

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 Four, March 14, Theme: Mountains

Location: Any outdoor space in the mountains or where you can see mountains; such as a trail, the Bosque, a park, your neighborhood, the Outdoor Chapel at the church, etc.

Pilgrim journey

Take a walk or sit outdoors and just be. Let God's beauty reorient you. It is in quiet that we listen and can hear God's words with his message to us.

Centering

In our world of busyness and chaos it is important to take time away from the things that control us and spent time in the world created by God. Romans 8:6 "The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace." Concentrate on opening your mind and soul to God's message for you.

Releasing

At the beginning of your travels, breathe deep. Feel the air God has given to you as it fills our body with life. Clear your mind so that you can appreciate all that God has provided for you during your time connecting to his creation.

Receiving

At the middle of your time in nature take a moment to really appreciate all that God has provided for you. Sit in silence listening to the present whispers from God's creation. Receive His love and strength.

Returning

As you end your journey, reflect on how you have been changed. Did you hear the quiet strength of God's creations? Look at the Sandia Mountains and reflect on the strength and security they represent. Know the strength and security God provides if you are just able to still your mind and open your heart. Take that quiet strength with you throughout this week.

Isaiah 54:10, "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you."

Prayer

Dear God:

*Please never let me be too busy to recognize your blessings or hear your voice. **Amen.***

Notes: