

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 Six, March 28, Theme: Trees and Branches

Location: Trail Head off Arroyo Seco Rd. (East side of N-14 between the Cedar Crest Post Office and Cabra Coffee)

Pilgrim journey

Walk the trails located above the public parking area between the Cedar Crest Post Office and Cabra Coffee. The way is well marked and paths loop through pinion and juniper forests. The path will be steep and rocky in some areas but not overly challenging. You may wish to carry something with you that helps to you keep you focused on God's promise; a cross, prayer beads or religious icon. Walk slowly, breathe deeply, and feel the ground beneath your feet.

Centering

Spring is upon us; the cycle of renewal reminds us of Gods promise to "make all things new again".

"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,' and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away." (Rev 21: 3-4)

Releasing

On your way up the path, 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, contemplate what it means to be made new again. The seasons, the moon, our physical being and spiritual journey, all move in cycles of decline and renewal. God makes all things new, not all new things. Remember, you are a new creation in Christ!

Returning

As you complete your journey, what do you want to bring back with you into the world? What burdens do you want to give up to the Lords care? Just as spring revives the dormant tree, let the Spirit revive your soul.

Song

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
consider all the works Thy hand hath made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Refrain

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee:
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee:
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin. (Refrain)

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!
(Refrain)

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and
hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze. (Refrain)