Lent Season Will Begin Next Wednesday

Period Observed by Many Since Third Century

By United Press International

Lent begins next Wednesday.

One of the oldest liturgical seasons of the church calendar, Lent has been observed since the third century AD as a period of self-examination, penitence and prayer in preparation for Easter.

Fasting and other acts of self-denial are traditional Lenten disciplines among Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and some Lutherans.

Some Protestant bodies, including Methodist and Presbyterians, schedule midweek worship services or study programs. Other Protestants do not observe Lent.

The Lenten season continues for 40 weekdays, ending with the celebration of Easter, on April 18, this year. Sundays are not counted as part of Lent because ancient tradition every Sunday is a feast day commemorating the Resurrection Lenten vows of abstinence are suspended on Sundays.

The Eastern Orthodox churches use a different calendar, and will begin their observance of Lent on March 8.