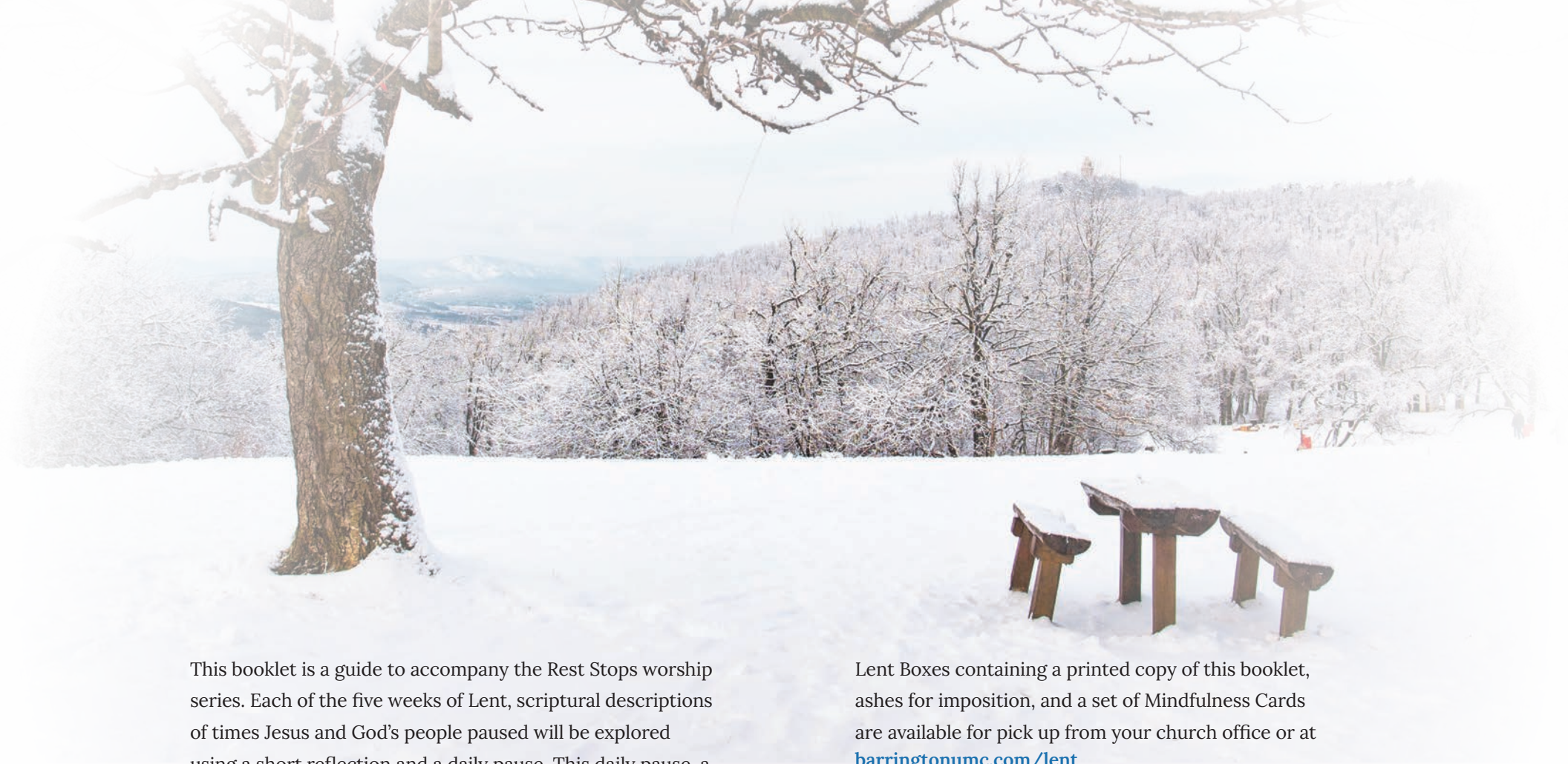


RestStops

We all need time and space on our journey when we can simply stop, step away from the craziness, and find a place where we can be still, breathe, and listen to the voice of God.





This booklet is a guide to accompany the Rest Stops worship series. Each of the five weeks of Lent, scriptural descriptions of times Jesus and God's people paused will be explored using a short reflection and a daily pause. This daily pause, a spiritual practice, will be fully described here in writing and also available as a short recording for your use.

If you have not engaged in a spiritual practice before, we encourage you to try them. Some people prefer one over another and, in this Lent in particular, an intentional time spent listening to the still small voice can be both calming and empowering.

Lent Boxes containing a printed copy of this booklet, ashes for imposition, and a set of Mindfulness Cards are available for pick up from your church office or at barringtonumc.com/lent.

Mindfulness Cards offer activities to engage the mind, body and spirit during this season of Lent. Most activities are appropriate for all ages, so they can be used as a family. Each activity creates a different type of pause and another opportunity to be mindful of ourselves and how we connect to Creation, God and neighbor. If you choose to use them, consider selecting an activity and placing the card somewhere visible to you throughout the day.

RestStops

*When we pause in the moments along the journey,
we encounter God.*



Ash Wednesday | *february 17*

Ash Wednesday begins the Lenten season with the invitation to reflect on the impermanence of life and our deep connection with God. Ashes remind us that we will one day “return to the ground, for out of it we were taken; we are dust, and to dust we shall return. (Genesis 3:19) At the same time, we can know that our broken and imperfect selves are held by God with deep and affirming love. On Ash Wednesday and all through Lent, we are invited to surrender our false notions of perfection, and rest in the unconditional, never-ending love of God. As we turn toward God’s love, these ashes can remind us that our broken and beautiful lives, though fleeting, can be restored and renewed.

This year, we will be offering online services for Ash Wednesday at 8:00 a.m., noon, and 7:00 p.m. Each service will be livestreamed and will include a live online chat with one of our pastors.

Ashes are included in our Lent Boxes, for information on how to receive yours please go to barringtonumc.com/lent. A member of our pastoral team has said a Thanksgiving over the Ashes before they were distributed. In this time of pandemic, we encourage you to impose ashes yourself or within your household. To make a clear mark, we suggest placing a drop of olive oil on a paper towel and touching the oily part with your finger before dipping it in the ashes.



week 1 | Jesus in the Wilderness

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ...

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ...

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

[Luke 3:21 – 4:15 NRSV excerpted,](#)
[related texts Matthew 4:1-11 and Mark 1:12-13](#)

Reflection

When Jesus is baptized, God claims him explicitly as his own and names him the Beloved. Then, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness. For forty days and nights, Jesus fasts, creating space in the depths of his soul to receive God's word. This time alone and apart helps ground Jesus. It allows him to set aside the distractions that would pull him away from God the Father and prepares him for his ministry. It uses a time of difficulties to prepare him for what is to come. It fills him 'with the Power of the Spirit'.

As we consider this story, what does Jesus' experience mean for us in today's world? Though we are not like Jesus in all things, we too are children of God, created in the divine image. We too are invited to our quiet time by the Spirit to be grounded in our identity as beloved and blessed. When we take that time, even a few moments, to be quiet and apart, we also can be filled with our portion of the power of the Spirit.

Setting aside daily time for quiet prayer may not always be easy. There will likely be times of peaceful refreshment as well as more challenging times. When we try to quiet our busy minds, we are often met by wandering thoughts and distracting habits. Our thoughts may try to captivate or

unsettle us. Just as Jesus was tempted, we will find excuses to pull us away from prayer. When we become aware of these distracting tendencies, rather than getting caught up in negative thoughts, we can choose to let them go and trust that God is with us. In the process, we are likely to find a deeper peace, grounding connection and meaning that remind us of God's abiding care for us.

Daily Pause

A pause offers us the opportunity to open our hearts to God's loving Spirit. By setting aside a few minutes each day, we can connect with a sacred presence deep within, blessing and supporting us.

Spiritual Practice: Breath Prayer

If you would like to be led in this practice, please find a recording online at barringtonumc.com/lent.

Find a comfortable position. You may want to sit on a chair, with your back straight and both feet flat on the floor. You can lie down if you prefer. The intention is to be relaxed but alert. Gently close your eyes or allow your gaze to fall downward. Try to relax the muscles in your face, neck, shoulders, arms, back and legs. Now focus on your breathing. Inhale deeply and follow the breath as it fills your lungs, ribs, and belly; then, as you exhale slowly through your nose, ask God to join you in the experience.

As you continue this deep, relaxed breathing, form one word or phrase that feels true to your spiritual life.

You might choose a word like: Peace. Spirit. Jesus. Love. God.

You might choose a phrase that begins with God's name and end with an intention or request, such as:

“Jesus, Free me.” “Jesus, Mercy.” “Spirit, Heal me.”
“God, let me feel your Presence.”

Breathe in and out, silently repeating the sacred word or phrase that you have chosen.

You may find that thoughts come into your head, and this is normal. Don't worry about it, just gently return your attention to your sacred word and soothing breath.

Spend five minutes each day, or as often as you are able, practicing the breath prayer. At the end of the practice, pause to reflect on what happened and perhaps make a brief note.



week 2 | Jacob's Dream at Bethel

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Genesis 28:10-18 NRSV

Reflection

The vision of angels ascending up and down a ladder assures Jacob that God's Spirit is reaching out and communicating with him. Jacob's dream is a revelatory moment that affirms his call and sets his course toward a new direction in life.

Just as dreams were often important in the Bible, Christians today can explore our dreams as experiences that connect this world with the spiritual realm. Dreams act as thresholds, as liminal spaces that can help us release those things that need to be let go, and to trust in new life that has yet to be revealed. Different from the world of reason and logic, dreams meet us where we are in our lives, inviting us to notice the mystery of God. Just as we can recognize the Spirit at work in the beauty of a sunset or in the innocence of a newborn child, dreams connect our inner world with the Spirit through the symbols, images, words, and feelings that arise from our unconscious during sleep. Although our dreams won't give us direct answers or advice, they can provide an encounter with our souls, connecting us with our inner wisdom.

As a prayer practice, we can attend to our dreams with a gentle, open perspective. While our dreams will bring us insight, there is much that we won't understand, and that

is normal. Prayer and spiritual guidance are advised before making any significant life changes in response to a dream. Still, as a daily practice for many folks, simply recording and pondering our dreams can weave inspiring bits and pieces of wisdom into our waking days.

Daily Pause

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Spiritual Practice: Praying with Dreams

If you would like to be led in this practice, please find a recording online at barringtonumc.com/lent.

Set pen and paper beside your bed at night and ask God to connect with you in your dreams. As soon as possible after waking from a dream, write what you remember in your notepad or journal. You might record the story line, actions, characters, images, colors, words, feelings, or thoughts. It

may be a complex dream, or it may be a simple fragment of a dream. Anything is fine, just track the dream as you recall it.

Reserve some time, either right away or later that day, to pray with your dream. Look over your notes and notice what comes up in you.

You can begin exploring the dream's meaning using a process similar to the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina. After reading and recalling your dream, notice how God is present in your life by engaging these four movements:

Pay attention (*Lectio*): Notice what part of the dream stands out for you.

Ponder (*Meditatio*): Ponder how this dream came to you in this time and place in your life.

Respond (*Oratio*): Consider what God may be calling you to be and do today, based on this dream as well as various experiences of yesterday and your schedule for today.

Rest (*Compatio*): Rest in the Mystery of God.

As a regular spiritual practice, journaling and reflecting on your dreams can offer one way to experience God's presence and action in your life today.

If you have not recalled a dream, you are invited to engage in the practice of Lectio Divina or Sacred Reading using this or another scripture.

This reflective way of reading the Bible helps open the reader personally to the invitations of God's Spirit. You will read the passage four times, and after each reading engage with it in a different way or movement:

Read (*Lectio*): Notice a word or phrase that shimmers for you.

Reflect (*Meditatio*): Ponder how your life is touched by this word.

Respond (*Oratio*): Consider your response to God based on what you have read.

Rest (*Compatio*): Rest in the Word of God.



week 3 | The Woman at the Well

But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

John 4:4-15 NRSV

Reflection

Can we truly trust that Jesus will meet us where we are? Can we reveal our truths to the Holy One with no fear of being judged? Can we hope for the inner peace, freedom, and life promised by the Spirit? To explore those questions, let's consider this unusual interaction between Jesus and the woman at the well.

They meet as Jesus journeys through Samaria, a region disdained by the Jews of his time. Tension and fighting would be expected between the Jews and Samaritans. Yet Jesus engages the Samaritan, an outcast woman, with openness and respect. And the woman responds in kind. It is clear she is not perfect, but Jesus doesn't judge. Seeing each other through the lens of grace, the conversation deepens. Jesus offers her living water, and she is transformed.

What can this encounter show us in these challenging times, as crises compete, and tensions can quickly rise? On any given day, it may seem quite reasonable to feel anxious or stressed. In the midst of that, the Spirit is present, seeking to encounter us wherever we are. Not with condemnation, but with healing and restoration. At any moment we can pause, take a few deep breaths, and be refreshed.

Loving-kindness is a simple spiritual practice that can help us tap into the "living water" within. Loving-kindness - from the Buddhist tradition of metta but now practiced widely - has been shown to be an antidote to fear, reminding us of the blessing and goodness that lives in each one of us. During the meditation, we picture a succession of people, beginning with our selves, then moving outward to others. We slowly repeat a series of phrases with the intention of sending goodwill toward each person. Loving-kindness practice helps us open to the moment while at the same time recognizing our deep connection with one another. In the process, we can discover inner resources of acceptance and care, for our self and others.

Daily Pause

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Spiritual Practice:

Loving-Kindness Meditation

If you would like to be led in this practice, please find a recording online at barringtonumc.com/lent.

Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and if you like, put a hand over your heart or another soothing place as a reminder to bring loving awareness to your experience and to yourself. Try not to be attached to the outcome, but rather try to approach each moment with kindness.

Loving-kindness practice involves directing feelings of unconditional friendliness toward yourself and others. You will begin by sending loving-kindness phrases to yourself, since being compassionate to yourself first helps you be fully compassionate to others. Then, repeat the phrases for friends, loved ones, members of the community and all living creatures.

1. *Loving-kindness for yourself*

Feel yourself sitting here. Feel the ground, firm under your feet. Feel yourself, I hope, happy and content.

Silently offer words of kindness to yourself, from your heart:

May I be happy

May I be safe

May I be strong

May I be at ease

2. *Loving-kindness for a loved one, mentor, or friend*

Now bring to mind someone with whom your relationship flows easily, someone who lightens your mind and heart. If you can form an image in your mind, form an image of this loved one. If you prefer, form your image of ... a favorite pet... or beloved place, a tree or beach or lake.

You are going to offer well wishes from your heart to this loved one.

Silently offer words of kindness to your loved one, from your heart:

May you be happy

May you be safe

May you be strong

May you be at ease

Gently repeat these phrases in your heart. Notice which phrase or word is most uplifting.

3. *Loving-kindness for someone in your local community*

Now bring to mind someone who lives in this area—this community, this region.

Silently offer words of kindness to this person:

- May you be happy
- May you be safe
- May you be strong
- May you be at ease

Repeat these phrases gently in your heart. Notice which phrase or word is most light, most uplifting.

4. Loving-kindness for your extended community, all living things

Now bring to mind everyone who lives in this community, this region, our nation, and all living beings. Include the friends and loved ones who have been part of your well wishes up to now... include yourself. All people who want, just as you do, to live in safety and contentment, to be able to feel strong, to be healed and at peace. Recognize the life force... vulnerability... that all living creatures share on this small planet.

Silently offer words of kindness:

- May you be happy
- May you be safe
- May you be strong
- May you be at ease

Let the breath come softly, Let the breath go gently. Wishes of well-being and happiness, of care and goodwill, embraced for yourself and extended to this world we all share.

At the end of the practice, continue to sit calmly and take a moment to reflect on the experience and what you noticed. Return to the practice as often as you can during this week.



week 4 | Feeding the Five Thousand

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.” But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?” And he said to them, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” When they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and were filled; and they took

up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

[Mark 6:30-46](#), related texts [Mark 8:1-8](#), [Matthew 14:13-21](#),
[Luke 9:10-17](#), [John 6](#)

Reflection

In this story, a crowd comes to Jesus “like sheep without a shepherd.” Gathering from far and wide, the people desire healing. Trusting in mystery and acknowledging need, they are open and receptive. Jesus feeds their spiritual hungers for several days, then continues to provide, this time with the basic nourishment of bread and fish, blessed and shared. Afterward, the people are healed and empowered to live more fully.

When have we felt “like sheep without a shepherd”—adrift, wandering, straying from meaningful purpose? Have we

felt stuck, anxious, or lacking hope? The spiritual path acknowledges that we are not in control, that we need healing. It can take courage and awareness to name our deep hungers. Trusting the mystery of Spirit can help us discover the deep needs and desires of our heart. With God’s loving guidance, we can allow our more surface concerns to become bridges to what we truly desire. Yielding to life’s deeper wisdom and wholeness, we can be nourished.

How do we relate wisely with our desires? How can our faith guide us to discover the nourishing seeds within? Can we remember that God longs for us even more than we long for God? Spiritual journaling, whether you write or draw, is one resource that can help us explore these questions. When we journal, we let go of any need for perfection or productivity and ask to feel safe in God’s loving presence. With curiosity, honesty, and intention, we can open ourselves to experience God’s desire for us and claim the deeper longings within us.

Daily Pause

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Spiritual Practice: Journaling

If you would like to be led in this practice, please find a recording online at barringtonumc.com/lent.

Take a few moments to quiet your mind, body, and spirit. You may want to read a scripture passage to become centered, asking yourself where you fit in the story. If you have just read the *Feeding of the Five Thousand* on page 27, you may want to picture yourself in the crowd... becoming in touch with your hunger... asking where Jesus can feed you.

Consider: What do you desire? Do not judge yourself in any way but hold yourself with care and compassion. If you feel any anxiety or sadness around this question, accept these feelings with loving awareness. Speak with God freely about your experience, as a friend who is sitting beside you.

Settle in comfortably with a pen and paper or your art supplies, open to receiving and sharing from that deeper space within. If you wish, you can select one or more of the following prompts to guide your writing or drawing:

What are the hungers and longings inside you?

Without judging, can you notice which desires lead to well-being and which lead to suffering?

What would you ask God to give you in your time of waiting?

What would life be like if your desire is granted?

How can you discover now some of the peace, aliveness, and wholeness that you long for?

Feel free to express yourself in your journal daily or whenever you feel called. Try using a different prompt each time you return or consider how you respond differently to a previous prompt under different circumstances. Welcome God's presence in your heart, and trust that this practice can guide and support you on the spiritual path.



week 5 | Joshua Renews
Israel's Covenant

“And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you; all have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed.

[Thus says the Lord, ...] I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant.

“Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

... The people said to Joshua, “The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey.” So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem. Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of

God; and he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the Lord. Joshua said to all the people, “See, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the Lord that he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, if you deal falsely with your God.” So Joshua sent the people away to their inheritances.

After these things Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred ten years old.

[Joshua 23:14, 24:13-15, 24-29](#)

Reflection

Each one of us, at some point in life, has given ourselves over to a deeper call or purpose - perhaps to a relationship, a life goal, a career. We reach a turning point where we must decide: will I continue along this path or go in another direction? As Joshua nears the end of his long life as leader and prophet, he finds himself at such a crossroad. Here Joshua claims God’s faithfulness to Israel as the heart of his legacy. Shortly before he dies, Joshua calls on the Israelites to continue serving the God of Abraham, renewing the covenant for future generations.

This biblical covenant renewal follows a three-step process: *Remember. Choose. Commit.* Joshua *remembers* how God has kept all the divine promises to the Israelites. Joshua affirms his *choice* to serve God and calls the people to join him in living with steadfast reverence and devotion. The people declare their choice and Joshua memorializes their vow with a formal *commitment* ceremony.

In today’s culture, where it is easy to become distracted by energies and activities competing for our attention, making commitments to can be a confusing process. The pandemic may have left us feeling disconnected or overwhelmed, outside of our reassuring routines. By *remembering* the meaningful events and caring connections that have sustained us over the years, we can nurture gratitude and discover a path to deeper purpose in this life. Noticing the stirrings that soften our hearts, we can *choose* to let go of lesser attachments while claiming the greater good. Our daily and life *commitments* can flow freely from the sacred calls that arise in this way from the wisdom of our hearts and souls.

Daily Pause

A pause offers us the opportunity to open our hearts to God’s loving Spirit. By setting aside a few minutes each day, we can connect with a sacred presence deep within, blessing and supporting us.

Spiritual Practice: Embracing Gratitude

If you would like to be led in this practice, please find a recording online at barringtonumc.com/lent.

The practice of embracing gratitude encourages us to take notice of the blessings in our lives, to build a library of remembrances to inform our choices, and allow our life commitments to flow from our best selves.

Try to establish a pattern of remembering the big and small things that you are grateful for each day. Consider five things that are important to your well-being—perhaps your work, education, or health—and notice them. Then reflect on five small positive things, little things that you might normally take for granted—perhaps electricity, running water, a book, or a smile. Give consideration to these smaller things as well. Review your lists, savoring any connections or inspiration that arises within. Consider whether your choices might be inviting you to live more fully in alignment with the things you value.

I am grateful for these important things:

And, I am grateful for these smaller things:

I am grateful for these important things:

And, I am grateful for these smaller things:

I am grateful for these important things:

And, I am grateful for these smaller things:

I am grateful for these important things:

And, I am grateful for these smaller things:

I am grateful for these important things:

And, I am grateful for these smaller things:

SERVICES DURING LENT

[Ash Wednesday](#) | *Wednesday, February 17*

Online worship at 8:00 a.m., noon and 7:00 p.m.

[“Jesus in the Wilderness”](#) | *Sunday, February 21*

[“Jacob at Bethel”](#) | *Sunday, February 28*

[“Woman at the Well”](#) | *Sunday, March 7*

[“Feeding 5,000”](#) | *Sunday, March 14*

[“Covenant Renewal”](#) | *Sunday, March 21*

All worship services are online and can be found on our facebook pages (facebook.com/BarringtonUnitedMethodist and facebook.com/fumcwestdundee) and our websites (fumcwo.org and barringtonumc.com).

HOLY WEEK

[“Hailing a Connection” – Palm Sunday](#) | *March 28*

Our “Rest Stops” series concludes with Jesus arriving at the edge of Jerusalem but needing a ride to take him into the city. How does God prepare us for difficult moments while we wait to take the next step?

[“Essential Workers” – Holy Thursday](#) | *April 1*

Join the multisite drama team for a look into the last supper from the point of view of those who are often left out of the story.

[“Seven Last Words” – Good Friday](#) | *April 2*

Join Rev. Chris Winkler, Rev. Matthew Johnson, Youth Pastor Bonnie Bevers and Lay Minister Luis Vega of Barrington UMC, Rev. Wendy Witt of First UMC West Dundee, Rev. Mi-Sook Yoo of Christ UMC and Rev. Laura Barkley of Salem UMC for this moving service based on the words Jesus spoke from the cross.

[“Do Not Be Afraid” – Easter Sunday](#) | *April 4*

Throughout the Bible, messengers appeared to God’s people with the words, “Do not be afraid!” Easter is the ultimate proclamation that, in the resurrection of Jesus, God has defeated our most feared enemy, death. Through the story of Jesus’ post-resurrection encounter with two of his followers on the Road to Emmaus, we will see how that message is still at the heart of the Good News of the Gospel.

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This publication has been edited by Sharon Orr, Director of Missions and Multisite Ministry, Barrington United Methodist Church

Recordings of the Spiritual Practices are by Dr. Michael W. Mangis, retired Professor of Psychology, Wheaton College, practicing in West Chicago and Elburn, IL and can be found online at barringtonumc.com.



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