

# Lenten Message from Bishop Davenport

## What Are We Taking On For Lent?

A reflection on Isaiah 58:6-9

February, 2020

Greetings, beloved.

So what are we taking on for Lent?

Jesus' journey to the cross was a path through sacrifice and discipline. Our Lord took on the weight of the whole world. He poured out love and mercy and healing for us all.

And this is what the prophet Isaiah says:

*This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel the debts.\**

Back to that question: What are we willing to take on for Lent?

Can we commit ourselves to taking on listening to those who come in and out of our churches to the food pantry? Or maybe we can come in and stock the shelves. If we can't stock the shelves, maybe we can bring in some canned goods or foodstuffs.

Maybe we can just pause for a moment amidst everything that's going on in society to spend some time with families or those who are addicted, who are shamed and blamed. Maybe we can spend some time accompanying them on the journey.

Maybe we can spend some time breaking bread with someone of a different ethnic origin. Someone, maybe, from the LGBTQIA+ community with a different pronoun than ours. Maybe someone that we've had a broken relationship with that we can just take a moment to let everything go and take on the responsibility of reaching out for reconciliation.

Maybe we can just pause amidst everything that's going on in our government to pen a letter to our state representatives saying that we stand up for those who are poor and living in poverty. We stand up with those who are incarcerated and who are returning to society. We stand up with those whose families have been broken and separated.

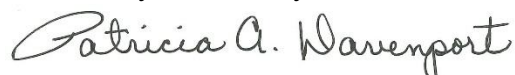
There are so many other things that I can think of that I'm willing to do. What are you willing to do? Because so often we deny ourselves Pepsi, and chocolate, and donuts, and those types of things. But what are we willing to take on for the sake of the other.

Let's go back to the prophet Isaiah, who says:

*What I'm interested in seeing you do is sharing your food with the hungry, inviting homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on and your lives will turn around at once.\**

Beloved, whatever we take on, the prophet Isaiah is affirming that God will bless our efforts. Now we know God has blessed us already. But on our Lenten journey let us look at the blessings we've received, and how we can be a blessing to others.

Love always and always love in Christ,



The Rev. Patricia A. Davenport  
Bishop

\* Isaiah 58:6-9, The Message



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Watch video version at [https://youtu.be/hc7vxm4G\\_hM](https://youtu.be/hc7vxm4G_hM)

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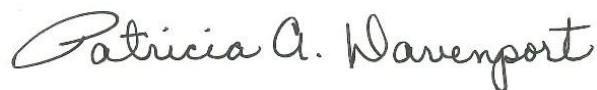
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