



LENT

ENCOUNTERING GOD



In the desert places
of our lives.

LENT 2026

Join us this Lent as we give some attention to where we hunger & thirst most for God in our own lives & communities.

In doing so we can discover that it is in those desert places we can know the presence and power of God more deeply and witness him at work transforming the dry places into places of *abundance, singing & joy (Isaiah 35v1-2)*

It is in these seasons of hunger & thirst that we can grow in communion with God and with others as we journey together & bear witness to the work of God in the lives of each other through prayer.

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ENCOUNTERING GOD, IN HIS WORD, WITHIN COMMUNITY, BY THE SPIRIT

As a church family this Lent we are inviting you each week to meditate on his word, consider the invitation of the Holy Spirit through some questions and take the opportunity to connect with others through prayer as a source of encouragement and to pray God's kingdom come.

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy & eat! Listen, listen to me and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare." (Isaiah 55 v 1)

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WEEK 1 & 2

LORD, EXAMINE OUR HEARTS

After Jesus' baptism he was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert for 40 days and nights. This was a time of withdrawal, solitude & retreat. A time of testing, fasting & contending in prayer. Yet also a time of being cared for and attended by angels.

In these first 2 weeks of Lent we invite you to read & consider;

- **Matthew 3v16-17**
- **Matthew 4v1-11**
- **Psalm 63 v1-8**
- **Colossians 4v2**

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As we journey towards Easter Lent can be a time for reflecting on Who God is to us and where we hunger & thirst for more in our relationship with him.

- **Are there areas of your life that feel dry, weary or difficult? Name them.**
- Where do you **thirst most for God or long to see God move** in your life this season of Lent?
- Might there be an area where you long to **grow in your relationship with God** in this season? *What might be some intentional steps you can take (maybe with the help of others) to move toward this?*
- Where have you witnessed **the loving care and attention of God** in your life recently?

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WEEK 3 & 4

ENCOUNTERING THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE STILLNESS & SILENCE

Henri Nouwen 'The Still, Small Voice of Love'

"Many voices ask for our attention. There is a voice that says, "Prove that you are a good person." Another voice says, "You'd better be ashamed of yourself." There also is a voice that says, "Nobody really cares about you," and one that says, "Be sure to become successful, popular, and powerful." But underneath all these often very noisy voices is a still, small voice that says, "You are my Beloved, my favour rests on you." That's the voice we need most of all to hear. To hear that voice, however, requires special effort; it requires solitude, silence, and a strong determination to listen.

That's what prayer is. It is listening to the voice that calls us "my Beloved."

Do you ever find yourself avoiding or resisting silence in your life? Take a moment to consider what might be the barriers to this?

Jesus invites us to be still & rest awhile in his presence. He too often withdrew from others and the demands of life to be with his Father. To hear his Father speak; This is my Beloved son.

To live each day out of the overflow of such generous love.

We invite you to read & consider;

- **Psalm 46v10**
- **Isaiah 30v15**
- **Psalm 23**
- **Luke 5v15&16**

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Make some space this week to intentionally withdraw to be with God.

- In times of silence or solitude are there competing thoughts or feelings that rise to the surface?
- What does "*In quietness and trust is your strength*" (Isaiah 30v15) mean to you?
- Do you have a question for God? As you are still & wait on him how might he respond to you? ***The voice of God will always be a loving response.***
- Talk with others about your experiences of silence and solitude with God.

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WEEK 5 & 6: LEARNING THE WAY OF LOVE & FAITHFULNESS

At his baptism Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit & marked out with love and the affirmation of his Father; This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Jesus is then directed into the desert by the Holy Spirit where he is tempted by Satan, the accuser. Each temptation tested Jesus' faithfulness to his father; to trust without compromising. Satan sought to undermine the intimate connection between Father & Son yet Jesus was tempted in every way but was without sin.

We invite you to read;

- **Matthew 4v1-11**
- **Hebrews 4 v15-16**
- **Romans 3v 22-24**
- **Ephesians 2v8-9**
- **Hebrews 12v1-2**

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If Jesus was tested or tempted we will be too.

- How is the response of Jesus to each test and his faithfulness a good example for you & I as we also experience our own testing or pressures in **our walk with God?**
- What unexpected test have you faced in life that taught you something or caused you to grow in your faith?
- Do you ever struggle with the tension between being saved by grace and still having to actively work on your spiritual growth?
- How can we help each other when we are tempted & get alongside each other as we run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12)?

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