**Lent 2023: Growing Closer to God through Journaling[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Lent is the season of the church calendar when Christians around the world prepare their spirits for the Easter miracle: life overcoming death. This year we’re suggesting journaling, a prayer practice, to help you intentionally focus your mind, body and soul on God’s love. We also invite you to come to a sharing group after coffee hour each Sunday; it will be a chance to talk with others about your journaling experiences.

We will be reflecting on six words and scripture passages during Lent:

**Sunday, Feb. 26:** **Peace** [**Matthew 5:9**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-5-9/) **and** [**John 16:33**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-16-33/)

**Sun., March 5**: **Light Philippians 2:14-17**

**Sun., March 12**: **Compassion Mark 10:46-59**

**Sun., March 19**: **Joy John 6:7-13**

**Sun., March 26:  Patience Romans 8: 24-28**

**Sun., April 2:**    **Forgiveness Acts 26:15-18**

**The Journaling Reflection Ritual**

1. Create a Sacred Space, a location and time conducive to thought and prayer.
2. Light a candle.
3. Recite the Lord’s Prayer.
4. Respond to these 3 questions in your journal:
5. What does (word and passage of the week) mean to me?
6. Where have I experienced (word of the week)?
7. How can I bring (word of the week) into the lives of those around me?

**Sunday, Feb. 26:** **Peace**

[**Matthew 5:9**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-5-9/) -Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

[**John 16:33**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-16-33/) - I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution, but take courage: I have conquered the world!

**Sun., March 5**: **Light**

**Philippians 2:14-17**: Do all things without murmuring and arguing, **15**so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world, **16**holding forth the word of life so that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

**Sun., March 12**: **Compassion**

**Mark 10:46-59: 46**They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. **47**When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” **48**Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” **49**Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” **50**So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **51**Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10%3A46-59&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-24634a)] let me see again.” **52**Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

**Sun., March 19**: **Joy**

**John 6:7-13:** **7**Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” **8**One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, **9**“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” **10**Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place, so they[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+6%3A7-13&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-26257a)] sat down, about five thousand in all. **11**Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. **12**When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” **13**So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.

**Sun., March 26:  Patience**

**Romans 8: 24-28: 24**For in[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A+24-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-28126a)] hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? **25**But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. **26**Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A+24-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-28128b)] with groanings too deep for words. **27**And God,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A+24-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-28129c)] who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A+24-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-28129d)] intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. **28**We know that all things work together[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A+24-28&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-28130e)] for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

**Sun., April 2:**  (Palm Sunday) **Forgiveness**

**Acts 26:15-18**  **15**I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. **16**But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+26%3A15-18&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-27826a)] and to those in which I will appear to you. **17**I will rescue you from your people and from the gentiles—to whom I am sending you **18**to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

1. Adapted from work by Leanne Hadley and the Michigan Conference Children’s Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)