



SAINT COLUMBA  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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February 4, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Faith,

With **Ash Wednesday** approaching on **February 18**, we are once again invited to take the Lenten journey together. As this letter is being composed, the town of Bloomsburg, and indeed much of our country, is blanketed in snow. Yet we have faith that from this frozen and dormant state, new life will emerge when springtime comes, as it is with the Passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. On January 10, Pope Leo proclaimed a *Franciscan Jubilee Year* for the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi. In this decree, we read that in a world where “the virtual takes over the real, disagreements and social violence are part of everyday life, and peace becomes more insecure and distant every day, this Year of St. Francis spurs all of us, each according to our possibilities, to imitate the poor man of Assisi, to form ourselves as far as possible on the model of Christ.” This Lenten Season, let us focus on how we can peacefully grow in faith, hope and love, like St. Francis.

There are many things that we can do during Lent to help us draw closer to Our Lord. We might consider **attending an additional Mass** during the week. **Tuesday all-day adoration** in the church is a wonderful opportunity to be in the presence of our Lord (sign-ups are in the back of the church). The **Stations of the Cross** on Fridays can help us to reflect upon the sufferings of Jesus out of His love for us. **Suggested Scripture readings for each day of Lent** will be in the **February 15** bulletin. **Fasting** between meals during Lent and **abstaining from meat** on Fridays can remind us of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert. **Almsgiving** for the poor reminds us of how God shares His blessings with us. **Choosing a spiritual book to read** is as simple as visiting our parish library. As we did last year, **we have placed the Little Black Books for Lent in the church** for anyone who enjoys this resource. Please contact us if you are unable to pick one up, and we will gladly mail it to you.

In the past year, we have welcomed our new Parochial Vicar, Father Aaron Lynch, to our staff. Our **website and our bulletin have undergone a complete renovation**, making it more user-friendly, appealing and accessible for its many visitors. One of the most active pages of the website is the Bulletins page, which is a great way to stay up-to-date on parish events when you don’t have a paper bulletin in your hands. Also, **online Lenten resources abound**, including those on our Parish app, the Formed website (free with St. Columba’s subscription), our Facebook page, and our YouTube channel. **Our Parish app is continually expanding** and contains many new features, including watching the Daily Mass, praying the Divine Office, and weekly audio reflections from Jeff Cavins. You can download our app at [myparishapp.com](http://myparishapp.com) or text APP to 55321. We will gladly help you do this in the office if you like.

As you see in the bulletin and website, there is so much happening each week here. Our new “Why are we Catholic” monthly Q and A sessions have been very popular. The Men’s and Women’s Groups have grown, and our recent Ministry Fair has drawn new volunteers into parish life. To ensure that our liturgies feel inviting, Father Lynch and our Liturgy committee are creating a new parish welcoming team, merging and expanding the current usher and greeter ministries into one unified team, with an open discussion for all interested on **Sunday, March 8 at 11:30 am**. Committees for social planning and fundraisers have generated exciting initiatives, such as our **March 28 Bingo Fundraiser** at the Bloomsburg Firehall. Tickets are on sale now for the Bingo, after Masses and in the parish office.

**Our Lent 2026 Study**, presented by Dr. James Gregory, M.A. in Theology and Educational Ministry, is called *Exploring Your Spiritual Life*. This Faith Study features a unique format, with a focus on spiritual growth and prayer. Please see the enclosed page for more specific information on this class.

We enclose our **2026 Lent and Easter Season Schedule**. Please keep this schedule handy for quick reference. We have much to offer between Christ the King our Mission Church, and St. Columba Church. **This year we have something new: on the first Friday of Lent, we invite you to our Lenten Fellowship potluck meatless meal on Friday, February 20 at 5:30 pm.** We look forward to sharing this meal in the cafeteria before Stations of the Cross. Please note that we are intentionally calling our times for confession or penance “reconciliation,” focusing on the restorative nature of this encounter with Jesus.

Soon, you will be hearing more about the **2026 Diocesan Annual Campaign**. We thank you for your generosity in supporting your Bishop in the Apostolic works throughout the Diocese of Harrisburg.

Together, we will journey through Lent into the glorious Easter season. You will see on our schedule that on **June 7**, we will have a very special parish event with Catholic composer-singer-songwriter Francesca LaRosa coming to our parish for Mass and a concert. She will include the history behind some of the most influential Psalms, interwoven with prayer and stories of how she composed these settings. Please keep our Church family in your prayers so that we may continue to bring the Light of Christ into the world.

Saint Columba, pray for us! Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Rev. Richard J. Mowery, Pastor,  
and the staff of St. Columba Church  
Enclosures

#### **LENTEN GUIDELINES**

1. The traditional Lenten practices of piety, fasting, almsgiving and other forms of self-denial are warmly recommended by the Church.
2. The faithful observance of Lent should manifest itself in the imitation of Christ in daily life and in the readiness to sacrifice time and talents whenever possible, in personal, parish, and community efforts for those in spiritual or material need. The spiritual hunger of the unchurched locally and in mission lands can be a focus of prayers and charitable giving.
3. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of abstinence from meat for those 14 years of age or older. They are also days of fasting for those between the ages of 18 and 59 years of age. Those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal. Two smaller meals are also permitted; liquids, including milk and fruit juices, are allowed. If health or ability to work is seriously affected, the law does not bind.
4. All Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence (no meat) for those 14 years of age or older.
5. Fridays of the year outside Lent remain days of penance. The Bishops of the United States highly recommend the traditional abstinence from meat on Fridays during the entire year, together with acts of mortification, for the cause of peace in the world. However, some other practice of voluntary self-denial or personal penance may be substituted.