

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
Feb 15-17



THURSDAY, FEB 15, MARK 9:30-35

“They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”

PRAYER

At the outset of lent, give me a humble heart, a heart that is willing to admit to my shortcomings and mistakes. A heart longing to grow and change. A heart that seeks to serve others before myself. For these forty days, help me to put aside the part of myself that calls for attention, acknowledgement, and prestige. Help me, O God, to be inspired by Jesus and learn once again what it means to love you and my neighbor. Amen.

What's so good about lent?

“In lent we hold space for joy and sadness at the same time”

Rose Koeppe

FRIDAY, FEB 16, MARK 9: 42-50

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

"For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

PRAYER

I think, O God, that I understand the point Jesus is trying to make, even if it does frighten me a little. I should be willing to remove the parts of myself and of my life that keep me from following your ways. Perhaps during lent, I will discover what those parts may be, but I will need courage, nurture, and wisdom to actually remove them from my habits and routines. I confess, O God, that I sometimes avoid the harsh words, the words that ask me to prune and remove. Help me, gracious Lord, to see the blossom that can emerge from such things. Amen.

SATURDAY, FEB 17, MARK 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

PRAYER

If the last shall be first, then it makes sense that your kingdom belongs to children. Children have little power, control, or influence over the world. They really are at the mercy of others. They live, learn, and grow by the generosity of those around them. You, O God, ask me to see the world differently. You insist that your kingdom operates by different norms: the last are first, the vulnerable are a treasure. Help me, O God, to see the world the way that you do. Amen.

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
Feb 19-24



MONDAY, FEB 19, EXODUS 20:12-16

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

PRAYER

When the ancient Israelites were a wandering people in need of direction and purpose, you gave them these (and other) commandments to live by. They were for them guideposts, a way to orient their lives and their hearts and find their bearings in the world. Help us, O God, in our Lenten wandering to cling to your commandments and use them as guideposts for our own lives. May the living out of your word bring purpose to our lives and meaning to our nothingness. Amen.

AT A GLANCE

THEMES

- Commandments
- Possessions
- Purpose

SCRIPTURE

- Exodus
- Mark
- Romans
- 1 Timothy

What's so good about lent?

"It is a season of non-commercial humility"

Damen Jensen-Heitmann

TUESDAY, FEB 20, MARK 10:23-27

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

PRAYER

Our things hold us back. They prevent us from taking risks. We believe they make us safe. We think they can make us feel important or loved or, at the very least, interesting. Too often, we set our hearts on our things and not you. Help us to be like the disciples your son first sent out into the world, carrying nothing with them, trusting in you and free of the burden of their stuff. Our safety comes from you, not our possessions. We are important, loved, and interesting because we are your children, not because of the things we possess. Help us to love our neighbors and not our stuff. Grant that we might find our identities in you and not in our things. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, FEB 21, 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

PRAYER

Can there be contentment in a broken and sinful world? Should there be? Paul isn't asking us to be content with hungry stomachs and harmful relationships. Rather, Paul is saying that we don't need to be constantly grabbing, scratching, and clawing after the next thing. The next thing won't make us happy if we aren't already content in you, O God. The next job, relationship, event, or digit in our account won't satisfy if we are not already satisfied by being your children. Everything that isn't you is a chasing after the wind. During this holy lent, help us to step away from our desire to chase after anything that isn't you. Amen.

THURSDAY, FEB 22, MARK 10:28-31

REPENT & BELIEVE

Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

PRAYER

In your infinite wisdom, O God, you did not make me the center of the universe. Good call on that one. It probably wouldn't have gone well. Rather, you created me to be a partner, a helper, an encourager, a part of a larger whole, and a member of your body. When, O God, I give myself to you and to your beloved community, that is when I come alive, that is when I am renewed, that is when I experience what it means to live with you and to have eternal life. Gracious Father, Loving Mother, grant me whatever it is I need to leave everything behind and follow you. Amen.

FRIDAY, FEB 23, ROMANS 8:18-25

O I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

PRAYER

I am not the center of the universe, and yet there are those who wait with eager longing for me to reveal myself as your child, O God. There are those who depend on me to be as loving as I can. There are plenty who count on me to show them the peace which passes understanding. The world itself is longing for me to live responsibly and sustainably. I do not exist in isolation. I am a connected part of a whole, and what I do and how I do it matter. Though I am not and will not be perfect, help me, O God, to love you and my neighbors to the best of my ability. Amen.

SATURDAY, FEB 24, MARK 10:32-34

They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.”

PRAYER

It is tough to hear these words over and over again, O God. But Jesus spoke them several times. Time and time again, he asked his disciples to face the reality of the world. And so, we too must face the reality of the world. Though it is hard, we must look upon the war, madness, and disappointment all around and ask what we can do to help. During lent, O God, help us to see the pain of others and if we need, recognize our own complicity within it. Help us, Dear Lord. It will be difficult. Amen.

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
Feb 26-March 3



MONDAY, FEB 26, MARK 10:46-52

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

PRAYER

Gracious God, let me see again, for my heart has grown cloudy. Let me see as a child with boundless hope and earnest curiosity. Let me see as an elder with wisdom girded by experience. Let me see as a new believer overflowing with thanksgiving. Let me see as an old stalwart knowing I can rely on you. Clear from my heart the distractions of the world. Let me see you again. Amen.

What's so good about lent?

"Lent is an opportunity to reflect, intentionally, on our need for Jesus"

Greg Allen-Pickett

TUESDAY, FEB 27, MARK 11:12-16

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it. Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.

PRAYER

I know, O God, what you have asked me to do. I've studied the scriptures. I've heard the prophets. You've asked me to produce not just fruit, but good fruit. I am one of those who you have called to bring peace, kindness, generosity, mercy, and forgiveness into the world. That is the good fruit you've asked me to make. People are hungry for good fruit. I will do my best to make it. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, FEB 28, MARK 11:20-25

In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

PRAYER

I ask, O God, for forgiveness for the times my callousness has caused pain and destruction for others. I ask for mercy for the moments I've put my wants in front of others' needs. I come to you trembling, with an earnest desire to do right by you and others. Forgive the withering I have caused. Help me to bring about new growth in you. Amen.

THURSDAY, FEB 29, MARK 11:27B-33

REPENT & BELIEVE

As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him and said, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?” Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me.” They argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘Of human origin?’” —they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

PRAYER

There is no shortage of people and institutions that would like to direct my living. I am inundated with requests from companies to adhere to their products and buy their things. News organizations implore me to live life by their priorities. Politicians decree that all is lost unless I follow them. All these things and many more want to assert their authority over me. And yet I desire to swear only to you, to let you be the guiding light in my life. Grant me, O God, a humble heart, strong in your will alone. Amen.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, MARK 12:1-9

Then he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.

PRAYER

If I am the vines, then help me make good fruit. If I am the tenant, then help hear your word. If I am the one you sent, then help me to follow your way. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, PSALM 118:21-26

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

PRAYER

Through the mystery of faith, O God, you gave us Jesus the Christ. He came to us. Lived among us. Knew what it was to be human. He taught. He fed. He healed. He cried. He suffered. He died. Through the mystery of faith, he united us with you. For his birth, life, death, and resurrection, we offer you our thanks and praise. Amen.

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 4-9



MONDAY, MARCH 4, MARK 12:26-27

And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”

PRAYER

I believe that I am not alone. I believe in the communion of saints. For I am convinced that all of those believers who came before, the ones I knew and the ones I didn't, are held and bound up in your presence. And through these days of penitence and humility, they sustain me. Abraham encourages me to rely only on you. Naomi reminds me to dedicate myself to others. The prophets implore me to follow your commandments. They live in you, O God, and for that I give you my thanks and praise. Amen.

AT A GLANCE

THEMES

- Community
- Love
- Fleeting Natures

SCRIPTURE

- Mark
- Deuteronomy
- Leviticus
- Hosea

What's so good about lent?

“In Lent, Jesus shows us how to pray through suffering.”

Rose Koeppe

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, MARK 12:28-31

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

PRAYER

During this season of lent, O God, help me to put aside all of the things I am tempted to serve that aren't you. Let me live to you and not to my schedule. Let me follow you and not my team. Let me hear your words and not those of talking heads and political partisans. You alone are God, and nothing else compares. It is through your benevolence that I am sustained. You are my God, you alone. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, DEUTERONOMY 6:1-5

Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the Lord your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, so that you and your children and your children's children, may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

PRAYER

With the entirety of my being. You ask a lot, O Lord. To love you alone with everything that I am is a tall mountain to climb. And yet, following your commandments and living in your ways are ultimately to my benefit. Through your commandments, you have set the boundaries, laid out what makes for a good life. Though I often stumble on the path, help me to regain my footing and cling to your commandments. Help me to show my love for you by living peace, justice, kindness, mercy, and forgiveness in the world. Amen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, LEVITICUS 19:13-18

You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord. You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

PRAYER

These commandments, O God, compel me to remember that I am part of something bigger than myself. Like it or not, I am connected to everyone and everything around me. The words I choose matter to someone else. The things I think have consequences for others. The actions of my life affect the lives of those around me. Forgive me for the moments when I have not been a good neighbor. Have mercy for my divisive actions and uncharitable thoughts. Help me to love you by loving others. Amen.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, HOSEA 6:1-3

“Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

PRAYER

Water in the desert. Sustenance amid desolation. These things God provides over and over again. A warm hug between good friends. A hand wiping away falling tears. A mentor, a stranger, a neighbor to say, “this too shall pass.” All these and more are spring rains and snow-melt streams, water that calls us back to life from fallow seasons. May we, O God, be sustained in this lenten desert by the promise of the spring rains of Easter. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, HOSEA 6:4-6

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have killed them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light. For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

PRAYER

As fleeting as my body is my love and devotion to you, O God. As I am temporal. Limited. Fading even as I grow. Thank you, O God, for your steadfast love for me even when I fail to return such admiration. Thank you for knowing me, even when I become infatuated with things other than you. Though my love and myself are like the morning dew, you are constant. Thank you. Amen.

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 11-16



MONDAY, MARCH 11, MARK 13:1-2

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

PRAYER

The grass withers. The flowers fade. But your word endures forever. Steeples tumble. Doors shudder. But you love abides eternally. Beauty vanishes. Bodies perish. But your grace is unending. Help us, O God, to put our trust and our very selves into the things of eternity. Grant that in this season of lent we may move our minds away from the things that fade and towards your perpetual mercy and calling. Amen.

AT A GLANCE

THEMES

- Impermanence
- God’s love
- Calling

SCRIPTURE

- Mark
- Joel
- Isaiah
- Psalms

What’s so good about lent?

“Honesty is key to any relationship. Our relationship with God is no different.”

Damen Jensen-Heitmann

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, MARK 13:9-13

“As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

PRAYER

Jesus asked his disciples to travel a difficult path, and they faced difficult situations. I offer you my thanks, O God, for all of those who offered testimony to you and your vision even in the midst of animosity and persecution. I thank you for those who spoke of love when the world called out for hatred. I thank you for those who cried out for justice when the world demanded segregation. I thank you for those who called for peace when the world sought vengeance. I thank you for those today who ask for sustainability in an ocean of consumption, mutuality in a field of individualism, and understanding in a world of talking heads. Though it may be challenging, help me to offer testimony to you and your kingdom of love and service. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, JOEL 2:12-14

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

PRAYER

It is a fact that I cannot escape. I have sinned. I do sin. I shall sin. I have ignored your commands. And I can guarantee that at some point I will be uncharitable in my thoughts and deeds. I have not lived up to the standards set by your son. I have not earned your grace, and I will not earn your grace. But still, I will do my best to return to you after every misstep, after every moment when I move away from your heart. Have mercy, O God. Relent and grant your grace once more. Amen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, ISAIAH 56:6-9

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? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

PRAYER

You, O God, have placed a calling upon my heart. You have asked me to be your ambassador. You have asked me to help, as best as I am able, to bring about faith, hope, and love in the world. During this season of lent, help me to find ways to bring about justice, mercy, and kindness. Help me to join in the holy fast that brings redemption to the lives of others. Dust that I am, let me reflect your holiness in the world. Amen.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, MARK 13:21-23

And if anyone says to you at that time, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'Look! There he is!' —do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But be alert; I have already told you everything.

PRAYER

A lot of people and a lot of things pretend to be my savior. But really they just want attention. All they really want is for me to tell them how great they are. They want the crowds. They want the cheers. They want the power. Help me always to remember that your son proclaimed repentance, not prosperity; humility, not pride; and self-sacrifice, not self-aggrandizement. Give me eyes to see and ears to hear those who proclaim and live by such truths. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

PRAYER

I am parched, O God. Give me living water. I am lonely, dear Lord. Give me your presence. I am lost. Come and find me. I am adrift. Give me direction. I am overwhelmed. Calm the storms. I am afraid. Hold me in your arms. I have fallen. Lift me. I am your child. Grant me love. Amen.

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 18-23



MONDAY, MARCH 18, MARK 13:28-31

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

PRAYER

As green shoots emerge from winter slumber, as birds and bugs begin to reappear, let us find signs of your presence with us. May new possibilities remind us of your unfolding grace. May warm smiles and hearty laughs reveal your eternal love. May comforting words embrace us in your welcoming arms. Signs, little glimpses; let us see in them your presence. Amen.

AT A GLANCE

THEMES

- Signs
- Alertness
- Preparation

SCRIPTURE

- Mark
- 1 Thessalonians
- Romans

What's so good about lent?

“Lent is an intentional preparation of our hearts and minds for holy week.”

Greg Allen-Pickett

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, MARK 13:32-37

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

PRAYER

You know, I do love sleep. I get all wrapped up and bundled up, and I drift off to dream world. It just feels so safe, so warm, so insular. And yet if I sleep too much, I know I'll miss it. I'll miss my neighbors when they need a meal. I'll miss a child when they have a question. I'll miss seeing the rainbow after the rain. I'll miss the bulbs as they begin to bloom. I'll miss your love when it arrives. Keep me awake to the beauty of you and of this world. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 1 THESS 5:6-11

So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

PRAYER

Help me, O God, be prepared for the day ahead. Grant me that which I will need to be gracious to all I meet and charitable in all my thoughts. Give me courage to face ambiguous situations. Give me resilience to navigate valleys of sorrow. Give me patience as I encounter difficult people and places. Give me the garments of love that I will need on this day. After all, there is no bad weather, only bad gear. Amen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1 THESS 5:14-18

And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

PRAYER

I watch, O God, as time and time again Jesus offers grace and empathy to those whom he encounters. He stops. He listens. He lifts, feeds, and heals. So often, he gives to those along his way true presence and the sort of things called for here. Help me to live by his example; offering good to those along my way. Help me to live by your will revealed through his example. Amen.

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, ROMANS 13:11-14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

PRAYER

Why do I quarrel? Why am I jealous? Because such things often make me feel important and powerful. And because I often forget that you didn't call me to be powerful. You didn't ask me to be influential. You don't need me to be right all the time. You've asked me to love you, to serve others, and be humble. Such works are the things of Christ. Such works are my calling. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, MARK 14:1-2

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; for they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”

PRAYER

The shadows of chaos are always nearby, and they can be revealed at any moment. When Jesus and the disciples entered Jerusalem, it was to shouts of praise and acclamation. But things change. And in the midst of our own triumphs, we know that things can change in a moment. We are fleeting creatures, and so are our joys. We are temporal, and so is our understanding. Chaos is always nearby, and it can be revealed at any moment. Be with us, O God, as we muddle through shifting, quite often, from joy to devastation. In the middle of it all, grant us your peace. Amen.

REPENT & BELIEVE

Daily Lenten Scriptures and Prayers
March 25-30



MONDAY, MARCH 25 DEUTERONOMY 15:9-11

Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.”

PRAYER

This, O God, has been your instruction from the earliest of days. Adam and Eve were meant to steward and keep. David was to shepherd the people. Micah implored listeners to do justice and love kindness. Jesus told his disciples, “love your neighbor as yourself.” It is a calling. It is a lifetime. They are ancient instructions sewn upon our hearts. Let us hear them. Let us live them. Amen.

AT A GLANCE

THEMES

- Betrayal
- Destruction
- Hope

SCRIPTURE

- Mark
- Deuteronomy

What's so good about Holy Week?

“It encourages us to hope through our disappointments.”

Damen Jensen-Heitmann

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, MARK 14:10-11, 17-20

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

When it was evening, he came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.

PRAYER

Why did Judas do it? I could ask forever. Then again, all the disciples will vanish in the night. And I could ask the same of myself. Why do I turn from Jesus? Why do I destroy the things I love? Why do I shrink when my witness is needed? Why do I give my heart so often to greed, jealousy, fear, and animosity? Why do I do such things? I could ask forever. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, MARK 14:26-31

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.

PRAYER

I asked my God, "How long had Jesus known? And how long had he welcomed them anyway? If he thought, if he knew, that they'd all desert him, why did he teach them? Why did he lead them? Why did he call and feed and bless and send them? If he knew they'd abandon him, why did he love them?" And my God replied, "Hope always. Anything can be redeemed." Amen.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, MARK 14: 39-42

And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

PRAYER

My eyes, too, are heavy, and my heart is worn. I'd like to take my rest, a break from all this bickering and conniving, a moment away from the senseless violence and hatred that so often floods the world. I know, O God, that you've asked me to keep awake, but the world wearies me. Forgive me, O God, and feel free to rouse me from my slumber whenever you would like. Amen.

FRIDAY, MARCH 29, MARK 15:21-24

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

PRAYER

May we never, O God, benefit from the destruction of others. May we never revel in decimation and cast lots to see how it will benefit us. Grant that we might be those who accompany the crosses and not those who put them up. Help us to be vigilant and mindful in our actions so that we do not inflate ourselves at others' expense. Give us the wisdom and courage we need to avoid being complicit in the pain and suffering of those around us. Amen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, MARK 15:44-47

Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where the body was laid.

PRAYER

Praise be to you, O God, for those who tended to his broken body, those who carried, washed, wrapped, and laid him gently in the tomb. Thank you for their grace, their compassion, and their willingness to care for such a fragile thing. Help us to be like them and tend to the broken bodies of the world. Help us to care for fragile hearts and spirits. Help us to nurture decimated peoples and communities. Give us that which we need to carry, wash, wrap, and tend to the brokenness we see around us each day. Amen.