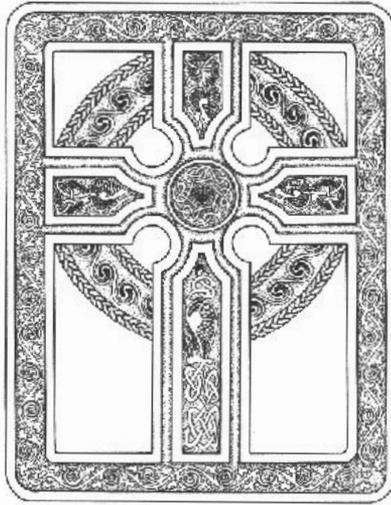


A Lenten Journey

Glendale Presbyterian Church

2006



Baptism Vows

Disciplines of Faith

Responding in Service

Prayer Partner: _____



An Invitation to a Journey

I would like to invite you to join us in a Lenten journey of spiritual growth. Lent is a season of preparation from Ash Wednesday to Easter. It was used in the early church as a period of preparation and training for candidates for baptism. I invite you to commit to joining us on this six and a half week journey, together with our congregation.

Content

This journey will consider our three vows of baptism and three disciplines of our faith. During Holy Week, we will consider the Passion of Christ.

- ◆ First Week Renouncing Sin
- ◆ Second Week The Lordship of Christ
- ◆ Third Week Disciplines of Scripture
- ◆ Forth Week Disciplines of Prayer
- ◆ Fifth Week The Discipline of Fasting
- ◆ Sixth Week Responding in Service
- ◆ Holy Week The Passion of Christ

What is the commitment?

Daily commitment: As we focus on different aspects of the faith from week to week, the daily exercises change. Most days though, you can finish the devotional in 5-10 minutes. As we look at the disciplines, you will be asked to commit to practicing them throughout the week.

Prayer Partners: As part of this process, I ask you to find a prayer partner. Agree to talk with him or her weekly to share your prayer requests. Commit to pray for one another daily. When you have chosen your prayer partner, write his or her name on the front cover of this booklet.

How I will help

I will be preaching each Sunday on the topic of our week. I will be in prayer for you. And, if you wish, I will send emails throughout the journey to remind you and encourage you to stay the course. Let us Journey together in this Lenten season.

In Christ's love,

First Week of LentRenouncing Sin

"Trusting in the Gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?"

In this first week of Lent, let us prayerfully consider this, our first vow of baptism. Let us come before scripture and God's Spirit each day and examine our lives for undiscovered and unrepentant sin. Each day this week, please read the passage listed on the right, then join in the prayer.

Ash Wednesday Ephesians 4:17-24

"Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity with a continual lust for more"

Heavenly Father, I confess I am not holy as you are. You walked in our world and did not run from sinners, but ate with them. Yet you remained pure. I confess that I have become jaded by repeated exposure to vulgarity and sexuality. Lord by your Spirit let me know again your sensitivity. Examine my thoughts and behaviors. Allow me to know, confess and repent of the impurity of my mind, heart and actions. Cleanse me O Lord, and make me holy again. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Thursday Ephesians 4:25

"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor"

Lord, Giver of Truth, in you there is no falsehood. I confess however that I am not even aware of the falsehood in my life. Show to me how I have lied to myself. Illuminate the times that I have spoken falsely to others. Guard my heart from lies told for convenience. Make me aware of lies I tell to protect my pride. Show me how I have lied to keep others from holding me accountable. Allow me to see the sinfulness of my lies and the damage they have done to myself and to others. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Friday Ephesians 4:26,27 & 31

"In your anger do not sin. Do not give the Devil a foothold. Get rid of bitterness."

Patient God, I thank you that you are quick to listen and slow to anger with me. Forgive me, for I am quick to anger. Show me the destructiveness and sin of my angry thoughts and actions. Shed light on the bitterness in my life. Allow me to see any malice that I hold for others. O Lord, I do not want to give the Devil a foothold in my life. Allow me to see, repent and confess the angry sin in my life. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Saturday Ephesians 4:28

“He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work.”

Holy God, if there is any way that I have taken that which does not belong to me, allow me to know it. Bring the light of your truth upon unethical choices I made and rationalized. Let me see if I steal time, or anything else from my employer. Shine your light upon the way I prepare my taxes. Show me if I use money for myself that rightly belongs to you. Allow me to see if I am taking a right of way, a place in line, or a larger share of something than I am due from another. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Sunday Ephesians 4:29, 5:4

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths... Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking.”

Jesus, allow me to hear if my words have become unwholesome. Make me aware of any obscenity in my speech. Allow me to have your sensitivity for foolish talk and coarse joking. Allow me to see how I have spoken and listened to things I should not have. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus, name I pray, amen.

Monday Ephesians 5:3

“Among you there must not be even a hint of ... greed.”

Sacrificing and self-giving Lord, you are generous beyond measure: even laying down your life for me. I confess that I am so self focused that I can not even see my greed. Allow me to see the ways that I look out for my own interest instead of the interest of others. Lord, have I been greedy with my family and those nearest to me? Did I set things up to benefit me years ago so that I can not even see the greed in my system? Lord, please show me each way that I am greedy. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Tuesday Ephesians 5:18

“Do not get drunk on wine... instead be filled with the Spirit”

Almighty God, I long for the good things in this life. I fill myself with food or alcohol to make me happy. I thank you for these good gifts. Allow me to see though Lord how I have indulged in unhealthy and sinful ways. Show me how I have used food as a drug. Show me the ways I have sought drugs or alcohol when I should have been seeking your Spirit. Allow me to know my sins of drunkenness and indulgence. *(Spend a moment in prayerful examination and confession.)* In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

2nd Week..... The Lordship of Christ

"Do you turn to Jesus and accept him as your Lord and Savior?"

Robert Boyd Munger, a Presbyterian Evangelist, wrote an essay called *My Heart, Christ's Home** In it, he led new believers through each of the "rooms" of their lives as a spiritual exercise of turning ourselves over to Christ. In this second week of Lent, as we remember our second vow of baptism to accept Jesus as our Lord, let us offer each of these areas of our lives to God.

Wednesday The Library

In the library of my mind, what books are on the shelves? What papers and magazines are on the coffee table for my reading? What are the pictures of my imagination on the walls? When I invite Jesus here are his eyes too pure to read some of the books? Are the images on the wall shameful in his presence?

"Take all the things you are reading that are not helpful, pure, good and true and throw them out. Fill the library with books of the bible. The images will be difficult to control, but hang this full size portrait of me on the wall."

Lord, how can I turn the library of my mind over to you today?

Thursday The Dining Room

I invite Jesus to the table in the room of my appetites and desires. What do I serve? Money, academic degrees, articles of fame and fortune, brochures for gadgets, and catalogs for clothes? "Why aren't you eating?" I ask.

"These aren't things that will satisfy," he says. "I have food that you know not of: doing the will of my Father in heaven." He lets me have a bite. How satisfying his food is! It makes the old seem like dry starchy paper.

Lord, how can I turn over to you the dining room of my life today?

Friday The Living Room

The living room is an intimate and comfortable room where Christ offers to meet and fellowship with me. I loved this room when I was a new Christian, but as responsibilities and pressures grew, I came here less often. One day I stop at the door and see Jesus. Master, have you been waiting here every day for me? Jesus says, "Yes, I told you that I would. You've been thinking of these times as a factor in your own spiritual growth, but you've forgotten that this means something to me also. I love you and want to fellowship with you."

Lord, how can I meet you in the living room more regularly?

(* The full essay can be found at www.spiritwatch.org/hearthome.htm)

Saturday..... The Workroom

In the workroom of my life are the gifts, talents, training and experience that God has given me. Jesus, help me take inventory of my tools. What do I have? How are they being used? **What am I producing for the kingdom?** Jesus, show me the tools you have given me and show me where you would like me to use them. Work through me by your Spirit.

(Spend a moment in prayerful examination of your gifts and tools, and offer them for service in God’s kingdom.)

Sunday..... The Rec Room

As a young Christian, some of my associations and friendships, activities and amusements were things I hoped Christ would not ask about. Jesus does ask, though, “*Are you going out? I would like to go with you!*” Do my friendships and recreational activities glorify God? God created me to enjoy him and glorify him forever. Am I doing things for fun or recreation that I don’t want Jesus to be a part of?

(Spend a moment in prayerful examination of your associations and friendships, activities and amusements and offer them to Christ’s Lordship.)

Monday..... The Hall Closet

“There is a peculiar odor in the house. There is something dead around here. It’s upstairs in the hall closet,” Jesus says. Under lock and key hidden from others and even from myself are a couple dead and rotten little personal things, carry-overs from my old life, and yet I love them. This is too much I protest. I’m not going to give those up as well. “Well, if you expect me to stay here with this odor, you are mistaken,” Jesus says. Alright, Jesus. I will give you the key, but I can’t do this on my own. I will need you to clean this out by your power.

(Spend a moment offering to Christ any hidden areas of your life.)

Tuesday..... Transferring the Title

Jesus, when I accepted you as my Savior and Lord, I became your disciple and I offered you my life. Over time, I have taken it back again and again. Lord, let me offer to you anew every area of my life. I offer my family and friends. I offer my future, my plans, my dreams and even my death. I offer you all my possessions. I submit the keys of my kingdom unto you and ask that you use all that I am, all that I have, all that I know and all that I will be to serve you and your kingdom.

(Spend a moment offering all of your life to your Lord.)

3rd Week.....Disciplines of Scripture

In the next three weeks, we will practice disciplines of our faith. This week, we focus on two disciplines of scripture: bible-study and devotional reading.

Bible StudyII Timothy 3:16-17

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Bible study is an opportunity to gain a firm knowledge of Gods word and allow our lives to be formed by it. There are two tasks. First, we need to rightly understand the passage. Second, we need to apply it to our lives.

1. Right Understanding

Pray for illumination. Ask the Holy Spirit to grant you understanding.

Learn the background. As best you can, answer these questions by skimming more of the book or reading your bible's study notes:

- ◆ Author: Does his situation affect how we interpret this passage?
- ◆ Genre: Is this a parable, poetry, prophetic history or a letter? How does its genre affect the way we interpret the passage?
- ◆ Purpose: Why was this written? What is it trying to accomplish?
- ◆ Audience: Who was this written to? What were their circumstances?
- ◆ Context: How does this fit into the whole book? How does it relate to the passage before and after?

Read carefully and thoroughly. Check the notes in your bible for passages that relate to this one and read them. If you have questions about the meaning or use of a word or idea, consult a bible dictionary or a concordance to look up other ways it was used in scripture.

Outline the flow of the passage. Summarize key points in your own words. Try to summarize the meaning or instruction of the whole passage.

2. Life Application

Spend some time considering or discussing whether this passage has any implications for how you should live. If there are many, which do you believe you should consider focusing on over the next week? Spend some time in prayer about your understanding of the passage and its application to your life.

Devotional Reading

Devotional reading is not as intensive as bible study, for it has another purpose. In contrast to bible study, the purpose of devotional reading is to

- ◆ Keep God's word at the forefront of our minds.
- ◆ Retain a scriptural perspective of the world.
- ◆ Understand the simple or obvious truths of a passage.
- ◆ Remember the knowledge we gained in previous study.
- ◆ Redirect the eyes of our heart onto Jesus Christ.

Where bible study is the heavy weight lifting at the gym, devotional reading is a quick daily jog. Devotional reading can be done in very small segments of time like 3-5 minutes, or a longer time like an hour. Its benefit is not as much from its intensity, but its frequency.

When you read devotionally, read directly through a small section like a chapter of scripture. Listen for God's voice as you read. Allow God to speak to you through the passage, (and by the Spirit as you read.) Spend time in prayer considering before God anything God raised through and about the passage or about your life.

Putting it into practice

Make a concrete plan for at least one hour-long opportunity this week to study scripture by yourself or with others. In addition, please commit to and plan to read devotionally each day that you are not studying.

To hold yourself accountable, please record your daily study or reading

Wednesday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

Thursday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

Friday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

Saturday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

Sunday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

Monday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

Tuesday: Devotional Bible Study Passage: _____

4th Week..... Disciplines of Prayer

This week, we focus on two disciplines of prayer, the ACTS prayer form, and prayer journaling.

ACTS as a Form of Prayer

ACTS is a form of prayer widely taught and recommended by the *Presbyterian Directory for Worship*. This structured prayer guides us to a form that includes more parts of prayer than our often prayed joys and concerns. To follow this form, spend some time in each of these parts of prayer:

- ◆ **Adoration:** Praise God for who he is, rather than what he has done. Consider God's perfection and holiness. Remember God's place in your life and world as Creator and Lord.
- ◆ **Confession:** Confess to God the ways that you fall short of God's perfection. Consider your sin, repent and confess.
- ◆ **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for his forgiveness and salvation. Spend time in gratitude remembering things God has done for you.
- ◆ **Supplication:** Remembering all God has done for you, offer to God your concerns and desires. Prayerfully consider the needs of others, and offer them to God. Offer yourself to God's service and ask that God would use you.

Prayer Journaling

Prayer journaling is a discipline that helps us remember what we have prayed for, and therefore how God has answered our prayers. In addition, it keeps a record of our prayer to help hold us accountable to pray. Finally, it is a place to record the thoughts that the Spirit leads us to in the midst of prayer. Some people write out their prayers. For the sake of brevity of space this week, you only need take notes following prayer.

Putting it into practice

Set aside a time each day for prayer. Read the devotional scripture. Spend time in prayer using either the ACTS form or your own. Use the ACTS form at least three times this week to learn it as a prayer tool for the rest of your life. Memorize what the letters stand for.

After you have prayed, journal what you prayed for, and any insights God led you to in prayer.

Prayer Journal

Wednesday.....Matthew 6:5-8

Thursday Matthew 6:9-15

Friday I Thessalonians 5:16-18

SaturdayActs 12:5-17

Sunday Psalm 51

Monday..... II Corinthians 12:7-10

Tuesday Eph. 3:14-21

5th Week.....The Discipline of Fasting

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting."

Though Jesus did not explicitly command us to fast, it is clear that he and his disciples fasted. In the passage above Jesus did not begin 'if you fast,' but 'when you fast.' Fasting is in harmony with Jesus' teachings.

Fasting Facts

- ◆ **Fasting is a spiritual discipline.** Every time we long for that which we are deprived we can remember how much more we need God than this. It is an act of devotion that focuses the eyes of our hearts on our Lord.
- ◆ **Not for weight loss:** It is not the purpose of the fasting to lose weight, nor is it an efficient means of doing so.
- ◆ **Fasting is enacted prayer:** Just as we do not pray to obligate God, we do not fast seeking a reward. Fasting, like any other act of devotion, does not obligate God to act. We do not control God through fasting.
- ◆ **Fasting is generally safe:** Healthy individuals are able to fast without deleterious effect. However, if you are under the care of a doctor, have diabetes, or another condition that could be effected by your eating, consult your doctor about the safety of fasting in your situation.
- ◆ **Fasting is not only from food:** While fasting traditionally is abstaining from food, one can fast from anything. The practice of giving up something for Lent, whether that be food, an activity like watching television, or a delight or pleasure, is a form of fasting. To be an effective discipline it should be something that you will miss daily.
- ◆ **How do I fast?** Choose a time period for your fast that is challenging but not unreasonably aggressive. If this is your first fast, consider a 24 hour fast from 6:30PM after dinner to 6:30PM before dinner the next day. If you would like to be more aggressive, try a 30 hour fast from 12:30PM after lunch until 6:30PM before dinner the next day. You may if you choose continue to drink caloric drinks like juices.

Putting it into Practice

If you have not already given up something for Lent, please choose something like soda, deserts or television to give up for the week. Second, if you are able, plan one period to fast from food. Each day read the passages on fasting. Briefly journal your experience. Note your success, failure and any spiritual benefit of your fast. Remember to ask the Holy Spirit to help you fast, and ask your prayer partner to pray daily for you.

Fasting Journal

Wednesday..... Isaiah 58:3-7

Thursday Matthew 4:1-4

Friday Matthew 6:16-18

Saturday Acts 14:23

Sunday Daniel 9:1-3

Monday..... Ezra 8:21-23

Tuesday Esther 4:12-16

6th Week..... Responding in Service

"Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study and service, and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?"

This week we consider the third vow of baptism printed above. Let us reflect on how are we being used in service for the kingdom of God. Each day this week, please read the passage listed on the right, then join in the prayer.

Wednesday Matthew 25:14-30

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things."

Jesus, you have blessed me with gifts, talents and resources. I do not want to bury them in the sand, but I want them to be used for your kingdom. This week, Lord, lead me by your Spirit. Allow me to know what I can do each day to serve your kingdom.

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection asking how you could be used today.)

Thursday II Corinthians 8:1-4

"For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints."

Lord, you are generous beyond measure. You love a cheerful giver. Show me your heart for generosity. What do I have that I should be sharing? With whom would you like me to be generous?

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of how God used you for the kingdom yesterday, and ask how you could be used today.)

Friday Luke 10:25-37

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Lord, I want to be a good neighbor like the good Samaritan. Allow me to see, Lord, who are the neighbors who you would have me care for. Throughout my day, lead me to be involved in the lives and needs of others, even strangers.

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of how God used you for the kingdom yesterday, and ask how you could be used today.)

Saturday John 4:1-26

"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

Lord you spoke to the one who others would not. Give me your eyes to see the outcasts in my daily life. Give me Christ's heart to reach out to them, to bless them with my company, and to be available to touch them for the kingdom as you touched the woman at the well.

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of how God used you for the kingdom yesterday, and ask how you could be used today.)

Sunday Psalm 84:10

"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."

Lord, inspire in me such love for service in your church. Lead me to see what task I can do or role I can play in your congregation. What time or gifts do I have that you desire to be used in the church? Do you desire for me to be a member of a ministry, a teacher, or a leader? How can I serve you in our church?

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of how God used you for the kingdom yesterday, and ask how you could be used today.)

Monday Matthew 6:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Lord, you prayed for those who nailed your hands to the cross. Loving my enemies is one of the most challenging instructions you give. I ask that your divine love would move in me. Allow me to see the enemies I need to love in thought, in prayer and in deed.

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of how God used you for the kingdom yesterday, and ask how you could be used today.)

Tuesday John 13:1-17

"When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "

Lord, teach me how to humble myself in service to my brothers and sisters. You asked me to wash others' feet as you did. Show me what you would have me do today to serve in this way.

(Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of how God used you for the kingdom yesterday, and ask how you could be used today.)

Holy Week..... The Passion of Christ

In these last few days of Lent, as we prepare for the joyous celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday, let us consider the sacrifice that Jesus made during Holy Week.

Wednesday.....Matthew 26:1-46

(In preparation for Easter, read devotionally this last evening of Jesus ministry. Note thoughts from your reading and prayer)

Maundy Thursday.....Matthew 26:47-27:26

(In preparation for Easter, read devotionally Jesus' betrayal, arrest and trial. Note thoughts from your reading and prayer)

Good Friday.....Matthew 27:27-66

(In preparation for Easter, read devotionally Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial. Note thoughts from your reading and prayer)

Saturday.....1 Peter 2:20-25

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Jesus, I thank you for this Lenten journey. I thank you for the work that you have done in my life as I have tried to submit myself to you for my spiritual growth. Thank you, Lord, for your sacrifice on my behalf. You suffered greatly that I could be healed and forgiven of my sin. Jesus, continue to prepare me today for the celebration of your resurrection tomorrow.

(In preparation for Easter, Spend a moment in prayerful reflection of what Jesus gave that you might have life..)

