

God Calls, and We Respond:

Invitations to the Offering during Lent and Easter Seasons

***D**uring Lent and Holy Week, we remember that God gave the world Jesus, and Jesus gave us his life. While many people may think of Lent as a somber time to “give up” things, we might better see it as a time to give our hearts, our lives, and our gifts in response to God’s own gracious generosity in our lives.*

Easter is an opportunity to rejoice and give thanks to God for all that God has done for us in Jesus: new life, abundant life! Sharing that abundance with confidence is an Easter joy.

Each invitation can be ended with the words: “Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise.”

Sunday, February 10 First Sunday in Lent

We hear many calls in our lives. Sometimes it’s hard to hear the voice of God over all the others, but if we listen carefully, we can hear God calling us each day to follow Jesus with all our hearts. Today, this very day, we respond to that call by taking the first steps of our Lenten journey, and we begin by offering our gifts as a sign of trust that God will be with us every step of the way.

Sunday, February 17 Second Sunday in Lent

“God so loved the world” that God gave us Jesus...the heart of God was moved by love to give us the greatest gift ever given. In response to that love, we bring our gifts this day as a sign of our gratitude for all that God has given us, and all that God is doing in this world that God continues to love so much.

Sunday, February 24 Third Sunday in Lent

A woman gave Jesus a cup of water at the well, and in return he opened her eyes and her heart to “the gifts of God.” God surprises us, too, in so many ways, each day of our lives. Let our generosity this morning, in support of all that God is doing through the ministry of this church, be a blessing that goes out and transforms the world in surprising and unexpected ways.

Sunday, March 2 Fourth Sunday in Lent (One Great Hour of Sharing®)

We come to church in this season of Lent with hope to see things, our lives, in a new light. We come to be transformed and to participate in the transformation of the world that God loves so much. Let’s bring our gifts this morning in support of the ministry of [this] church, so we will be a shining of light of hope in this place. And let’s also bring our generous gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing® so we can, together, participate in changing lives around the world.

Sunday, March 9 **Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Living water, the ability to see, new life...the stories of Jesus in this Lenten season are all about giving, including the gift of Jesus himself. We hear the call this morning to respond to God's giving with our gifts, too, because God works through us to bring new life, new hope to the world.

Sunday, March 16 **Palm/Passion Sunday**

During this Holy Week, we remember that Jesus gave his own life so generously that we might know how much God loves us. Let us respond to God's amazing generosity with our own gifts, offered now in gratitude and praise.

Sunday, March 23 **Easter Sunday**

Christ is risen – Alleluia! God keeps God's promises, and we are filled with joy on this Easter Sunday morning. New life is ours, and hope is ours as well. Let us respond to God's great works and God's great gifts in our life together as the church by sharing what we have been given.

Sunday, March 30 **Second Sunday of Easter**

The risen Jesus gives his heartbroken disciples the gift of peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. God is always finding ways to give to us, and our offering this morning is one way that we return a portion of what we've received so that a world broken and in need will hear the Good News of God's love.

Sunday, April 6 **Third Sunday of Easter**

It wasn't the talking that opened the disciples' eyes on that road to Emmaus. It was the things Jesus did – his actions: the blessing, breaking, and giving of bread – that made all the difference and helped them to see who he really was. When we share our time, our talents, and our treasure through the ministry of [this] church, our actions express our commitment to be the church God calls us to be: faithful, generous, and full of love.

Sunday, April 13 **Fourth Sunday of Easter**

God is good (all the time!), and all the time, (God is good!). It's easy to see why Psalm 23 is so well-loved: God has been so good down through the ages, providing an abundance of good things for God's children, our cups overflowing. Our gifts this morning are one powerful way we share this abundance with one another and the world God loves through the ministry of [this] church.

Sunday, April 20 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

When Jesus calls us to believe in him today, he's telling us that we can trust the goodness of God in our lives. Generosity springs from our trust in God's goodness, a goodness that is stronger than anything else in the world. This morning, as we give our gifts in support of the ministry of [this] church, we say that we trust our past, present, and future to God.

Sunday, April 27 **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Love is a powerful force in the world, stronger than hatred or fear or greed. The love of Jesus inspires us and makes us able to share generously the gifts we have received from God. Our gifts are one way that we love one another and the world around us, the world God loves.

Sunday, May 4 **Seventh Sunday of Easter**

There is such a marvelous sense of belonging in today's reading. The prayer of Jesus names those disciples long ago, and all of us today, as belonging to God and given to Jesus. There's a sense of call in that belonging, because we're drawn together in this community of prayer so that we might find powerful ways to love the world God loves through the ministry of this church. Then let us bring our gifts to strengthen and sustain that ministry in the days ahead.

Sunday, May 11 **Pentecost Sunday** **Strengthen the Church**

When the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, they didn't keep it to themselves, and they didn't stay all locked up in a room. They burst out into the world and shared the good news about "God's deeds of power." God is at work through the ministry of [this] church today, and we won't sit here and keep it to ourselves. Our gifts say that we mean to burst out into the world, full of the good news of God's love and saving grace.

Calls to Offering for Lent and Easter were written by the Rev. Kathryn Matthews Huey, Minister for Covenantal Stewardship, Stewardship and Church Finances Ministry Team, LCM.



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