



## March 2026

### Lexington United Methodist Church

*Where We Seek, Serve and Share Christ*

[www.lexmoumc.org](http://www.lexmoumc.org)

Office: 660-259-2483

Rev. Andrew Sanders, Pastor  
[sandman1016@yahoo.com](mailto:sandman1016@yahoo.com)  
 417-770-6731 (cell)

Liz Johnson,  
 Administrative Assistant  
[secretary@lexmoumc.org](mailto:secretary@lexmoumc.org)

Janet Thompson,  
 Music Director

Sarah Black,  
 Council Chair

Sunday worship: 11 a.m.  
 Children's Sunday School: 10 a.m.  
 Adult Sunday School: 10 a.m.  
 Young Couples Class: 10 a.m.  
 Youth Group: Sundays 6 p.m.  
 Worshipping Winds Rehearsal:  
 Sundays, 9:30 a.m.  
 Choir Rehearsal: Sundays 10 a.m.

*“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”*

– Acts 3:19 (NIV)

## Live the Lenten season with personal, spiritual growth

I'm genuinely excited to see what 2026 is already bringing to our life together. We are seeing growth—in our youth, in our volunteers, and in the ways people are stepping up to care for one another. From meals being shared to hands being raised to serve, God is clearly on the move among us.



Rev. Andrew Sanders

That's something to celebrate. If you're looking for a place to plug in, I invite you to check out our Sunday School classes. We offer a variety of age groups and topics, and there's a place for you to belong and grow. (Check our calendar on page 2 for those Sunday School classes.)

In March, our youth will be gathering for a lock-in filled with games, food, and fun—but even more, it will be a time to learn, grow, and build faith together. These moments matter. They shape lives and strengthen our church for the future.

We're also celebrating growth in our Baby Grace ministry. With gratitude for the work and dedication that brought us to this point, we're excited about the new vision taking shape and we look forward to Jennifer Coen's leadership, alongside the incredible volunteers who make this ministry possible.

And speaking of growth—our average worship attendance is now in the 60s!

As we move into this season, we're also reminded of personal and spiritual growth. Lent invites us into a time of reflection, prayer, and renewal. We have personal Lenten studies available, and I encourage you to take part. Please also join us for our **Maundy Thursday (April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30 p.m.) and Good Friday (April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m.) services as we prepare our hearts and minds for Easter (Sunday, April 5 at 11 a.m.)**.

I can't wait to see you in worship, in classes, and in ministry. You are the disciples called for this time—to shine the light of Christ through LUMC and into our community.

*Grace and peace, Pastor Andrew*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sundays: Worshiping Winds rehearsal  
9:30 a.m.

Choir Rehearsal: 10 a.m.

**Sundays at 10 a.m.: Adult Sunday School with Liz Johnson, facilitator. Lenten study: "Why Did Jesus Have to Die?" by Adam Hamilton. It's not too late to join.**

Sundays at 10 a.m.: Children's Sunday School with Donna Slusher & Katie Dye.

Sundays at 10 a.m.: Young Couples Class, "A Disciples Path: A Guide for United Methodists" by James Hamish, with Sarah Black, facilitator—open to all ages.

**BABY GRACE:** Call for diaper needs: Lauren Negrete—660-251-8109 or Jen Coen—660-232-4190.

**Mondays: Quilters at 1 p.m.**

**HARVESTERS DISTRIBUTION: Monday, March 9, 9 to 11 a.m.**

**YOUTH GROUP: Sundays at 6 p.m.**

**Youth Group Lock-in, Friday, March 6.**

**WOMEN OF THE CHURCH MEET: Friday, March 13, at Noon for carry-in meal in the Choir Room.**

**CHURCH COUNCIL TEAM MEETING: Monday, March 16, 6 p.m.**

**USDA FOODS: Monday, March 23rd, 8:30 to 11 a.m. (Commodities is now USDA Foods and now on the 4th Monday)**

**PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 11 a.m.**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 5:30 p.m.**

**GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 5:30 p.m.**



March 3	Sylas Johnson
March 8	Josh Coen
March 16	Phillip Davis
March 17	Leland Reynolds
March 18	Lillian Lyon
March 22	Joel Baker
March 23	Larry Johnson
March 28	Elizabeth Baker

\*Did we miss your birthday? Please reach out to Liz Johnson in the church office: 660-259-2483 to let her know of a missed birthday.



Liz Johnson | Secretary

◆ **Present:** Sarah Black, council chair; Liz Johnson, Rev. Andrew Sanders, Teri James, Scott Slusher, Kathryn Roberts, guest; Shawn Hodgeman, Sharol McMullin, Janae Fuller, Roger McFadden, Jim Martin, Cheryl Cooley, Jennifere Coen, Steven Fuller via phone.

◆ **Pastor** opened with prayer.

◆ **Spiritual Development | Pastor Andrew:** He said that as we return back to basics this year, we should always be ready. This is a year to focus on the kids. He then read the Great Commission (Jesus' command to His disciples to spread the Gospel). We are to be making disciples of, and caring for others.

◆ **Teams | Pastor Andrew:** Pastor said we need the following teams:  
- **Missions:** discovering local and global missions/presenters to Christ.  
- **Education:** Recruit & support teachers – setting education goals.  
- **Events:** Organize volunteers/plan fellowship.  
- **Annual Conference:** who is attending?

◆ **2026 Leadership Covenant | Pastor:** He read the 2026 covenant and passed around the table to be signed.

◆ **Review of New People | Pastor:** Pandora Kuhnlein and her friend Wanda have begun attending. Pandora previously attended here as a visitor in 2019. Angie Davis has been attending off and on for a year now and is looking for a new church. Also attending on Sunday, Feb. 15 was Scoutmaster Jeff Morris and his wife.

◆ **January Minutes:** Cheryl & Sharol moved to accept the January minutes – so passed.

◆ **January Finance Report:** Sharol & Sarah moved to accept the January Finance Report – so passed.

◆ **Finance | Teri James:** January was

lighter than usual, but we didn't have services one Sunday and we still had some of the March to the Manger funds helping us. Teri said we had put \$2,000 back into the savings to repay some of what we had borrowed last year. We still owe the savings \$5,800 to replace all we had borrowed to pay bills.

◆ **Kathryn Roberts | guest:** Kathryn suggested we have a clothing drive twice a year (Spring and August). She provided a suggestion from a church in a different city: children arriving received a stuffed animal, while parents were given a bag for them to gather free clothing. Then there would be a tour of the church and introducing all the missions and activities including a handout about the church. Clothing would be new-born to age 4, diapers and wipes. They would be spread out on tables by size. Cheryl asked where the clothing would be stored. Kathryn suggested they should be dropped off the weekend prior to the event and boxed up. She said she would be okay with storing donations at her home. Jennifer asked if there would be a problem with lice coming in on clothing. Kathryn said we would require all donated clothing to be freshly laundered and gently used and would include blankets and sheets, shoes, socks, coats, etc. She said she would store the clothing at her home and create a flyer and she would spearhead this event. She would call for an appointed day to drop off clothing. Liz J asked Kathryn to be sure to send her information on the event so that the church office could get the word out on the Thursday email, bulletin, newsletter and Facebook. Kathryn also suggested we advertise with Harvesters. She is looking at a 2026 one-time event in August – working around back to school and the city's summer events. Liz J will put Kathryn's phone number out in the assorted advertisements.

◆ **St. Patrick's Day | Steven Fuller, parade grand marshal:** Steven would like to use this event, March 14<sup>th</sup>, as a promotion for the church; for members to walk in the parade

# Lent, a time of preparation, reflection, study

Liz Johnson | Editor

The following is an excerpt from a piece I wrote in 2018 for the Richmond News, prior to my working in a Methodist Church. Therefore, my reflections are mostly based on my Episcopal upbringing and the disciplines I followed then and many which I follow now.

The purpose of this article is to impress upon everyone that the 40 day season of Lent is a time of preparation, reflection, repentance and study as we recall the three years of Jesus' teaching and preaching which culminated in his crucifixion and resurrection as the one who redeemed us.

As I have grown deeper in my faith, I understand more and more how important this time of year is to grow closer to our Lord and to spend time in his presence. When Holy Week arrives, I want to be prepared to follow Holy Week, deeply embedded in the journey our Lord took in those days before his crucifixion.

The Lenten season of fasting, repentance and self-examination began with the imposition of ashes on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter, a celebration of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, by observing a 40-day period of fasting, spiritual discipline, repentance and focus on Jesus and His teachings.

Growing up in the Episcopal faith with a father who was a minister, meant we observed the Lenten season as that denomination decreed.

Every Friday during Lent, my father would have a Stations of the Cross service in which he and an acolyte carrying a cross, would stop at specific sections in the sanctuary that corresponded to a picture on the wall depicting Christ's last hours that lead up to his crucifixion.

My father would read scripture pertaining to each station, and as he walked to the next, the organist would play a portion of a hymn that was solemnly chosen for the occasion.

In our household, we abstained from eating meat on Tuesdays and Fridays, though it is often thought of as a Friday-only thing in protestant churches. My father felt it was a good discipline for us to uphold as a specific time to recognize that Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins.

The idea was that the practice of not eating meat twice a week, as well as additional fasting, gave a person strength in his/her spiritual life by weakening the day-to-day pleasures in which we tend to indulge. I confess that I do not uphold that discipline anymore.

"One of the hardest lessons we have to learn in life is to say, 'No' when no is called for, and 'Yes' when a yes is called for. To freely impose a discipline such as fasting upon ourselves strengthens our will and enables us to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," my father said in a 1974 sermon.

"The ultimate goal of the Christian life, to which every Lenten season of spiritual exercises and disciplines should draw us, is an unfeigned love motivating and sustaining all our thoughts and actions," my father preached in a later sermon.

Finally, my father taught us that the Lenten season was a time for repentance.

"When we repent, we acknowledge our sin – face up to it, own it as our own, de-test it – and confess it to God. We have not repented until we have put our feet on God's way and are actually walking in it," he said.

## Council Cont'd from page 2

and the youth to have a float. Cheryl suggested we have pens/pencils with our information on it and wrapped in a flyer to hand out instead of candy. (Note: Liz J has ordered 500 red pencils with church name, address, website and Sunday worship, as well as a white cross & flame logo, to hand out with a half-page flyer about the church at the parade). Rocky Morgan and his wife are the contacts for entering the parade: 660-233-2637 (Rocky).

♦**PPR | Jim Martin:** Jim has completed an online training for PPR along with 112 others with the MO Conference. He will have information for the March meeting to share. The parsonage inspection has been completed (Clearview address).

♦**Nursery:** Lily King, Cooper Davis and Mylan Huffman have been hired – all three will go on a rotating schedule made out by Jordyn Ortega. They all need to complete the Safe Gathering

training. Update from Liz J: Lily and Mylan have not done the SG training. Cooper cannot do the SG training due to his age. Cooper's status is still pending.

♦**Baby Grace | Jennifer Coen:** She suggested we serve only the Lexington School District – motion was made and passed to only serve the Lexington School District – a utility bill to be presented will suffice as proof of being within our coverage area. Jennifer also proposed having paperwork to be done including liability forms, only serving up to age 4 for diapers. Children over that age, Jennifer will provide assistance. How often to come to Baby Grace? One time per month (can also be referred to Happy Bottoms). Cheryl voiced a concern about putting children's names and ages – so we will go to one document per family. **Work days for reorganizing Baby Grace are: Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> right after church, also Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., and Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.**

♦**Jennifer** also suggested a possible April or May date to have a baby shower for Baby Grace which would include a meal, punch and cookies for diapers and wipes.

♦**Finance | Janae:** The team met on February 11<sup>th</sup> and talked about a few fund-raising ideas.

♦**Trustees | Roger:** The second thermostat in the southwest corner of the FLC is back on and working.

♦**Blessing Box | Shawn:** He has sent the dimensions and pictures to Steven. Roger also has them. They're hoping to start on this in the Spring. At that time, we'll start a food fundraiser to fill the blessing box. Liz J will need dimensions on the blessing box in order to order a sign – that will include donations should be non-perishable only.

♦**Shawn said, regarding his laity** that he has finished lay speaker (spiritual gifts) and is moving onto pulpit supply study.

♦**Next meeting is Monday, March 16.**

**WORSHIP: Sundays 11 a.m.**

**Children's Sunday School is 10 a.m.**

**Young Couple's Class: 10 a.m.**

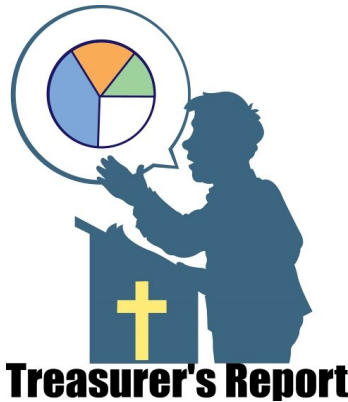
**Adult Sunday School: 10 a.m.**

**Choir Rehearsal: 10 a.m.**

**Worshiping Winds Rehearsal: 9:30 a.m.**

**ONLINE: [lexmoumc.org](http://lexmoumc.org)**

**FEB.: 2025**



## Treasurer's Report

February Offering:	\$ 10,032.75
Feb. Expenses:	<u>-\$13,391.06</u>
Total (tithe)	<u>-\$ 3,358.31</u>
Year to Date (as of 2/28):	-\$ 10,996.52
**February full finance report is not available at press time.	
*Avg. Expenses 2025	\$ 13,641.00 (per month)
Building Rentals Feb.:	\$ 725.00

**Teri James:** Treasurer

**Liz Johnson:** Finance Secretary

**Janae Fuller, Mary Kate Alkire:** 2026 Finance  
Co-Chairs

**Sarah Black:** 2026 Council Chair

**Jim Martin:** 2026 PPR Chair

**Pastor:** Rev. Andrew Sanders

*"Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor." ~ Proverbs 22:9*



# PARADE

**SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2 p.m.**

**STEVEN FULLER, GRAND MARSHAL**

Join us in walking the parade. Line up is 1 p.m., 13th and Franklin. Let's gather together to support our own Steven Fuller as grand marshal. We will have LUMC personalized pencils and a flyer to hand out to parade guests instead of candy.

# PARSONAGE FIRE

Most of our congregants know that the church parsonage on Clearview burned on February 20th, displacing Pastor Andrew, Julie and their dogs. Patty Skelton graciously let the Sanders' stay at her home until a new home became available. On February 25th, the Sanders' moved into the new parsonage, provided by Cheryl and David Cooley on Hillside Drive. We are all so grateful for the kindness of Patty

and the Cooleys and all who came to help the day of the fire, moving day and other pertinent assistance.

As we await a list of items the Sanders' need replacing, donations can be monetary—checks made out to: Rev. Andrew Sanders (instead of to the church), so they can purchase items they need. Look for more information to come in Thursday emails

—Liz Johnson

Second Sunday in Lent, March 1, 2026

## Scripture Reading: John 3:1-17

*My main ambition in life is to be on the Devil's Most Wanted list.  
—Leonard Ravenhill*

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**M**y mother was born about 10 months before the armistice of 1918. She lived to be 102 and thus lived through many seasons of life — the hopeful beginnings, the challenging middles and the quiet endings. Like her, you've watched new generations come into the world, witnessed friends move away or pass on, and felt the changing contours of your own heart. Sometimes life can feel like a long chapter nearing its end. But in this beautiful conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus found in today's Bible reading, we're reminded that with God every ending can be a new beginning.

Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of darkness, puzzling over deep questions. An older man, learned and faithful, he wondered if it was too late to truly understand the ways of God. Jesus answered with an invitation that still speaks to us today: "You must be born from above" — born anew by the Holy Spirit.

To be "born again" means different things to different people. But surely, it doesn't mean forgetting or erasing the past. It rather means allowing God to reshape the heart that has felt both the sting and sweetness of a long life. It means accepting that, no matter how old we are or how many years have passed, the Holy Spirit can still whisper new beginnings. This new birth is available every morning, every moment we pray, every time we open ourselves to God's grace. It's a renewal that doesn't depend on physical strength or earthly status. It rests upon the deep and unchanging love of God.

And that's the heart of John 3:16-17. God loved the world including this world of questions and quiet moments, of cherished memories and unfulfilled dreams. So, God gave his Son. Not to condemn, but to save. Not to judge, but to embrace. Not to discard, but to call each of us, at every stage of life, to a fresh and hopeful longing.

Today, if you feel tired or uncertain, if your heart is weighed down by regrets or loneliness, remember this: Jesus came for you. The Spirit is still at work within you. No matter your age or circumstance, you are deeply loved, deeply valued and deeply known. New beginnings can come even now if you whisper a quiet prayer, a hopeful thought or a solemn, "Yes, Lord."

You may not live as long as my mother; or, indeed you may live longer. But, whatever the case, each breath you draw is a reminder that the Holy Spirit is closer than you imagine, inviting you to live fully in the warmth of God's unfailing love.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Loving God, thank you for reminding me that it is never too late for new beginnings. Renew my heart and spirit today. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**Daily Bible Readings**

**Sunday:** Leviticus 1-4

**Monday:** Leviticus 5-7

**Tuesday:** Leviticus 8-10

**Wednesday:** Leviticus 11-13

**Thursday:** Leviticus 14-16

**Friday:** Leviticus 17-19

**Saturday:** Psalms 22-24

*Verse to Remember*

*“The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.”*

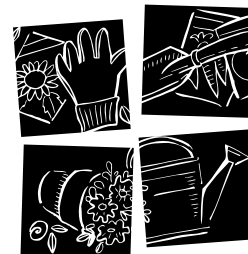
—Psalm 23:1

**Think Spring!**

S R E T A W L A R E N I M Y H  
 V N N D U O L C Y E O J T E C  
 R G O F T E E L S P I U U G W  
 H E Q W L M W E A H T C N M X  
 Y T G G E J N Z U F A I A T I  
 L R I V E R A M R O R T C L F  
 N P J K Q Y I O T P I E S E G  
 T L M N D D S O S Y P N T R I  
 M Z O M I T E E V E S A E A Q  
 D K S T L A T R R R R B A A W  
 W R Y I O I R K O D E W M D K  
 H F S Z C L A P Y C P S I C C  
 F L S O W X A H I L E Q E B N  
 B U Z V V V G K D C P A Z R W  
 T L Z E Y J I D E G R Q N R E

Soon, the winter snow will begin to melt if it hasn't already. Rain will fall and mud season will be in full swing! Find the following forms of water in the word search puzzle to the left:

- cloud    reservoir    dew    river
- fog    sleet    frost    snow
- geyser    spring    glacier    steam
- hail    vapor    humidity    ice
- hydrate    iceberg    lake    ocean
- perspiration    rain
- artesian well    mineral waters
- waterfall



**Brain Stumpers:**

1. What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?
2. What can you catch but not throw?
3. What's black and white and red all over?

- Brain Stumpers:**
1. A towel
  2. A cold
  3. A newspaper

Third Sunday in Lent, March 8, 2026

## Scripture Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

*God can draw forth the sweetest water from the hardest rock. —Anon.*

I admit it. There've been many times in my life and ministry when I felt as though the well had run dry. That's why I can sympathize with the Israelites in the wilderness who, as we find them in today's reading from Exodus, are tired, thirsty and wondering where God is hiding and why God is hiding. In this scene from Exodus, God's people have set up camp, only to discover — horrors — there's no water! Parched and weary, they grumble against Moses, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Perhaps you've felt that way, too, in moments of doubt, loneliness or pain. The wilderness can be a harsh place. It doesn't only describe geography; it can also describe seasons of life when we long for refreshment. As we grow older, we can find ourselves grappling with a dry spell — a time when energy wanes, friends pass on or questions linger about the future.

Yet this passage reminds us of an unchanging truth: *God meets us in the wilderness*. The same Lord who heard the cries of his people *then*, hears ours *today*.

What does God do? He tells Moses to strike the rock, and from that rock, water gushes forth — a miracle of mercy. The rock that appeared solid, dry and lifeless became the source of life-giving water. So it is with God. What may seem like a hard, unyielding moment can be the very place where grace and renewal spring forth.

This reminds us that in moments when our hearts feel like that parched wilderness, we can still trust the hand of the One who knows how to draw water from the rock. It may come as an unexpected phone call from a friend, a verse of Scripture that sparks fresh hope or a quiet sense of peace rising within. Whatever form it takes, it's a reminder that God's grace finds its way to us, even in the driest seasons.

As you walk this chapter of life, remember that you are not forgotten. The God who guided Israel through the wilderness goes with you now. The same God who brought forth water from a rock can quench your spiritual thirst, reminding you that you are cherished, watched over and deeply loved.

Trust that the spring of God's grace is never far away, and that, even in moments when the well runs dry, you can call upon the one who promises, "To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life" (Revelation 21:6). Let this comfort your heart and strengthen you for your journey.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Loving God, thank you for being with me in every wilderness. When I am feeling dry within, help me to trust that you can make streams of grace flow from unexpected places. Renew my strength, restore my hope, and quench the thirst of my heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Daily Bible Readings

**Sunday:** Leviticus 20-23  
**Monday:** Leviticus 24-27  
**Tuesday:** Mark 1-3  
**Wednesday:** Mark 4-6  
**Thursday:** Mark 7-10  
**Friday:** Mark 11-13  
**Saturday:** Psalms 25-28



### VERSE TO REMEMBER

*“Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.”*

—Psalm 25:4

## PROBLEMS AT THE ZOO!

A rookie zookeeper one day is preparing to place new signs on all the animal exhibits, but he trips over something and spills all the letters on the ground. Now he has to unscramble the letters so that he correctly identifies the animals in the zoo. Can you help him?

NLOI	_____	RAFEGIF	_____
RLUTTE	_____	GPEUNINS	_____
KAESNS	_____	LAORP ERAB	_____
LOW	_____	CURPOENIP	_____
EHCTEHA	_____	HISF	_____
GREIT	_____	BIGBON	_____
KOMEYN	_____	RREENID	_____
RABE	_____	BZREA	_____
EESTPNALH	_____	KSSRAH	_____
PDALOR	_____	SINCTSE	_____
RROTPA	_____	GORSF	_____
LKAAO	_____	LMAEC	_____

**SOLUTION:** Left column — lion, turtle, snakes, owl, cheetah, tiger, monkey, bear, elephants, leopard, parrot, koala; Right column — giraffe, penguins, polar bear, porcupine, fish, gibbon, reindeer, zebra, sharks, insects, frogs, camel.

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 15, 2026

## Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

*First impressions are like icebergs — you only see the tip,  
and the rest can surprise you later. —Anon.*

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I am a huge Jane Austen fan. She was an amazing talent. For example, she started writing *Pride and Prejudice* in 1796 when she was 21. The working title was “First Impressions.” And just what were Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy’s first impressions of each other? “*Your* defect,” Miss Bennet complained with her nose in the air, “is a propensity to hate everybody.” “Whereas yours,” Darcy rejoined, “is willfully to misunderstand them.”

First impressions can be tricky. You can no doubt think of people about whom you’ve revised your opinion over the years.

In the story of David’s anointing, the prophet Samuel faces this very challenge. God sends him to Jesse’s house to anoint a new king. As Jesse’s sons parade before him, the oldest and tallest steps forward — a strong, impressive figure. Surely this must be the one, Samuel thinks. But God replies, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (v. 7).

This is a good reminder for us, isn’t it? We often measure worth by surface appearances — status, health, beauty or accomplishments. But God doesn’t use these rubrics. The boy David, still out with the sheep, overlooked by others, the youngest and least impressive in the room, was the one God chose to lead Israel.

Throughout history, God has chosen the unexpected. The apostle Paul was once a persecutor. Moses was a fugitive. Rahab was an outcast. Mary, a teenager. Yet God called each of them, seeing beyond their surface, beyond their past, beyond their imperfections.

It’s likely true for you, as well. However old or limited you may feel, however unseen by the world, God knows your heart. God knows your worth. God remembers. And in moments when we ourselves forget our own worth, God reminds us that we are chosen, cherished and called.

Today, remember this: The Lord looks upon the heart. You matter to him — not because of how you appear, but because of who you are. And you can trust that God looks upon others the same way.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord, thank you for seeing beyond the surface and knowing my heart. Grant me the grace to look upon others with the same mercy and understanding you have shown me. In your name. Amen.*



**Daily Bible Readings**

- Sunday:** Mark 14-16
- Monday:** Numbers 1-3
- Tuesday:** Numbers 4-6
- Wednesday:** Numbers 7-10
- Thursday:** Numbers 11-14
- Friday:** Numbers 15-17
- Saturday:** Psalms 29-30

# FORTY Days OF LENT



## WORD SEARCH

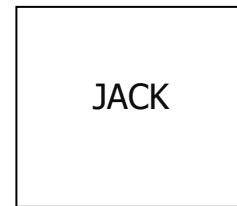
Find the words below that are all associated with the Lenten journey toward the cross.

- |         |             |            |         |        |
|---------|-------------|------------|---------|--------|
| Barabas | crucifixion | Gethsemane | penance | sins   |
| crown   | death       | Golgotha   | Pilate  | suffer |
| colt    | donkey      | hosanna    | prayer  | thorns |
| confess | denial      | kiss       | palms   | silver |
| cross   | forsaken    | lots       | repent  | vigil  |

E	N	A	M	E	S	H	T	E	G	R	L	W	Y
C	L	E	U	X	B	M	T	H	B	U	C	W	B
N	R	I	K	Y	P	A	T	E	T	I	Y	X	Y
A	V	J	G	A	L	B	R	E	Y	A	R	P	B
N	G	N	L	I	S	N	L	A	I	N	E	D	X
E	W	M	P	R	V	R	D	H	B	N	R	D	F
P	S	O	G	O	L	G	O	T	H	A	B	S	C
D	L	N	R	O	C	O	N	F	E	S	S	I	K
O	T	H	T	C	P	E	K	W	U	O	U	N	D
M	N	S	H	N	P	W	E	D	R	H	F	S	K
U	N	F	O	E	T	K	Y	C	S	G	F	O	E
H	E	C	R	E	V	L	I	S	W	Q	E	C	M
H	V	H	N	C	X	S	O	C	C	J	R	L	O
F	Q	E	S	U	D	S	H	C	A	A	Y	M	C
C	R	U	C	I	F	I	X	I	O	N	S	R	V

### Word Picture

What expression comes to  
mind when you  
study this drawing?  
Write your answer below.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fifth Sunday in Lent , March 22, 2026

## Scripture Reading: Romans 8:6-11

*Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God?  
Make for it two wings: fasting and almsgiving.  
—Saint Augustine*

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**W**e are nearing the end of our Lenten journey. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday. We've spent the Lenten days so far in reflection, remembrance and renewal. We've been walking with Jesus through the wilderness and toward the cross. And in the process, we've come to understand Jesus as a person we love "because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

An old American folk hymn, "What Wondrous Love Is This?," explains. The author is unknown, but its words have been sung by countless believers across the centuries. The first stanza captures the heart of Lent:

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.*

The hymn reminds us that Lent is not about guilt for guilt's sake. It's about the wonder of God's love. Jesus chose the path to the cross knowing its cost. In doing so, he offered a grace so deep and so wide that it embraces every person, every heartbreak, every sin, every doubt. It's a love that knows no end.

For many, life has a way of making us forget that kind of wonder. The routine of daily trials, the long nights when pain or loneliness whispers in the dark, can make God's love seem far away. But in Lent, we remember. We slow down. We listen to the old songs and ponder the old story. And in that still space, we rediscover that wondrous love — a love that was, and is — strong enough to bear the weight of the world.

As you move through these final Lenten days, let this hymn be your prayer. Let its words wash over you like a quiet stream. Let its melody draw you closer to the heart of Jesus, who chose the cross because he chose to love.

Today and every day, you are held by a love that will not let you go.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the wondrous love that led you to the cross for my sake. In this holy season of Lent, help me slow down and remember the depth of that love. In your name. Amen.*



### Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Numbers 18-20
- Monday:** Numbers 21-24
- Tuesday:** Numbers 25-27
- Wednesday:** Numbers 28-30
- Thursday:** Numbers 31-33
- Friday:** Numbers 34-36
- Saturday:** Psalms 31-32

**VERSE TO REMEMBER**

*Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.*

—Psalm 32:1

### First Puzzle

P		N		O
---	--	---	--	---

	C		A	
--	---	--	---	--

C		A		P
---	--	---	--	---

	T		L	
--	---	--	---	--

### Second Puzzle

R		A		M
---	--	---	--	---

	O		S	
--	---	--	---	--

R		N		E
---	--	---	--	---

	A		O	
--	---	--	---	--

### DOUBLE FUN!

Each puzzle to the left consists of four five-letter words that use 10 different letters exactly two times apiece. Thus, there are already two A's in the first puzzle and two R's in the second. Therefore, you cannot use another A or R in the respective puzzles. Think of other words with N, L or T in the first puzzle, for example.

### NINE LETTER FUN!

Place the letters of the nine-letter words to the right on the dashes, one letter per dash to spell a seven-letter word, a five-letter word, and a three-letter word. Each letter of the nine-letter word can only be used once.

### RIDERSHIP

\_\_\_ E \_\_\_ V \_\_\_ S \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ K \_\_\_ E \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ O \_\_\_

### SIDETRACK

\_\_\_ A \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ R \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ A \_\_\_

### SCRAMBLED

\_\_\_ U \_\_\_ T \_\_\_ R \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ U \_\_\_ V \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ O \_\_\_

- DOUBLE FUN**
- First Puzzle**
- pinto
  - ocean
  - clasp
  - stile
- Second Puzzle**
- realm
  - moist
  - rinse
  - talon
- NINE LETTER FUN**
- Ridership=
  - peevish, skier,
  - rod; sidetrack=
  - earmark, saint,
  - cad; scrambled=
  - mustard, curve,
  - lob



Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026

## Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

*One cannot be humble and aware of oneself at the same time.*

—*Madeleine L'Engle*

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“**B**lessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (v. 9). These are some of the words shouted by excited crowds as they welcomed a king on a donkey! Who would have thought? The scene is vivid, like something right out of a Cecil B. DeMille movie. Jesus enters Jerusalem on a humble donkey, surrounded by a hopeful and enthusiastic crowd. They wave palm branches and shout praises. The sound of “Hosanna” rings out like a hymn of joy.

To many in the crowd that day, Jesus was a hero — a miracle worker, a healer, a teacher and perhaps even a revolutionary. They expected a conqueror, someone to overthrow Roman rule and restore Israel’s glory. Yet Jesus arrived, not in a war chariot, but on a donkey.

This scene reminds us how often we misunderstand God’s ways. We expect strength, and Jesus offers humility. We expect glory, and Jesus embraces sacrifice. We expect to be saved from trials, and Jesus instead joins us in them. But this is precisely the wonder of Palm Sunday: a King who chooses humility and love over arrogance and hatred.

As we grow older, many of us have learned the same lesson. Life doesn’t always match the script we imagined. The victories for which we hoped may have been replaced by quiet moments of grace. The strength we counted on may have yielded to a deeper strength — one rooted in trust and surrender. Yet it is in this holy paradox that Jesus meets us.

So, this Palm Sunday, when the shouts of “Hosanna” fade, remember the King on the donkey. Remember that Jesus still comes — quietly, humbly — to walk with you. To bear your burdens. To whisper peace into your heart. To fill your days with purpose, no matter how long or short the path may be.

Let this holy week be a reminder that you are never forgotten, never overlooked, never abandoned. The one who came riding into Jerusalem long ago still arrives in the quiet spaces of our lives, carrying grace upon grace.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for choosing the path of humility and peace. As we walk with you this Holy Week, help us remember that you walk with us every day. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

### Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Deuteronomy 1-3
- Monday:** Deuteronomy 4-6
- Tuesday:** Deuteronomy 7-9
- Wednesday:** Deut. 10-12
- Thursday:** Deut. 13-16
- Friday:** Deuteronomy 17-19
- Saturday:** Deut. 20-22

## Verse to Remember

*“The LORD watches over the way of the righteous.”*

—Psalm 1:6



## BIBLE CRYPTO-FUN!

Clues: R=I, M=T

M Y L C L O Q Z C M Y L P Z Q N R V

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M Y L H L D R F F R F D Z C G R V N Z U .

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For solution, see Psalm 111:10 (NIV)

### MUSIC MYSTERY

**Directions:** Fill in the blank boxes below by choosing the correct letter from the two clues provided to spell a famous composer's name. Answer below.

**4C 1E 3A 3C 2D 3E 1C 1E 5E**

				H					
--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--

**1A 3D 4E 1B 5A 5A 4D 5E 3B**

**A B C D E**

<b>1</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>U</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>N</b>

**Answer:** Beethoven