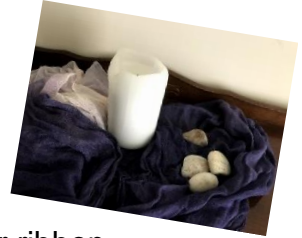




'Worship at home' February 18th 2024

This is the first week of Lent,
and as you prepare for
worship, you might like to **set up
a prayer space** at home, to keep
throughout the duration of Lent.



Purple is the liturgical colour for Lent,
and you might find some **purple cloth** or ribbon.

Place a **cross** and a **candle** to aid your reflection and prayer.

Light the candle to remind you of the light of Christ,
with us always, even in times of wilderness and struggle.

Opening

Lent calls us to journey,
following Jesus wherever he leads us.

Lent calls us to journey, in covenant with God.

Lent calls us to worship,
to tell future generations the good news.

**Lent calls us to practice justice,
to bring God's hope to all people.**

Lent calls us to faithful living,
to trust the One who gives us life.

**Lent calls each of us to take up our cross,
to trust the One who bears it with us.**

Lent calls us to journey with God.

**Let us worship God, who walks with us,
this and every day.**

~ adapted from Thom Shuman

<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/>



The liturgical season of Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter, begins with the story of Jesus led by the Spirit to a 40-day retreat into the wilderness. There, Jesus fasted and prayed, deepening his reliance upon God. We are invited to use this time as a period of reflection and prayer, as we seek to deepen our relationship with God.

Prayer for Lent

Gracious Lord, as we begin this Lenten season, we are reminded of our weakness and our need for your strength. May we use this time to examine ourselves, to listen to your call inviting us to live more simply and to follow you more closely. We seek to rid ourselves of the clutter in our lives, in order to rely on you. Lead and guide us in our Lenten journey, we pray. Amen

Mark 1:9-15

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

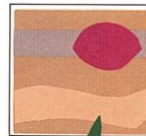
At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he

was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

New International Version

Mark's gospel tells of how, after Jesus' baptism, he spent a period of time alone with God, in spiritual preparation for the ministry on which he was about to embark. It is sometimes in our own wilderness times, times of struggle or self-doubt or confrontation or challenge, that we come to trust in the presence and power of God in our lives, and let go of our reliance on ourselves and the things we have built up around us. We come to know ourselves more clearly, and to know God more fully. Wilderness times can be times of transformation and growth. Like Jesus, we emerge more fully equipped for ministry. You are invited to enter these 40 days of Lent open to where the Spirit might be at work in and through you.



THE
WILDERNESS
will lead you
to your heart
where I will speak.

Historically, for many Christians, the period of Lent involved fasting from luxury items such as eggs and butter. These were made into pancakes and eaten on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent began. This act of self-denial and sacrifice reminds us of Christ's sacrifice and death, and helps to rid us of all the extras in our lives so we can rely on God.

What “extras” tend to clutter your life and distract you from God?

How might you rid yourself of these in order to focus on God more fully?

LENT

making room for God

Instead of fasting from food, you might try the following:

Fast from judgment;

Fast from greed;

Fast from scarcity;

Fast from fear;

Fast from lies;

Fast from gossip;

Fast from anxiety;

Fast from evil;

Fast from apathy;

Fast from discontent;

Fast from noise;

Fast from discouragement;

Fast from hatred;

Feast on compassion

Feast on sharing

Feast on abundance

Feast on peace

Feast on truth

Feast on praise

Feast on patience

Feast on kindness

Feast on engagement

Feast on gratitude

Feast on silence

Feast on hope

Feast on love

What will be your fast?

What will be your feast?

During his time in the wilderness, tempted by Satan and surrounded by wild animals, Jesus was supported and encouraged by angels.



Who are the “angels” in your life, supporting and encouraging you?

Give thanks to God for these people around you.

When are you able to be an “angel” to another?

Pray to be open to the needs of those around you, in order to offer encouragement and support. 3

Jesus emerges from the wilderness to begin his public ministry, proclaiming the good news of God's love and grace.

**Reflect on the ways in which your life proclaims
God's love and grace.**

**How do the doubts and fears of your wilderness times
equip you for your own ministry to others?**

Psalm 25: selected verses

In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long. Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs

sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

New International Version

Closing

As you begin this season of Lent, consider how you might use this time to deepen your relationship with God. You might choose to make a commitment each day to:



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- Take five minutes of silent reflection each morning
- Read one page of a devotional or inspirational book or article
- Give thanks throughout the day
- Write a few sentences in a journal of your fears and hopes
- Contact one person just to see how they are
- Pray for a different country or group of people
- An intentional daily act of kindness for another
- Forego a cup of coffee and put aside a dollar or two to donate to UnitingWorld's Lent Event

<https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/event/lent-event/about-us>