



# spring *lent* *easter*

COMMUNITY  
RULE OF LIFE

**What is a Rule of Life?**

A rule of life is a set of Spirit-empowered practices that help disciples abide in Jesus more deeply (John 15). For a given time, we commit to these core practices, perhaps lived out individually, but experienced within a body of Christ that is pursuing them together. Our goal is to find a deeper sense of unity, joy, and flourishing in Jesus.

A rule of life helps us to live into healthy spiritual rhythms.

We mark time with practices and “signposts” that remind us who God is and who we are in him. This guide introduces some ancient seasonal, monthly, weekly, and daily rhythms observed by our spiritual mothers and fathers that can deeply enrich our life in Christ.

The suggested disciplines and readings are not tasks to slave over or items to check off a list. Rather, they are offered like a trellis for cultivating a vine, a structure that invites you to start where you are, and do what you can, to enjoy the fruit and beauty that come. Hear them as an invitation, not a command. We encourage you to invite a group of trusted friends to journey with you, not just for accountability, but for deepening joy in Jesus together.

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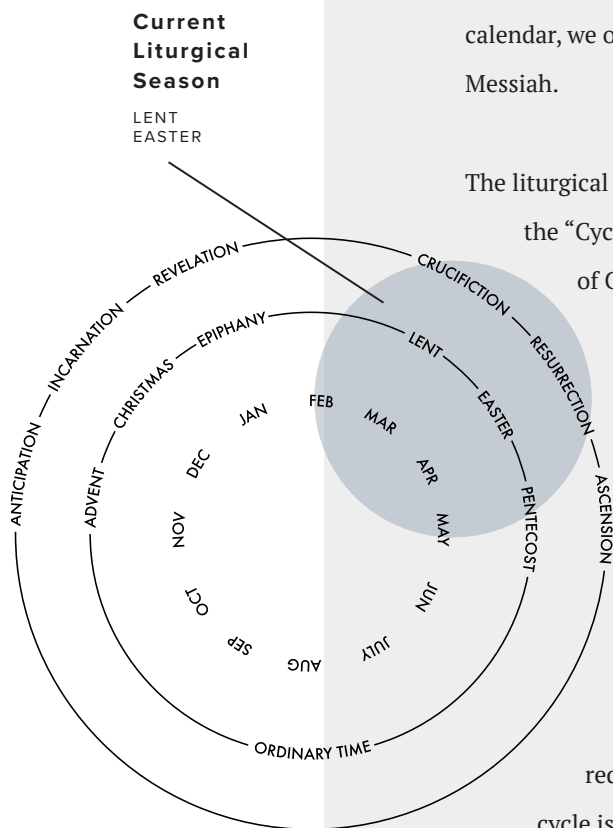
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# Invitation to Seasonal Rhythms

## Ordering Our Time by the Story of the Messiah

The “liturgical calendar” is a way to learn and live out the story of Jesus through the year. Instead of structuring our lives according to the rhythms of school semesters, fiscal years, or even the normal calendar, we order our time by the story of the Messiah.

The liturgical year is made up of two cycles of time: the “Cycle of Light,” focusing on the light of Christ breaking into our darkness (the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany); and the “Cycle of Life,” focusing on the death and resurrection of Jesus bringing life to the world (the seasons of Lent, Easter, and Pentecost). We could also add a third cycle, the “Cycle of Love,” focusing on our Spirit-empowered living out of God’s redeeming love for the world. Usually, this cycle is simply called “Ordinary Time.”



The Cycles of Light and Life are what we call “Extraordinary Time.” They help us live in the real world with our identities rooted in the story of Jesus. Each cycle walks us through seasons of expectation, fulfillment, and proclamation that shape how we live:

EXPECTATION	> FULFILLMENT	> PROCLAMATION
<b>Advent</b> ANTICIPATION Waiting in the dark for the Messiah’s coming	<b>Christmas</b> INCARNATION Rejoicing in the Messiah’s arrival, the light of the world	<b>Epiphany</b> REVELATION Revealing the light of the Messiah to the world
<b>Lent</b> CRUCIFIXION Walking with the Messiah through suffering & death	<b>Easter</b> RESURRECTION Rising with the Messiah in resurrection life & victory	<b>Pentecost</b> ASCENSION Revealing the Messiah’s reign through a Spirit-empowered life


## Current Liturgical Season

The liturgical seasons covered by this edition of the Community Rule of Life are Lent and Easter. Each season invites us to different priorities and practices. Lent invites us to an attitude of sober self-examination to recognize our sin, but also a deeper relationship with Jesus as we walk with him toward his cross. Easter invites us to live with joyful awe at God’s victory over death and to live out his resurrection life.

*(You can learn more about the liturgical calendar through books like Living the Christian Year by Bobby Gross.)*

# Invitations to Monthly & Weekly Rhythms

## Monthly Rhythms

 **FASTING** Fasting is a regular weekly rhythm of our Community Rule of Life. It's the key practice from the way of Jesus that helps us to become a community of holiness in a culture of indulgence and immorality. Fasting is a way to offer ourselves to God, to grow in holiness, to amplify our prayers, and to stand in solidarity with the poor.


During Lent, however, it takes on more significance. Fasting has historically been a primary Lenten practice. As we fast, we not only give up something, we also take on something. We make room to receive God's love in a new way and give it out to others. Fasting is a temporary "no" to something good so we can cultivate a deeper, lasting "yes" to something even better – a small flame we light so that, with the Spirit's empowering, our light can "break forth like the dawn" (Isa. 58:8).

Technically, a fast is from food – not eating for a set period. However, that may not be possible for you medically or wise for you emotionally. (For anyone struggling with an eating disorder, fasting may be harmful.) Abstaining from other things can be just as powerful: from entertainment and media; from technology or devices; from spending money. Whatever we refrain from, we turn our time and resources, and our experience of wanting, toward God. He graciously reveals our needs, desires, and attachments – not all of which are bad, but which are meant for ultimate fulfillment in him.


As you consider what a fast on the order of a month might look like, you can use this framework to journal your experience of fasting:

I will fast in this way (or abstain from)...	I will replace it with...	God met me in these ways, or revealed this to me...

## Weekly Rhythms

 **FASTING** Abstain from lunch one day a week, if you are able. Don't just work through lunch or fill the time. Take the opportunity to pray (alone or with others), or to spend time in solitude and silence. If fasting from food isn't possible, what other good thing could you refrain from for a short time, in order to become more aware of your desire for God?

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 **SABBATH** Sabbath is a time to stop, rest, delight, and worship the Lord. We invite everyone to take a block of time, ideally 24 hours, to set aside work, technology, and other distractions to focus on relationship with God and others. You could observe the usual Sunday Sabbath of Christians, the traditional Jewish Sabbath from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, or a timeframe that works for your season of life and your household.

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To learn more about the why, what, and how of these historic Christian practices, check out our practice guides and other resources at [somamidthtown.com/spiritual-formation](https://somamidthtown.com/spiritual-formation).



## Invitations to Daily Rhythms

We invite you to four key disciplines that form the backbone of a daily spiritual rhythm. These are often practiced in solitude, but strengthened by a supporting community.

### SILENCE

Get in a comfortable but alert posture. Practice two minutes of silence & stillness to become aware of the Lord's presence and love for you. Inhale and exhale deeply, noticing what's going on in your body. Set your restful attention on God by repeating a short centering prayer like "Come, Holy Spirit," or "Here I am, Lord," or simply "Jesus."

### SELF-EXAMINATION

Ask God to search you (Ps. 139) as you mentally review the day you're beginning (or ending, if you do this at night). Where were you most aware of God's presence? When did you experience the most joy or fullness of life? Where did it feel like God was absent? When were you the most drained? Bring those things to God in prayer.

### SCRIPTURE

Ask God to speak to you in his Word by the Holy Spirit. Read your selected text without rushing, taking note of what jumps out at you or stirs within you. (Reading guides are offered on the following pages.)

### PRAYER

Speak or write a short prayer, responding to what God has been revealing. You could use the "ACTS" model: adoration of God; confession of sin; thanksgiving; and supplication (requests for needs). Close with the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13).

## Reading Calendar

To engage in a daily rhythm of reading Scripture, set aside even 10-15 minutes of prayerful, reflective Scripture reading. (Choose a time you'll realistically keep!) Two different reading plans are offered below. While both are beneficial, choosing one might be best.

# THE LECTIONARY CYCLE (YEAR B)

## "Short Text" Plan

Shorter passages of Scripture are ideal for contemplative reading. We can slow down and be present to God in his Word, not just learn about him. This short text plan follows the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year reading cycle used by Christians around the world, in sync with the liturgical year. Instead of reading new long passages each day, we stay with a few short passages for a week at a time, starting on Sunday. (Some liturgical days may use different passages than the Sunday readings.)

# Reading Calendar

## “Short Text” Plan

*Lectio divina* is an ancient approach to Bible reading that helps us read contemplatively. We read a short passage slowly several times, learning to recognize and respond to God’s voice to us in particular. This can be practiced individually or in a group. There are four “movements” to *lectio divina*:

- 01 : READ

After beginning with a few moments of silence, read the text slowly. Listen for a word or phrase that seems to stand out to you or to hold a special weight. Don’t try to interpret it. Simply notice what God is drawing your attention to.
- 02 : REFLECT

Read the passage a second time slowly, tuning in to what that word or phrase is doing inside you. What emotions do you feel? How are your desires or imagination stirred? Don’t rush to the next step. Allow yourself to notice what the Scriptures are prompting inside you.
- 03 : RESPOND

Read the passage a third time slowly, letting the word or phrase become a prayer that you lift up to God in response. Is there an invitation or challenge to accept? Is there grief to lament? Is it leading you to praise God? To confess sin? To intercede for someone or request something?
- 04 : REST

Read the passage a final time slowly, not to produce anything, but simply to rest in God’s presence with what he has said to you. This rest is the foundation of how you’ll carry God’s Word out into the world.

DATE	SUNDAY	PSALM	OT (or Acts)	EPISTLE	GOSPEL	PLAN WEEK
2/14	ASH WEDNESDAY	51:1-17	JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17	2 COR. 5:20B-6:10	MT. 6:1-6, 16-21	
2/18	LENT I	25:1-10	GEN. 9:8-17	1 PET. 3:18-22	MK. 1:9-15	1
2/25	LENT II	22:23-31	GEN. 17:1-7, 15-16	ROM. 4:13-25	MK. 8:31-38	2
3/3	LENT III	19	EX. 20:1-17	1 COR. 1:18-25	JN. 2:13-22	3
3/10	LENT IV	107:1-3, 17-22	NUM. 21:4-9	EPH. 2:1-10	JN. 3:14-21	4
3/17	LENT V	119:9-16	JER. 31:31-34	HEB. 5:5-10	JN. 12:20-33	5
3/24	PALM SUNDAY	118:1-2, 19-29	ISA. 50:4-9A	PHIL. 2:5-11	MK. 11:1-11	6
3/25	HOLY MONDAY	36:5-11	ISA. 42:1-9	HEB. 9:11-15	JN. 12:1-11	
3/26	HOLY TUESDAY	71:1-14	ISA. 49:1-7	1 COR. 1:18-31	JN. 12:20-36	
3/27	HOLY WEDNESDAY	70	ISA. 50:4-9A	HEB 12:1-3	JN. 13:21-32	
3/28	MAUNDY THURSDAY	116:1-2, 12-19	EX. 12:1-14	1 COR. 11:23-26	JN. 13:1-17, 31B-35	
3/29	GOOD FRIDAY	22	ISA. 52:13-53:12	HEB. 10:16-25	JN. 18:1-19:42	
3/30	HOLY SATURDAY	31:1-4, 15-16	JOB 14:1-14	1 PET. 4:1-8	MT. 27:57-66	
3/31	EASTER SUNDAY	118:1-2, 14-24	ISA. 25:6-9	1 COR. 15:1-11	JN. 20:1-18	7
4/7	EASTER II	133	ACTS 4:32-35	1 JN. 1:1-2:2	JN. 20:19-31	8
4/14	EASTER III	4	ACTS 3:12-19	1 JN. 3:1-7	LK. 24:36B-48	9
4/21	EASTER IV	23	ACTS 4:5-12	1 JN. 3:16-24	JN. 10:11-18	10
4/28	EASTER V	22:25-31	ACTS 8:26-40	1 JN. 4:7-21	JN. 15:1-8	11
5/5	EASTER VI	98	ACTS 10:44-48	1 JN. 5:1-6	JN. 15:9-17	12
5/9	ASCENSION	47 OR 93	ACTS 1:1-11	EPH. 1:15-23	LK. 24:44-53	
5/12	EASTER VII	1	ACTS 1:15-17, 21-26	1 JN. 5:9-13	JN. 17:6-19	13

The standard lectionary contains many more readings for certain days, as well as each day of Easter week. For a complete listing, see the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer at [bcponline.org](http://bcponline.org).

# THROUGH THE BIBLE

## “Long Text” Plan

Longer chunks of Scripture can be good for understanding books or sections of the Bible as a whole, possibly in more of a “study” mode. This long text plan will take you through the Psalms every 60 days, the OT every two years, and the NT every year. Even though the passages are long, don’t read them simply for information. The Lord wants to meet you in these pages. Listen for his specific invitations for you to know and follow him in faith.

*Video overviews of each biblical book can be found at [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com).*

## Reading Calendar

### “Long Text” Plan

DATE		PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
WED	2/14	90-91	NUMBERS 6	2 CORINTHIANS 13
THURS	2/15	92-94	NUMBERS 7	GALATIANS 1
FRI	2/16	95-98	NUMBERS 8	GALATIANS 2
SAT	2/17	99-102	NUMBERS 9	
SUN	2/18	103-104	NUMBERS 10	
MON	2/19	105	NUMBERS 11	GALATIANS 3
TUES	2/20	106	NUMBERS 12	GALATIANS 4
WED	2/21	107	NUMBERS 13	EPHESIANS 1
THURS	2/22	108-110	NUMBERS 14	EPHESIANS 2
FRI	2/23	111-114	NUMBERS 15	EPHESIANS 3
SAT	2/24	115-117	NUMBERS 16	
SUN	2/25	119:1-48	NUMBERS 17	
MON	2/26	119:49-88	NUMBERS 18	EPHESIANS 4
TUES	2/27	119:89-128	NUMBERS 19	PHILIPPIANS 1
WED	2/28	119:129-176	NUMBERS 20	PHILIPPIANS 2
THURS	2/29	118, 120-121	NUMBERS 21	PHILIPPIANS 3
FRI	3/1	122-126	NUMBERS 22	PHILIPPIANS 4
SAT	3/2	127-131	NUMBERS 23	
SUN	3/3	132-135	NUMBERS 24	
MON	3/4	136-138	NUMBERS 25	COLOSSIANS 1
TUES	3/5	139, 141-142	NUMBERS 26	COLOSSIANS 2
WED	3/6	140, 143	NUMBERS 27	COLOSSIANS 3
THURS	3/7	144-145	NUMBERS 28	COLOSSIANS 4
FRI	3/8	146-147	NUMBERS 29	1 THESSALONIANS 1
SAT	3/9	148-150	NUMBERS 30	

Week One

Week Two

Week Three

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN 3/10	2-4	NUMBERS 31	
MON 3/11	1, 15, 34	NUMBERS 32	1 THESSALONIANS 2
TUES 3/12	5-7	NUMBERS 33	1 THESSALONIANS 3
WED 3/13	9-10	NUMBERS 34	1 THESSALONIANS 4
THURS 3/14	8, 11, 15, 16	NUMBERS 35	1 THESSALONIANS 5
FRI 3/15	12-14, 17	NUMBERS 36	2 THESSALONIANS 1
SAT 3/16	18	DEUTERONOMY 1	
SUN 3/17	20-22	DEUTERONOMY 2	
MON 3/18	19, 23, 25	DEUTERONOMY 3	2 THESSALONIANS 2
TUES 3/19	24, 26-27	DEUTERONOMY 4	2 THESSALONIANS 3
WED 3/20	28-29, 31	DEUTERONOMY 5	1 TIMOTHY 1
THURS 3/21	30, 32-33	DEUTERONOMY 6	1 TIMOTHY 2
FRI 3/22	34-35	DEUTERONOMY 7	1 TIMOTHY 3
SAT 3/23	36-38	DEUTERONOMY 8	
SUN 3/24	37	DEUTERONOMY 9	
MON 3/25	39-41	DEUTERONOMY 10	1 TIMOTHY 4
TUES 3/26	42-44	DEUTERONOMY 11	1 TIMOTHY 5
WED 3/27	45-46	DEUTERONOMY 12	1 TIMOTHY 6
THURS 3/28	47-49	DEUTERONOMY 13	2 TIMOTHY 1
FRI 3/29	50-51	DEUTERONOMY 14	2 TIMOTHY 2
SAT 3/30	52-55	DEUTERONOMY 15	
SUN 3/31	56-58, 60	DEUTERONOMY 16	
MON 4/1	59, 63-64	DEUTERONOMY 17	2 TIMOTHY 3
TUES 4/2	61-62, 65, 67	DEUTERONOMY 18	2 TIMOTHY 4
WED 4/3	68	DEUTERONOMY 19	TITUS 1
THURS 4/4	69	DEUTERONOMY 20	TITUS 2
FRI 4/5	66, 70, 72	DEUTERONOMY 21	TITUS 3
SAT 4/6	71, 73	DEUTERONOMY 22	

DATE	PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN 4/7	74-76	DEUTERONOMY 23	
MON 4/8	77, 79, 82	DEUTERONOMY 24	PHILEMON
TUES 4/9	78:1-39	DEUTERONOMY 25	HEBREWS 1
WED 4/10	78:40-72, 80	DEUTERONOMY 26	HEBREWS 2
THURS 4/11	81, 83	DEUTERONOMY 27	HEBREWS 3
FRI 4/12	84-85	DEUTERONOMY 28	HEBREWS 4
SAT 4/13	86-88	DEUTERONOMY 29	
SUN 4/14	89	DEUTERONOMY 30	
MON 4/15	90-91	DEUTERONOMY 31	HEBREWS 5
TUES 4/16	92-94	DEUTERONOMY 32	HEBREWS 6
WED 4/17	95-98	DEUTERONOMY 33	HEBREWS 7
THURS 4/18	99-102	DEUTERONOMY 34	HEBREWS 8
FRI 4/19	103-104	JOSHUA 1	HEBREWS 9
SAT 4/20	4-14	JOSHUA 2	
SUN 4/21	4-15	JOSHUA 3	
MON 4/22	107	JOSHUA 4	HEBREWS 10
TUES 4/23	108-110	JOSHUA 5	HEBREWS 11
WED 4/24	111-114	JOSHUA 6	HEBREWS 12
THURS 4/25	115-117	JOSHUA 7	HEBREWS 13
FRI 4/26	119:1-48	JOSHUA 8	JAMES 1
SAT 4/27	119:49-88	JOSHUA 9	
SUN 4/28	119:89-128	JOSHUA 10	
MON 4/29	119:129-176	JOSHUA 11	JAMES 2
TUES 4/30	118, 120-121	JOSHUA 12	JAMES 3
WED 5/1	122-126	JOSHUA 13	JAMES 4
THURS 5/2	127-131	JOSHUA 14	JAMES 5
FRI 5/3	132-135	JOSHUA 15	1 PETER 1
SAT 5/4	136-138	JOSHUA 16	

Week Twelve

Week Thirteen

DATE		PSALM	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SUN	5/5	139, 141-142	JOSHUA 17	
MON	5/6	140, 143	JOSHUA 18	1 PETER 2
TUES	5/7	144-145	JOSHUA 19	1 PETER 3
WED	5/8	146-147	JOSHUA 20	1 PETER 4
THURS	5/9	148-150	JOSHUA 21	1 PETER 5
FRI	5/10	2-4	JOSHUA 22	2 PETER 1
SAT	5/11	1, 15, 34	JOSHUA 23	
SUN	5/12	5-7	JOSHUA 24	
MON	5/13	9-10	JUDGES 1	2 PETER 2
TUES	5/14	8, 11, 15, 16	JUDGES 2	2 PETER 3
WED	5/15	12-14, 17	JUDGES 3	1 JOHN 1
THURS	5/16	18	JUDGES 4	1 JOHN 2
FRI	5/17	20-22	JUDGES 5	1 JOHN 3
SAT	5/18	19, 23, 25	JUDGES 6	





*SPRING (LENT / EASTER)*

**COMMUNITY RULE OF LIFE  
SOMA MIDTOWN 2024**