

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Therefore, as ambassadors of Christ - knowing that God sent Christ to break the chains of sin and make us whole - and as reconciled children of God, can we see through eyes of faith and say, “I can do that,” too?

*Help me to see all that your love can enable within me, God,
and give me the will to do it according to your will.*

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

Prayerscapes for Lent

Reflections and Prayers from The Order of Ministry

Mar. 7: Third Sunday in Lent

Read Luke 13:1-9

from Rev. Don Snyder, First Christian Church, Beckley

While there a variety of sins, they all have one thing in common: sinners. The weight and/or guilt of our sin is not witnessed in the events of life that may befall us, but rather in our response to the gift of grace given to us by God. Suffering may occur at the hands of another (the Galileans martyred by Pilate), or even befall us by tragedy (the victims of the Tower of Siloam falling). However, the saving act of God in Jesus provides us something that neither the most terrible tormentor, nor the greatest disaster that comes to pass may overcome: a kingdom life that bears fruit for the Master. The only obstacle to this kingdom is a failure to respond to the gift of God in this life.

*Help me to own my faults, O God,
and find victory over them in your overwhelming grace.*

Mar. 8 – Monday

Read 1 John 3:14-22

from Rev. Jayne Chafin, First Christian Church, New Martinsville

Our seminary professor and choir director used to quote Luther's confessor and tell us to "go forth and sin boldly" as we prepared to sing. This Lenten season, let us go forth boldly in our singing, in our actions, in our striving for the God's Kingdom. We may miss a few notes here and there, but with God's love in our hearts, with God's Word leading the way, we will be blessed and encouraged as we continue on this journey that we are on, boldly sharing the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

*We have no fear, O God, as we put our trust in you.
Your perfect love will overcome all of our short-comings.*

Mar. 9 – Tuesday

Read 1 John 4:7-13

from Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bowman Thurston, Wheeling, WV

In the wider Church 1 John comprises the daily lectionary after Christmas because it reminds us that the initiative in salvation (which the coming of Jesus signals) is God's. We love because God first loved us. According to John, God's intention is that our response to that divine gift is to love each other, not with the sticky, sentimental *luv* of trashy television, but with the love for which Christ's cross is origin, model and source.

Wouldn't it be novel (and better exegesis) if we heard this text instead of 1 Corinthians 13 at weddings? It says the Lenten (and marital) "sacrifices pleasing to God" are those we make in Christ-like, self-emptying service (love) to one another. Verse 12 suggests if we don't feel God's consolation and presence, it might be because of our unlovely attitudes and actions towards those who are right here.

*Loving God, may this Lenten season deepen my gratitude
for the mystery of Christ's atoning sacrifice.*

As I meditate on His cross, show me how to love more deeply.

Mar.10 – Wednesday

Read Psalm 28:1-2, 6-9

from Rev. Mark Mills, First Christian Church, Moundsville

Desperation. Whether quiet or expressed through anguished cries, to be desperate must be one of the worst emotions we can feel. In the midst of desperation, to feel as if God has abandoned us leaves us in the deepest darkness. Yet darkness gives way to light, and to the Light we must turn if we are to have hope. Our Lenten journey is to help us focus on the deepest part of the human spirit's connection with God's divine Spirit, the deepest Light. God is never silent though the ears of the soul may at times be deaf. Trust that God hears your heart. Trust that desperation will always be temporary and fade at the onset of the Light of Easter.

*God, reach into my soul and let me hear the rhythm of your breath,
filling me with your wholeness and saving grace.*

Mar. 11 – Thursday

Read Joshua 5:9-12

from Pastor Rod Hubbs, First Christian Church, McMechen

I may be off in my thinking, but when I read this scripture I am reminded of when Christ celebrated the Passover with His apostles. Up

until that time they had been following Jesus, enjoying the manna he provided. Upon his crucifixion, their manna was gone and they were on their own to be and to teach the Good News.

This brings to mind when we were first converted. The stone of ignorance was rolled away, and we were on our journey toward being new creations in Christ. We put away our old ways, and started our new lives.

Every Lenten season is a reminder of our new lives in Christ - a refreshing of our minds in the way that we should love each other and live as Christians.

*Father, be with us in our refreshing period
and guide us in the way you would have us to go.*

Mar. 12 – Friday

Read Psalm 32

from Rev. Sanford Downs, First Christian Church, Parkersburg

It may seem strange to talk about the way to be happy during Lent, but the psalmist says, "*Happy are they whose sins are forgiven.*" Our sins have been forgiven through Jesus Christ. Too often, people pretend they don't have any sin. They often harshly judge others for every transgression, but deny their own. This does not lead to happiness.

Happiness is found by confessing our sins to God and then accepting God's forgiveness, which also means forgiving ourselves. This, then is the real purpose of Lent. It is not a time of sadness or want. It is a time to confess our sins to God, to repent of everything we have done wrong - and everything we failed to do right - so that we may accept forgiveness and truly be happy in the Lord.

*Forgiving God, I have not always done everything as I should have;
so forgive me and help me to forgive myself and everyone else,
that I may be filled with your happiness.*

Mar. 13 – Saturday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

*from Pastor Rae Browning, First Christian Church,
Cumberland, MD*

My Mother and Grandmother always told me that there is some good in everyone. I was reminded of this listening to motivational speaker Suzie Humphrey. Her message was, "I Can Do That." She explains how she has stepped into situations and jobs having no idea how to face them, but always answers, "I can do that." For this, she is one of today's best motivational speakers. She emphasizes looking at the positive, especially the positive in other people.