

Northern Lights

Northern Michigan District Church of the Nazarene



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Lent: Preparation for Easter

by Rob L Staples

Published in Holiness Today - March/April 2011

The word "Lent" means "lengthen" and refers to "spring," that time of year, after a cold winter, when days become longer and new life begins to burst forth everywhere. The time when migratory birds reappear, crocuses emerge from the cold ground, and daffodils put forth their shoots.

The dates of Lent vary from year to year because they are based on the lunar calendar rather than the solar calendar. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, the seventh Wednesday before Easter. On Ash Wednesday we are called to remember that life is a gift from God to be cherished and that we must one day give it up. We are to remember that we were made from dust and shall return to dust and to reflect somberly on the depth from which we have been lifted.

Often what we see when we worship is as important as what we hear. Thus in some churches ashes are applied by the minister to the foreheads of worshipers on Ash Wednesday. First a vertical line is made, an "I" that stands for the old sinful self that we once were. Then across it a horizontal line is made, thus forming a cross! The sinful self is crossed out! The ashes made in the form of a cross remind us of the suffering of Christ on the Cross, by which our sins are canceled.

But that is not the end of our story! Ash Wednesday also reminds us that Easter is coming! So if Lent begins with the gloom of Ash Wednesday, it ends on Easter with a mighty, world shaking boom when Christ was raised from the dead as the harbinger of our own resurrection!

The observance of Lent as a special season in the Christian year began in the fourth century. It spans the 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. Since every Sunday celebrates Christ's resurrection, the six Sundays occurring during Lent are not counted as part of the 40 days of Lent. The number 40 is connected with many biblical events, but especially with the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert preparing for His ministry by facing and overcoming temptation (Matthew 4:11).

“**Christians should use this period as a time for introspection, self-examination, and a spirit of repentance.**”

We remember John Wesley's assertion in his sermon, "The Repentance of Believers," that repentance does not belong solely at the beginning of the Christian life but is also required at every stage thereafter.

Lent is a season for prayer and fasting. Many people observe Lent by giving up certain things purposefully, such as meat, sweets, and other foods. It is also a time for focusing on charitable deeds, helping needy people with gifts of food or clothing, or simply giving money to compassionate ministries. Of course, in doing such good deeds, one should remember our Lord's admonition: "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them" and "whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others" (Matthew 6:1-5, NRSV).

Again remembering that what we see may be as helpful as an aid to worship as what we hear, some churches make use of liturgical colors throughout the year. The color used in the sanctuary during Lent is usually purple which symbolizes pain, suffering, and mourning. It is often the color of a bad bruise, reminding us that our Lord "was wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5, KJV).

It reminds us of the suffering of Jesus leading up to His crucifixion as well as the suffering of humanity under sin. Purple is also the color of royalty, and thus anticipates through the suffering and death of Jesus the coming resurrection and hope of newness of life that will be celebrated on Easter Sunday. It is because of Easter that Jesus is not only our Prophet and Priest but also our coming King who will reign upon the throne forever.

Northern Michigan District Assembly & NDI, NMI, NYI Conventions Friday and Saturday - April 11 & 12

Clare Church of the Nazarene - 10160 S. Grant Ave. Clare, MI



Dr. Carla D. Sunberg
General Superintendent

Friday

8:30am - Conventions Registration
9:30am - 2:30pm District Conventions
7:00pm - Assembly Worship Service

Saturday

7:30am - Delegate Registration
8:30am - Assembly Business



**29th Annual NMI
Global Week of Prayer
March 2-8, 2025**

As the 2025 Global Week of Prayer approaches, NMI would like to invite the church to pray for the needs of our global churches and districts with requests from the regions. Click [here](#) for adult and children's Global Week of Prayer resources.

May this week be a sacred time as we serve as the global missions advocate in every local church, nurturing a spirit of missions and mobilizing into action, impacting people around the world. Thank you for praying!

**P
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**4th Annual
Half Million Mobilization Call to Prayer**



From Easter to Pentecost | April 20 - June 8, 2025

Join us together in prayer, seeking the Lord for unity and resurgence in our churches and communities. The Half-Million Mobilization is an opportunity for every Nazarene in the USA/Canada Region to engage in focused prayer and action, asking God to move in powerful ways.

This year, we encourage you to access the free resources available to help guide your church, small group, or personal journey during this season. Let's pray together for a movement of God that leads to transformed lives!

[RESOURCES](#)

CELEBRATE LIFE 2025



God has given everyone of us gifts; these gifts are given not to make us look great, but to bring glory to Him. Celebrate Life is a youth event designed to help students find the gifts they have, develop those talents, and discover how God can use them to build his Kingdom.



Celebrate Life Event Information

<https://celebratelife.olivet.edu/>

District Celebrate Life

Date: March 15, 2025
Location: Beaverton Church of the Nazarene
Time: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Details: Meet youth from the Northern Michigan District, share talents, develop teams, & create friendships

TALENT EVENTS

Volleyball	Table Tennis	Singing
Basketball	5K Run	Instruments
Dodgeball	Pickleball	Dancing
Soccer	Corn Hole	Drama
Chess	Bible Quizzing	Photography/Art
Tennis		

Regional Celebrate Life

Date: May 8 - 10, 2025
Location: Olivet Nazarene University (ONU), Bourbonnais, IL
Details: Youth from 4 states & 11 districts gather at ONU to experience college life, share talents through individuals & team events, create friendships, & worship together.

Cost: Participants --- \$160.00

- On-line registration

Sponsors --- \$140.00

- Must be 21 years of age or older
- On-line registration
- Background check
- Ministry Safe training

Registration:



• <https://cl.olivet.edu/register.php?dpwd=G2CJBHA4>

Payment: Due in Full by April 1st, 2025

NMD CELEBRATE LIFE DIRECTOR

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NMD NYI Website

<https://www.nmdnyi.com/celebrate-life.html>



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MULTIPLYING CHURCHES BY CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF MISSIONAL EVANGELISM

MAR 11, 2025
12:00 PM CST



BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE USA/CANADA

Bringing People to Jesus Webinar March 11th at 12:00 CST

Topic: Multiplying Churches by Cultivating a Culture of Missional Evangelism

Guest Speakers: Jad and Jamie Levi, pastors of Trinitas Church

Description: It's been said that in the West, "we don't plant churches—we start services." Join us as we explore practical ways to plant the gospel and establish Christ-centered communities by living out foundational Kingdom principles rooted in prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Register](#)

[Cycle of Resurgence](#)



BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS 2025



Make sure you are signed up for the USA/Canada Region monthly email called the HUB. This will allow you to stay up to date on all that is happening around the region. You can sign up by clicking [this link](#).

USA/Canada Kids



See the newest released resource...Let's Party - Half-Million Mobilization: Bringing People to Jesus. This is for children and families created through a partnership of USA/Canada Kids and Equip to Engage!

It includes 8 Early Childhood and Elementary lessons, 8 Kids' Moments, 1 Preteen Event, 50 Family Devotions, and promotional materials. It coordinates with the adult sermons and devotions. **And it's ALL free!!**

For more information about USA/Canada Kids, contact Rev. Trey Brooks, Co-Director of Equip to Engage, at trey@equiptoengage.org.

[resources](#)

Outreach + USA/Canada Region Partnership



The USA/Canada Region has partnered with Outreach to create Nazarene-exclusive products. You can check out these products at nazarene.outreach.com. We have worked to get our churches the best prices on banners, invites, and more! Currently, products are available in English with Spanish and French coming soon!



Free Course by Dr. Chic Shaver on How to Witness

[The Bible Speaks to Me About My Witness](#) is a free resource created by Dr. Chic Shaver. The sessions include 12 PDFs and eight videos to help people learn how to witness, which are excellent for individuals or small groups. [CLICK HERE](#) to begin!



The Discipleship Place - New Bible Study

The Discipleship Place library of Bible studies continues to grow monthly. You can now enjoy I & II Samuel. Thanks to the work of Dr. Daryll Stanton and Natasha Skyba for their work on editing and revising! [Go to the library](#)

The Bless App

and USA/Canada Region Partnership

The USA/Canada Region's partnership with the BLESS App offers a powerful tool for churches to equip their congregations to live missionally. A church account on the BLESS App empowers your congregation to unite around the BLESS practices, fostering collaboration and amplifying impact. Church accounts enable leaders to connect their congregation with new movers, share prayer requests, celebrate missional stories, and organize initiatives that engage the entire community.

This shared platform encourages your church to move together with purpose—building relationships, serving intentionally, and bringing people to Jesus.

Don't miss this opportunity to unite your church around God's mission. Learn more and get started today at theblessapp.com/usacanadanaz. Together, we can make a greater impact!



We're partnering with Gloo!

The USA/Canada Region is excited to partner with Gloo, a platform that helps pastors and churches connect with their communities and grow their ministries. With a free Gloo account, pastors can access Hubs, enabling collaboration with other churches and organizations. Hubs allow you to share resources, coordinate outreach, and expand your impact together.

Additionally, Gloo offers free texting to help you stay connected with your congregation, engage new visitors, and nurture discipleship. These tools make it easier to invite people into the life of your church and build meaningful, long-lasting relationships.

Pastors can also upgrade to Gloo+ with 30% off using the discount code Nazarenechurch30. Visit gloo.us to learn more and start using Gloo today. Together, let's unite and share the hope of Jesus!



Where: ONU Centennial Chapel

When: Saturday April 12

9:00am - 4:00pm

Click [here](#) for information and to purchase tickets.

2025

MAR 15 - DISTRICT CELEBRATE LIFE - BEAVERTON

APRIL 11-12 - DISTRICT ASSEMBLY & CONVENTIONS - CLARE COTN

MAY 3 - ABC'S OF DISCIPLE MAKING - BEAVERTON COTN

MAY 3 - OLIVET COMMENCEMENT

MAY 8-10 - REGIONAL CELEBRATE LIFE - ONU

JULY 28-AUG 1 - KID'S CAMP - MANTON CAMP

AUG 1-3 - FAMILY CAMP WEEKEND - MANTON CAMP

SEPT 19-21 - PASTOR & SPOUSE RETREAT

OCT 16-19 - HOMECOMING WEEKEND AT ONU

DEC 6 - DISTRICT PASTOR CHRISTMAS GATHERING - PARK PLACE HOTEL, TRAVERSE CITY

2026

APRIL 17-18 - DISTRICT ASSEMBLY - CLARE COTN

JUL 1-5 - NYC - SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

2027

JUNE 25-JULY 3 - GENERAL ASSEMBLY - KANSAS CITY, MO

upcoming
events

WONDER

NAZARENE YOUTH CONFERENCE 2026

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
JULY 1-5, 2026