Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Our annual forty-day Lenten journey of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6th. It’s later than usual this year. You may recall that last year, it fell on February 14th, Valentine’s Day. The date is determined each year by the date of Easter, i.e. the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. Easter Sunday will be celebrated in 2019 on April 21st.

Whether early or late, the season of Lent (which comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for “springtime”) is a period of preparation for the celebration of Easter. The great mystery of our faith is that Jesus Christ triumphed over all forces of violence and evil – including death itself. In order to come to a deeper appreciation of the love, freedom, and salvation offered to us in Jesus Christ, the season of Lent invites us to step aside from “business as usual.”

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Lent and Easter Liturgical Schedule

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**
Monday-Thursday: 5:00-5:20pm
Saturdays: 3:30-4:30pm

**PARISH RECONCILIATION SERVICE**
Thursday, April 11th at 7:00pm
Sunday, April 14th at 2:00pm
Confessions, followed by reception

**ASH WEDNESDAY**
Mass: 8:15am and 5:30pm
Liturgy of the Word and Ashes: 6:20am, 12:10pm, 7:00pm

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**
Fridays during Lent at 6:00pm

**LENTEN EVENING PRAYER & ADORATION**
Tuesday, March 19th at 7:00pm

**HOLY THURSDAY MASS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**
April 18th at 7:00pm

**GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD’S PASSION**
April 19th at 3:00pm & 7:00pm
Stations of the Cross at Noon

**EASTER VIGIL**
Saturday, April 20th at 8:15pm

**EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST**
6:00am, 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am, & Noon
No 5:00pm Mass on Easter Sunday
Masses will be simulcast in the Social Hall as needed
Traditionally, Lent involves actions of fasting (from food or other things we enjoy), more intensive prayer, and almsgiving, i.e. giving to the poor and needy. These disciplines are never meant to be an end in themselves. Our spiritual practices in Lent are always meant to lead us to change and growth. It’s a time for each of us to ask ourselves:

- Do I truly believe in my baptismal identity as a beloved son or daughter of God?
- Are my values consistent with my beliefs?
- What do I need to change in my behaviors and attitudes in order to grow?
- How is God calling me to deeper intimacy with Christ?

These are difficult questions, aren’t they? But as we ponder and pray, we will discover God’s grace and strength. As members of a community of believers, we know that we are not alone. The scriptures, the Eucharist, the sacrament of Reconciliation, and the fellowship we share with each other can help lighten our burdens and support us on our journey.

May your Lenten journey be blessed, brothers and sisters, with significant spiritual growth. And may your increasing awareness of the Lord’s intimate love for you spring forth in a new joy and serenity, in a new compassion and kindness for others.

Sincerely in Christ’s love,
Fr. Denny Hanneman
Pray for our Candidates!

During this Lenten season, many adults in the Church community are making their final discernment toward being in full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil. Please keep them, their sponsors, and their catechists in your prayers during this holy season, especially all those at St. Columbkille.

Traditional Easter Basket Blessing
Saturday, April 20th
11:30am

Bring Easter Food Baskets to the Church for a special blessing. Watch the bulletin for more details on traditional foods and their symbolism in regards to Easter!

Reconciliation Services
ST. COLUMBKILLE
Thursday, April 11th at 7:00pm
Sunday, April 14th at 2:00pm

Come experience the loving mercy of God through confession! Afterwards, we will have a light reception to celebrate! Watch the bulletin and website for other area Reconciliation Services.

Lenten Fish Fries

Join us every Friday during Lent, except Good Friday, for a Fish Fry in the Social Hall from 5:00-8:00pm We serve the area’s best fried and baked fish, along with all the trimmings.

$9 Senior Citizens (age 60 and over)
$10 Adults (age 15-59)
$8 Children (age 5-14)
$3 Children (age 4 and under)
$30 Family

A Catholic’s Guide to
Fasting & Abstinence

What is fasting?
The limitation of food & drink - typically to one main meal and two smaller meals, with no solid foods in between.

When do we fast?
Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Why fast?
It helps us focus and pray better, as well as share in Christ’s suffering.

Who has to fast?
Catholics aged 18-60
Those with impaired health should not fast in any way.

What is abstinence?
Avoiding certain kinds of food or drink, typically meat or other desirable foods.

When do we abstain?
Catholics are obliged to abstain from meat on Fridays during Lent.

Why abstain on Fridays?
It’s the day of Christ’s saving death on the cross; we abstain to share in His work.

Who has to abstain?
Catholics aged 14 and older.
Learn more about the faith this season and find new ways to celebrate on formed.org!

**A Lent to Remember Video Study**
This four-week, video-based study uses Augustine Institute original productions Forgiven and Symbolon to present the power of God’s love and mercy in his Paschal Mystery and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Into the Desert - A Lenten Study on Prayer**
Our Lord teaches that prayer is a relationship and a vital necessity. And yet, many of us have difficulty committing to daily prayer. Lent is an opportunity to create space in your life for daily conversations with Christ. Follow Jesus into the desert and discover intimacy with God through prayer.

**The Fourth Cup**
Well-known Catholic theologian Dr. Scott Hahn explains Christ's Paschal Sacrifice on the Cross as the fulfillment of the traditional fourth cup used in the celebration of the Jewish Passover meal. He draws a symbolic parallel to the Last Supper and Christ’s death on Calvary. Through his scholarly insights and important biblical connections, the Mass will come alive for you as never before!

**Commit to Daily Devotional Reading**
Commit to reading an excerpt from one of the following inspiring e-books every day during Lent and Easter: *Meditations for Lent | The Power of Silence | The Year and Our Children*