

MY DAILY

JOURNEY

SETTING OUR FACES TOWARD JESUS

A LENTEN JOURNAL

Lenten 40-Day Journal

Introduction to the Lenten Devotional Journal: A Journey of Reflection, Repentance, and Renewal

Lent is more than just a season — it is an invitation. An invitation to slow down, reflect, and draw near to the heart of God. It is a sacred journey that mirrors the path of Christ as He moved steadily toward the cross, fully aware of the suffering ahead, yet unwavering in His love for the world.

For forty days, we enter into this rhythm of repentance and renewal, not as an empty ritual, but as a means of spiritual formation. We intentionally step away from distractions, lay aside what weighs us down, and tune our hearts to the whisper of the Holy Spirit.

This devotional journal has been crafted to guide you through this journey, with daily reflections drawn from the Gospel of Luke. Each passage invites us to encounter Jesus — in His teachings, His miracles, His moments of solitude, His suffering, and ultimately, His victory over death.

You will notice a shift in voice throughout this journal, as different weeks reflect different perspectives. Some devotionals will challenge you to think deeply, as if you were sitting at the feet of a great theologian. Others will call you into personal reflection, as if Jesus Himself were walking beside you on the road to Emmaus. Each entry is designed to meet you where you are, but not leave you there — for Lent is a season of transformation.

As you journey through these pages, may you discover:

- The courage to surrender — letting go of what no longer serves you in light of Christ's calling.
- The depth of God's mercy — embracing the radical grace that meets us in our failures and calls us beloved.

- The urgency of the Kingdom—living today with the expectation that God is making all things new.

Lent is a time to ask hard questions, to wait in the silence of Holy Saturday, and to rejoice at the dawn of Resurrection Sunday. And through it all, we pray that this journal leads you not only to the cross but beyond it—to a life forever transformed by the risen Christ.

Each day, you will be presented with a scripture from Luke, a short devotional thought, a reflective question, and a prayer prompt. There will also be space provided for you to jot down your personal thoughts and responses.

May this journey bring renewal to your soul.

Blessings,

Dion

Ash Wednesday - March 5th, 2025

Luke 4:1-13

Isaiah 58:1-12

The Purpose of Lent

Lent is a 40-day journey of self-examination, repentance, and renewal. It is a time to remember Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness—a period of fasting, prayer, and preparation. For centuries, Christians have stepped away from distractions to draw closer to God during this season.

Traditionally, fasting has meant abstaining from food, but in a world filled with constant noise and division, perhaps what we need most is to fast from the things that keep our souls restless. What if this year we stepped away from social media, political debate, and excess and instead feasted on the peace, presence, and wisdom of God?

Fasting from Social Media: Silence Over Noise

Jesus' wilderness experience was marked by silence. He was not surrounded by the voices of the crowd or the distractions of the world. In contrast, we live in an age of constant notifications and opinions. Social media promises connection but often leaves us feeling empty, anxious, and divided.

Fasting from social media does not mean ignoring the world but tuning into a different voice—the voice of God. It means stepping away from endless scrolling and instead using that time for prayer, Scripture, serving others, and being present with loved ones.

Isaiah 58 reminds us that fasting is about more than self-denial—it's about transformation. What if, instead of filling our minds with trending topics, we filled our hearts with God's Word? What if, instead of posting online, we wrote a letter of encouragement or had a meaningful face-to-face conversation?

Fasting from Political Debate: Peace Over Division

One of the temptations Satan presented to Jesus in the wilderness was power. The devil offered Him authority over all the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:5-7), but Jesus refused, knowing that His kingdom was not one of earthly control but love, sacrifice, and servanthood.

We live in a time when political debates dominate our conversations, often sowing division and resentment. While thoughtful debate and discourse are not wrong, when it consumes our energy, breeds hostility, or distances us from others, they can become spiritually toxic.

Fasting from political debate during Lent could mean:

- Choosing listening over arguing
- Replacing news consumption with prayer for God's guidance
- Prioritizing unity over the need to "win" a debate

Isaiah 58 challenges us: *"If you do away with the pointing finger and malicious talk... then your light will rise in the darkness"* (vv. 9-10). What if, instead of debating, we sought to be a light of grace and truth in a divided world?

Fasting from Excess: Contentment Over Consumption

We live in a culture of more—more food, more entertainment, more shopping, more distractions. But Jesus embraced less in the wilderness. He fasted, surrendered His comforts, and fixed His heart on God alone.

Excess is not just about material things—it is about anything that numbs our souls and keeps us from true fulfillment in Christ. Fasting from excess could mean:

- Simplifying our lifestyle – buying less, consuming less, and practicing gratitude
- Re-evaluating our priorities—spending time in prayer and service rather than in pursuit of more
- Being generous – giving away what we don't need to bless those who do

Isaiah 58 reminds us that true fasting is about justice, mercy, and generosity (v. 7). Perhaps the best way to fast from excess is to give sacrificially – choosing generosity over self-indulgence.

An Invitation to Fast

Lent is not about legalism; it is about opening space for God to work in us. Whatever you choose to fast from, let it draw you closer to Christ.

- If you fast from social media, fill that time with prayer and Scripture.
- If you fast from political debate, replace it with peacemaking and understanding.
- If you fast from excess, practice contentment and generosity.

As we begin this season, let's follow Jesus into the wilderness—not to be defeated but to be transformed. Let's surrender what weighs us down so that we may be filled with the Spirit and prepared for the joy of resurrection.

Our Lenten Journey Together

Our fast begins today, March 5, and ends on Easter Sunday, April 20. Since we do not fast on Sundays, this will be a full 40-day journey. To guide us, I will provide daily Scripture prompts and reflections based on the Gospel of Luke. Additionally, on Sunday, March 9th, we begin a new sermon series titled "Journey: Setting Our Faces Toward Jesus." We will walk through the latter part of Luke's Gospel, starting with Luke 9:51 – *"When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."*

Prayer

Day 5 – March 10th, 2025**Scripture: Luke 10:17-37****Title: Who is My Neighbor?**

The disciples returned from their mission, excited about their success—they had cast out demons and performed miracles. But Jesus redirected their focus: “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

Success in the kingdom of God isn’t measured by power or achievements, but by the reality of our relationship with Him and others. And then, almost as if to illustrate this point, Jesus tells one of His most famous parables: The Good Samaritan. A man is left beaten on the road, and two religious leaders—who should have known better—walk right past him. But a Samaritan, a man from a despised group, stops, helps, and loves his neighbor in the most practical way possible.

It’s easy to think that being “spiritual” is about having big faith moments—casting out demons, preaching, leading ministries. But Jesus shows us that true spirituality is how we love our neighbor. It’s the quiet acts of mercy, the inconvenient kindness, the willingness to see the person in need rather than walk by on the other side.

Reflection: Where have you been too busy, too distracted, or too self-focused to see the needs of your neighbor? Who is God calling you to stop for today?

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see the people You have placed in my path. Help me to be a neighbor who reflects Your love in real, practical ways. Amen.

Journal Space:

Luke 24

The Resurrection of Jesus

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women[b] were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men[c] said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.[d]’ ⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’ ⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.[e]

The Walk to Emmaus

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[f] from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad.[g] ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ ¹⁹ He asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth,[h] who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.[i] Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ ²⁵ Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah[j] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us[k] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

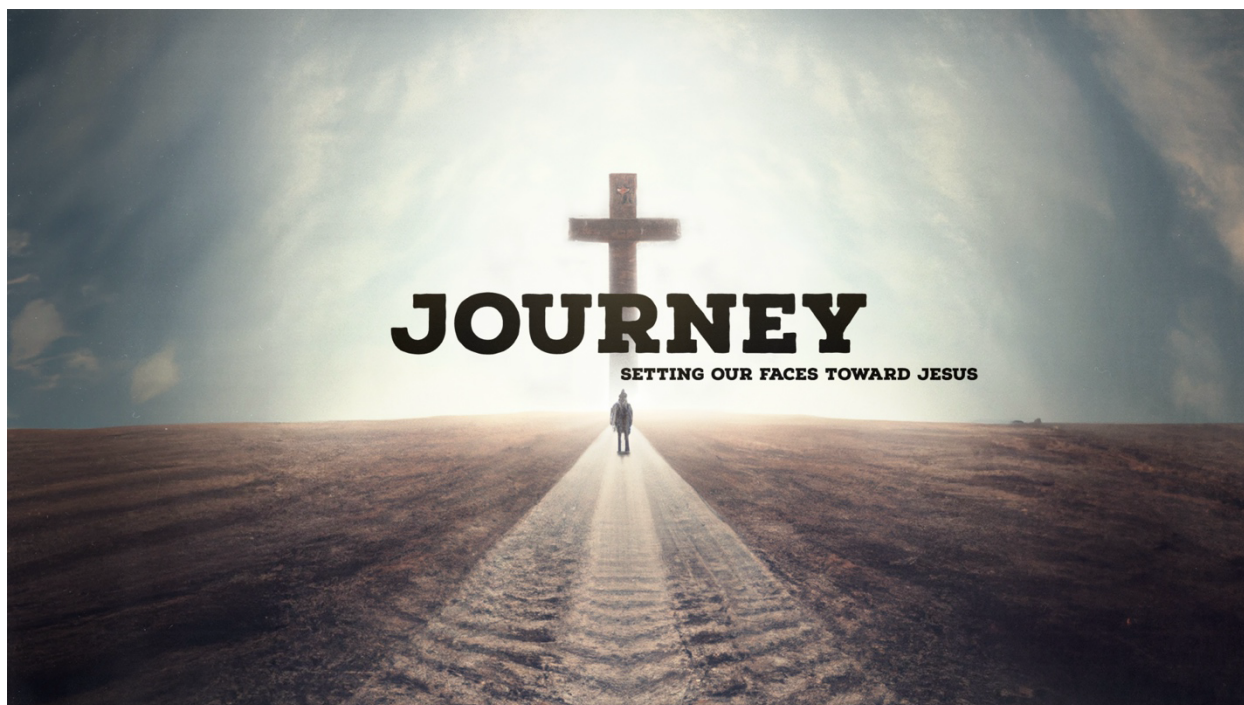
Jesus Appears to His Disciples

³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' [l] ³⁷ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. [m] ⁴¹ While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah[n] is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses[o] of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

The Ascension of Jesus

⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. [p] ⁵² And they worshipped him, and [q] returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.



Lenten Sermon Series At Reynoldsburg Church of Christ

Lent is a season of repentance, self-reflection, and renewal. Starting on Ash Wednesday, the church is encouraged to proclaim a fast lasting 40 days (excluding Sundays). As we fast, we will consider the "Travel Narratives" in the gospel of Luke. Jesus "sets his eyes toward Jerusalem". During his journey, Luke records some of his most impactful teaching and some intriguing encounters. As we reflect on his journey, we consider our own spiritual journey in our corner of the earth.

March 9th – The Journey Begins

March 16th - The Journey through Obstacles

March 23rd - The Journey with Others (Not like you)

March 30th - The Journey to Recovery

April 6th - The Journey to Repentance

April 13th - The Journey to the Home Stretch

April 20th – Easter Sunday - The Journey Begins: The Coda