

LENTEN CONSECRATION 2023
“The Year of Enlarged Territory”
The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry.” (Luke 4:1-2)

The 2023 Lenten Period begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023 and ends on Resurrection Sunday, April 9, 2023. The period of Lent commemorates the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness immediately after His baptism. Just as Jesus spent time in the wilderness fasting and praying, it is our custom to follow that example as we prepare to embark upon or continue the ministry that God has set before us. Fasting and prayer strengthens our faith, increases discipline, unlocks spiritual power, and prepares us to do fruitful ministry. It helps the believer to be more attentive to God’s voice and the ways of God. It increases spiritual stamina and releases power in the lives of those who spend time in His presence. Thus, it is spiritually beneficial for the individual and for the corporate church of God to commit to this period of consecration in which all those who participate will strive to experience personal spiritual cleansing and growth. These are the spiritual goals that we are praying will be accomplished during this Lenten Period.

Increased Prayer

“I, Daniel...turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications with fasting.” (Daniel 9:2-3)

Prayer and fasting go hand in hand. We ask that you pray continually, and make the commitment to pray without ceasing.

Increased Study of God’s Word

“On a fast day...you shall read the words of the Lord.” (Jeremiah 36:6)

Every member who is not currently consistently reading the Word of God is asked to make a commitment to do so. If you are already reading the Word of God, increase your personal time of study at home or wherever you customarily study. Select books that will facilitate personal growth as they speak to particular spiritual needs or interests.

Total Obedience

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6)

Please remember that while fasting is valuable in the life of the Christian, it is more important to be totally committed to the will of the Lord. “Obedience is better than sacrifice.” Let us all sincerely consider our behaviors, attitudes, relationships, etc and confess those areas of disobedience in our lives. Then let us proceed to commit to conforming to the will of God in every area that needs to be addressed.

This is the Time for the Yokes of Bondage to be Broken!

- If you are challenged with an addiction (drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, pornography, food, spending, etc.), this is the time that you should commit to doing whatever it takes to overcome your addiction.

This is the Time to Eliminate Excessive Behavior!

- If you are given to excess in certain areas (shopping, television, telephone, social media, computer, etc.) seek to change behavioral patterns during this time of fasting and consecration. For example, it might be advantageous for one to refrain from watching television during certain hours and devote that time to prayer and study. We must be balanced and moderate in all things.

This is the Time to Give to the Work of God’s Kingdom!

- If you are not a faithful giver, this time of fasting, prayer and reflection will increase your faith and move you to give to the work of the kingdom of God and the expansion of the body of Christ.

Cleanse the Body and Spirit

“Your healing shall spring forth speedily.” (Isaiah 58:8)

Fasting cleanses body and spirit. Unhealthy eating is the cause of many illnesses, and fasting helps rid the body of toxins and waste materials. It should likewise prepare our hearts and minds to receive God’s anointing and will for our lives.

The Consecration Fast

“Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and there sat weeping before the Lord. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offering to the Lord.” (Judges 20:26)

During this Lenten Period, we are calling the members of GAC to join together for this partial fast. Fasting cleanses our bodies and helps to prepare our hearts to receive God’s anointing and God’s will for our lives. It is a means by which we worship the Lord and offer ourselves to Him in humility and love. In fasting, we are always striving to ensure that God gets the glory in all that we do. Genuine faith and the desire to please God is what God wants from every believer.

Prayerfully eliminate the following foods from your diets during these 46 days (Sundays included):

- **Fast foods, junk foods, and fried foods**
- **Beef, Pork, and shell fish or sea scavengers (shrimp, catfish, lobster, crab, clams, etc.)**
- **Foods and drinks with high sugar and salt content (cookies, cakes, candy, custards, pies, chips, juices)**
- **All coffee and teas with caffeine and sodas**
- **You may also decide to refrain from eating foods such as: breads, pastas, dairy, carbohydrates, etc.**

Eat fish, whole grains, brown rice, limited poultry, fresh vegetables and fruit, and other healthy food choices.

Please observe a **daily, 12-hour TOTAL fast (liquids only)**, depending on your schedule; for instance, between the hours of **6 p.m. and 6 a.m.; 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.; or between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.** This essentially means that you will have your last meal of the day in the evening and will not eat again until the following morning. Pray for God’s wisdom to make appropriate choices of food, drink and even attire during this time of consecration.

Special Instructions

If you have never been on this kind of consecration before or have any questions about your physical capability to fast, please consult your physician. Please note:

- In the first few days you may experience a headache, which is probably due to the cessation of the caffeine in tea, coffee, and other products with caffeine.
- An unpleasant taste in the mouth, coated tongue and bad breath are all a part of the cleansing process. Place (sugarless) breath mints under the tongue when needed.
- Drink plenty of water and get sufficient rest. This aids in the process of elimination by flushing the system.

It is recommended that all who are physically able would maintain a schedule of regular exercise. Walking, aerobics, biking, etc. help regulate the metabolism, and will prevent sluggishness and rapid weight gain after the consecration is over.

Should you absentmindedly or intentionally violate the consecration fast by eating what you have vowed not to eat or eating at a time that you have vowed not to eat, you may repent and return to the fast, remaking your vow to the Lord.

Breaking the Fast

We will break our fast on RESURRECTION Sunday, April 9, 2023, with gratitude, rejoicing, and praise. We will not only celebrate the resurrection of our risen Lord, we will give God the glory for the increased power that will be ours. After a season of repenting, praying, studying and yielding to the will of the Lord, we are sure to witness a marvelous move of God in our midst. We are believing God for ***“Enlarged Territory”*** during this season.

Remember, after you break your fast, you should gradually resume a “normal diet,” should you choose to do so. Spiritually, it should not be business as usual. You should be more liberated to walk in the Spirit, more committed to the Lord, and more energized for service in God’s Kingdom.