And He died for all,
that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:15
Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

Prayer + Fasting + Almsgiving

The three traditional pillars of Lenten observance are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These pillars should be practiced in relationship to our baptismal renewal.

Prayer: More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully. We might pray for those who will be baptized at Easter and support their conversion journey by our prayer. We might pray for all those who will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with us during Lent that they will be truly renewed in their baptismal commitment.

Fasting: Fasting (deliberately saying “no” to our desires for satisfaction) is one of the most ancient practices linked to Lent. In fact, the paschal fast predates Lent as we know it. Fasting is more than a means of developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. Fasting should be linked to our concern for those who are forced to fast by their poverty, those who suffer from the injustices of our economic and political structures, those who are in need for any reason.

Almsgiving: It should be obvious at this point that almsgiving (giving to the poor), the third traditional pillar, is linked to our baptismal commitment in the same way. It is a sign of our care for those in need and an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given to us. Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life we began when we were baptized. Please consider participating and making your contribution to OPERATION RICE BOWL (offering containers can be found in the narthex of the Church).

Lenten Regulations

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of FAST and ABSTINENCE. This means that we do not eat meat and we have only one full meal.

The other FRIDAYS of the season of Lent are also days of ABSTINENCE from meat. This obligation to abstain from meat binds Catholics 14 years of age and older. The obligation to FAST, limiting to one full meal and two lighter meals in the course of the day, binds Catholics from the age of 18-59. Those who are younger or older may freely embrace these disciplines. Lenten disciplines should never endanger your health.

The Fridays of the year outside of Lent are also days of penance. Abstaining from meat is the traditional way of observing these days of penance; however, each person is free to replace this with some other practice of voluntary self-denial or personal penance.
It is obvious that abstaining from meat is meaningless to vegetarians; it is equally obvious that replacing meat with a gourmet seafood meal is not in keeping with the SPIRIT OF LENTEN PENANCE. Abstinence from meat on the other Fridays of the year may be replaced with time spent reading and studying the Scriptures, special prayers, thoughtfulness and charity to those in need, or acts of personal witness to one’s faith.

While the season of Lent is the primary period of Catholic penitential practices, these regulations are not intended to limit the occasion for Christian penance. The practice of spiritual discipline is always appropriate during periods of special need for the individual and the larger community.

Mass Schedule for Lent

Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2016
Ash Wednesday is a day of FAST and ABSTINENCE
Masses: 8:30 AM and 5:30 PM Ashes are distributed after the sermon at both Masses. A national collection for Aid for the Churches of Central and Eastern Europe is taken up at the Ash Wednesday Masses.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
Saturday
Sunday
8:30 AM in the Chapel
5:00 PM in the Church
8:00 AM and 10:30 AM in Church

Adoration
Every Friday during Lent and throughout the year, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for individual adoration following the 8:30 AM Mass until 10:00 AM.

Confession
Lent is the primary time for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance. Early Christian teachers called this sacrament “second Baptism,” because it is intended to enable us to start again to live the baptismal life in its fullness. Those who experience the loving mercy of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation should find themselves standing alongside the newly baptized at Easter filled with great joy at the new life God has given all of us.

Individual Confessions will be heard every Saturday afternoon from 4:00 - 4:45 PM in the Confession Room in the back of the Church.

A Special Reconciliation Service with Individual Confessions at St. Charles Church with Fr. Dennis and several guest Confessors on Sunday afternoon, March 13th at 3:00 PM

Statewide Day of Confession
Bishop Libasci is asking all parishes in New Hampshire make an effort to have the Sacrament of Reconciliation available for an extended period during Monday of Holy Week, March 21st. At St. Charles Church, Fr. Dennis will be in the Confession Room to hear confessions during the hours of 11:00 am - 1:00 pm and from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm on that day.
Stations of the Cross

When we pray the Stations of the Cross, we recall the passion and death of Jesus Christ and we are reminded that we, too, may be called to suffer in order to be faithful to the call of God. A variety of settings and opportunities to pray the Stations of the Cross will be presented: **All Thursdays of Lent (not on Holy Thursday) in the Chapel following the 8:30 AM Mass.** **A special Way of the Cross for Children will be celebrated on Sunday March 6th at 9:15 AM.** **“Mary’s Way of the Cross” will take place on Sunday, March 6th at 4:00 PM.** **Join our Youth Ministry in the Living Stations of the Cross on Friday, March 11th @ 7:00 PM in the Church. This is a family gathering and all are welcome to participate in the Stations of the Cross as portrayed live by our parish youth.**

Adult Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation is a very high priority in the parish! Building a relationship and walking our journey with Jesus never ends.

Sunday evenings starting January 31st, February 14th through March 20th from 6:00 - 8:00 PM in the Parish Hall. **The People of the Way of the Cross by Marci Alborghetti** Did you ever wonder what it would be like to be there? How would it look, sound and feel if you were part of the crowd along that narrow, walled-in pathway in Jerusalem? Come and walk with Jesus through the eyes of fourteen witnesses as People of the Way of the Cross. This Lenten journey through their stories, prayer and reflection questions will provide an opportunity for us to enter into our Lord’s Passion and to connect our lives to his and to experience for ourselves his love for us.

**ALSO**

Monday mornings of Lent and beyond at 9:15 – 10:30 AM **Adult parishioners gather with Fr. Dennis after Monday morning Mass for coffee and reflection. This Lent, we will explore the Passion and Resurrection Narratives of Jesus found in the Gospels. The passion and resurrection of Christ are at the core of Christian faith and form the capstone of each of the four gospels. This study opens Matthew, Mark, Luke and John individually to reveal the special insights each has preserved. Examining the passion and resurrection will challenge you to incorporate both the pain of the cross and the hope of the resurrection into daily living. The classes will include video presentations and discussions. PLEASE BRING YOUR BIBLE TO EACH SESSION! Stephen J. Binz is a Catholic biblical scholar, speaker, and counselor. He did graduate studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and is a member of the Catholic Biblical Association and the Society of Biblical Literature. Binz is the author of several companion commentaries to Little Rock Scripture Studies.**