



2026 Lenten Devotional

American Baptist Churches of the Central Region

A Lenten Journey

Rev. Jennifer Schneider

During the forty days leading up to Easter, Christians around the world observe the season of Lent. We begin on Ash Wednesday, when we mark our foreheads with ashes that symbolize our mourning and penance, and end with Holy Thursday. Lent is a time of preparation, reflection, and self-examination as we journey towards Easter.

These devotions are designed for each Sunday of Lent and for the holy days of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter.

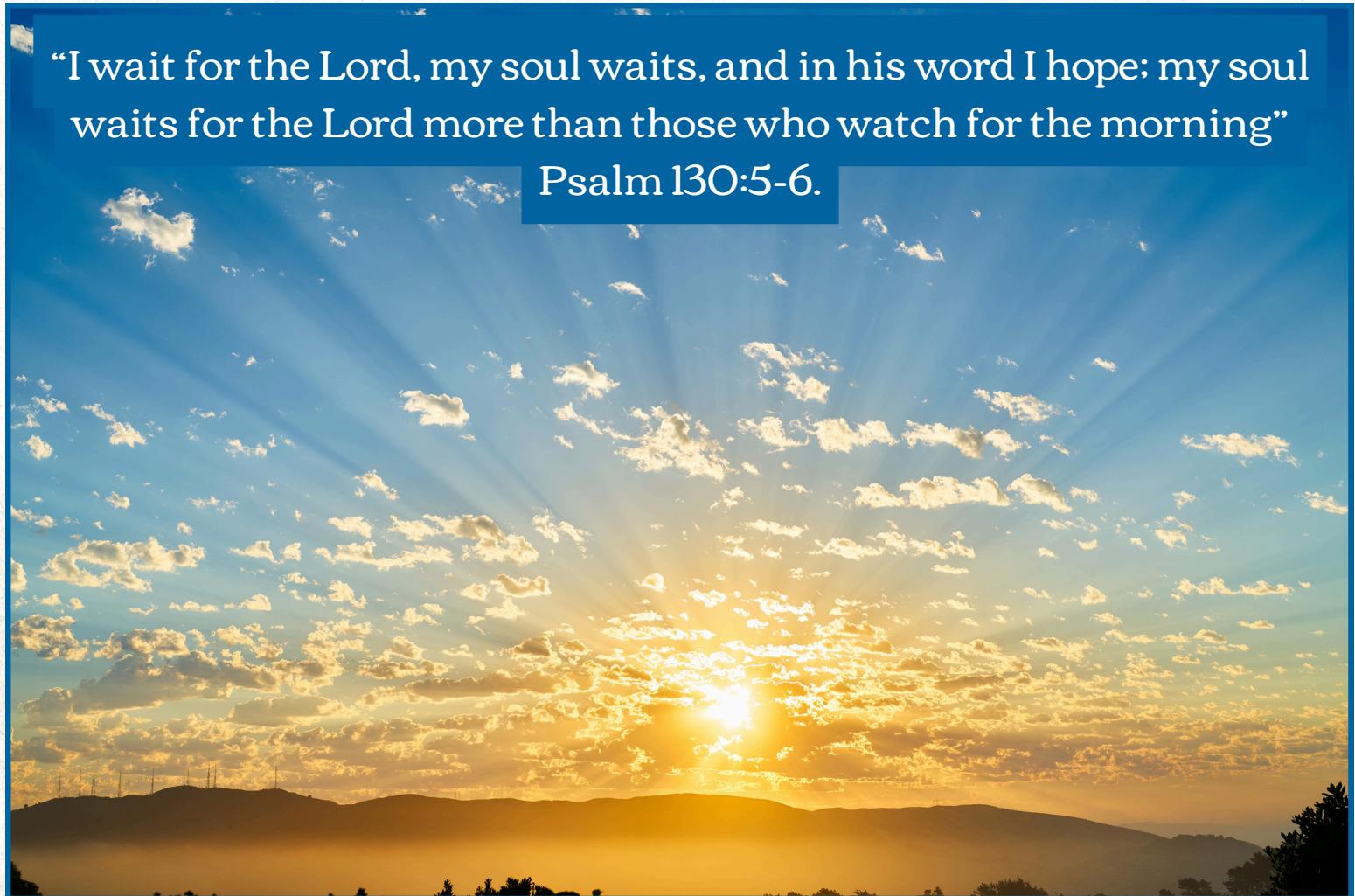
We hope you find these devotions uplifting and encouraging as you dedicate yourselves to prayer, service, and self-denial during this Lenten season. We are grateful to the pastors and lay leaders who said yes when we invited them to share.

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning"
Psalm 130:5-6.

Easter is coming, but for now, we are invited to a time of reflection as we prepare for the celebration.

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope: my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning"

Psalm 130:5-6.



The Journey

Sunday Before Lent

Jim Cook

Lent is often portrayed as a journey starting with Ash Wednesday and progressing to Easter. We commonly read the stories in the Gospels that depict the journey of Jesus from his ministry in Galilee to the tumultuous days in Jerusalem ending in the resurrection stories of Easter. It is an important journey and one that the gospel writers explicitly call out, the gospel of Luke has nine full chapters on the journey to Jerusalem, over one-third of the whole gospel.

This past summer my wife and I spent some time on the Oregon coast. It is a place that each of us grew up going to as children and we go back regularly as a couple. Part of what we love about going back is the familiarity. It means that we don't have to search the internet to find the best source to buy local seafood, its Barnacle Bill's. We have our favorite restaurants, favorite hikes and ice cream shops. That sense of routine feels relaxing.

This last summer we headed out one day for one of our favorite places but decided to take a different route than we had ever taken before. Less than 10 miles into the journey we discovered a small little beach side village—just a handful of cottages—and decided to stop and access the beach. What we discovered was one of the most spectacular places we have seen on the Oregon coast. Long beautiful stretches of sand punctuated by large stone mounds at the surf edge forming wonderful tidepools of life.

My wife and I talk about the time on that beach regularly since this summer. The other day as we were reminiscing, one of us said, "Where were we going that day?" We both laughed because neither of us could clearly remember where we were going.

During the season of Lent, we are often invited to engage in some sort of spiritual practice; we all know the old practice of giving something up. But to what end? At the heart of most practices we might take up for Lent is simply the idea of doing something new—or maybe going a different way—on our Lenten journey to Easter. Easter will get here one way or another, but maybe we should take a clue from Luke this Lent and spend some time focusing on the journey as much as the destination. Choose a new spiritual practice or even just a new habit in life and focus on the new things you see and experience. Expect to be surprised by the beauty of God on the way.



Lenten Practices Pleasing to God

Ash Wednesday

Rev. Dr. Ruth Rosell

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?" (Isaiah 58:6-7, NRSV)

In many Christian traditions, Ash Wednesday begins the Lenten season with having ashes rubbed on one's forehead in the shape of a cross. It is traditionally a forty-day season for prayer, fasting, repentance, humility, and preparation for Holy Week and Easter. Ashes are a sign of mourning over sin and repentance.

When we think about repentance, we may tend to focus on confessing our personal sins and failures. In Isaiah 58, the prophet encourages us to go beyond that to also consider the social sin that results in harm to others. These words were addressed to a nation that viewed itself as practicing righteousness in their religious acts but at the same time were oppressing people and engaging in violence. They indicate that for our spiritual practices of prayer and self-denial to be acceptable to God, they must be connected with working for justice and acting with compassion toward those in need.

As we reflect on Jesus' sufferings during the Lenten season, let us also reflect on the sufferings of those with whom Jesus identified himself – the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned (Matthew 25). These are the sufferings of Christ being made visible in our present day. And let us consider what the societal structures are that contribute to these sufferings. In a democratic society where there exist the possibility and responsibility for citizens to act to bring greater justice and equality, we participate in social sin when we do not do our part to bring about positive change.

Repentance is not just feeling sorry and confessing our sin. It involves turning around and changing what we are doing. So, let us consider what we are called to do when we recognize social sin that is causing suffering to those with whom Jesus identified. Perhaps it involves speaking out, rather than staying silent, about injustices we see. Perhaps it entails making phone calls to elected officials regarding the unjust laws or policies that are causing suffering. Perhaps it involves standing up and protecting the immigrant or refugee stranger. Perhaps it includes providing food and clothing to them in their need and caring for them.

It is not just our prayers, personal worship, and religious rituals that God desires. Rather, it is that we work to rectify unjust and oppressive laws, policies, and government actions so that the poor, the hungry, the stranger, and those detained or imprisoned are not subjected to further suffering but rather experience the justice of having their basic needs met and freedoms respected.



Setting Our Hearts to Seek the Lord

First Sunday in Lent

Rev. Jim Kiker

2 Chronicles 30: 18b – 20

"But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, "May the Lord, who is good, pardon everyone who sets their heart on seeking God – the Lord, the God of their ancestors – even if they are not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary." And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people."

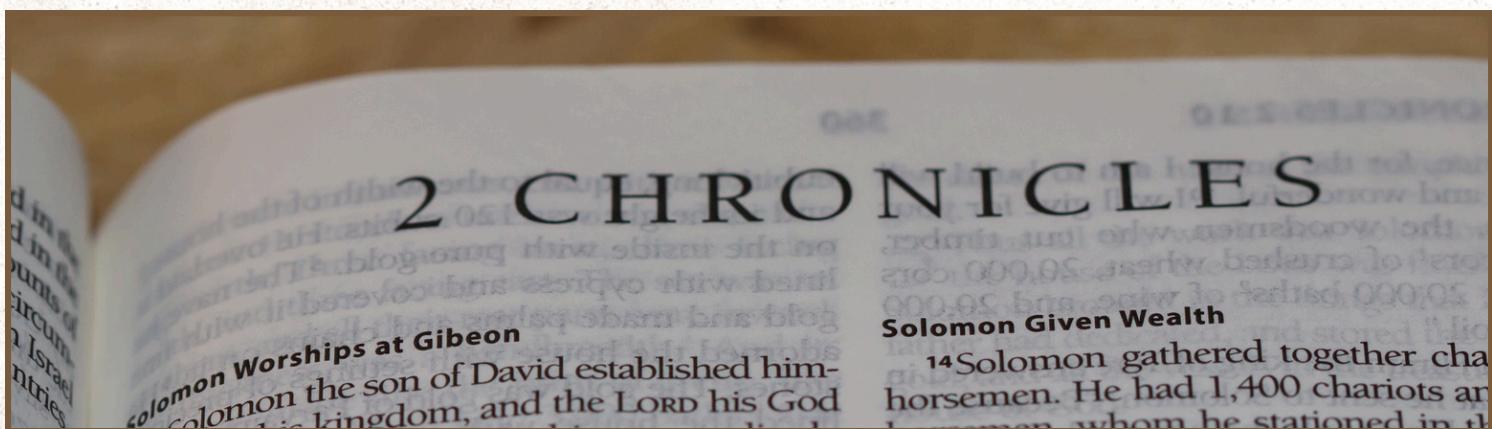
Did we catch Hezekiah's prayer to "pardon everyone who sets their heart on seeking God"? And God "healed the people". As a boy growing up on the plains of Kansas, and whose parents raised me in an American Baptist Church and traditions, at that time, we did not follow the Liturgical Calendar of "extra" holiday observances. Please, don't get me wrong, we celebrated with great enthusiasm the days of Christmas and Easter! They were truly the highlights of our calendar! But, to somehow give a second look at Advent and Lent, it just did not happen! My Catholic and Lutheran friends had to make special arrangements for all the extra services they had to attend. Seemed to me like it was just a way for their churches to take up more of their time.

My wife, on the other hand, was raised in a Lutheran Church, participated in the full Liturgical Calendar. With much of her youth spent down South, just outside of New Orleans, her recollections include major celebrations, beginning with Fat Tuesday, and Ash Wednesday – the official beginning of Lent, and Mardi Gras! Days and days of parades, festivals, parties, and frivolity.

As many of you have had a similar joining of different lifestyles, either as couples, or as your local church gathering of many varied backgrounds and experiences (for us – both Christian, but at different doctrinal views), we have embraced for ourselves a "blended" calendar. Yes, we now celebrate Advent and Lent as a preparation. We prepare our hearts for these extremely important spiritual observances.

When we began thinking about other special occasions; birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, etc., we begin with planning the event. Whether it is a small intimate party, or a super, blow-out, all the way, extravaganza, we must begin with the preparations. This Easter, that is what Lent does for us. It gives us the time to prepare our hearts for one of the greatest celebrations for all mankind! We celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! He did what we could not, defeated Sin and Death! Such a celebration deserves hearts that have been consciously, purposefully, and properly prepared!

We "set our hearts on seeking God" by preparing and opening ourselves to God's grace of this Lenten season, it begins now, Ash Wednesday! Our faithful Lord will do for us as He did for Hezekiah – "healed the people".



Gloriously Surprised

Second Sunday in Lent

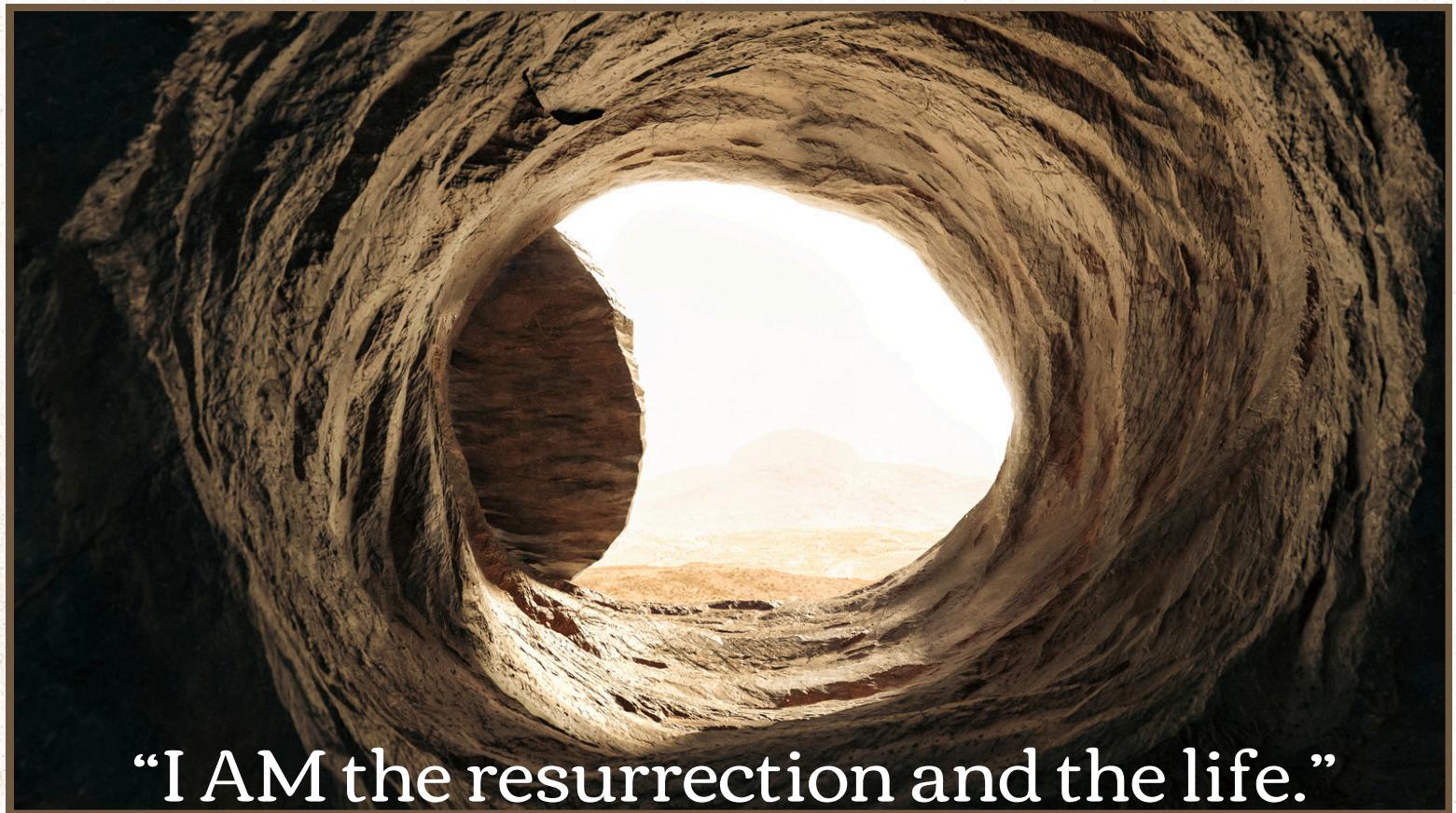
Rev. Brian Hardee

How does one prepare for the unexpected? We normally only think about bad news as being unexpected. But sometimes the most unexpected blessing invades our world, and we are nearly overwhelmed with a profound sense of it just isn't possible.

That is the challenge of resurrection. No one expected it. Even after the event had transpired there were those that were told and yet didn't believe. Peter and John race to the tomb, and don't know what to do with what they find. Two travelers to Emmaus shocked at a stranger's words of exhortation. Even at the ascension Matthew records that some doubted. For all the clear predictions of the Old Testament the events of that first Resurrection Day were bathed in unexpected doubt, fear and glorious surprise. One of our great challenges today 2000 years later is to remain gloriously surprised and full of unexpected awe of the fullness of forgiveness that resurrection brings to us.

We can be like Martha who was confronted by the Lord at the death of Lazarus with, "Your brother will rise again." Her response was, "yes I know." Her knowing was head knowing not heart believing. Jesus challenged her faith with the powerful words: "I AM the resurrection and the life." We can so easily know the stories and miss the truth.

Can you hear it from heaven now – YOUR SINS are FORGIVEN!! The resurrected Christ shouts! Write it on a piece of paper in capitals: "Jesus declares I am forgiven by his very life!" Now fold it up and put it in your pocket and take it out several times and read it today as a reminder of the most unexpected ever gift. If you are like me you will forget what is written on that sheet and pull it out to read it and be reminded again of the unexpected wonder of resurrection.



"I AM the resurrection and the life."

Nothing in Me

Third Sunday in Lent

Rev. Gerald Haunpo

John 14:30b; "...for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

No other human, before or after our Lord Jesus Christ could ever utter these words about himself in sincerity and truth. As God, Jesus knew the heart of every man, even His own. As a man, He learned the discipline and necessity of yielding His heart's every desire to the will of His Father.

There was nothing the devil could offer Him that could ever turn Him from submitting to the Father's will. No riches, no glory, no fame or pleasure offered to Him, in return for His allegiance could make Him yield to the tempter. He had already tried and failed during Jesus' wilderness experience. Testing Him at the most opportune time; when He was at the limits of His physical strength, having gone forty days without eating. It says that He was afterwards hungry.

As His body was demanding to be fed, the tempter came to take full advantage of the moment to see if there was anything in Jesus; any earthly desire that He could be enticed with. But, what he found was that there was absolutely nothing in the heart of Jesus that the devil could ever use to cause Him to submit or to yield to his demonic influence; no offer of earthly desire or pleasure, no offer of immediate relief could penetrate the power of the Spirit of God that Jesus was yielded to.

Unlike Jesus, as men, we do not know the true condition of our own hearts. We are often blind to the darkness that may lie hidden and dormant in the depths of our hearts, unexposed. Nor are we always aware of the doors that remain open to the devil's influence through our lack of spiritual understanding. And just as he did with Jesus, the tempter comes to us with subtlety in our most vulnerable moments to take full advantage of our spiritual ignorance. And if he is able to entice us, the result will always be a time of failure, guilt and condemnation as we realize, too late, the deception of our enemy and fall into his snare.

But, even in those times of failure, God's grace is already at work, not just to deliver us from the snare of the devil, but to cause us to triumph over it. As He begins to shine more, and more of His Light in us, the hidden works of darkness become exposed. And as we are drawn to repentance through His goodness, we are strengthened and find our sufficiency in Him.

The season of Lent is more than setting aside a few of our appetites or habits.

More than anything, the season of lent is a time for true repentance and sincere self-examination. It's a time for drawing closer to our Lord Jesus Christ and allowing Him to shed His Light on the areas of darkness in us that remain un-yielded to His Lordship in order to remove them once and for all.

The prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58) said that the fast that the Lord desires for His people is not a fast that honors self. But, rather, a fast that causes us to break loose from the bands of wickedness and oppression. And a fast that enables us to truly serve others in the love of God. In essence, it's a fast that challenges us to be more like Him.

As we look forward to celebrating our Lord's victory over death and His glorious resurrection this coming Easter, we must never forget the cost of our atonement and all that the powerful resurrection of Jesus secured for us. Long before He poured out His blood on the cross, He poured out His life for each one of us. Every sacrifice, every self-denial, every hardship undertaken was for our sake. Just so we might share in His triumph over darkness and have an opportunity to know the goodness, kindness, and the unconditional love of God here in this world and in the one to come.

In this season of Lent, let us consider the Word of the Lord to the prophet Joel: "...rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful..." Joel 2:13.

Prayer: Search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. -Psalm 139:23-24

Give or Get

Fourth Sunday in Lent

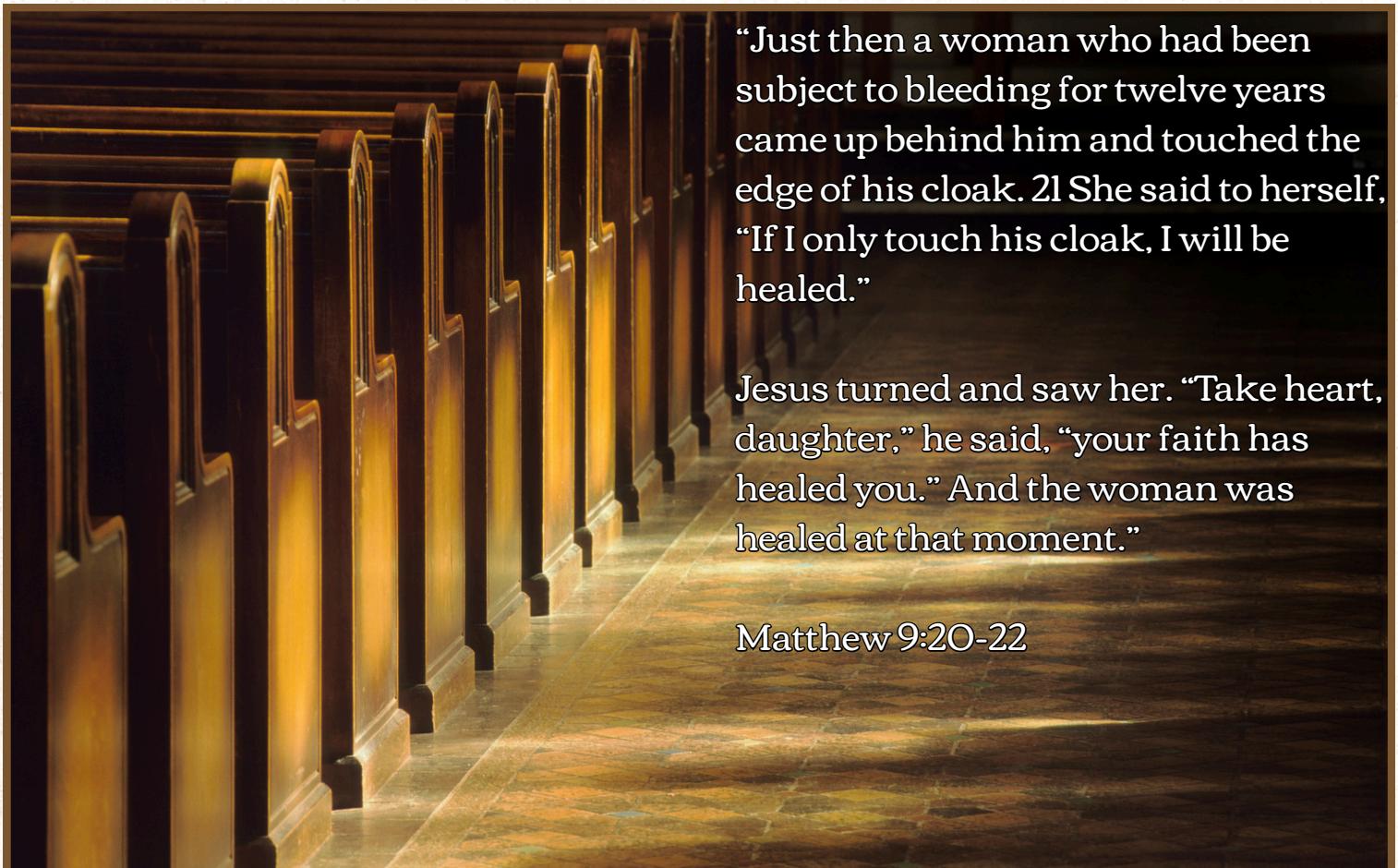
Cara Christian

Lent wasn't something we participated in growing up. Lent growing up was for other churches. Growing up my parents kept the theme of self-discipline year-round. Daily devotions and weeding out what doesn't glorify God was always happening. Fast forward to today and less of me = more of God. We are born with a God shaped hole in our hearts; everyone feels it sooner or later. Some people refuse to accept that God is what will fulfill them and spend all their lives searching.

Believers I encourage you to keep searching out what will lead you closer, so you don't miss a single blessing intended for you. Conversations happen everywhere we go, start centering them on biblical thoughts. Stop talking weather and idle chatter, try something like this.

Why was Jonah sitting under that plant? Jonah 4:6 What does wormwood mean in Revelation? Revelation 8:11 When I give of my time and my sleep to wake earlier as we are instructed to in Mark 1:35 these conversations happen naturally as we are focused and excited on what we have learned.

If we shift our mindset to what we can gain, not what we have to lose we will be more apt to pursue Jesus as the women did in Matthew 9:20-21. May we be churches and individuals who chase after Jesus and not let a day go by that we aren't sharing with others so everyone around us can enter this season with anticipation for Easter morning.



“Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.”

Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment.”

Matthew 9:20-22

Grace Is Enough

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Pam Fodder

September 10, 2025. My hand began to shake when my phone rang. "Hello?" I heard my daughter's shaky voice reply, "Mom, it's positive. I have breast cancer." The tears began to flow. "No, Dear Lord!" My co-workers saw me upset, so I shared the heartbreak news.

One of the ladies made a comment: "Now is when we need to lean on the Lord and place all our faith in him." This made me realize, the Lord is the only thing I needed. The only One that could help. We stopped and prayed right there in the office.

The rest of our family got together that evening to take my daughter and her family out to dinner. It was also her 30th birthday and she was in her third trimester of pregnancy with a baby girl. This was the beginning of our family coming together with a plan to make sure she never went to her appointments alone. Once her treatment plan was in place, each of us selected which appointment we could accompany her.

Even so, the financial hardships came on quickly. As a family we decided to have a fundraiser during a local city event on October 4, 2025. We had a garage sale and Indian taco sale. Her sister set up an online fundraiser as well. By the end, we were exhausted after a very successful day!

Soon, the date arrived for my daughter's baby to be delivered. Her sister and brother-in-law offered to keep her three other kids - all under age 5. I drove to Oklahoma City with a relative to be with them. Her brother and his girlfriend traveled from CO to OKC to spend time with her while she was in the hospital.

I share this very trying time of my life to show how heartache, can be overcome through faith, prayer, and the love of our Lord God. Lent is a time of spiritual development and strengthening one's relationship with God. A time to increase prayer time, turning to the word of God and giving to those in need.

The sacrifices our family have made and will continue to make while on this journey have made us all fully aware of how our lives can change dramatically and not always positively. But it is how we chose to respond to life's storms that makes all the difference.

"My grace is all you need, for my power is the greatest when you are weak." – II Corinthians 12.9
Hearing the news the first day put me in a state of weakness. I needed his word to pull me up.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." – I Thessalonians 5.11
We reached out to family and friends across the country asking for prayers for my daughter. Prayers, messages, phone calls came in abundance, each one letting us know they are praying for her and for all of us.

Because of those prayers and faith, a beautiful, healthy baby girl was born on November 26, 2025 – Oakley Sage Liles. My daughter's recovery also continues. Each day she is getting stronger both physically and spiritually. Thanks be to God.

What Would Jesus Do?

Palm Sunday

Morgan Menefee

I grew up with a WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) bracelet. Many of us millennials did. And we thought we knew how to answer that question: avoid drugs, tell the truth, respect our parents, and love our neighbors. But what does it mean to love our neighbors? What does it mean to show respect, and to whom is it due? As an adult, answering the WWJD question feels much more complex, but I've found that looking at Jesus's last week on earth as a mortal man provides unexpected insight.

As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem for the Passover, he sent them ahead to retrieve a donkey and her colt. Finally, after three years of walking, the Messiah would arrive in a manner more befitting his position, astride a donkey's colt. It wasn't the elegant horse signifying military conquest that some hoped for, but it was a step in the right direction.

When they entered the city, crowds hailed him as the Messiah, praised him, and shouted, "Hosanna," save us. Jesus embraced, even encouraged their worship. How different from the man the disciples had seen tell the healed lepers to go and tell no one. Finally, Jesus was ready to tell the world that he was the Messiah, there to free Jews from Roman rule.

But the next day, Jesus drove the money changers and sellers of sacrifices, along with their customers, from the temple. While some followers likely cheered, others would have been confused. Why was Jesus driving his own people from their house of worship? Of course there were issues with Jewish corruption, but surely the oppression of the Romans was a more important matter. What would Jesus do about that? But Jesus was not there to free the Jews from the Romans. He was there to free the Jews from the oppression of religious law and their own sin. What oppression might Jesus free our churches from today? What norms would he disrupt? What tables would he flip?

It may be uncomfortable, but conflict was an intentional part of Jesus's ministry. Without the Jews mistaking Jesus for a political revolutionary, and without his openly challenging the Pharisees and their laws, Jesus would not have been arrested and put to death. Confronting authority is sometimes a necessary step in loving our neighbors. Sometimes, it's the answer to the question, "What would Jesus do?"

Yes, Jesus came in on a donkey, a common choice for a peaceful leader or royal, but he also endorsed the open messianic worship directed at him, and the day after that triumphal entry, he cleared the temple. Jesus didn't enter his final week quietly. He didn't fly under the radar. He stood up. He embraced his identity. He challenged the corrupt authority. And he was murdered for his boldness.

What would Jesus do today, in your corner of the world? May you follow his example by living out your identity as a child of God, as redeemed, with even half as much boldness and bravery as Jesus showed during his final week as a man.



Living in the Darkness

Maundy Thursday

Rev. Ken McKenzie

It's a story we've all heard. Jesus teaching the disciples in that upper room right before the Passover meal was served. "I am the vine." "Don't let your hearts be troubled." "Love one another."

But there was so much more to learn that evening, lessons that would only come to light in hindsight, for the Light of the World was about to confront darkness—the darkness of the night, the darkness of the garden, the darkness of the soul, the darkness of betrayal, the darkness of sin and death.

After the supper, "they sang a hymn and went out." Out, into the darkness, out after dark. In the absence of streetlights and the torches that all villagers seem to carry in the movies, Jesus headed into the darkness determined to find a place of prayer in the garden. The garden, lit only by what the moon and stars might reflect, welcomed Jesus into its familiar landscape. It's no wonder the disciples kept falling asleep as they fought against the darkness. It was certainly a dark and lonely place.

But even before the soldiers arrived, Jesus encountered the darkness of his own soul crying out for another way, another path, another possibility. Yet he trusted the Father's plan, and in the midst of the darkness, saw the torches as they approached. In the midst of the commotion came a simple kiss, what has come to be known as the Judas kiss. It was here that Jesus now experienced the darkness of betrayal, and would soon come to know the darkness of denial.

With the rising of the sun, how odd it must have felt for the darkness to continue. The darkness of humiliation and pain, as thorns now adorned his head and nails were being pounded into his hands and feet, his body exhausted and failing. And then, the greatest darkness of all: sin.

The sin of the world, all of it, was placed upon him as he breathed his last. Life, at least life as it had been understood for centuries, had ended. The earth itself responded with a covering of darkness. All that was left seemed to be the darkness of the tomb.

It would be so easy to jump ahead to the rest of the story, but the challenge of this moment is to live in the darkness, to experience the cold and the fear and the noise and the uncertainty of the darkness, to feel the weight of the darkness, and to ponder the depth of the darkness that not only surrounded him, but which continues to surround us today. Let us learn from the darkness how to trust more deeply in the One who has already conquered the darkness, and let us find a renewed comfort in the thought that Jesus is the light of the world and that the darkness cannot overcome him.

love one another

The Love That Holds Us

Good Friday

Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs- Strain

Good Friday invites us to pause. This sacred day calls us to, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Around the world people gather in worship, prayer, and reflection. Today let us fast from doing and rushing to simply being still in the grace of Christ.

At Calvary, it seemed as though all was lost. Darkness covered the land. Hope appeared crucified. Yet in every moment, God was coming closer to us. What looked like defeat was, in truth, the unfolding of redemption... the revealing of God's glory which never succumbs to human demands and frailty. The prophet Isaiah declared, "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities... and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). The cross represents the intersection of human brokenness and divine compassion.

Dr. Howard Thurman wrote, "At the heart of life is a Heart." On Good Friday, we see that Heart revealed. Jesus does not retaliate. He forgives. "Father, forgive them," he prays (Luke 23:34). Divine love refuses to retaliate and chooses mercy over hatred. In a world shaped by discord and division, the cross rises at their intersection—revealing the redemptive power of compassion.

Father Henri Nouwen reminds us that no one escapes being wounded. The question is not whether we hurt, but whether our wounds can become sources of healing. On the cross, Christ's wounds become our restoration; we are redeemed. He submits to betrayal, loneliness, suffering, and death...so that our pain is never beyond His care. Jesus interrupted cycles of sin and brokenness with grace and forgiveness.

Perhaps today you find yourself waiting—lingering in unanswered prayers, uncertain about the future, wondering if God hears your pleas. Good Friday assures us that even when God seems silent, our omnipresent God sees and hears us... divine wisdom and love surround us. The eternal light of Christ shines in the darkness, "For God is light and in Him there is no darkness" (I John 1:5).

Let us pause today. Attend a service. Sit quietly with a trusted friend. Think about the cross without rushing toward Sunday. Let us breathe in the love of Christ and breathe out the indifference of the world, inhale the grace of God and exhale every grievance, receive God's mercy, and let go of all that hardens our hearts. Let us be still in the love that holds us.

Prayer: Calm Me Into A Quietness (Loder, Ted (2023). Guerrillas of Grace. Fortress Press)

O Lord, calm me into a quietness that heals and listens, and molds my longings and passions, my wounds and wonderings into a more holy and human shape.



Participating in Peace

Easter Sunday

Michael Jones

Political division, global unrest, a twenty-four-hour news cycle, participating in a culture that demands more from you at every turn, and being glued to our screens; these are just a few of the daily pressures that leave us exhausted – physically tired, mentally off balance, and even spiritually weak. We arrive to worship on Sunday, celebrating our Sabbath, hoping for renewal. Praying that God give us peace, patience, rest – asking for things we deeply desire, yet rarely slow down enough to participate in.

The world we live in rushes at light speed before our eyes. As a father of a “little”, it is evermore obvious to me how quickly life will speed by if we passively let it. When we position ourselves in worship, do we actually pause in the presence of God? Or are we simply too busy, asking God to give us the peace, patience, and rest that we are unable to allow ourselves to take?

“If I could just pray harder, serve more faithfully, or feel more joy, then God would move.”

Consider Psalm 46:10, which encourages us to be still in God’s presence. During Lent, as we prepare ourselves for Christ’s resurrection, what if we acknowledge something we often overlook? Jesus spends three days in the tomb. Doing what exactly? Resting. He was not crucified and then immediately resurrected. No, he rested. The first moments of our salvation were marked by His rest.

This season of Lent teaches us that seeking rest is not abandoning goals, that silence does not produce passivity, that stillness begets inaction. Rather, the opposite is true.

Instead of asking God to grant us peace as a fleeting hope, consider participating in prayer and communing with Him and experience His peace.

Instead of asking God for patience, meditate and seek his divine discernment by welcoming the Holy Spirit into your struggles. Instead of asking God for rest that we do not believe we have earned, stop and recognize that Jesus meets us where we are – even when we are at our lowest.

When Jesus emerged from the tomb, John 20:19 tells us his first words to his disciples were “Peace be with you”. When Jesus encountered Mary, she is so overcome with an exhaustive grief that she is unable to recognize him – but He greets her warmly and knows her by name.

In this modern society, life spins around us until we finally say “I cannot keep going”. Easter, and Lent more broadly, tells us “You don’t have to”. It provides us an opportunity to recognize that God’s love is a gift, one that includes grace and relief – not pressure to meet a deadline, unrealistic expectations or a task.

Plainly, He offers us the peace we are seeking. Our task is not to earn it, but to recognize it and to pause long enough to participate in it with Him.

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