

Lent 2024

AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH EDMOND



We all hunger for something in this life.

Buried deep within every human heart are hungers and longings for something more. We usually think of the season of Lent as a time to deny our hunger. For some it's often the first time we've experienced physical hunger in a long time.

But there is a hunger we should feed this Lent: The hunger for God. Our physical hunger is only satiated when our spiritual hunger is satisfied and those hungers are met through seeking and following Jesus – the Bread of Life.

Bread sustains life, the bread we break with family and friends, and the Bread that is Christ's body broken for us. We've chosen the book ***By Bread Alone: A Baker's Reflection on Hunger, Longing, and the Goodness of God*** to shape our journey to Easter.

Come discover how God meets our hunger, loneliness, and unmet longings through bread. Join us at First Christian Church of Edmond, as we make space for God to break into both the sacred and mundane of our lives.

fcedmond.org/lent



Lent Experiences

AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH EDMOND

BAKE & PRAY WORKSHOP:

Learn to Bake as a Spiritual Practice

Saturday, March 2 - 3:00 to 6:00PM

Come explore the connections between bread and a life of faith with author, professional baker, and theologian Kendall Vanderslice. Participants will experience mixing, shaping, and baking dough. To conclude we will break bread together sharing soup prepared by our own Charles Stout. Plus, you'll step away with your own batch of dough to shape and bake at home! Bring your own 3qt. mixing bowl to the workshop.

\$20 per person

Sign up at fcedmond.org/nextsteps



A CONVERSATION WITH AUTHOR KENDALL VANDERSLICE

Sunday, March 3 – 2 to 3:30pm

Bluebird Books, 21 S. Broadway - Downtown Edmond

Author Kendall Vanderslice will read from her book *By Bread Alone: A Baker's Reflection on Hunger, Longing, and the Goodness of God*. Followed by a Q&A, and book signing.

Pre-order your copy of Kendall's book online from Bluebird Books.

bluebirdedmond.com/by-bread-alone



Maundy Thursday Experience

Thursday, March 28 - 6PM Let us break bread together.
Soup, bread, communion, meditation, and song.

Lent 1, 2, 3: Ash Wednesday

Reading

Transformed through Bread and Ashes – from Shelley Regan

Today marks the beginning of the season of Lent, a unique chance to alter the rhythms of our spiritual lives. On this day, Christians around the world gather to receive ashes and hear a reminder of their mortality: *From dust you come and to dust you will return.*

It's drawn from Genesis 3:19: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread until you return to the ground. For from it you were taken. From dust you come and to dust you will return."

Our Lenten series is based on a book by author, baker, and theologian Kendall Vanderslice. Kendall says she likes to dig her hands in flour as she reflects on this idea that we are dust. So, each year for the past several years, she has mixed up a sourdough starter on Ash Wednesday to help her remember her own mortality. Over the next three days, it's a reminder that flour comes back to life, and so do we if we make space for God.

"But," she reminds us, "dust and flour are not quite the same. As soon as water touches wheat, a series of transformations begins. Water activates enzymes inside the grain and begins to uncoil amino acids trapped inside. As these amino acids uncoil they form bonds with one another building up a protein network called gluten. Once water touches wheat, the flour can never go back to the way it was before. For wheat, its death to become flour is not going to be the end. We know it's just dormant, waiting patiently to bubble back to life. It's a mass of proteins and starches wound up tightly, ready to be released and transformed by water."

From dust we come, and to dust we will return. Jesus, though he appeared in a human body like our own, did not just turn to dust. Like flour, Jesus offered himself to us as bread. The Bread that binds us together as the Body of Christ. The Bread through which Jesus draws us in and makes us more like him.

Most of us know Lent as a season to fast, giving something up to make more room for God. We spend 40 days facing our hungers in preparation for Easter and for the rest of our lives. Jesus began his ministry with a 40-day journey in the desert where he faced many temptations, hunger being one of the worst. 40 days without food! We've all experienced hunger, but not on that scale. There is another kind of hunger we are wrestling with this Lent. Our spiritual hunger. Jesus is the "Bread of Life."

Lent can be a time to take on something new. Training our bodies for new life-giving rhythms. This Lent, we are exploring the sacredness of Bread, and the Gospel story woven through the process of baking. You can join us on this journey - by baking with us, or simply savoring bread in all its goodness. And yes, we think there are some pretty delicious gluten free options out there. In fact, to be as inclusive as we can we are offering gluten free communion wafers throughout this season. And our Ash Wednesday Communion bread was baked with love and is gluten-free, nut-free, dairy-free, soy-free, vegan.

Over these next six weeks, you might bake when you are able. Kendall suggests this pattern:

- Savor a loaf for yourself.
- Break a loaf with friends.
- Give a loaf away.

As Kendall Vanderslice says, "Remember, you are but flour, and flour teaches us that brokenness and death are not the end. We can be transformed individually and communally so that God can work through us to love, serve, and feed the world."

As we enter this season, take a moment, and do a quick spiritual assessment. What do you feel hungry for? Maybe it is community? Maybe it's closeness with God? How do you want to be transformed over these next 40 days? How do you want to love, serve, and feed for the transformation of the world?

Lent 1, 2, 3: Friday, Feb. 16

Bake

Bread, like God, is not a mystery to be mastered or solved.

Bread is at once simple — a mix of flour, water, yeast, and salt — and infinitely complex. Thousands of years after our ancestors made their first loaf, bakers are still learning new ways to pull flavor and texture from grain. We can commit our entire lives to the rhythms of baking, of drawing out the nuances of wheat, and still have more to learn. The goal should not be mastery in and of itself, but curiosity and joy. Breadmaking, like faith, is a craft to hone over the course of a lifetime, a truth that is at once exciting and liberating.

– Kendall Vanderslice

Mom's Cinnamon Rolls - from Becky Garrett

4 cups flour
½ cup sugar
1 tsp salt
1 cup Butter Crisco
1 cup milk, scalded & cooled
1 pkg dry yeast
½ cup warm water
2 eggs
¾ cup sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
1 stick margarine

Frosting
¼ cup margarine
1 cup powdered sugar
½ tsp vanilla
Hot water

Scald milk and let cool. Dissolve 1 pkg yeast in ½ cup of warm water. Mix milk and yeast and add two eggs. Combine flour, ½ cup of sugar, 1 tsp salt and the Butter Crisco. Mix together with pastry blender until crumbly. Add milk and yeast mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 2-3 hours. Dough will be very soft.

Set out margarine to soften. When ready to roll dough, cream margarine, ¾ cup sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl with electric mixer. Mixture should be soft and creamy and easy to spread.

Divide dough and roll out on pastry cloth, using enough flour to make rolling easy. Knead a few times before rolling. Using a rolling pin, roll out dough and spread half of the butter and cinnamon mixture evenly over the dough. Beginning at long side, roll and slice.

Take each slice of dough and roll out flat with rolling pin. A little flour may be necessary to keep dough from sticking. Place in baking pan lined with aluminum foil. Let rise until double. Bake in 400 degree oven for 20 minutes.

Frosting: Mix ¼ cup margarine and 1 cup powdered sugar with enough hot water to make a thin frosting. Add ½ tsp vanilla. Frost as soon as rolls are taken out of oven. A pastry brush is helpful to use while frosting the rolls.



Lent 1, 2, 3: Monday, Feb. 19

Verse & Voice

Verse

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers. – Acts 2:42

Voice

In her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day's closing words are these:

We cannot love God unless we love each other,

and to love we must know each other.

We know him in the breaking of bread,

and we are not alone anymore.

We have all known the long loneliness

and we have learned that the only solution is love

and that love comes with community.

Pray

God, we can spend our whole lives searching for things to fill us,

Our whole lives feeling empty,

Our whole lives looking for satisfaction,

Believing we are incomplete.

We try so many things to satisfy this gnawing hunger -

 Possessions and pleasure,

 Food and drink,

 Achievement and status,

 Adventure and thrill.

None of these are life.

And the deep soul yearning remains -

 To be known,

 To be loved,

 To be at one,

 To be at ease,

 To be still,

 To be free

Thank you for sending us Jesus, to offer a new headspace,

a different way of being, a new fuel.

Manna in this desert: The Bread of Life.

Amen

Reflect

What is your soul searching for? In what ways do you feel seen and known? Where have you searched for fulfillment in the past? How can you lean in to God to find true satisfaction?

Lent 1, 2, 3: Wednesday, Feb. 21

Reading

Manna in the Wilderness - from Rolf Svanoe, *Bread for the Journey*

A young American man was lost in the Australian desert a few years ago. Robert Bogucki, a 33-year-old volunteer fireman from Fairbanks, Alaska, was on vacation in Australia. Robert did some sightseeing and then headed off across the Australian desert “seeking spiritual enlightenment.” The young man was missing something in his life, and he felt that in the wilderness of Australia, he could discover something about himself and about God. After two weeks, his absence sparked an intensive search that ended with his discovery. He had spent some forty days in the wilderness. Robert kept himself alive, eating plants and wildflowers and drinking dirty water. In forty days, he lost 44 pounds. A television crew flying in a helicopter just happened to spot him. On the hour-long flight back to civilization, Robert was asked why he had embarked on the Journey. “I just wanted to spend a while on my own, just nobody else around, just make peace with God, I guess,” he said. Robert said he felt alone in the desert but never believed he was going to die, even when his supplies ran out. “I had the feeling of confidence that God would take care of me,” he said.

After God rescued the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt, Moses led them into the wilderness, heading toward Mount Sinai. It was time to learn some important lessons about his God who had rescued them, and what better place than in the wilderness. But the Israelites didn’t like the wilderness. They began to complain. “I’d rather die a slave in Egypt than die of hunger and thirst out here in this godforsaken wilderness. Life may not have been good in Egypt, but at least we had something to eat.” It’s interesting how the story continues. It doesn’t say that God was angry at them or that God scolded them for their ingratitude. It just says that God decided to provide for them. Every morning, the people could go out and collect bread. It was a flaky substance they called manna. In Hebrew, the word manna literally translates, “What is it?” They looked at this strange food and said, “What is this stuff?”

So God provided the Israelites with manna bread, and with manna came a lesson. They were to gather each morning only enough to meet their needs for that day. If they gathered more than they needed, if they tried to store it or hoard it, the manna spoiled--it turned rotten and became worm-infested. This was the lesson they were to learn in the wilderness—to trust God to provide for each day. And when they trusted that God would provide, God was found to be faithful. Manna came each day. They didn’t need to worry about whether or not they had food to eat.

There are two lessons we can learn from the experience of the Israelites. First, trust God to provide for your future. The Israelites didn’t need to worry because God provided what they needed every day. So much of our time is spent worrying about the future—things we cannot control and that eventually we see really don’t matter. To trust in God means that we can be certain that God walks with us and reminds us what is truly important in our life. The second lesson is that God will meet your need, not your greed. God didn’t give the Israelites what they wanted; God gave them what they needed. Often times we think that what we want is what we need. But trusting God means that we realize that what we need is very simple. All of our over-the-top desires distract us from being authentic to ourselves.

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread. He, too, had learned the lessons of the wilderness. But Jesus added a lesson of his own. Our prayer for daily bread is always prayed in community. We don’t ask for my daily bread. Bread is not mine alone. Bread is given by God for the community. In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray that the whole world may be fed.

This idea is expressed well in this poem:

You cannot pray the Lord’s Prayer and even once say “I.”
You cannot pray the Lord’s Prayer and even once say “My.”
Nor can you pray the Lord’s Prayer and not pray for one another;
And when you ask for daily bread, you must include your brother.
For others are included in each and every plea,
From the beginning to the end of it, it does not once say “Me.”
The lesson of the wilderness is that God promises to meet our needs.



Mise en place

You can't bake a good loaf of bread without it taking over everything. Your time, your body, your space. When I bake bread, it completely takes over. First there is the mess of the kitchen, which even the tidiest of bakers are at pains to maintain. Some bakers suggest a mise en place before starting bread (measure every ingredient, preferably by weight down the gram, and set it out in its own individual bowl, ready to be tipped into the larger bowl when ready). Think television cooking-show style. Bakers who use this method insist it's the only means to successful loaves. I don't doubt them, but I have zero faith I'll want to keep baking if my first step is to dirty every bowl I have. I take my chances. Inevitably the floor looks like a light fallen snow. The countertops and cutting board have a thick sticky build up. Bits of dough get everywhere, crusting on cotton towels I use to cover resting loaves. But bread baking also takes over my spirit. Whenever I need to "get out of my head," I bake bread. Moving from thinking-only mode to one that includes my arms to push and pull dough across the counter can untangle the tight knots my mind likes to wind. Inhale the scent of yeast and I'm solving problems that have vexed me for days. The clouds start to clear. It's a good kind of taking over this practice of baking bread. Same too this life of faith. It is practiced in the feeding of a starter, kneading of a dough, and the slicing to share a fresh-baked loaf around the table.

Shelley Regan

Rosemary Olive Bread

½ cup whole wheat flour
¼ tsp yeast, instant or active dry
1 ½ cups room temperature water, divided
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
1 cup assorted olives, chopped
1 tsp salt

1. In a large bowl, mix together the whole wheat flour, yeast, and 1/2 cup water. Let sit for half an hour.
2. After the wheat mixture has finished its half-hour rest, add in the rest of the water, the flour, and the rosemary. Mix until it comes together in a shaggy dough. Let sit for half an hour.
3. After the dough has finished its second rest, sprinkle the salt over the dough followed by the olives. Stretch and fold the dough 12-16 times until the olives are dispersed and the dough is smooth.
4. Cover loosely with a damp tea towel or plastic and let rest at room temperature for 8-12 hours.
5. Half an hour before you are ready to bake, shape the dough into a tight round then preheat the oven to 425°F. If you are baking in a dutch oven, place it in the oven to preheat as well.
6. Once the oven is heated and the dough shows signs it is fully proofed, bake the loaf for 45 minutes.

Let cool and enjoy!



Lent 1, 2, 3: Monday, Feb. 26

Verse & Voice

Verse

And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” – Luke 3:10-11

Voice

In a world where faith is often construed as a way of thinking, bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of life. To make bread or love, to dig in the earth, to feed an animal or cook for a stranger—these activities require no extensive commentary, no lucid theology. All they require is someone willing to bend, reach, chop, stir.... And yet these are the same activities that change lives, sometimes all at once and sometimes more slowly, the way dripping water changes stone. – Barbara Brown Taylor

Prayer

May I direct my faith not as a way of thinking, but as a way of kneading, digging, and stirring.

Reflect

How do you view your faith? Is it a belief system? A way of thinking? Or is it a way of life? Surely it must be some combination of all of those and more.

Reflect on times when your faith has manifested more as a mental exercise than a way of life. In what ways can you live out your faith in your daily life?

How can your daily practices be like the dripping of water, or the kneading of bread?

Lent 1, 2, 3: Wednesday, Feb. 28

Reading

Gaza Hospitality – from Rev. Chris Shorow

One of the most incredible meals I have ever had was in Gaza. We visited Israel after I graduated from college, and we were able to stay with a family in Gaza. They welcomed us with a meal that was over-the-top extravagant. Lamb, beef, chicken, and various sauces and dips perfectly complemented the meal. It was delicious, full of flavors and herbs I had never had before.

We all dipped into family-style bowls with the utensils we were given—pieces of bread. This kind of sharing made our dining experience very intimate, and we had a wonderful time getting to know each other. I was blown away by the generous hospitality. Why would they welcome strangers from so far away with such a marvelous feast? I asked our host, and he said that the most important teaching of his faith was to welcome the stranger. He was a Palestinian Christian. That night, he helped me understand that my faith also called me to reach out to the stranger—with extravagant grace.

Hospitality is one of the great themes of the Bible. Over and over again in the Hebrew Bible, we are told to welcome the stranger. And Jesus' ministry was full of welcome to everyone—the widows, orphans, blind, lame, and poor. All are welcome.

In one of his Christmas sermons, Martin Luther was preaching to his congregation about the poor hospitality shown to Joseph and Mary by the people of Bethlehem. "There are many of you who think to yourselves: 'If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the baby!'...You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at that time, you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem...Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor." Yes, that's what I learned that night in Gaza—Christ is in our neighbor and we are called to reach out.

As we gather each week at the table, Jesus invites us to share our bread. The amazing thing is that instead of being the host, we find that we are actually the guests and that in sharing bread with others, Christ, the true host, is present to bring blessing into our lives. We are all strangers who have been graciously welcomed and made to feel at home. We are fed the family meal, the bread of life—Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

Lent 1, 2, 3: Friday, Mar. 1

Bake

The Spiritual Practice of Seeing God in a Piece of Bread

"The Rabbi turned to his students and said: 'Do you know where God is?' He took a piece of bread, showed it to them all and continued: 'God is in this piece of bread. Without the manifestation of God's power in all nature, this piece of bread would have no existence.'"

With a piece of bread, say a prayer of thanksgiving and spend a moment contemplating its origins.

Look into the bread to see the baker, the measuring cups, the warm ovens baking the bread; look deeper to see the wheat mill and the raw grain; and look deeper yet to see the wheat fields, the rich soil, the clouds offering rain, the sun making new growth possible. See the farmer planting the fields in spring and see the farmer's parents nurturing him or her from childhood.

Continue back as far as you like, realizing that "in the beginning" there was only God.

This is the unfolding story of Creation and the Eternal One's power of transformation; this is knowing that God is in a piece of bread.

— James L. Mirel, Karen Bonnell Werth in *Stepping Stones to Spiritual Living*

Baguettes

6 cups (766 g) unbleached bread flour
2 ¼ tsp (16 g) salt
1 ¾ tsp (5 g) instant yeast
2 ½ cups plus 3 Tbsp (610 g) cool water
flour, semolina, or cornmeal for dusting

1. In a large mixing bowl combine flour, salt, yeast and water. Mix with an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on low speed or by hand until a dough comes together, about 1 minute. Continue mixing until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Transfer to a lightly oiled work surface.
2. Using oiled hands, pat the dough into a disk. Choose one side and stretch it and fold it back in on the dough. Give it a quarter turn and repeat with another side. Repeat two more times for a total of four times. Cover the dough with a bowl and rest for five minutes. Repeat the process, stretching and folding four times, every 5 minutes, four times total. Spray the bowl you've been using to cover the dough lightly with oil. Place the dough in the bowl, turn to coat and cover. Refrigerate overnight.
3. Bring the dough to room temperature. Gently transfer to a floured work surface using an oiled dough scraper. If the dough is too sticky to handle, lightly sprinkle flour over it. With oiled hands coax it into a roughly 8-inch x 6-inch shape. Divide it cleanly in half, and let it rest for 5 minutes.
4. Arrange an oven rack in the lowest position. Place a metal baking pan in the bottom of the oven. It should be deep enough to hold a cup of water that you'll pour in before baking to provide a steamy environment. Preheat the oven to 500° F or 550° F if it will go that high.
5. Turn two baking sheets upside down and over with parchment. Mist with oil and dust with bread flour, semolina, or cornmeal. With each piece of your divided dough, cut three long portions and transfer to the baking sheets. Using a sharp serrated knife (dip it in water between each cut), score the bread making diagonal slashes across the baguettes.
6. Prepare 1 cup of hot water. Carefully slide one of the pieces of parchment with three of the baguettes onto the baking sheet. Quickly add the water to the bottom of the pan (use an oven mitt because the water will turn to steam when it hits the hot pan) and close the oven door.
7. Bake until golden brown, 20-35 minutes, rotating halfway through. Transfer to a cooling rack and repeat the process with the remaining loaves.

Lent 1, 2, 3: Monday, Mar. 4

Verse & Voice

Verse

“Why spend your money for what is not bread, your wages for what fails to satisfy. Heed me and you shall delight in rich fare, come to me heedfully that you may have life.”

- Isaiah 55:2-3

Voice

What are the things you hunger for? I don't mean cravings like your favorite meal or drink, or the obsessive scrolling through our social media accounts we can sometimes get caught up in, which often fuels our anxiety over the world or our sense of the inadequacy of our lives. These things are not ultimately nourishing. What is nourishing are the things that are life-giving. What is nourishing are the things that are joy-bringing, peace-arising, purpose-revealing. We live in a culture that depends on distracting us from our true hungers, because when we identify with these surface hungers we will consume more and more in the search for satisfaction. – Christine Valters Paintner

Prayer

Holy one,
Release our grip from calendars and planners,
soften our need to make something happen,
to try to control the outcome.
Release us from the grip of numbing ourselves,
scrolling, eating, drinking – those things that never nourish.
Reveal your impulse arising in us
in a hundred different ways.
Guide our hearts to identify our true hungers.
May our hearts find rest in you.
Amen

Reflect

What is your own relationship to calendars, planning, deadlines, and to-do lists? What are the ways you schedule your life that end up costing you or depleting you? What ways do you numb yourself? What do you discover about your true hunger when you let go of the need to control the outcome of things? What longings do you find when you set down the phone or the fork?”

Lent 1, 2, 3: Wednesday, Mar. 6

Reading

Yeast - from Kendall Vanderslice's *By Bread Alone* and Rev. Chris Shorow

“Fermenting dough requires a balance of time and temperature. If the dough ferments in too warm an environment, yeast quickly consumes all the sugar in the dough. At best, the resulting bread will be bland; at worst the yeast will die early, causing the loaf to fall. With a long, cool fermentation, however, the dough acquires a robust and nuanced flavor.

Commercial yeast is available in three different forms: instant yeast, active dry yeast, and fresh yeast. Each of these forms contains the same strain, stabilized through different techniques. Once measured and mixed into the dough, these yeasts behave in much the same way.

Not all dough is leavened with commercial yeast, though. These domesticated strains were not available for purchase until the mid-twentieth century. Prior to this, most breads were leavened using the dregs left over after brewing beer or using cultures of wild yeast—both methods relying on a community of microbes that bring out a more complex taste than the single strain found in the commercial packet. As yeast brings life to dough, I’m reminded of God’s promise of resurrection.”

I, too, am reminded of resurrection. The transformation that takes place in us as we are given new life through God’s love in Jesus Christ. But our transformation in faith should not be like the dough in a warm environment, consuming all the sugar and dying early. Let it be the yeast that brings more flavor to the world—more complex and robust. A faith that is able to makes God’s love grow in our souls until we have been infused with the flavor of love.

Lent 1, 2, 3: Friday, Mar. 8

Bake

Ancient

Kamut, farro, spelt, emmer, amaranth, and rye —this isn't a magical incantation. Or maybe it is. The words are names for ancient grains, whole grains that have been around for centuries. Throughout history ancient cultures regarded grains as a sacred food, like medicine for the soul, it symbolized the essence of their spirituality that meant more than just sustenance.

Several years ago, John and I were on vacation in Santa Fe and had a lovely Airbnb with a tiny kitchen (microwave, toaster, coffee pot). We decided to do a little grocery shopping for breakfast things. I stumbled upon a loaf of a bread that was new to me, but turned out to be an ancient grain. Spelt. It called to me because the little label boldly pronounced it made "the world's best toast." The next morning, I pronounced it was the best toast I'd ever tasted. We bought two more loaves before driving back home. Over the years I've tried multiple loaves of store bought Spelt, but nothing has ever come even remotely close to that loaf in Santa Fe.

For Lent I've decided I'm going to try my hand at the thoroughly impractical concept of baking with ancient grains. So far, I've collected bags of Einkorn, Himalayan Tartary Buckwheat, and you guessed it – SPELT.

Visiting a decent bakery surely makes more sense. But if you seek something more than high yields for your time, bake bread at home in an act of defiance. Gather the ancient grains that required more work to grow and knead the dough by hand if you're able and want to discover the truths of what bakers before you learned. Immerse yourself in the deep and ancient patterns of a practice that yields more than a simple loaf of bread.

– Shelley Regan.

Spelt Pan Loaf

¼ cup warm water
2 ¼ teaspoons yeast
1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup
1 cup non-dairy milk
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 - 3 ½ cups whole sprouted spelt flour
1 teaspoon sea salt

Add the water and honey to a large bowl, or the bowl of your stand mixer. Sprinkle the yeast on top and let it sit for ten minutes. After ten minutes, it should be foamy. If the mixture doesn't foam, discard – you need new yeast.

Add the milk, olive oil, 2 cups (300g) of the flour, and the salt. Stir with a wooden spoon until a loose dough forms.

Add the remaining flour 1/2 cup at a time, kneading between each addition, until a smooth, springy dough forms. This should take 6-8 minutes. It should be quite smooth and not really sticky. If you're using a stand mixer, use the dough attachment for this.

Place the dough into a large greased bowl and cover with a tea towel or large plate. Let it rise in a warm, draft-free place for one hour, or until doubled in size. This is called proofing.

When the dough has risen, punch it down gently and place it into a parchment-lined or well greased standard-size** loaf pan, tucking any untidy ends underneath. Cover with a tea towel and place the loaf into a warm place to rise again for half an hour longer. While it's rising, heat your oven to 180°C (350°F).

Bake the bread for about 45 minutes, or until golden, and it sounds hollow when tapped. Remove from the pan and cool for ten minutes on a rack before cutting.

Store the bread in a sealed container for up to three days, or freeze for up to a month.



Lent 1, 2, 3: Monday, Mar. 11

Verse & Voice

Verse

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.
– 1 Corinthians 10:17

Voice

Our communal tables seem to be getting both smaller and faster. Studies show that nearly half of American adults eat most of their meals alone, and one out of five meals are eaten in a car. Food has become a simple transaction. As followers of the Way of Jesus, we are called to do better. The nourishment we give and receive around the table is about more than just a plate of pasta or a bowl of beans. A meal around a table can provide both an intentional place and time for people to build relationships. Jesus often used the table to show us the way to community because a meal is a natural equalizer. Everyone needs to eat. Hunger shows no partiality. It touches the rich and the poor, the famous and the infamous. The table is a place for all. A shared meal not only soothes the pain and loss of the widow and orphan, but also gives them a place to belong. – Jamie Erickson

Prayer

God of hospitality and goodness,
You have called me to welcome the stranger and to show them your love.
Open my eyes to see who in my life needs companionship.
Reveal to me practical ways to help them feel seen, known, and loved.
Wipe away my insecurities and my self-focus that keep me from extending my table to them.
May my home be a place where others can not only be fed a meal,
but also nourished with the Bread of Life.
Amen

Reflect

Communion brings together all types of people, highlighting our need for one another.
When have you experienced a meaningful connection over a shared meal, whether inside or outside of a church context?

When have you experienced hospitality that led to rich community?

Who in your life is a stranger in need of the love of God? What form of hospitality could you extend to that person in this season of life?

Lent 1, 2, 3: Wednesday, Mar. 13

Reading

Sharing Bread, End of Poverty—from Rev. Chris Shorow

Back in the days when I was a youth minister, I had my group participate in a World Hunger Meal. During this event, the students were assigned to groups representing different portions of the world's population. The wealthiest 20% were served steak, loaded potatoes, seasoned vegetables, gourmet salad, and clam chowder, all with garlic bread. The 20% middle class were served soup and sandwiches, the 27% poor were given rice, beans, and a little bread, while the bottom 33% had to make do with a piece of bread and some water. This was done to sensitize them to the reality of hunger in our world. It was interesting to see how quickly people became uncomfortable with the situation. Prior to the event, the kids were not informed of what was to happen, they were simply told to come and eat at the church.

The 10 kids on the bottom were complaining— “This isn't fair!” and “I'm hungry,” and the classic youth complaint, “You're so mean!” The two on the stage were having a great time and rubbing it in to the others. Most of the middle class just watched and laughed while the others argued.

Afterward, as we reflected on the experience, it was obvious that this had been an effective way to visualize the reality of our world that we don't see every day. When we discussed the distribution of resources, the kids noted that I hadn't said they couldn't share—they simply chose not to share. There was plenty of food for everyone, but some got a lot more than others, just like in our world. Only the statistics are much more alarming today than they were in 1990. Today, 1% of the world's population controls 46% of the wealth. The following 11% hold 39% of the wealth, and 33% control 14%. That leaves 55% of the world living off of 1% of the world's resources. (Wealth Group, Credit Suisse, 2021) Alarming indeed, especially with the rise of the ultra-rich in our world.

The Apostle Paul criticized the church in Corinth for how they ate meals together. Much like the hunger meal, some wealthier Christians feasted while the poorer members went hungry. He said, “In this matter, I do not commend you.” Paul said there was a right and wrong way to come to the table. “For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. (I Cor. 11:29) It is clear from what Paul is saying that they were not recognizing and honoring Christ in their fellow Christians. He told them to treat each other with generosity and hospitality, just as you would treat Jesus.

Paul felt that the rich were making a mockery of the Eucharist. Discerning the body of Christ was impossible if one ignored the hungry.

In his book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, author Ron Sider puts it this way. “As long as any Christian anywhere in the world is hungry, the eucharistic celebration of all Christians everywhere in the world is imperfect.”

Can we solve world hunger at our church? No, but we can address hunger issues in our community. This is our responsibility as followers of Christ, which we take seriously during Lent.



Lent 1, 2, 3: Friday, Mar. 15

Prepare to Bake

When We Eat the Good Bread

When we eat the good bread,
we are eating months of sunlight,
weeks of rain and snow from the sky,
richness out of the earth.

We should be great, each of us
radiant, full of music and full of stories.
Able to run the way clouds do, able to
dance like the snow and the rain.
But nobody takes time to think that he
eats all these things and that sun, rain,
snow are all part of himself.

— Monica Shannon in Bless This Food:
Ancient and Contemporary Graces
from Around the World by Adrian Buta

Simple Sourdough Starter

EQUIPMENT

Glass jar
Offset Spatula
Baker's Scale

INGREDIENTS

6 cups (720 g) organic all-purpose flour
3 cups (360 g) organic whole wheat flour
water

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix 6 cups of all-purpose flour with 3 cups of whole wheat flour and
store it in an air-tight container. This is what you will feed your starter
with.

DAY 1: Add 1 cup of flour and ½ cup of water to a clean jar. (120g flour +
120g water) Stir the mixture thoroughly and cover the jar with a lid or
breathable cloth, secured with a rubber band. Place the container in a
warm location, around between 75°F (24°C) for 24 hours.

DAY 2: Give the starter a stir to help incorporate a little air. Cover the jar
and let it rest for another 24 hours in a warm spot.

DAYS 3-7: Every 24 hours, discard all but 2 tablespoons of the starter
and feed it with ½ cup fresh flour and ¼ cup water. (60g flour + 60g
water) Mix thoroughly until well combined. Repeat this daily feeding
routine, discarding and feeding, for about 7 to 10 days or until your
starter becomes active, bubbly, and doubles in size within 4-12 hours of
feeding.

TIP FOR A SLUGGISH STARTER

If your starter seems sluggish after the 4th day, begin stirring in 2
tablespoons of flour along with 2 teaspoons of water into the starter, 12
hours after you fed it. This will help to give it a boost until the next
feeding.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Continue to feed your starter daily for the first two weeks after you've
gotten it established in order to keep building up the yeast and bacteria.
This will provide you with a very robust and mature sourdough starter

Lent 1, 2, 3: Monday, Mar. 18

Verse & Voice

Verse

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it;
if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.
1 Corinthians 12:26

Voice

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. – Lilla Watson

Prayer

To love you, God is to feed the hungry,
heal the sick, clothe the naked, and give homes to the homeless.
May our love be shaped like bread, baked and broken for everyone.
Inspire us to serve where service is rare.
Help us to imitate you as we feed those who hunger for bread, for justice,
for companionship, for forgiveness, for alternate ways of living in this world.
Give us your words, equip our hands, and guide our feet.
Sustain us, Lord, with your healing love.
Amen.

Reflection

Who am I helping?
What am I breaking?
What am I giving?
What am I taking?



Lent 1, 2, 3: Wednesday, Mar. 20

Reading

God Gives Bread from Rolf Svanoe, *Bread for the Journey*

Some of my earliest childhood memories are when our family gathered to eat. The table was set, the food was prepared, and all eight of us were gathered. The first thing we did was pray. Only after we said our prayers could we eat. I don't remember how all eight of us fit around the table, but I do remember what happened after the meal. We got out our Bibles and read through a chapter.

I remember sitting impatiently, waiting to go out and play with my friends. But it was important, and we did it, even with all the grumbling. We fed the body; now it was time to feed the soul. My parents were impressing two things on me at a tender age: It is God who provides our food, and food alone is not enough to give meaning to our lives.

It's easy to forget that food comes from God. Luther once said, "God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all people, though sinful, but we ask in this prayer that God will help us to realize this and receive our daily bread with thanks." We need help to remember that. After all, we work hard, earn our money, buy food at the store and take time to prepare it.

Why should we thank God for it? The author of Deuteronomy tried to answer that question as the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land. "Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to our ancestors, as he is doing today." (Deut. 8:11-18)

When you buy bread, what do you really pay for? You pay for the farmer, seed, tractor, combine, and truck. You've paid for the storage time in the grain elevator and the mill that grinds the grain into flour. You've paid for the bakers and the ovens that baked the bread. You've paid for the truck driver who delivered it to the store. You've paid for the person to stock the bread shelves and the clerk to check it out. But what have you paid for the bread itself? Not one cent. It is God who sustains our lives and gives us strength and creativity to work and earn money.

There was one other thing the author of Deuteronomy was concerned about. He worried that in the new land the Israelites would forget God. They would settle into their homes, get rich and be comfortable. They would be so busy making a living they would forget to make a life with God.

"God humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." (Deut. 8:1-3)

Thankfulness is essential as we travel through Lent. Let us be thankful for bread and for every word that comes from the mouth of God.



Lent 1, 2, 3: Friday, Mar. 22

Bake

Transformational Food

The popularity of baking sourdough bread rose to new heights during 2020 as we stayed home and sought comfort in the ordinary. For some, baking sourdough continues to be essential for their ongoing spiritual transformation.

You see, ultimately, bread is a transformational food. The transfiguration of tasteless flour into dough and eventually bread, that emerging from the oven, looks nothing like what goes into it. That's not a coincidence. The baker engages deeply with this transformation process. When you think about it, baking bread is a spiritual practice in and of itself.

There is a corollary between the process of spiritual transformation and fermentation. Fermentation in bread, whether thanks to commercial yeast or carefully tended sourdough, is special. It makes the bread possible.

Fermentation is a process that reveals that holiness. Caring for sourdough starter is an opportunity to know more intimately how sacred the stuff of our lives is, right down to the bacteria and yeast that make ordinary bread extraordinary. Even dormant, starter is alive, always beckoning us back to a practice that changes things.

from Brother Juniper's Bread Book:
Slow Rise as Method and Metaphor.

Sourdough - from Lee Wheeler

1/3 cup + 1/2 Tbsp Sour Dough Starter
1 cup + 1 Tbsp Water
1 1/4 tsp Salt
3 cup Bread Flour
Rice Flour for bread form (Banneton)
1 Banneton (proofing basket)

Step 1

Measure out starter into a bowl. Add water, salt and bread flour. Mix until ingredients are well blended into a very sticky dough. Cover with aluminum foil; let rest 4 hours at 70-75 degrees.

Step 2

With wet hands, fold dough over on itself 3-4 times. Cover with foil and allow dough to ferment for 2 more hours.

Step 3

Generously dust a bread form with rice flour (set aside). Scrape dough out onto a lightly floured work surface (can use bread flour or all-purpose flour). Shape into a ball with a smooth, unbroken surface, using just enough flour on the surface to keep it from sticking. Transfer smooth-side down to banneton. Pinch together the rougher edges of the surface toward the center to smooth them and maintain the round ball shape. Cover and refrigerate 12 hours to slow the fermentation process.

Step 4

Remove loaf from the refrigerator and let it rise in a warm spot until the dough springs slowly back and retains a slight indentation when poked gently with a finger, about 3-5 hours.

Step 5

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Dust surface of dough with flour. Gently invert banneton over the baking sheet and transfer dough onto parchment paper. Gently brush off excess rice flour. Score the top of the dough about 1/2 inch deep with a sharp knife to create a shallow slit running across the center. Mist entire surface lightly with water.

Step 6

Bake in the center of a preheated oven until beautifully browned, 25-30 minutes. When finished, transfer to a rack to cool completely (do not slice loaf while it is still warm).



Lent 1, 2, 3: Monday, Mar. 25

Verse & Voice

Verse

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Voice

As human beings, it is natural for us to feel anxious at times. But we can choose to nourish ourselves with the antidote for anxiety and allow ourselves some freedom from the worry for a while. The more we practice this, the more we start to trust this possibility of being made new.

We reclaim the Sabbath by making a commitment to rest and to lay aside work and worry. By giving ourselves the gift of moments that are truly restorative—some time spent in silence, a beautiful meal shared with a friend, a long walk in a beautiful place, a nap. – Christine Valters Paintner

Prayer

Lord God, cleanse our spirits of anxiety, worry, and insecurity.
Embolden us to live in the lifegiving ways you lead us.
To rest, to breathe, to experience silence, and the mundane.
To make bread and break bread.
For in you, our hungers are met and we are made new. Amen.

Reflection/Practice

As part of your Lenten practice, we invite you to fast from anxiety and the endless torrent of thoughts that rise up in your mind to paralyze you with fear of the future. “Rest in your God-breathed worth. Stop holding your breath, hiding your gifts, ducking your head, dulling your roar, distracting your soul, stilling your hands, quieting your voice, and satiating your hunger with the lesser things of this world.” – Sarah Bessey

Lent 1, 2, 3: Wednesday, Mar. 27

Reading

Fast Food, from Rolf Zvanoe, *Bread for the Journey*

Zvanoe tells the story of picking up his daughter from high school and going out for lunch. He says, "Since we didn't have much time, we decided to get fast food. While we were eating, she told me that they had watched the film *Supersize Me* in one of her classes that morning. It was part of a weeklong emphasis at school on healthy eating and the problems of obesity. For thirty days, filmmaker Morgan Spurlock ate nothing but fast food from McDonald's—breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If he was asked whether or not he wanted his order supersized, he was obligated to say "yes"—hence the film's name. He gained 25 pounds during the month, and his cholesterol jumped 60 points. His doctors were shocked by the negative impact of his diet and two weeks into his experiment, they asked him to stop. My daughter told me all this while we were wolfing down our burgers and fries. 'Sixty percent of Americans are obese,' she said. As we sat in the restaurant, I suggested giving up fast food for Lent. She made me pinky swear."

In Exodus, we have the original fast food. God's people were enslaved in Egypt, and they cried out to God to deliver them. God heard their prayers and used a series of plagues to change the minds of their oppressors. Before the last plague, God commanded his people to eat a special meal. They were to kill a sheep or goat, put its blood on the doorposts, roast it, and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. "This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord." (Exodus 12:11)

Fast Food! God was about to deliver them, and they needed to be ready to go instantly. Since there was no time, they were to take bread with them made without yeast. There was no time to allow the bread to rise; thus, the bread was unleavened.

There was another reason for the unleavened bread. It symbolized a break from the past. People would use a pot of starter to make their bread, a piece of fermented dough from the bread made the day before. A piece of that new fermented dough would then be stored away and used as starter for the next loaf of bread.

God's people demonstrated their break from the past by making unleavened bread. It wasn't just bread they left behind. They had lived in Egypt for hundreds of years and had learned the Egyptian language, culture, and religion. If God was going to create a new people with new laws, they needed a clean break from their past. Unleavened is the "bread of affliction," the bread of those in need of rescue and deliverance. Unleavened is the bread of those who need changes in their lives because life isn't working, it's for all who yearn for freedom. Ever wondered why we often eat those awful tasting little wafers for communion? It is a reminder of our desire to be forgiven and loved by God. Like unleavened bread, Lent is a season of the church year that unsettles us. We are not in bondage to Egypt, but we are indeed slaves.

Jesus said, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). Lent is the season that reminds us of our daily struggle against sin and temptation, and prayer, fasting, and charity are the disciplines of Lent. As we approach Easter, we celebrate God's deliverance through Jesus Christ. We are truly free as we celebrate the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.



Lent 1, 2, 3: Friday, Mar. 29

Bake

What Can Your Toaster Teach You? A spiritual practice

Wherever you are look around — choose an unlikely suspect — for example, your toaster in your kitchen. Imagine that toaster is your spiritual guide with something crucial to teach. What might it be? Free associate, enlisting your mind, your humor, your subconscious, and the revelatory power of God.

Hmmm. A toaster must be placed on the right setting to cook a piece of bread properly. Hold onto the bread too long and it will burn. Is there a relationship, a project, in your life that you're holding onto even at the risk of ruining it? Maybe it is time to let go, to let it pop out before it turns crisp and blackened.

Then too, a toaster only works when connected to its power source. You may, on occasion, have waited and waited for your bagel only to realize the toaster wasn't plugged in. Is there an area in your life you feel stalled? Maybe the toaster is reminding you to plug into God and God's people – to find the energy, guidance, and companionship you need.

Multi Grain Bread

1 ¼ cups eight-grain hot cereal mix
2 ½ cups boiling water
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
1/2 tablespoon salt
1/3 cup honey
1/4 cup butter melted
2 ½ teaspoons active dry yeast
1/2 cup unsalted sunflower seeds
1 tablespoon chia seeds optional
1/2 cup old-fashioned rolled oats or quick oats

Instructions

Place cereal mix in bowl of stand mixer fitted with dough hook, and pour boiling water over it; let stand, stirring occasionally, until mixture cools to 100-105 degrees (F), about 1 hour.

Meanwhile, whisk flours and salt together in separate bowl; set aside. Once grain mixture has reached 100-105 F, add honey, butter, and yeast and stir until combined. Let mixture sit for 5-10 minutes.

Add flour mixture, 1/2 cup at a time, and knead until dough starts to come together. Cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap, and let dough rest for 20 minutes. Knead on medium-low speed until dough clears sides of bowl, 3-4 minutes. If it does not clear sides, keep adding 2 tablespoons additional all-purpose flour and knead until it does.

Once it comes together, continue to knead dough for 5 additional minutes. Add seeds, and knead until seeds are evenly dispersed throughout the dough and dough forms smooth, round ball.

Place dough in large, lightly greased bowl; cover tightly with plastic, and let rise at room temperature until nearly doubled in size, 45-60 minutes. Grease two 9x5 inch loaf pans.

Transfer dough to lightly floured counter and divide in half. Stretch first piece of dough into 9x6 inch rectangle. Roll dough into a cylinder, and place dough seam-side down in prepared loaf pan. Repeat with second piece of dough. Spray loaves lightly with water or vegetable oil spray. Sprinkle both loaves in oats.

Cover loaves loosely with greased plastic, and let rise at room temperature until nearly doubled in size 30-40 minutes. Preheat oven to 375 F.

Bake until loaves register 200 degrees, 30-40 minutes. Transfer pans to wire rack, and let loaves cool in pan for 5 minutes. Remove loaves from pans, and let them cool to room temperature on wire cooling rack

