

This year during Lent we will explore the greatest commandment of Jesus- to love God, and your neighbour as yourself. We are known to be a friendly church- and I see evidence of that every Sunday. But how well do we really know what is going in the life of the person sitting next to us? As Christians we are called to gather in community, to be brothers and sisters in Christ. This means that we are called to get to know each other deeply. During our worship services we will get to know each other by hearing from members of our church family about the joys and challenges of their lives. We will hear from a variety of sub-cultures about what it is like to be a refugee, a teenager, a member of the LGBTQ2 community, a newcomer to Canada, a single person and what it is like to live with grief. Join us each Sunday as we take the commandment of Jesus seriously.



In his 2016 Lenten message, the pope writes, “Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians.

Describing this phenomenon he calls the globalization of indifference, Pope Francis writes that “whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.” He continues that, “We end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own.

But when we fast from this indifference, we can begin to feast on love. In fact, Lent is the perfect time to learn how to love again. Jesus—the great protagonist of this holy season—certainly showed us the way. In him, God descends all the way down to bring everyone up. In his life and his ministry, no one is excluded.

## † LENTEN PRAYER

God of love, as in Jesus Christ you gave yourself to us, so may we give ourselves to you, living according to your holy will. Keep our feet firmly in the way where Christ leads us; Help our lips speak the truth that Christ teaches us; Fill our bodies with the life that is Christ within us. In his holy name we pray, Amen.

## † LENTEN PRACTICES

### Plug into the Power of Prayer

Use scripture for your reflection and prayer time. Each week we will offer you a “prayer vitamin”, a short verse from scripture to take home with you. Look for the purple heart on the candle table. Use the verse in your quiet time. Repeat it silently or out loud. Ponder these questions:

- What do these words show me about God?
- What do these words show me about myself?
- How will these words influence my heart, my mind, or my actions today?

**Extra challenge:** memorize the verse, it will come back to you when you need it! A Jewish rabbi said, “We are to write the scripture on our hearts so that when our hearts break, God’s word falls into them.

### Plug into the Power of Fasting

#### ***Do You Want to Fast this Lent?***

*- In the words of Pope Francis*

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

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