

Lenten Pilgrimage Guide

Jesus was born into a world similar in many ways to our own. He gazed up at the stars and moon and felt the sun on his face, the earth beneath his feet, the heat of the desert, the warmth of a fire, the waves rock his boat, and the rain soak his clothes. He saw the wind in the trees, the birds in the air, and experienced the smells of gardens and the sea. Experiencing these elements ourselves during weekly pilgrimages is a way to “ground” and connect us to Jesus’ time on this earth as a living, breathing man; teaching us the way to the Father; showing us the way of hope, peace, joy, love, and eternal life through his own life, death, and resurrection.

During this time of Lent, look for signs of God’s presence in nature and elements that Jesus also experienced. God is always seeking you. Be still and feel His presence. Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Set an intention to listen for God.

We live accelerated lives, and that gets us places. But we miss a lot along the way. A pilgrimage starts with slowing down, both the pace of your mind and the pace at which you move. The pace of your mind and movement become connected when you walk. And God adjusts His pace to match yours.

The steps you take during your pilgrimage begin with centering yourself. You may wish to begin with a centering prayer; a silent prayer in which you experience God’s presence within you. It may help to choose a sacred word that you can contemplate or silently repeat during your pilgrimage. The footsteps of your pilgrimage begin with releasing those things you need to get rid of; that separate you from God; then moving on to a receiving or center place where you meet God. The final steps of your journey are steps in trust and gratitude, leading back into the world in a new direction.

Six Weekly Pilgrimages

This Lenten pilgrimage guide contains information for six weekly pilgrimages. They are journeys you can take on your own, or take with others while observing safe COVID practices. These Lenten pilgrimages may take you to a physical place or you may wish to travel to a place in your memory or that you’ve created in your mind. If you have mobility issues, you may go choose a more accessible site than the one suggested, have someone take you on a drive, or use pictures you’ve taken or found on the internet. Each of the pilgrimages begin with centering yourself, followed by three phases: releasing, receiving, and returning, along with a concluding prayer, song, or other reading. The pilgrimages may be taken any day or time during the week, repeated as often as you like, or adjusted in any way that better meets your needs and helps you feel and observe God’s presence in the world.

Throughout Lent

You are invited anytime during Lent to tie a strip of cloth to the netting on the Cross at the Outdoor Chapel, located off the north side of the lower parking lot at Mountainside United Methodist Church. You may wish to write a message on the strip of cloth before tying it on the branch. Your message may be a sacred word of your choice; one that speaks to you during the time of Lent. Your message might be of something you wish to turn over to God...to leave behind. Or, your message might be a new covenant you make with God; a new direction you’d like to take.

A labyrinth is available in the lower parking lot beginning the second week in Lent (February 28th). Both the Outdoor Chapel and the Labyrinth are available for your use any day/time during Lent.

Week Three, March 7, Theme: Desert

Location: Labyrinth at lower parking lot of Mountainside United Methodist Church

Pilgrim journey

Walk the labyrinth located in the lower parking lot of Mountainside United Methodist Church. You may wish to bring something with you to leave at the center place; perhaps something that helps you keep your focus on God's promise like a cross. Walk slowly, feeling the ground beneath your feet.

Centering

Moses led the Israelites in the desert for 40 years. They often grumbled at the conditions and didn't trust that God would take care of them. We often grumble about our woes forgetting to keep our gaze on God and the many blessings he has given us. Choose an area near the labyrinth that seems barren of life or beauty. Then look up and notice the sky, the green leaves, and the life all around you. Remember that God is with you and the promise of Salvation.

Releasing

On your way into the labyrinth, release yourself from those things you wish to leave behind; that separate you from God; and fill yourself with God's presence.

Receiving

At the center of your journey, stand still with God. You may place what you brought with you in the receptacle at the center. Remember the words of Psalm 91:2 "I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Returning

As you return through the labyrinth, what do you want to bring back with you into the world? What burdens do you want to give up to the Lords care? Can you renew your trust in God?

Song

1. When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

2. Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, but our toil he doth richly repay; not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross, but is blest if we trust and obey. (Refrain)

3. But we never can prove the delights of his love until all on the altar we lay; for the favor he shows, for the joy he bestows, are for them who will trust and obey. (Refrain)

4. Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet, or we'll walk by his side in the way; what he says we will do, where he sends we will go; never fear, only trust and obey. (Refrain)

Amen

Notes: