

Teach us to
Pray
Lent 2025



First Presbyterian Church
OF LAKE FOREST

Prayer

MARIE HOWE

Every day I want to speak with you. And every day something more important
calls for my attention – the drugstore, the beauty products, the luggage

I need to buy for the trip.
Even now I can hardly sit here

among the falling piles of paper and clothing, the garbage trucks outside
already screeching and banging.

The mystics say you are as close as my own breath.
Why do I flee from you?

My days and nights pour through me like complaints
and become a story I forgot to tell.

Help me. Even as I write these words I am planning
to rise from the chair as soon as I finish this sentence.

from The Kingdom of Ordinary Time: Poems
© WW Norton & Co. 2009



Introduction

What are we doing when we pray? Have you ever wondered? We pray at church or before meals or special occasions. Many of us learned to “say prayers” before bedtime as well. Prayers don’t always have to be spoken out loud. Saint Augustine believed that even the desire to pray counts as prayer itself — a comforting thought when words fail us. Paul Zahl says prayer is the expression of a relationship. He says it is one word: help. He is right that prayer is the expression of a relationship, but prayer is more than just a cry for help. Anne Lamott adds that prayer can also be Thanks and Wow too.

“Every day I want to speak with you. And every day something more important calls for my attention,” writes the poet Marie Howe in her poem, “Prayer,” capturing a struggle familiar to many of us. In a world of constant notifications, urgent deadlines, and breaking news, the simple act of prayer can feel both essential and elusive. Even the disciples, walking alongside Jesus, asked him to teach them how to pray. This reminds us that feeling uncertain about prayer is deeply human. But the beauty of prayer is that it takes many forms. This devotional offers a variety of practices not because any one way is better, but because different moments call for different expressions of our relationship with God. Whether you’re seeking a deeper prayer life or simply trying to begin one, there’s something here for you. As you explore these pages this Lenten season, we hope you’ll discover prayer isn’t about perfecting a technique but about nurturing an ongoing dialogue with God, one honest moment at a time.

Jon Wasson
Lent 2025

Lent Events

For more information and to sign up for a Lent event visit firstchurchlf.org/lent

Lent is a season of preparation that begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Easter Sunday. During these 40 days, we reflect deeply on Jesus's path of sacrifice and suffering - from his time of testing in the wilderness, through his ministry of healing and teaching, to his final days in Jerusalem, and ultimately to Calvary. We invite you to join us on this journey by participating in worship, community, and spiritual practices unique to this season.



Ash Wednesday Services, March 5th

Begin the Lenten season by joining us for one of our short-format, traditional worship services, each including the sacred imposition of ashes. We invite you to pause amidst your day to gather in worship and fellowship as we embark together on the journey through Lent.

7:00 am Chapel

12:30 pm Chapel

7:00 pm Chapel



The Lord's Prayer

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he gave them the words to what we now know as the Lord's Prayer. We're inviting you to read Wesley Hill's short but insightful book on the Lord's Prayer and reflect on your practice of prayer. Copies may be purchased at the Lake Forest Book Store or on Sunday following worship.



Small Groups

Community is an essential Christian practice and one we regularly invite you to. We'd love to help you find a group or start one of your own. Groups will be encouraged to read Wesley Hill's book on the Lord's Prayer.



Chapel Worship and Dinner

Join us for a casual worship service on Sunday nights during Lent led by Daniel Makins.

5:00 pm Worship Chapel

6:00 pm Dinner Great Room



Labyrinth

This Lenten season, we invite you to walk the labyrinth as a form of prayer. Walk it at your own pace and be open to its gifts. A guide will be provided. If you have any questions or want to learn more about labyrinths, please contact Kristie at kfinley@firstchurchlf.org.



Art and Prayer Space

Room 012 (next to the Fellowship Hall kitchen) will be set aside during Lent for creative expressions of prayer. Creative activities can add a new dimension to your prayer life, providing peace, inspiration, and focus. Invite God into your art as you work, whether you're painting, knitting, sculpting, or crafting. Let prayer guide your hands, calm your mind, and open your heart to new possibilities. Explore the spiritual connection between creativity and faith through prayer.

The space is available Monday through Friday during the church business hours. All supplies and guides will be provided.



Easter Flowers

As we look forward to Easter, offerings for flowers are welcomed in memory or honor of a loved one to beautify the church and remind us of the glory of God's creation and Christ's resurrection. If you are offering Easter flowers in honor or memory of a loved one and would like for their names to be printed in the Easter bulletin, please have your donations in by Tuesday, April 15th.

Lenten Resources

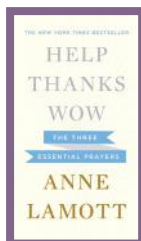


iOS

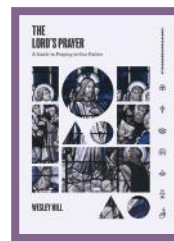
Pray As
You Go App



Android



Help,
Thanks,
Wow
by Anne
Lamott



The Lord's
Prayer: A Guide
to Praying to
Our Father
by Wesley Hill

Ash **Wednesday Services**

7:00 am Chapel

12:30 pm Chapel

7:00 pm Chapel

Ash Wednesday

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 05

“Teach us to care and not to care.”

These lines, taken from T.S. Eliot’s poem, “Ash Wednesday,” summarize the attitude of the season we enter today. As we receive the sign of the cross on our foreheads, we hear the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This reminder of our mortality is meant to keep us honest about our limits as human beings. We will all die. It is also meant to teach us what matters most while alive. Death creates an economy in which some things matter more than other things. There are things about which we are wise not to care: keeping score by our achievements, the outrage cycle played out on social media, and the petty resentments that keep us from one another. And there are things about which we ought to care: knowing others and being known, giving and receiving mercy and grace, working for justice and peace, and caring for and enjoying God’s good creation.

Almighty God, as we enter into this holy season today, teach us to care and not to care, that we might pay attention to your grace in our lives and in the world you love.

Amen.



First *Sunday* of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 09

Lord, you who invite us to die to ourselves so that we might find ourselves anew, help me, I pray, not to be too full of to-do lists and deadlines and wants and shoulds during this season of Lent, so that there is no space for you to do your work of transformation in me, but grant me, I pray, the grace to welcome your Spirit's work. I pray this in the name of Jesus, the One who heals us by his wounds. Amen.

Adapted from David Taylor's Prayers for the Pilgrimage

Silent Prayer

MONDAY, MARCH 10

“Be still and know that I am God!”
— Psalm 46.10

Blaise Pascal once said that all our problems stem from our inability to sit quietly in a room. He's exaggerating, of course—there are real problems out there that silence alone won't fix. But he's onto something. Stillness won't fix everything, but it might change us. And maybe that's the point. Begin this week by taking some time today to be still. 1, 3, or 5 minutes is all you need. Turn off your phone. Sit down. Rest in God's grace.

Dear Lord Jesus, once you spoke peace to the wind and the waves. Speak your peace to my heart today. I wait silently... patiently. I receive your gracious command, “Peace, be still.” Amen.

Lord's Prayer *Reading & Reflection*

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

Journey deeper into the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples this Lenten season through Wesley Hill's insightful exploration of the Lord's Prayer. Whether you join a small group or engage in personal study, this five-week journey will help you appreciate what it means to call God "Father," to long for his kingdom, and to seek daily bread and forgiveness. The weekly readings are manageable – perfect for the contemplative pace of Lent – and come with reflection questions to enrich your personal reflection or group discussion. Join us in letting the prayer Jesus taught us reshape our hearts this Lenten season.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." (Pages 1-27)

1

How has your understanding of prayer been shaped by your family background or early religious experiences? In what ways might this influence how you approach the Lord's Prayer?

2

Consider the concept of prayer as "adopted speech." How does viewing prayer as something we learn, rather than something that comes naturally, change your perspective on spiritual practices?

3

What does it mean to you personally to address God as "Father"? How might this form of address both comfort and challenge us?

4

How does praying in community differ from private prayer in your experience? What unique value might each form hold?

Lectio Divina

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Lectio Divina is a practice of prayerfully reading scripture. Set aside 15 minutes.

1 lectio (*read*)

3 oratio (*pray*)

2 meditatio (*meditate*)

4 contemplatio (*contemplate*)

Matthew 4.1-11

Read

Read the text out loud, slowly and thoughtfully, not rushing to get to the end but to listen to what God might be saying through the text.

Meditate

The early Christians practiced meditation by repeating a word or a phrase from scripture until it formed in their heart and mind. Read the text again out loud and consider what word or phrase sticks out to you that you can meditate on throughout the rest of the day.

Pray

Read the text a third time. How can you pray from what you have meditated on? What does this passage bring to your attention in your own life or in the world around you that needs prayer?

Contemplate

After reading, meditating, and praying, the final step is to rest in God's grace, allowing ourselves simply to be with God. Spend a few minutes quietly praying for God's Spirit to lead you into deeper knowledge of God and of yourself from this practice.

Labyrinth

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

The labyrinth is a meandering path used as a meditation, contemplation, and spiritual transformation tool. It is not a maze with dead ends where you can get lost, but a path leading to the center and back out. For centuries, Christians have used the labyrinth for spiritual centering, discernment, and contemplation. As a form of silent prayer, we invite you to walk the simple circular path as disciples have done for centuries. You may use the labyrinth in the Fellowship Hall at church or trace your hand through the labyrinth on the right.

Breathe **deeply, relax, and don't rush.**

Before you enter the labyrinth path, try to quiet your mind and heart with a few deep, centering breaths. Be attentive to your breath and your intention to be present with God in these moments. As you enter the labyrinth and walk toward the center (there are no dead ends or false passages), release and let go of things that hinder your relationship with God. Pray for an open mind and heart. With kindness toward yourself, gently try to release distracting thoughts and let go of expectations.

Release As you move toward the center, let go of anything that gets between you and God. Shed images or projections of yourself to be your true self with God. Let go of what you don't need to take on the journey.

Receive Once you arrive at the center, listen to God's message to you this day. Stay in the center as long as you like, receiving the love and word of God for you.

Return As you travel out, give thanks for God's presence and message.

There is no single right way to pray as you walk the labyrinth; whatever helps you connect with God is the right way. Since reaching the center is assured, walking the labyrinth is more about the journey than the destination, about being rather than doing, integrating body, mind, and soul.



Examen

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

The Examen is a form of prayer that helps us pay attention to God's presence. The Examen asks us to consider the events and experiences of our day or week and to reflect on them in the company of God's Spirit. Set aside 5-10 minutes to pray this guided prayer.

Presence The earliest Christians remind us that God is as close to us as our own breath. Let your breath now remind you that God is with you, and spend a moment silently in the company of the Holy Spirit.

Review Begin to review your day or week from beginning to end objectively and without judgment. Let your memory drift, recalling people, events, and places. What happened? What sort of mood do you recall being in? How did you spend your time and attention? Become aware of how you were feeling at different times. Try to name for yourself these different feelings and moods.

Gratitude In particular, where do you notice times of life and light? What gifts did you receive? Take a moment to relish these gifts and thank God for them.

Pray Now, talk to God as you might talk to a friend about your day or week.

Expect And as this day or week comes to an end, is there anything you want to ask of God for the coming days? Just take a moment to do this before bringing your prayer to a close.

Second *Sunday* of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

Silent Prayer

MONDAY, MARCH 17

“Be still and know that I am God!”
— Psalm 46.10

Blaise Pascal once said that all our problems stem from our inability to sit quietly in a room. He’s exaggerating, of course—there are real problems out there that silence alone won’t fix. But he’s onto something. Stillness won’t fix everything, but it might change us. And maybe that’s the point. Begin this week by taking some time today to be still. 1, 3, or 5 minutes is all you need. Turn off your phone. Sit down. Rest in God’s grace.

Dear Lord Jesus, once you spoke peace to the wind and the waves. Speak your peace to my heart today. I wait silently... patiently. I receive your gracious command, “Peace, be still.” Amen.

Lord's Prayer *Reading & Reflection*

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Journey deeper into the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples this Lenten season through Wesley Hill's insightful exploration of the Lord's Prayer. Whether you join a small group or engage in personal study, this five-week journey will help you appreciate what it means to call God "Father," to long for his kingdom, and to seek daily bread and forgiveness. The weekly readings are manageable – perfect for the contemplative pace of Lent – and come with reflection questions to enrich your personal reflection or group discussion. Join us in letting the prayer Jesus taught us reshape our hearts this Lenten season.

"Your Kingdom Come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
(Pages 31-45)

1

What does it mean to "hallow" God's name in our daily lives? How might this affect our choices and priorities?

2

In what ways do you see tension between God's kingdom and earthly kingdoms in today's world? How does this shape your prayers?

3

Consider the phrase "your kingdom come." How does this prayer challenge our desire for control and immediate results?

4

What does it mean to align our will with God's will? Can you identify areas where this alignment feels particularly challenging?

Lectio Divina

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

Lectio Divina is a practice of prayerfully reading scripture. Set aside 15 minutes. Traditionally, it has four steps:

1 lectio (*read*)

3 oratio (*pray*)

2 meditatio (*meditate*)

4 contemplatio (*contemplate*)

Matthew 5.1-11

Read

Read the text out loud, slowly and thoughtfully, not rushing to get to the end but to listen to what God might be saying through the text.

Meditate

The early Christians practiced meditation by repeating a word or a phrase from scripture until it formed in their heart and mind. Read the text again out loud and consider what word or phrase sticks out to you that you can meditate on throughout the rest of the day.

Pray

Read the text a third time. How can you pray from what you have meditated on? What does this passage bring to your attention in your own life or in the world around you that needs prayer?

Contemplate

After reading, meditating, and praying, the final step is to rest in God's grace, allowing ourselves simply to be with God. Spend a few minutes quietly praying for God's Spirit to lead you into deeper knowledge of God and of yourself from this practice.

Labyrinth

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

The labyrinth is a meandering path used as a meditation, contemplation, and spiritual transformation tool. It is not a maze with dead ends where you can get lost, but a path leading to the center and back out. For centuries, Christians have used the labyrinth for spiritual centering, discernment, and contemplation. As a form of silent prayer, we invite you to walk the simple circular path as disciples have done for centuries. You may use the labyrinth in the Fellowship Hall at church or trace your hand through the labyrinth on the right.

Breathe **deeply, relax, and don't rush.**

Before you enter the labyrinth path, try to quiet your mind and heart with a few deep, centering breaths. Be attentive to your breath and your intention to be present with God in these moments. As you enter the labyrinth and walk toward the center (there are no dead ends or false passages), release and let go of things that hinder your relationship with God. Pray for an open mind and heart. With kindness toward yourself, gently try to release distracting thoughts and let go of expectations.

Release As you move toward the center, let go of anything that gets between you and God. Shed images or projections of yourself to be your true self with God. Let go of what you don't need to take on the journey.

Receive Once you arrive at the center, listen to God's message to you this day. Stay in the center as long as you like, receiving the love and word of God for you.

Return As you travel out, give thanks for God's presence and message.

There is no single right way to pray as you walk the labyrinth; whatever helps you connect with God is the right way. Since reaching the center is assured, walking the labyrinth is more about the journey than the destination, about being rather than doing, integrating body, mind, and soul.



Examen

FRIDAY, MARCH 21

The Examen is a form of prayer that helps us pay attention to God's presence. The Examen asks us to consider the events and experiences of our day or week and to reflect on them in the company of God's Spirit. Set aside 5-10 minutes to pray this guided prayer.

Presence The earliest Christians remind us that God is as close to us as our own breath. Let your breath now remind you that God is with you, and spend a moment silently in the company of the Holy Spirit.

Review Begin to review your day or week from beginning to end objectively and without judgment. Let your memory drift, recalling people, events, and places. What happened? What sort of mood do you recall being in? How did you spend your time and attention? Become aware of how you were feeling at different times. Try to name for yourself these different feelings and moods.

Gratitude In particular, where do you notice times of life and light? What gifts did you receive? Take a moment to relish these gifts and thank God for them.

Pray Now, talk to God as you might talk to a friend about your day or week.

Expect And as this day or week comes to an end, is there anything you want to ask of God for the coming days? Just take a moment to do this before bringing your prayer to a close.

Nighttime Prayers

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer

A Prayer for Comfort

Almighty and everlasting God, the comfort of the sad, the strength of those who suffer; hear the prayers of your children who cry out of any trouble; and to every distressed soul grant mercy, relief and refreshment.

The Galasian Sacramentary
(8th century)

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of God,
have mercy on me,
a sinner.

The Desert Fathers
(5th century)

For Little Deeds of *Kindness* to Another

O Lord, you who do not despise the day of small things, prompt us by your Spirit, we pray, to speak a little word of kindness to our family this day and to offer a little act of care to a friend, so that we might not think that your love is made manifest only in big things. We pray this in the name of Jesus, the One who is born in the little town of Bethlehem. Amen.

David Taylor

The *Serenity* Prayer

God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
That I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Reinhold Niebuhr

A Collect for *Grace*

Lord God, almighty
and everlasting Father,
you have brought us in
safety to this new day:
Preserve us with your
mighty power, that
we may not fall into
sin, nor be overcome
by adversity; and in
all we do, direct us to
the fulfilling of Your
purpose; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

Third *Sunday* of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

O Lord, you who daily bear our burdens, strengthen our hands and expand our heart's capacity to bear one another's burdens, we pray, so that we might offer your generous care to friend and neighbor alike who may feel crushed under the trials and troubles of their lives. We pray this in the name of Jesus, the One whose burden is light. Amen.

David Taylor

Silent Prayer

MONDAY, MARCH 24

“Be still and know that I am God!”

— Psalm 46.10

Blaise Pascal once said that all our problems stem from our inability to sit quietly in a room. He's exaggerating, of course—there are real problems out there that silence alone won't fix. But he's onto something. Stillness won't fix everything, but it might change us. And maybe that's the point. Begin this week by taking some time today to be still. 1, 3, or 5 minutes is all you need. Turn off your phone. Sit down. Rest in God's grace.

Dear Lord Jesus, once you spoke peace to the wind and the waves. Speak your peace to my heart today. I wait silently... patiently. I receive your gracious command, “Peace, be still.” Amen.

Lord's Prayer *Reading & Reflection*

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Journey deeper into the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples this Lenten season through Wesley Hill's insightful exploration of the Lord's Prayer. Whether you join a small group or engage in personal study, this five-week journey will help you appreciate what it means to call God "Father," to long for his kingdom, and to seek daily bread and forgiveness. The weekly readings are manageable – perfect for the contemplative pace of Lent – and come with reflection questions to enrich your personal reflection or group discussion. Join us in letting the prayer Jesus taught us reshape our hearts this Lenten season.

"Give us today our daily bread." (Pages 49-55)

1

How does the request for "daily bread" relate to issues of trust and dependence in your life?

2

In what ways might praying for "our" daily bread (rather than "my" daily bread) change how we think about community and shared resources?

3

What role does gratitude play in your prayer life? How might regular prayers for daily provision cultivate thankfulness?

Lectio Divina

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

Lectio Divina is a practice of prayerfully reading scripture. Set aside 15 minutes.

- 1 lectio (*read*)
- 2 meditatio (*meditate*)
- 3 oratio (*pray*)
- 4 contemplatio (*contemplate*)

Matthew 6.1-15

Read

Read the text out loud, slowly and thoughtfully, not rushing to get to the end but to listen to what God might be saying through the text.

Meditate

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Pray

Read the text a third time. How can you pray from what you have meditated on? What does this passage bring to your attention in your own life or in the world around you that needs prayer?

Contemplate

After reading, meditating, and praying, the final step is to rest in God's grace, allowing ourselves simply to be with God. Spend a few minutes quietly praying for God's Spirit to lead you into deeper knowledge of God and of yourself from this practice.

Labyrinth

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

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Breathe **deeply, relax, and don't rush.**

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Examen

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

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Presence The earliest Christians remind us that God is as close to us as our own breath. Let your breath now remind you that God is with you, and spend a moment silently in the company of the Holy Spirit.

Review Begin to review your day or week from beginning to end objectively and without judgment. Let your memory drift, recalling people, events, and places. What happened? What sort of mood do you recall being in? How did you spend your time and attention? Become aware of how you were feeling at different times. Try to name for yourself these different feelings and moods.

Gratitude In particular, where do you notice times of life and light? What gifts did you receive? Take a moment to relish these gifts and thank God for them.

Pray Now, talk to God as you might talk to a friend about your day or week.

Expect And as this day or week comes to an end, is there anything you want to ask of God for the coming days? Just take a moment to do this before bringing your prayer to a close.

Fourth *Sunday* of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Jesus of Nazareth, you met unlikely people in unlikely places and joined yourself to them in friendship. May we be like you in this way, finding friends at crossroads and bus-stops, in queues and crises, in kindness and curiosity. Because we, like you, need the company of others. Amen.

Daily Prayers from the Corrymeela Community

Silent Prayer

MONDAY, MARCH 31

“Be still and know that I am God!”
— Psalm 46.10

Blaise Pascal once said that all our problems stem from our inability to sit quietly in a room. He’s exaggerating, of course—there are real problems out there that silence alone won’t fix. But he’s onto something. Stillness won’t fix everything, but it might change us. And maybe that’s the point. Begin this week by taking some time today to be still. 1, 3, or 5 minutes is all you need. Turn off your phone. Sit down. Rest in God’s grace.

Dear Lord Jesus, once you spoke peace to the wind and the waves. Speak your peace to my heart today. I wait silently... patiently. I receive your gracious command, “Peace, be still.” Amen.

Lord's Prayer *Reading & Reflection*

TUESDAY, APRIL 01

Journey deeper into the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples this Lenten season through Wesley Hill's insightful exploration of the Lord's Prayer. Whether you join a small group or engage in personal study, this five-week journey will help you appreciate what it means to call God "Father," to long for his kingdom, and to seek daily bread and forgiveness. The weekly readings are manageable – perfect for the contemplative pace of Lent – and come with reflection questions to enrich your personal reflection or group discussion. Join us in letting the prayer Jesus taught us reshape our hearts this Lenten season.

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."
(Pages 59-66)

1

How do you understand the relationship between divine forgiveness and our forgiveness of others?

2

What makes forgiveness particularly challenging in your experience?
How does the Lord's Prayer speak to these challenges?

3

How might regular practice of this prayer shape our attitudes toward both receiving and extending forgiveness?

Lectio Divina

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 02

Lectio Divina is a practice of prayerfully reading scripture. Set aside 15 minutes.

1 lectio (*read*)

3 oratio (*pray*)

2 meditatio (*meditate*)

4 contemplatio (*contemplate*)

Mark 4.35-41

Read

Read the text out loud, slowly and thoughtfully, not rushing to get to the end but to listen to what God might be saying through the text.

Meditate

The early Christians practiced meditation by repeating a word or a phrase from scripture until it formed in their heart and mind. Read the text again out loud and consider what word or phrase sticks out to you that you can meditate on throughout the rest of the day.

Pray

Read the text a third time. How can you pray from what you have meditated on? What does this passage bring to your attention in your own life or in the world around you that needs prayer?

Contemplate

After reading, meditating, and praying, the final step is to rest in God's grace, allowing ourselves simply to be with God. Spend a few minutes quietly praying for God's Spirit to lead you into deeper knowledge of God and of yourself from this practice.

Labyrinth

THURSDAY, APRIL 03

The labyrinth is a meandering path used as a meditation, contemplation, and spiritual transformation tool. It is not a maze with dead ends where you can get lost, but a path leading to the center and back out. For centuries, Christians have used the labyrinth for spiritual centering, discernment, and contemplation. As a form of silent prayer, we invite you to walk the simple circular path as disciples have done for centuries. You may use the labyrinth in the Fellowship Hall at church or trace your hand through the labyrinth on the right.

Breathe **deeply, relax, and don't rush.**

Before you enter the labyrinth path, try to quiet your mind and heart with a few deep, centering breaths. Be attentive to your breath and your intention to be present with God in these moments. As you enter the labyrinth and walk toward the center (there are no dead ends or false passages), release and let go of things that hinder your relationship with God. Pray for an open mind and heart. With kindness toward yourself, gently try to release distracting thoughts and let go of expectations.

Release As you move toward the center, let go of anything that gets between you and God. Shed images or projections of yourself to be your true self with God. Let go of what you don't need to take on the journey.

Receive Once you arrive at the center, listen to God's message to you this day. Stay in the center as long as you like, receiving the love and word of God for you.

Return As you travel out, give thanks for God's presence and message.

There is no single right way to pray as you walk the labyrinth; whatever helps you connect with God is the right way. Since reaching the center is assured, walking the labyrinth is more about the journey than the destination, about being rather than doing, integrating body, mind, and soul.



Examen

FRIDAY, APRIL 04

The Examen is a form of prayer that helps us pay attention to God's presence. The Examen asks us to consider the events and experiences of our day or week and to reflect on them in the company of God's Spirit. Set aside 5-10 minutes to pray this guided prayer.

Presence The earliest Christians remind us that God is as close to us as our own breath. Let your breath now remind you that God is with you, and spend a moment silently in the company of the Holy Spirit.

Review Begin to review your day or week from beginning to end objectively and without judgment. Let your memory drift, recalling people, events, and places. What happened? What sort of mood do you recall being in? How did you spend your time and attention? Become aware of how you were feeling at different times. Try to name for yourself these different feelings and moods.

Gratitude In particular, where do you notice times of life and light? What gifts did you receive? Take a moment to relish these gifts and thank God for them.

Pray Now, talk to God as you might talk to a friend about your day or week.


Expect And as this day or week comes to an end, is there anything you want to ask of God for the coming days? Just take a moment to do this before bringing your prayer to a close.

Fifth *Sunday* of Lent

SUNDAY, APRIL 06

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

The background of the page is an abstract watercolor illustration. It features large, overlapping, curved shapes in various shades of beige, tan, and light brown. The colors are soft and blended, creating a textured, organic feel. The shapes are arranged in a way that suggests a stylized cross or a large, open book, with the central area being a lighter, more uniform color, and the surrounding areas showing more variation and depth of color.

Silent Prayer

MONDAY, APRIL 07

“Be still and know that I am God!”
— Psalm 46.10

Blaise Pascal once said that all our problems stem from our inability to sit quietly in a room. He’s exaggerating, of course—there are real problems out there that silence alone won’t fix. But he’s onto something. Stillness won’t fix everything, but it might change us. And maybe that’s the point. Begin this week by taking some time today to be still. 1, 3, or 5 minutes is all you need. Turn off your phone. Sit down. Rest in God’s grace.

Dear Lord Jesus, once you spoke peace to the wind and the waves. Speak your peace to my heart today. I wait silently... patiently. I receive your gracious command, “Peace, be still.” Amen.

Lord's Prayer *Reading & Reflection*

TUESDAY, APRIL 08

Journey deeper into the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples this Lenten season through Wesley Hill's insightful exploration of the Lord's Prayer. Whether you join a small group or engage in personal study, this five-week journey will help you appreciate what it means to call God "Father," to long for his kingdom, and to seek daily bread and forgiveness. The weekly readings are manageable – perfect for the contemplative pace of Lent – and come with reflection questions to enrich your personal reflection or group discussion. Join us in letting the prayer Jesus taught us reshape our hearts this Lenten season.

“Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.”
(Pages 71-94)

1

What does it mean to pray for deliverance from evil in our contemporary context? How do you understand the nature of evil and temptation?

2

How does the doxological ending of the prayer (“For thine is the kingdom...”) affect your understanding of what comes before?

3

In what ways has this study changed your approach to prayer? What aspects of the Lord's Prayer have become more meaningful to you?

4

How might this prayer serve as a pattern for other prayers? What elements would you want to incorporate more intentionally into your prayer life?

Lectio Divina

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 09

Lectio Divina is a practice of prayerfully reading scripture. Set aside 15 minutes.

1 lectio (*read*)

3 oratio (*pray*)

2 meditatio (*meditate*)

4 contemplatio (*contemplate*)

Luke 6.27-36

Read

Read the text out loud, slowly and thoughtfully, not rushing to get to the end but to listen to what God might be saying through the text.

Meditate

The early Christians practiced meditation by repeating a word or a phrase from scripture until it formed in their heart and mind. Read the text again out loud and consider what word or phrase sticks out to you that you can meditate on throughout the rest of the day.

Pray

Read the text a third time. How can you pray from what you have meditated on? What does this passage bring to your attention in your own life or in the world around you that needs prayer?

Contemplate

After reading, meditating, and praying, the final step is to rest in God's grace, allowing ourselves simply to be with God. Spend a few minutes quietly praying for God's Spirit to lead you into deeper knowledge of God and of yourself from this practice.

Labyrinth

THURSDAY, APRIL 10

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Examen

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Gratitude In particular, where do you notice times of life and light? What gifts did you receive? Take a moment to relish these gifts and thank God for them.

Pray Now, talk to God as you might talk to a friend about your day or week.

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Holy Week

SUNDAY, APRIL 13 - SUNDAY, APRIL 20

What follows is a brief outline of the events of Holy Week. As you make your way through this week, take a moment or two to consider what Christ's example of sacrificial love inspires in you.



Palm Sunday Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, moving toward the cross. The crowd cheers, waving palms, longing for a triumphant king. But victory looks different than they imagined—glory through humility, power through surrender, life from death.



Monday — Wednesday The gospel accounts offer different perspectives and timelines of Holy Week events between Monday and Wednesday. During these days, Jesus overturned the tables in the Temple, was anointed in Bethany, and frequently spoke to his disciples about his imminent death. Sometime on Wednesday, Judas Iscariot, seeing that it would not work out as he hoped, accepted thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus.



Maundy Thursday On Thursday, Jesus washed his disciples' feet and shared a meal with them. "Maundy" Thursday comes from the "mandate" Jesus gave his disciples when he washed their feet. "A new commandment (mandate) I give you, that you should love one another as I have loved you." The disciples — clueless as ever — were surprised to hear him speak about his death and later on, in the Garden of Gethsemane, they fell asleep while Jesus surrendered to God's will. Judas showed up and with a kiss the mob took Jesus away.

This year, we invite you to join us in homes across town for a shared meal and communion. Together, we will reflect on Jesus' humility and sacrifice, breaking bread in fellowship as we prepare our hearts for Good Friday.

Sign up at firstchurchlf.org/lent



Friday Following the glory of a meal shared with dear friends on Maundy Thursday the mood shifts to Good Friday, the darkest and saddest day in the liturgical calendar. It is only called “good” because of what Jesus’ death means for the redemption of the world. A trial, if you can call it that, found him guilty of God knows what. Simon the Cyrene carried his cross. Christ is crucified.

Join us on Good Friday for a solemn Tenebrae service, a time of reflection on the passion of Christ. Through scripture readings, music, and hymns, we will journey through the events of Christ’s crucifixion as the sanctuary gradually darkens.

7:00 pm Sanctuary



Saturday The commotion of the week gives way to tears of sorrow. Jesus is in the tomb. The disciples scatter. One had already denied he even knew him.

Tomorrow the world will change forever.



Easter Schedule

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 5:30 am | Sunrise Service at the Lake Forest Beach
(north pavilion) with The Church of the Holy Spirit |
| 9:00 am | Traditional Service in Sanctuary |
| 10:15 am | Easter Egg Hunt on South Lawn |
| 11:00 am | Traditional Service in Sanctuary |



First Presbyterian Church
OF LAKE FOREST