



1 W. Wyomissing Ave., Mohnton, PA 19540

March 10th, 2024 – Mar. 16th, 2024

www.calvaryumcmohnton.org

*Connect with God.
Connect with each other.
Connect with the community.*

Fasting As a Spiritual Discipline

3/3/24 Sermon by Pastor Nova; Scripture: Matthew 6:16-18 (NIV)

Fasting is meant to change our hearts, seek God's guidance, and deepen our relationship with God.

FASTING- literally means not to eat. Greek (*nisteia*) unfed, hungry, Hebrew (*tsom*) **Fasting** can be deliberate and sustained abstinence from all food for a specified period of time.

During the Civil War, Senator James Harlan of Iowa, introduced a resolution to the senate, which made Abraham Lincoln write an address to the nation that was at least as important as the Gettysburg Address. It was a proclamation for Thursday, April 30, 1863, to be a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer. Lincoln wrote "It is the duty of nations as well as men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God...and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scripture and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

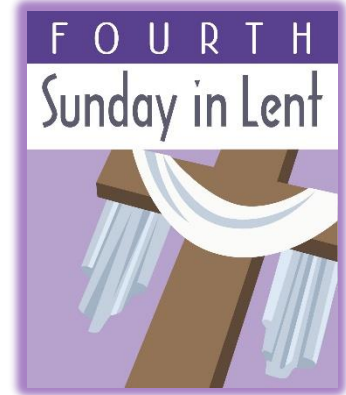
Fasting is mentioned over 70X throughout the Scripture, in the Old Testament, there were two types of Fasting, public and private. Through many examples of people who fasted, it reveals that God grants supernatural revelation and wisdom through this practice.

Think of biblical fasting as a love offering. It requires us to give up something we want in the physical for spiritual purposes. It makes us weak physically to experience strength spiritually. Fasting is always associated with prayer. We can pray without fasting, but we cannot fast without praying.

Types of fasting:

1. Normal Fast- 24 hours
2. Partial Fast - abstaining from certain food or drink/Water Fasting

Sermon *cont'd* on pg. 2



March 10th, 2024

9:00AM – Sunday school for all ages

10:30AM – Traditional

Purple Theory Series: Confession
Pastor Nova Preaching

The traditional worship is available via
livestream through Calvary's
website homepage.

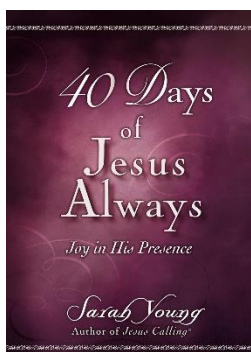
Go to: calvaryumcmohnton.org or
click on the link below.

**CTRL + CLICK HERE
SUNDAY LIVESTREAM**



**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
BEGINS THIS SUNDAY,
MARCH 10TH.**

Mark your calendar now (or put an alarm on your phone) to set your clock(s) **FORWARD** 1 hour before you go to sleep Saturday night (3/09). You don't want to be late for Sunday school and church!



Prepare Your Heart & Mind for Easter

A free Lenten devotional, *40 Days of Jesus Always*, is available for pick in the Gathering area. [One per household, please.]

The devotional booklet includes daily words of love, encouragement, and guidance, written to us, as if from Jesus.

40-Day Lenten Prayer Challenge (Ctrl+Click)

You may join the daily 6PM Zoom meeting, where we will pray daily, and using a designated reader, listen to a chapter of the book, *Draw the Circle*, by Mark Batterson. If you would like to be a designated reader, we ask for you to click on the link **ABOVE** to sign up for the day(s) when you would be willing to volunteer. If you don't have a copy of the book, we will email you a copy of the reading for your designated day.

ZOOM Prayer Challenge by Phone

1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 647 829 181#; **Password: 082013**

ZOOM Prayer Challenge by PC

<https://zoom.us/j/647829181?pwd=dHlMM09HSmFQcUZ3bEorMUNwRUNkZz09>

Meeting ID: 647 829 181

Password: 082013

On March 19th, Bishop John Schol will join Calvary's 6PM Lenten Prayer Challenge. He will be the reader, lead the devotional prayer time, and participate in the discussion.

40-Day Lenten Walk Prayer Challenge (Ctrl + Click)

- Join the 40-Day Lent Prayer Walk Challenge. This will happen daily at the church at 8:30AM, with Pastor Nova joining you if she has no other commitments that day. First, there will be prayer and a reading from the *Upper Room*. You may walk around the church, around the streets of Mohnton, or you may just sit in the church for the devotional reading and to pray. We ask that you click the link **ABOVE** to sign up for the days when you would like to be the designated reader for the Lent Prayer Walk Challenge.
- The last option is for people who can't make the other two options. In that case, we ask that you commit to finding a daily time for prayer on your own.



~Sermon cont'd from pg. 1

3. Absolute Fast - more than 24 hrs.

4. Intermittent Fast - alternating period of hrs. not eating, then eat in certain hr

5. Corporate Fast- involves a group of people

Intermittent fasting is very popular in our society. It is what we call "dieting". It is very popular because of the health benefits, as well as for some people who desire to lose weight.

Fasting is found as a spiritual practice across multiple faith practices or religions. A group or an individual fasts if they are asking for freedom and or seeking for direction.

Biblical fasting started even before Jesus. Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Paul, practiced it. So, WHY did they fast?

Old Testament

1. Moses (*Ex. 34:28 - the 2nd giving of the tablets*) - *Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments. Moses was in the presence of God, and therefore, did not need anything.*

2. Elijah (*1 King 19:8*) *So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah was afraid and running away from Jezebel. He was afraid and needed strength.*

3. Esther (4:15-16) *Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." Esther sought God's favor.*

~Sermon cont'd from pg. 2

Fasting as a commandment: Leviticus 16:29-31 - The Day of Atonement - forgiveness of sins

On the tenth day of the seventh month of each year, you must go without eating to show sorrow for your sins, and no one, including foreigners who live among you, is allowed to work. ³⁰ This is the day on which the sacrifice for the forgiveness of your sins will be made in my presence, ³¹ and from now on, it must be celebrated each year. Go without eating and make this a day of complete rest just like the Sabbath.

New Testament:

Jesus (Matthew 4:2 - After he was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry. Jesus was fully human, just like us, he gets hungry. Jesus was preparing for ministry.

Paul (Acts 9:9 - For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything. Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus to receive direction from God.

3 Important Things to Remember About Fasting:

1. Fasting is a must. Christ spoke about when you fast, not if you fast. Christ expected His disciples to fast. Biblically and physically, fasting has many benefits. Research has shown, according to Bible.org, that fasting (water therapy) has a lot of physical benefits and spiritual benefits.

Supposedly, not eating will make us weak, but, interestingly, FASTING MAKES US STRONG.

2) Brush when you fast –V¹⁷ *But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face.* In Jesus' time, anointing with oil was a symbol of joy; however, people usually fasted and put ashes on their heads when they were mourning. So, when Jesus instructs, "When you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face," he is directing them to do the opposite of what would normally be expected when fasting! When we fast, we should act normally. When fasting, we must practice secrecy to protect us from pride and praise. Fasting isn't for show.

3) Fast for God V¹⁸ *Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward*

you. When we fast, it should be between God and us. **It's a way of focusing totally on him** when seeking his guidance and help. Fasting is a means of demonstrating that you really are in earnest in your quest to seek the Lord with all your heart. It's also, at times, an expression of sorrow and deep repentance, something that a person or community will do in order to acknowledge failure before God and seek his mercy. Most importantly, fasting is surrendering to God and worshipping God with our body.

Mr. Rogers said that when a person is weak, physically, they become closer to God and get their strength from God. Many of us might have included fasting in our Lenten practice (e.g., fasting from sugar, meat, caffeine, carbs, etc.) without growing or learning from the experience. Fasting is about more than *what* we give up or even how well we stick to what we are fasting from (which can be different for different people).

Have you given something up this Lent? You may choose to fast from something to eat or something else (e.g. watching TV, spending money unnecessarily, etc.) or focus on another spiritual discipline.

Fasting is worshipping God with our bodies. Fasting is not for those who are taking medication and need food with their meds. it should never be or become about not nourishing or caring for our bodies, which are given to us by God. Fasting calls us to turn to God with a purpose, to deepen our connection with him. Consider Pope Francis' words below:

Do you want to fast this Lent?

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

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



~ SAVE THE DATE ~
Hosted by Calvary UMC

Saturday, March 23rd at 9:30AM
for kids ages 2 yrs. – 4th Grade
Rain or shine @ Calvary ~ No RSVP



Donations of individually wrapped candy are needed for the Easter Egg Hunt.
Please place candy in the plastic bin located in the Gathering Area. THANK YOU!

~ 3~



Palm Sunday

March 24th @ 10:30AM: A joyful celebration of Christ's arrival into Jerusalem, with palms waving, joyful hymns and a special choir anthem. The service will be livestreamed & available through Calvary's website homepage & Facebook. All are welcome.

March 28th @ 7PM: An experiential service in Calvary's lower-level Social Hall (handicap accessible), including scripture, hymns, sharing Holy Communion, special music, and reflection. The service will be available via Zoom. All are welcome.



Maundy Thursday



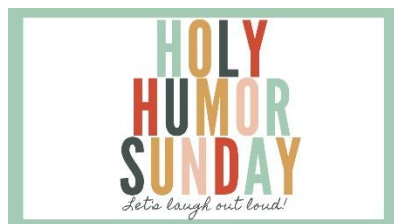
Good Friday

March 29th @ 7PM: An evening service in Calvary's sanctuary recalling & reflecting on the passion and death of Christ through readings and hymns. All are welcome.

March 31st @ 10:30AM: Join us for a joy-filled service rejoicing in Christ's triumph over the grave. The bell choir and senior choir will present special music, and we will share in the fellowship of Holy Communion. The service will also be livestreamed & available through Calvary's website & Facebook.



Easter Sunday



For centuries many faith traditions observed the Sunday after Easter as a "day of joy and laughter" to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. "*Risus paschalis* - the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it. Calvary will celebrate **Holy Humor Sunday** on **April 7th** during the **10:30AM** service, with children & youth participating.



10 – Laura Owen
105 Dolomite Dr
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

13 – Becky Dodson
15 Whitepine Gulch
Reading, PA 19607

15 Wanda Steffey
4851 Perkiomen Ave., Lot 71
Reading, PA 19606

16 Ashley Feiler
3314 Pequot Dr.
Sinking Spg., PA 19608

SHIRLEY AYRTON
DAVID BAKER
ERIN BAUER
ANDREW BEERER
BRO. HENRY BHASKER
DONNA BROWN
RICK BRUETSCH
LINDA CHANDLER
TREAVOR COMEAU
DAVE CURLEY
BROOKLYN DANIELS
LYNN DANIELS
MICHELLE DANIELS
LAINA DIGIROLAMO
CANDY DODSON
JEFF EBERTS
MATT EDGERTON
BONNIE EHST
JANET ENGLE
GINNY EPPS
ANDREW ERB
AMELIA FORTUNATO
STEVE & BARBARA GANCER
ROSELEE HAAKE
PAT & DOTTIE HAFFER
PEGGY HARSHAW

RICH & JAN HARTMAN
TOM HASSLER
JACK HIGGINS
DAVID HOFFMAN
FAM. OF MARY JO
HOLLIS
DANNY HUTZELL
KELLY HUTZELL
FAM. OF MARY JANE
KEINARD
LOUISE KELLENBERGER
WAYNE LAMP
ED LEISER, SR.
JEN MADARA
DEB MCGAHEN
JULIE MCGETTRICK
BRENDA MEYERS
JENNIFER MILLER
KAREN MOORE
CHARLES & LINDA
MORGANT
DANIELLA MUNTEAN
RYAN MYHER
RON PATUN
MAX PEARSON

CHARLES PLUSHINISKI
ANN RINGLER
GAIL ROLLMAN
BILL RUTH
JOHN & DORISMARIE ROWE
FAM. OF ROSIE SANDERS
PAULLINE SCHMEHL
BOB & WANDA STEFFEY
MIRIAM STEFFEY
GLENN & LISA STUBER
TRACEY SUNDAY
JOANNE TALARICO
KELSEY TAVERAS
LOLA TROUTMAN
AMANDA VALENTIN
KAREN WADE
SUSIE WAHL
CLAYTON WALKER
NELLY & JAE WALLACE
JANE WEISS
BOB WERNER
MARIANNA WOLFE
ELIZABETH ZEMBAS
BEN ZERBE

PRAYER
NEEDS



The Pastor Will Be Away

Pastor Nova will be on vacation from Monday, April 1st through Sunday, April 14th.

If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Matthew at 717-917-5342 or christianed.calvmohn@gmail.com



We are continuing our partnership with Safe Berks by providing a meal for the guests and staff on Tuesday, March 19th.

Our menu will be BBQ (sloppy joe type, not pulled pork), Mac and cheese, salad, and dessert.

We will be feeding 40 people, so we need several volunteers to create these items at home and bring them to the church kitchen (lower level) by 4:15PM for reheating, packaging, and delivery. Recipes will be provided to ensure uniformity.

Please contact Joann or Bob Werner, 610-914-5020 or 484-336-5059 to sign up or with questions. Hopefully, we will have enough volunteers so that each menu item's preparation will be shared by several people.



Special Easter GIFTS

IN CELEBRATION OF EASTER A VARIETY OF GIFTS may be given in honor of or in memory of loved ones. Please indicate your choice(s) below. Checks may be made payable to: "Calvary UMC" with the gift designation & your Env. # in the memo section.

I / We would like to contribute the following as an Easter gift(s): (Indicate the number in the blank/\$10 ea.)

_____ Easter Lily (\$12 ea.)

_____ Pastor's Contingency Fund (\$10 ea.)

_____ Safe Berks (\$10 ea.)

_____ Mifflin Community Food Ministry (\$10 ea.)

NAME: _____ Env. # _____

(Please print clearly.)

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

PLEASE PLACE YOUR COMPLETED FORM & DONATION IN JANET DEARSTYNE'S CHURCH MAILBOX (A10), OR MAIL IT TO HER ATTENTION AT: CUMC, 1 W. Wyomissing Ave., Mohnton, PA 19540.

DEADLINE: ON OR BEFORE PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH, 2023.

