

Rooted in God's Promises

2021 Lenten Devotional Guide



HEBRON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Rooted in God's Promises

The season of Lent in the church year is an ideal time to consider our rootedness in the promises of God. The testimony of God's provision and steadfast love reach far back into history. When God chose to enter our human condition in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, it was for the purpose of extending that steadfast love into eternity. The observance of Lent is a growing discipline for many of us, as we discover how Lenten practices root us in the life and witness of Jesus Christ and prepare us for the celebration of the Resurrection at Easter.

To that end, we invite you to a Lenten practice of daily Scripture reading and prayer. This devotional booklet is designed to be used with a provided kit containing a small pot, soil, and flower seed. If you are accessing this booklet online, you can use it with a pot and seed of your own, or simply by imagining the germination and growth process of a flower seed.

The Scripture passages from each day are drawn from the daily and Sunday readings in the Revised Common Lectionary. You will notice repetition with the Psalm for each week. Please don't skip over this after you've read it the first time. Read the assigned Psalm again each day and see what different insights present themselves.

While the devotional writings are my own, this Lenten project has been a team effort. Appreciation belongs to Lori Alford, Markus Compton, Jeanne Napier, Brenda Morgan and Cheryl Nuckols.

I hope you will find this project a worthy traveling companion on your Lenten journey this year.

Connie Weaver, Pastor
February 2021



Getting Started

In your take-home kit we have provided:

- a 4" clay pot and tray
- potting soil mix
- dwarf French Marigold seeds

1. Transfer the soil to the clay pot
2. Plant the entire bag of seed $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep
3. Water the soil
4. Place the pot in a sunny location
5. After initial watering, water from the bottom by placing water in the tray
6. Seed will germinate in 10 days or less
7. Enjoy watching your seed grow and flower during the Lenten season



Week 1: A Place to Be Prepared

A New York City photographer named Greg Miller became fascinated with people who wore ashes on Ash Wednesday. He was surprised by how willing his subjects were to be photographed wearing ashes on their foreheads. “There’s a difference between what the ashes look like to someone else and the way people feel about having them,” Miller said. “They are still wearing this mark of repentance, which looks striking perhaps to others, but actually they are feeling the relief of that” as they go back about their lives. Ash Wednesday is a day intended to remind us of our mortality and our dependence on God, as we enter the season of Lent leading up to Easter. But there can be joy in hearing the words, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” What a relief it is to be reminded that we are indeed mortal, and for that reason, we are not dependent on what we can accomplish for ourselves. Our faith is in what God can do for us and through us. As you prepare your pot for its seed, remember that God has given you space to be protected and prepared during this Lenten season.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:2,10

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Ash Wednesday

February 17 Psalm 51:1-17; Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21, 4:1-11

February 18 Psalm 25:1-10, Daniel 9:1-14, 1 John 1:3-10

February 19 Psalm 25:1-10, Daniel 9:15-25a, 2 Timothy 4:1-5

February 20 Psalm 25:1-10, Psalm 32, Matthew 9:2-13

First Sunday in Lent

February 21 Psalm 25:1-10, Genesis 9:8-17, 1 Peter 3:18-22

February 22 Psalm 77, Job 4:1-21, Ephesians 2:1-10

February 23 Psalm 77, Job 5:8-27, 1 Peter 3:8-18a



Week 2: A Place to Grow Roots

One of the things the gospel writers make sure to show us is that Jesus was a faithful Jew. His identity as the promised Messiah was rooted deeply in the historic covenant of God with the people of Israel. When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where he would be tempted by hunger and the prospect of earthly power, he was sharing in a practice undertaken by many Jewish men who wanted to deepen their relationship with God. Jesus' testing was unique, of course, because of his identity as the Son of God. The writer of Matthew's gospel tells us that the devil tried to tempt Jesus to use his power to meet his own needs and to elevate himself in the eyes of the world. Jesus was able to rebut the devil's words through his knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. Like Jesus, you and I are better able to recognize and resist temptation when our roots go deep into our Scriptures. As you care for the seed in your pot, ask God to give you a desire to grow deeper into the Word.

One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.
Matthew 4:4

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February 24 Psalm 77, Proverbs 30:1-9, Matthew 4:1-11

February 25 Psalm 22:23-31, Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18, Romans 3:21-31

February 26 Psalm 22:23-31, Genesis 16:1-6, Romans 4:1-12

February 27 Psalm 22:23-31, Genesis 16:7-15, Mark 8:27-30

Second Sunday in Lent

February 28 Psalm 22:23-31, Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, Mark 8:31-38

March 1 Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45, Genesis 21:1-17, Hebrew 1:8-12

March 2 Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45, Genesis 22:1-19, Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19



Week 3: A Place to Be Nourished

One of the defining events for the Jewish people of Jesus' day was God's deliverance of their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. It is a story that is remembered even today in the observance of the Jewish Passover. The Hebrew people who were enslaved in Egypt longed for freedom. But they were also accustomed to the ways of those who held them captive. When God made it possible for Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, God was also leading them into a wilderness where they would need to learn to trust God for their future. God gave them manna to eat, but for many of them, that was not enough. They remembered all the good things they had to eat back in the place where they were slaves. They wanted meat, and not just manna. So the Lord brought quails on a wind from the sea and let them drop in the camp. There's more to this story, but what the Israelites would later remember in their hymns is that the Lord met their need for nourishment in the wilderness. As you care for your tiny plant this week, ask God to help you rely on Christ's nourishment for the meeting of your needs.

They asked, and he brought quails, and gave them food from heaven in abundance.
Psalm 105:40

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March 3 Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45, Jeremiah 30:12-22, John 12:36-43

March 4 Psalm 19, Exodus 19:1-9a, 1 Peter 2:4-10

March 5 Psalm 19, Exodus 19:9b-15, Acts 7:30-40

March 6 Psalm 19, Exodus 19:16-25, Mark 9:2-8

Third Sunday in Lent

March 7 Psalm 19, Exodus 20:1-17, John 2:13-22

March 8 Psalm 84, 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22, 1 Corinthians 3:10-23

March 9 Psalm 84, 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19, Hebrews 9:23-28



Week 4: A Place to Be Watered

Water is an easy thing to take for granted when we live in a place where water tends to be plentiful. But there are places in our country and all over the world where good water is a scarce commodity. Many stories in our Scriptures center around the need for good water, both literal and figurative. The presence of real water for people and animals is seen as a blessing that comes from God. The presence of God's Spirit is figurative water that cleanses and refreshes and strengthens. In one of our readings for this week, a psalmist says that people who long to be in the presence of God can be like water that brings life to a barren land. As you care for your growing flower this week, thank God for the water you enjoy, and ask God to help you be a bringer of life to barren places.

*They make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.
They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion.
Psalm 84:6-7*

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March 10	Psalm 84, Ezra 6:1-16, Mark 11:15-19
March 11	Psalm 107:1-3,17-22, Genesis 9:8-17, Ephesians 1:3-6
March 12	Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Daniel 12:5-13, Ephesians 1:7-14
March 13	Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Numbers 20:22-29, John 3:1-13
<i>Fourth Sunday in Lent</i>	
March 14	Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-21
March 15	Psalm 107:1-16, Exodus 15:22-27, Hebrews 3:1-6
March 16	Psalm 107:1-16, Numbers 20:1-13, 1 Corinthians 10:6-13



Week 5: A Place to Receive Light

One of the interesting things about plants is that they grow toward the light. If you've ever had a houseplant, you know that in order to grow a balanced plant, you have to provide equal measures of light to all sides of the plant. Otherwise, it will grow lopsided. It will be healthy on one side, and less healthy on the other side. People also need light in order to be healthy. Our exposure to natural light causes our bodies to produce substances that affect our health and happiness. We need light, and we need Light. We need earthly light for our bodies, and we need heavenly Light for our spirits. Jesus is that heavenly Light, who dispels spiritual darkness and who makes it possible for us to travel through life without stumbling or losing our way. As you care for your flower this week, ask Jesus to help you follow his Light.

Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

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March 17 Psalm 107:1-16, Isaiah 60:15-22, John 8:12-20

March 18 Psalm 51:1-12, Isaiah 30:15-18, Hebrews 4:1-13

March 19 Psalm 51:1-12, Exodus 30:1-10, Hebrews 4:14-5:4

March 20 Psalm 51:1-12, Habakkuk 3:2-13, John 12:1-11

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 21 Psalm 51:1-12, Jeremiah 31:31-34, John 12:20-33

March 22 Psalm 119:9-16, Isaiah 43:8-13, 2 Corinthians 3:4-11

March 23 Psalm 119:9-16, Isaiah 44:1-8, Acts 2:14-24



Week 6: A Place to Grow

When captive Jews were released from Babylon to return home to Palestine in the 6th century before Christ, one of the things they wanted to do was to rebuild the destroyed temple in Jerusalem. But it took them a while to get going on the project. They were more interested in building good houses for themselves than they were in rebuilding the house of the Lord. As God spoke through the prophet Haggai, influential people were stirred to commence work on the temple. Haggai reminded them that God can take nothing and turn it into something. If you were to look at the seed in your pot without knowing its potential, you would discard it without bothering to give it a place to grow. Often in our own lives, God plants seeds that we have trouble recognizing as anything significant, and so we don't give them space to grow. As you care for your plant this week, ask God to show you what potential lies uncared for in your life.

Work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts, according to the promise that I made to you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear.

Haggai 2:4b-5

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March 24	Psalm 119:9-16, Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23, John 12:34-50
March 25	Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Deuteronomy 16:1-8, Philippians 2:1-11
March 26	Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Jeremiah 33:1-9, Philippians 2:12-18
March 27	Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Jeremiah 33:10-16, Mark 10:32-34, 46-52
<i>Palm Sunday</i>	
March 28	Psalm 31:9-16, Isaiah 50:4-9a, John 12:12-16
March 29	Psalm 36:5-11, Isaiah 42:1-9, John 12:1-11
March 30	Psalm 71:1-14, Isaiah 49:1-7, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

