

## Liturgy We Live *by Dr. Gil Haas*

We are reminded by Ash Wednesday's gospel that Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, and self-denial. Page 17 of our BCP designates Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as "Fasts", while the weekdays of Lent and Holy Week, (except the Annunciation on March 25) are considered "Days of Special Devotion" requiring "special acts of discipline and self-denial". No specifics are provided, and the rigor of abstinence depends largely on personal preference. In the Western church, the original thirty-six days of Lent were punctuated by "Sunday feasting" - continuing Sunday's resurrection celebration even during Lent. Beginning in the 7th century, when the four days from Ash Wednesday to the first Sunday in Lent were added, forty days of Lenten fasting was begun. During this time, early Christians often abstained totally from meat, and fasting was strict with only a single evening meal. Meat, eggs, and fish were forbidden. Beginning in the 4th century, the hour for breaking the fast was moved to 3 PM and later back to noon. The exact manner of a person's fast is an individual one. The important point is to set aside this Lenten time in a special and personal way.

***If you have a liturgical question or an inquiry about anything that transpires during or around our worship service, please forward the question you would like researched to: gghaas@aol.com, or drop the question in the offering basin. Please note whether we can credit you as the source of the question.***