lent guide

These days leading up to Easter, we are inviting you to enter into the Kingdom of God. Don't look along. Don't look at. Rather, take an opportunity to explore, investigate, experience, participate in and pursue the Kingdom of God.

PRAISE...

- Listen to and sing one worship song each day.
- Look for signs of God's power and provision each day and thank God!

PAUSE...

- Practice silence for 2 minutes each day. Set a timer and simply say, "Yes, Jesus?"
- When you find yourself in a situation where you need help, pause and listen for God. Rather than wishing for a change or figuring that things are already going to go a certain way, pause and ask God for your next step.

PRAY AND FAST...

- Decide what you will fast from each Thursday after dinner up to Friday dinnertime. You can fast from food or sweets, or some form of technology or input of some kind. Thursday evening, Friday morning and noon time, pause to pray. Prayer prompts are provided later in this Lent Guide under "Pray and Fast Prompts."

Click here to sign up for for prayer prompts through the ChurchCenter app or via email.

You can also email **office@centralfreemethodist.org**, and we will add your email! A reminder to fast along with prayer prompts will be sent to you on Thursdays and Fridays starting March 10.

PARABLES...

- Read through Jesus' parables daily. Parable daily reading prompts are provided later in this Lent Guide under "Parable Prompts."
- Write down answers to this question: What is the Kingdom of God like?

PROPHECY...

- Look for ways to build others up through comfort or encouragement or challenge.
- Let God speak through you.
- Pray and see whether God wants you to share a word during Sunday service. This can be something you are carrying that you want others to pray with you, a word of celebration for what God has done, or a word from Scripture (no preaching, just read the scripture and possibly a few sentences of application.)

other resources

Click for a companion resource about the parables of Jesus with further links

Click for a video series of the Gospels in English

Click for an article that is a practical guide to how to fast for Lent

parables DAILY READING PROMPTS

March 6-11

Monday: Matthew 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22, Luke 5:36-18
Tuesday: Matthew 5:14-16, Mark 4:21-22, Luke 8:16
Wednesday: Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:47-49
Thursday: Matthew 13:44-52
Friday: Matthew 18:12-14
Saturday: Matthew 18:23-31

March 13-18

Monday: Matthew 20:1-16
Tuesday: Matthew 21:28-44; Mark 12:1-11, Luke 20:9-18
Wednesday: Matthew 22:1-14
Thursday: Matthew 24:32-35, Marks 13:28-29, Luke 21:29-31
Friday: Matthew 25:1-13
Saturday: Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27

March 20-25

Monday: Matthew 25:31-46
Tuesday: Luke 7:41-43
Wednesday: Luke 12:16-21
Thursday: Luke 12:35-48
Friday: Luke 17:7-10
Saturday: Luke 10:30-37

March 27 - April 1

Monday: Luke 11:5-8

Tuesday: Luke 14:7-11

Wednesday: Luke 15:3-10

Thursday: Luke 16:1-9

Friday: Luke 16:19-31

Saturday: Luke 18:2-14

April 3-8

Monday: Luke 19

Tuesday: Luke 20

Wednesday: Luke 21

Thursday: Luke 22:1-65

Friday: Luke 22:66 - Luke 23:56

Saturday: Luke 24

pray and fast PROMPTS

March 9-10

We are one people--children of God.

Praying through our vision statement:

- Though we may have different skin colors, different languages, and different cultures, we will be committed to one another as the family of God.
- As God's people, each one of us will know we are loved and important. Ask God to bring specific people to mind to pray this over.
- We will each recognize that we all have something to bring. Ask God to reveal to you what it is that you bring to Central.
- That the Holy Spirit will move over God's people at Central, empowering us to play our parts wholeheartedly, with joy and humility knowing that ours is one part of something far bigger.

Specific prayer requests:

- For the Sunday nursery ministry including teachers, leaders, volunteers, and children ages 0-4. For even the youngest among us to meet Jesus at Central. This is our children's experience of what church is!
- For Men's Breakfasts taking place once a month on Saturdays. That community will continue to grow during that time. For connections!
- For Calvary Free Methodist Haitian Church that meets at Central on Sunday evenings.
- For our facilities. May we be good caretakers of the buildings and physical assets we have. Pray that the care we have put in will last. Pray for the properties team and Mark Slusher who shoulder much of the work to care for our aging buildings.
- For Sue Leak who is ministering and serving in Morelia, Mexico.
- For someone who is younger than you. Ask God to bring specific people to mind. Does he have a word for you to share with someone?
- For the Karenni Kids Club that meets monthly at Central. Pray for those who are leading this ministry. Pray for those who attend. Pray that they will grow closer to Jesus and eachother.
- For those who are prayer champions for the Pray4Me Campaign at Central. Pray for them as they faithfully pray for our kids and students. Pray that they will be built up through praying for others.

March 16-17

We are living one story--God's shalom story.

Praying through our vision statement:

- We learn to follow the shalom story of Jesus.
- For a desire for lives of right relationships between us and God, us and others, and us and the created world. Ask God to convict us and show us the places where we are not cultivating right relationships.
- For patience as we walk through sorrows, suffering, and pain. Ask God to help us know and believe that all things work together for good for God's people.

Specific prayer requests:

- For Homework & Hangs ministry providing space for young adults and college students. Pray for Kristin June as she leads this ministry.
- For Lansing Hmong Alliance Church that meets at Central on Sunday afternoons.
- For the work Central supports in Nepal. Pray for leaders and those who are planting new faith communities.
- For adult discipleship at Central. Pray that our small groups will be opportunities for growth and community. Pray for life transformation.
- For STREETS 517 that meets weekly at Central and ministers to urban and underserved youth of Lansing. Pray for positive relationships to continue being built. Pray for their STREETS Smarts initiative which aims to assist Lansing public schools through adult/youth relationships built by Christian adults volunteering at schools. Pray for youth to be open to God and for the leaders of STREETS.
- For upcoming summer kids programs. Pray for the children as we work to support their education. Pray for the Bible learning that will take place. Pray each child comes one step closer to Jesus this summer.
- For InterVarsity at Michigan State University and InterVarsity at Lansing Community College as we continue to partner with them. Pray for college students to be open to Jesus. Pray for the leaders of these ministries.

March 23-24

We are taking one step at a time.

Praying through our vision statement:

- We continually grow closer to God, participating in the miracle of holiness -- becoming more and more like Jesus.
- That we notice, name, and remember the times where Jesus has walked with us step by step. That we recognize the spaces where we have participated in a miracle.
- That we become patient, grace-giving, and speak the truth in love. Pray this over our church relationships, and pray this over your personal relationships and interactions.

Specific prayer requests:

- For Sunday morning KidCentral (preschool - 5th grade). Pray that children will be excited to come to church. Pray that they learn how much Jesus loves them. Pray for the adult and teen leaders and Britany Miller who leads this ministry.
- For adult English as a second language classes on Thursdays. Pray that people will feel welcome at Central and safe to practice something new. Pray for Pastor Tammy and Brian Williams as they lead these classes.
- For the summer TeenLIFT program. Pray for the high school leaders and college interns who will join the program. Pray for the details to be worked out. Pray that our students will be built up as leaders and experience an amazing summer of growth and belonging. Pray for Kristin June and Britany Miller as they pour into these teen leaders together.
- For friends and family who do not know Jesus. Ask God to bring specific people to mind. Continually pray for these people. Ask God to show you one way you can have a spiritual conversation with someone.
- For M and L whose ministry is supported by Central. Pray for safety and the growth of the church in creative access countries. Pray for our creative God to make new ways to share about Jesus.
- For Shared Pregnancy Women's Center located across Washington Ave from Central. Pray for the women experiencing unexpected or challenging pregnancies. Pray for the advocates who come alongside these women. Pray for the young father mentorship program.

March 30-31

We are inviting others to also take one step closer to God.

Praying through our vision statement:

- We recognize that we do not exist only for the building at Central. Pray that we recognize that we are the children of God wherever we go. Pray that we recognize the people in our community who we need to invite one step closer to God.
- That we are a light in dark places. Ask God to reveal hope-giving, tangible ways we can bless our community.
- We will be emboldened and ready to share our own Jesus stories. Pray that we will be good listeners to receive the stories of others.
- For the space we offer: the building, programs and gatherings. Pray that people experience belonging, are open to Bible teaching, and will grow.

Specific prayer requests:

- For the Williams as they provide pastoral training in Asia. Pray for opportunities to build up pastors and church leaders. Pray for continuing financial support and partners to come alongside their ministry.
- For HHYG (Homework Help and Youth Group) for 6-12th grade students on Wednesdays. Pray for the students who are coming for help with homework. Pray for students who are coming to learn more about Jesus. Pray for the students who don't know why they want to come, but do. Pray for the volunteers, especially those who do not know Jesus themselves, but have chosen to serve at Central. Pray for continued connections and growth of relationships between our youth. Pray for Kristin June, Britany Miller, and Pam Russell as they lead each week.
- For Board Game Central game days monthly on Saturdays. Pray that this will grow beyond our church, and we will welcome community members into the Central Space. Pray that we will be bold to invite others to come. Pray that a sense of community grows around the tables especially in young adults.
- For the persecuted church around the world. Pray for leaders who are in prison or facing threats. Pray for continued trust in Jesus. If you were given a specific person to pray for, pray for that person. If you would like a specific person, send Pastor Tammy an email. tammy@centralfreemethodist.org
- For Refugee Development Center and our continued partnership. Pray for their safety when using the church vans. Pray for the many new neighbors they welcome in our city.

April 6-7

We can't do it. But God can.

Praying through our vision statement:

- For God to do a new thing at Central and the people of Central. Pray Isaiah 43:19 over us, "Look! Now I will do something that is new! It is already beginning to happen. Surely, you can recognize it. Yes, I will make a road through the desert. I will make streams in the wilderness."
- That we recognize God at work. That we tell others the stories of how God is at work. That we join in the work and participate in the miracle with the Holy Spirit.
- That God unites us across the things that naturally divide. That each of us regularly surrender our own agendas, and we pursue discernment together.
- That we will experience God's Kingdom here at Central, in Lansing, in our communities, and in our circles of influence. That we will recognize God's shalom and be part of "here as in heaven."
- That we specifically invite others one step closer to Jesus. That we notice the people in our lives who do not know Jesus. That we take the time to build relationships and have spiritual conversations. That we speak timely and true words in genuine love. That we ask others if they are ready to receive whatever Jesus has for them today.

Specific prayer requests:

- For those who lead us in worship music each Sunday. Pray that our worship extends throughout the week so that Sundays truly are an outpouring of the past week. Pray for Pastor Erik as he leads the congregation in worship and leads the worship leaders.
- For someone who is older than you. Ask God to bring specific people to mind. Does he have a word for you to share with someone?
- For the church staff and leaders. Pray for the pastors, office staff, ministry staff, Board of Administration, others on leadership committees.
- For the Central Space (820 Vision space). Pray that we find the way forward. Pray for the young adults and college students as we create space for growth and community. Pray for gen-z leaders to be mentored and raised up. Pray for Kristin June as she leads the young adult group. Pray for connections between those who come to the Central Space. Pray for good questions to be asked and gracious, ongoing, candid conversations about spiritual things.

break fast WITH CENTRAL

Good Friday, April 7
6:00pm

Join for a time of worship together on Good Friday. We will break our fasts together by participating in Communion and having a simple soup supper together in the Fellowship Hall. Nursery age children will be cared for and have a short Bible lesson during the worship time. Everyone is invited to join together for supper and children will join at that time. If you are able to, please bring a soup or dessert to share.

easter WITH CENTRAL

Easter Sunday, April 9

9:30-10:15am - Easter Hymns & Scripture in the Chapel
10:15-10:40am - Coffee & Breakfast Sweets in the Fellowship Hall
11:00am - Easter Sunday Service in the Sanctuary

Who could you invite to join you?

mission & vision statements

For reference as we pray through Central's mission and vision statements.

MISSION...

Loving God, loving others, following Jesus...together.

VISION...

We are one people, living one story, one step at a time. We also invite others one step closer to Jesus by being hope-givers, light-shiners, and story-tellers.

We are one people--children of God.

- We may have different skin colors, different languages, and different cultures but we are committed to one another as the family of God.
- As God's people we are loved and important.
- We all have something to bring.
- The Holy Spirit gives us power to play our part wholeheartedly and with the humility and joy of knowing ours is one part of something far bigger.

We are living one story--God's shalom story.

- We are learning to follow the shalom story of Jesus.
- We desire a life of right relationships between us and God, us and others, and us and the created world.
- God's story is long but simple. It has a good ending. Though there are tragic parts, the end and many parts along the way are good, very good. So we patiently walk through the sorrow, suffering, and pain knowing that all things work together for good for God's people.

We are taking one step at a time.

- We are continually growing closer to God, participating in the miracle of holiness--becoming more and more like Jesus.
- We understand that sometimes God works in big ways, but more often he walks with us step by step until we look back and realize we have participated in a miracle.
- We are patient, grace-giving, and we speak the truth in love.

We are inviting others to also take one step closer to God.

- We do this outside of church -- in our community. We do not exist only for this building. We are the children of God everywhere we go.
- We do this by blessing our community in hope-giving, tangible ways, being a light in dark places.
- We do this by talking about our own Jesus stories.
- We also do this by offering a place (the church building/programs/gatherings) where people can experience belonging, Bible teaching, and growth.

We can't do it. But God can.

He (Jesus) existed before all things, and all things are held together in him.
He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the one who is firstborn from among the dead so that he might occupy the first place in everything. Because all the fullness of God was pleased to live in him, and he reconciled all things to himself through him—whether things on earth or in the heavens. He brought peace through the blood of his cross. Once you were alienated from God and you were enemies with him in your minds, which was shown by your evil actions. But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death, to present you before God as a people who are holy, faultless, and without blame. But you need to remain well established and rooted in faith and not shift away from the hope given in the good news that you heard. This message has been preached throughout all creation under heaven. And I, Paul, became a servant of this good news... God wanted to make the glorious riches of this secret plan known among the Gentiles, which is Christ living in you, the hope of glory. This is what we preach as we warn and teach every person with all wisdom so that we might present each one mature in Christ. I work hard and struggle for this goal with his energy, which works in me powerfully.

Colossians 1:17-23, 27-29