



WILDERNESS

&

# WANDERING



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

2024 LENTEN MEDITATIONS



# introduction

Lent is a season of self examination, prayer, fasting and reflection. It is a 40-day period in which we are invited to examine our lives in order to reorient ourselves toward God and toward a more whole and complete self.

In the early church the Lenten observance was a period of time in which new converts to Christianity were prepared for Baptism, and was a reminder to the whole body of our common call to be reconciled to God and to one another through Baptism.

As you begin your Lenten journey, the Church invites you to the observance of a Holy Lent. Let these next six weeks be an opportunity to engage more fully in the practice of prayer and meditation, to renew a commitment to regular spiritual practice and act as the hands of Christ in the world.

## how to use this booklet

The prayers, reflections and activities provided in this booklet are intended to be an aid along the journey of Lent. These short meditations may be used as you begin your day, as a break in the midst of a busy day, or as you prepare for your night's rest.

As you go through the Season of Lent, may you be blessed with God's presence and with a renewed sense of deep connection to the Divine.

*God of infinite mercy,  
grant that we who know your pity  
may rejoice in your forgiveness  
and gladly forgive others  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.*

Bishop Deon K. Johnson,  
XI Bishop of Missouri

## Ash Wednesday

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*Psalm 103, Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

Temptation comes in many forms.

Bread. Arrogance. Idolatry.

Jesus was tested by the great Tempter and overcame.

How do we live past the temptations of our own day?

Greed. Self-centeredness. Nationalism.

Like Jesus we have a companion when tested.

Look for angels.

## Thursday after Ash Wednesday

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*Psalm 1, Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Luke 9:18-25*

To live with you is to die to self;

You lead me to walk your way

You watch over me; my heart rejoices

Let my prayer today be,

“Your will be done, your kingdom come.”

## Friday after Ash Wednesday

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*Psalm 1, Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Luke 9:18-25*

You are my comfort. You are my guide.

You give me hope when things go wrong.

You carry me when I can go no further.

You are the God of my past and the God of my future.

You are...

## Saturday after Ash Wednesday

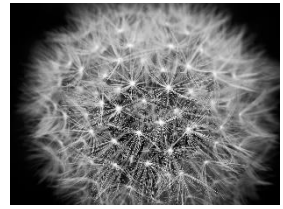
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*Psalm 86:1-11, Isaiah 58:9b-14, Luke 5:27-32*

Sinner. Outcast. Unclean. Tax Collector.  
Not worthy of a second glance.  
Not worthy of a second chance.  
Not welcome at the table.  
Good people shy away.  
But he breaks bread. Invites.  
Son of God eating with the scum.  
"I call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Wilderness notes:

Wandering thoughts:



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## faith in the wilderness

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### the first Sunday in Lent

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*Psalm 32, Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7, Matthew 4:1-11*

Bread. Self. Worship.

Tempted in every way. Dripping wet you are sent.

Yet Jesus did not falter, faint or fail.

Not just bread, not just words, and not just worship.

God is more interested in our hearts than our offerings.

### Monday in the first week in Lent

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*Psalm 19:7-14, Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18, Matthew 25:31-46*

God's love is perfect.

We walk in love, as we are loved.

We try to love one another, even when it's hard.

We reach out to help feed the hungry, clothe the naked.

We do all this to show that we love God.

We are God's love. Act like it.

## Tuesday in the first week in Lent

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*Psalm 34:15-22, Isaiah 55:6-11, Matthew 6:7-15*

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
My soul boasts in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.  
O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt together.  
Find joy.

## Wednesday in the first week in Lent

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*Psalm 51:11-18, Jonah 3:1-10, Luke 11:29-32*

God of love hear the cry of those who yearn for love;  
fractured families, broken homes neglected, unwanted, alone.  
May you know  
The peace of God,  
The love of God,  
The justice of God,  
The healing and mercy of God.

## Thursday in the first week in Lent

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*Psalm 138, Esther (Apocrypha) 14:1-6, 12-14, Matthew 7:7-12*

Treat others the way you want to be treated.  
Not that hard, yet infinitely difficult.  
We fail. A lot. We try again. Often.  
Make a U-turn where possible.  
God will always care and provide.  
"Ask and it will be given unto you; seek and you shall find."

## Friday in the first week in Lent

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*Psalm 130, Ezekiel 18:21-28, Matthew 5:20-26*

Hear the cry of those who yearn for mercy;  
convicted, in need of your Grace,  
contrite, humble, bowed down, broken.  
Help me offer my gift, connect to sister, brother, sibling.  
That hand in hand we can walk together.

## Saturday in the first week in Lent

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*Psalm 119:1-8, Deuteronomy 26:16-19, Matthew 5:43-48*

With great reward comes great responsibility,  
And greater expectations.  
We imperfect children of God seek the image of Christ,  
hoping to somehow achieve all that is asked of us...  
but we fail.  
Always.  
This is our life's work: Try again. Try again.

Wilderness notes:

Wandering thoughts:





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## freed in the wandering

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### the second Sunday in Lent

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*Psalm 121, Genesis 12:1-4a, John 3:1-17*

God, grant us simplicity of faith  
and a generosity of service,  
that gives without counting cost.  
A life overflowing with Grace,  
poured out from the One who gave everything,  
God, grant us simplicity of faith  
And a willingness to share it.

### Monday in the second week in Lent

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*Psalm 79:1-9, Daniel 9:3-10, Luke 6:27-38*

Love your enemies  
so go and serve all others  
give so to receive  
seek so you may find  
knock to be seen  
run in love and not get weary.

## Tuesday in the second week in Lent

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*Psalm 50:7-15, 22-24, Isaiah 1:2-4, 16-20, Matthew 23:1-12*

I am God, you are mine.  
Grace is my gift freely given.  
Do what is right for the sake of justice.  
Call on me; do not go it alone to seek the affirmation of others.  
Be modest and humble. You are God's own.

## Wednesday in the second week in Lent

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*Psalm 31:9-16, Jeremiah 18:1-11, 18-20, Matthew 20:17-28*

Be gracious Lord, I am in distress  
I suffer from grief, sorrow and misery.  
I am the scorn of my adversaries and shunned.  
Many plot against me.  
I trust that You will deliver me.  
My life is in Your hands.  
Walk with me. Always. In all ways.

## Thursday in the second week in Lent

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*Psalm 1, Jeremiah 17:5-10, Luke 16:19-31*

Circle us, Lord,  
with the light of your presence within this world.  
Enable us to be overcomers of fear and temptation.  
Enable us to be victors over sin and despair.  
Enable us to become that which you would desire.  
Circle us, Lord.

## Friday in the second week in Lent

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*Psalm 105:16-22, Genesis 37:3-4, 12-28, Matthew 21:33-43*

For each step we take, be our guide.  
Each load that we bear, be our strength.  
Each mountain we might face, be our power.  
Each river that might impede, be our safety.  
Each place where we might rest, be our peace.  
Each sunrise and sunset, be our joy.

## Saturday in the second week in Lent

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*Psalm 103:1-4(5-8)9-12, Mica 7:14-15, 18-20, Luke 15:11-32*

Forgive those things we have done  
which have caused you sadness,  
and those things we should have done  
that would have brought you joy.  
In both we have failed  
ourselves, and you.

Wilderness notes:

Wandering thoughts:



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## forgiven in the wilderness

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### The third Sunday in Lent

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*Psalm 95, Exodus 17:1-7, John 4:5-42*

God of light and God of night,  
Creator of seed and mountain raindrop and fountain;  
We bring our offering of praise.  
God of right and God of might, lover of child and childless,  
rich and homeless. We bring our offering of praise.

### Monday in the third week in Lent

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*Psalm 42:1-7, 2 Kings 5:1-15b, Luke 4:23-30d*

Sometimes it is just in the small stuff  
No grand show - just an everyday occurrence  
A hug, word, laugh; A sorrow shared, God is there.

Open your eyes!  
Step back; listen, look, feel.  
Carefully, thoughtfully, openly, trustingly, lovingly, God is there.

## Tuesday in the third week in Lent

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*Psalm 25:3-10, Daniel (Apocrypha) 3:25-27, 24-43, Matthew 18:21-35*

You call us to service;  
to be your eyes and ears,  
hands and voice in this your world.  
To open our eyes not only to the beauty and love which you  
create,  
but to the injustice, hate, and suffering that humankind  
generates.

## Wednesday in the third week in Lent

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*Psalm 78:1-6, Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 5-9, Matthew 5:17-18*

Christ fulfills the law of love.  
Not to keep score.  
Not to hold it against us.  
Not to laud it over.  
Christ fulfills the law of love,  
to draw the circle wider, and yet wider, and wider still.  
Until there is no one outside the reach of love.

## Thursday in the third week in Lent

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*Psalm 95:6-11, Jeremiah 7:23-28, Luke 11:14-23*

Stand in hope.  
Stand in faith.  
Stand in joy.  
Stand in forgiveness.  
Stand in peace.  
Stand in love.  
Stand in, for Jesus. Always.

## Friday in the third week in Lent

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*Psalm 81:8-14, Hosea 14:1-9, Mark 12:28-34*

Compassion isn't simply feeling sorry for the other;  
Looking at the news and feeling sorry  
between the peas and potatoes.  
Compassion is taking heart to walk  
alongside the stranger and friend.  
Walk compassion on the earth.  
Look compassion into the world.

## Saturday in the third week in Lent

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*Psalm 51:15-20, Hosea 6:1-6, Luke 18:9-14*

Who are you?  
Are you a parent, a child?  
Are you the favorite uncle, the fun aunt?  
Are you the doting grandparent, the loving cousin?  
You are the beloved of God. Begin there.

Wilderness notes:

Wandering thoughts:



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found in the wandering

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## The fourth Sunday in Lent

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*Psalm 23, 1 Samuel 16:1-13, John 9:1-41*

Gracious God, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. –BCP 1979

## Monday in the fourth week in Lent

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*Psalm 30:1-6, 11-13, Isaiah 65:17-25, John 4:43-54*

When you need help,  
God comforts you.  
God heals you.  
God makes you strong.  
God gives you joy.  
Give God Thanks.

## Tuesday in the fourth week in Lent

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*Psalm 46:1-8, Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12, John 5:1-18*

Life presents times of change and adversity  
over which we have no control.

God is ever-present and our strength and comfort.

Look, see, pray, and fear not,  
for God's strength helps and protects us in troubled times.

## Wednesday in the fourth week in Lent

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*Psalm 145:8-19, Isaiah 49:8-15, John 5:19-29*

The love of God,  
The light of Christ,  
And the power of the Spirit;  
Control your every thought and action  
This day and all days. Amen.

## Thursday in the fourth week in Lent

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*Psalm 106:6-7, 19-23, Exodus 32:7-14, John 5:30-47*

I am who I am,  
mixed motives and excuses;  
blur of memories, hopes, fears.  
Somewhere between grateful and gripe,  
wonder and routine.



## Friday in the fourth week in Lent

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*Psalm 34:15-22, Wisdom 2:1a, 12-24, John 7:1-2,10,25-30*

Eternal One,  
Praying would be simpler with  
a single mind and pure heart;  
if I stop hiding from myself, from you.  
Help me accept me as small enough,  
aware enough, simple enough,  
smart enough, foolish enough to enjoy peace.

## Saturday in the fourth week in Lent

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*Psalm 7:6-11, Jeremiah 11:18-20, John 7:37-52*

You fill me up to overflowing,  
You give me more than I could ask.  
Like a mighty river welling up from eternity  
Your followers are called to be.  
Help me be a living spring  
Springing from your love.

Wilderness notes:

Wandering thoughts:



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## familiar in the wilderness

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### the fifth Sunday in Lent

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*Psalm 130, Ezekiel 37:1-14, John 11:1-45*

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found. Amen. –BCP 1979

### Monday in the fifth week in Lent

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*Psalm 23, Daniel (Apocrypha) 13, John 8:1-11*

through the dark valley  
our shepherd shall watch over  
leading us to rest  
your rod and staff  
comforting me, my trials  
leading me, still waters  
my shepherd holds out a hand even as I fall  
returning me home

## Tuesday in the fifth week in Lent

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*Psalm 102:15-22, Numbers 21:4-9, John 8:21-30*

Jesus left them alone  
To their own devices and devising.  
He gave a warning,  
Be prepared for my departure  
But even in leaving he stayed with them.  
Stay with us Christ Jesus  
We need your presence.

## Wednesday in the fifth week in Lent

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*Canticle 2 or 13, Daniel 3:14-20, 24-28, John 8:31-42*

Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the Way everlasting.

## Thursday in the fifth week in Lent

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*Psalm 105:4-11 Genesis 17:1-8 John 8:51-59*

Author of Being,  
You know my innermost being.  
You called and created.  
You comfort and cajole.  
You chastise and care.  
You know me, better than myself.  
Help me to know you.

## Friday in the fifth week in Lent

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*Psalm 18:1-7, Jeremiah 20:7-13, John 10:31-42*

Show me a sign.

Perform a miracle so that I can believe.

End my doubts and uncertainties.

Give me clarity and assurance of your presence.

"Take a breath." That is your sign, miracle, doubt dispelled.

## Saturday in the fifth week in Lent

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*Psalm 85, Ezekiel 37:21-28, John 11:45-53*

God brought prosperity to the land,  
and a covenant to people.

God journeys with us.

We feel you if we listen and pay attention.

Resurrect us anew, like Lazarus.

Unbind us and let us go.

Wilderness notes:

Wandering thoughts:



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## Fortunate in the wandering

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### Palm Sunday

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*Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Isaiah 50:4-9a, Matthew 21:1-11*

Jesus rode into Jerusalem not as a conquering king, but in humility, the Servant King, ready to complete the task for which he had walked this world. Forgive us those times when we think too highly of ourselves and remind us always that you ask from us lives dedicated to service, to you and to our neighbors, wherever and whoever they might be.

### Monday of Holy Week

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*Psalm 36:5-11, Isaiah 42:1-9, John 12:1-11*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. –BCP 1979

## Tuesday of Holy Week

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*Psalm 71:1-14, Isaiah 49:1-7, John 12:20-36*

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. –BCP 1979

## Wednesday of Holy Week

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*Psalm 70, Isaiah 50:4-9a, John 13:21-32*

When waking I generally know how my day will unfold. Disagreements, changes occur that make adjustments necessary. I make the best of it knowing that God has my back and will see me through my difficulties.

## Maundy Thursday

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*Psalm 116:1, 10-17, Exodus 12:1-14, John 13:1-17, 31b-35*

Almighty God, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

–BCP 1979

## Good Friday

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*Psalm 22, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, John 18:1-19:42*

What is truth?

It is a fair question to ask.

Everyone has their side of the story.

Everyone has a truth.

Pilot has heard them all.

When did truth become Truth?

When God's love story joined ours on the cross.



## Holy Saturday

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*Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16, Job 14:1-14, Matthew 27:57-66*

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. –BCP 1979

Remind us often Lord,  
when we are feeling

**proud,  
arrogant,  
beyond reproach,  
pleased with ourselves,  
self sufficient in our ways,  
that for such as us  
and better  
and worse  
you walked a road  
that took you to a cruel cross,  
and rose again to show us where  
we might look for rescue  
as from this lofty perch  
we fall.**



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