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

Lent is the season of the church calendar when Christians around the world prepare their spirits for the Easter miracle: life overcoming death. The 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter (not counting Sundays) remind us of Jesus’ fasting and temptation in the wilderness after he was baptized. Many branches of Christianity encourage fasting during Lent as well as giving up something (chocolate?) that one would miss and would feel as a temptation.

Another way to prepare our spirits is to try out a new spiritual practice. 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?

In addition to journaling, there are many other ways to explore faith and enhance discipleship. Here are some possibilities:

* Join our online Bible study on Friday afternoon
* Commit to attending worship every Sunday
* Attend the Maundy Thursday service
* Engage in a few minutes of prayer or meditation each day
* Take time to read the Sunday Scriptures in advance of Sunday morning
* Remember the hungry. Make a contribution to DESK or Connecticut Foodshare to combat hunger in our community.
* Reach to someone who needs encouragement or just kind words (a card, email, phone call, text, or …)
* Make a positive change each day: add an exercise routine, volunteer, express gratitude/appreciation,  meditate on positive feelings toward yourself and others.

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