



Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
in West Virginia presents:

Prayerscapes for Lent

Reflections and Prayers from The Order of Ministry

Feb. 17: Ash Wednesday

Read Isaiah 58:1-12

from Rev. Thaddaeus B. Allen, Regional Minister

As enter into this holy season of Lent, may we do so honestly. A holy time set aside for God is a gift of grace. A holy time to reveal ourselves honestly to God and to ourselves is a gift of grace. A holy time to be made new and tidied up by the one who desires sincerity and not empty public practice is grace.

As we explore these days that lead to Easter, may we devote ourselves daily to the lessons and revelations of God. As we give ourselves to this season, may we give ourselves to God and to each other. Let us shed the unnecessary baggage that we have taken on, and let us hold fast to the mysteries and gifts of the faith. May we let injustices and oppressions go, and may we break them down when we encounter them. May our light shine forth to those who need warmth and direction. As we enter this holy season of Lent, may we do so with our whole selves turned towards God.

*As we hear you calling to us, O Lord, help us to turn to you,
and in turning find healing, forgiveness and peace.*

Feb. 18 - Thursday

Read Matthew 6:1-6

from Rev. Aaron Watkins, First Christian Church, Bluefield

Jesus did not want his disciples to do good works in order to bring attention to themselves. He wanted them to give out of the goodness of their own hearts. Is it not right to think that, more often than not, we are more blessed in the giving of a gift than in receiving?

In ancient Jewish times almsgiving was the practice of giving charitable gifts. Because Jewish law did not require almsgiving, it was considered especially praiseworthy. "Sounding the trumpet" was a figurative way of saying that the people of Jesus' day found ways of calling others' attention to what they were doing. When we give a gift to gain recognition for ourselves, is that truly giving from our own hearts? Not really. God calls us to be humble. When we do so, are we not becoming more like Christ? Let us daily seek to be more Christ-like.

May I grow in Christ's likeness, O God,

by giving from the fullness of my heart and not for selfish gain.

Feb. 19 - Friday

Read Matthew 6:16-18

from Rev. Darrell Pierce, Clarksburg, WV

Jesus is not nearly as concerned about what we do as he is about why we do it. The hypocritical religious leaders were interested in the praise of people, so they fasted in a way most likely to bring them that praise. They did not fast because of sorrow for sins nor to strengthen themselves against temptation.

The modern Christian's fast, therefore, is not about methods but about attitudes and motives. Does he fast desserts more as a method of losing weight than for sorrow for sin or desire to become more one with Jesus? Does she fast because all her friends are fasting?

It is fine if someone finds out that a Christian is fasting as long as that is not an object of the fast. If the reason for fasting is Godly, the method of fasting won't matter much.

*Most Perfect God, may our fasts be pleasing to you
and improve our intimacy with you.*

**Feb. 20 - Saturday
6:19-21**

Read Matthew

from Rev. Magdalyne Sebastian, First Christian Church, Wheeling

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

American media, business, and the church are all good at coming up with snappy one-liners. *Put your money where your mouth is. Money follows Mission. What's in your wallet?* Our passage today reminds us in straight forward words to make sure we have our priorities straight. Our culture makes it too easy to fall prey to **its** measures of success and security: the influential job, the to-die-for car, the trophy spouse. Jesus warns us to readjust our priorities to focus on God. When our focus is on God, our lives may be lived authentically, faithfully. Stock markets crash. Cars rust. Friends become fickle. Old age comes despite creams and potions. Unlike these earthly treasures, our forgiving God is always there welcoming us with open arms, loving us no matter what. The most sound investment advice: love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Abundant God, help us to appreciate the treasures

you give us through Christ Jesus and your people.

May our hearts and minds be cradled in your loving hands.

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