

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
February 21, 2021 The First Sunday of Lent
“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

To you, O Lord, we lift up our souls; in you, O God, we place our trust.

Make known your paths and lead us in your truth.

Your Kingdom is coming near.

Be present in our midst, we pray.

To you, O Lord, we lift up our souls.

In you, O God, we place our trust.

Opening Prayer Faithful God, your loving presence is with us now, even as it was with Noah in the days of the flood, and continued with Jesus through his trials in the wilderness. Make your paths known to us, we pray, that we may walk in your ways and abide in your truth. For it is you, O God, who holds our hearts; it is for you that we wait in this holy time. Amen.

Scripture Reading *“I will remember my covenant that is between me and you...”* Read Genesis 9.8-17

Prayer of Confession *Based on Psalm 50*

The Mighty One, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

O God, we come before you.

God calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that the people may be judged.

Remember the covenant we share, O God.

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me, says our God.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory over all the earth be found.

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts.*

Words of Assurance Our Creator God sustains us in paths of love and faithfulness. Jesus the Christ offers us repentance and new life. The Holy Spirit breathes into us fresh energy and strength. God, Holy Three in One, we thank you for walking with us in this Lenten season, offering us forgiveness of sin and fullness of grace. Amen.

Scripture Reading *“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all”* Read I Peter 3.18-22

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

A Lenten Prayer and **The Lord’s Prayer**

Scripture Reading *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”*
Read Mark 1.9-15

Meditation The Camino de Santiago, known in English as the Way of St. James, is a network of pilgrimages all of which lead to the shrine of the apostle St. James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain. For centuries countless individuals have followed this pilgrimage as a spiritual path, hoping for growth on their journey of faith. A clergy friend of mine completed this pilgrimage, which on average takes thirty to thirty-five days, about 12 or so years ago. Because she was walking the entire route, she had to be very careful about the contents of her backpack, which she took great care to limit to about twenty pounds. Each night she sought a bed in a hostel designed for those on the pilgrimage path. While I greatly

admired her commitment to this walk and envied not only the sights she would see but, especially, the spiritual growth she would experience, I couldn't imagine walking for thirty-five days straight. What an undertaking!

As we enter the Lenten season this year, our worship theme will be to walk in the way of Jesus' cross. What does that mean? Well, it doesn't mean a 20-pound backpack and 35 days of walking but it does mean to be serious about our journey, the specific journey of Lent which brings us to the cross of Jesus Christ before we can celebrate the gloriousness of Easter morning.

We catch a glimpse of the path Jesus forged in order to get to the Day of Resurrection in Mark's gospel. Always brief and to the point, Mark doesn't share much in the way of detail about Jesus' time in the wilderness but we can imagine that it was no picnic. No doubt hungry and sleep-deprived, tempted by the devil, and anxious to begin his ministry, these were not happy days in the life of our Savior. He would face many such times before the miracle of Easter morning. Jesus knew all too well what it meant to sacrifice and suffer and did so for each of us.

As we seek to walk in the way to Jesus' cross, I'm not, of course, suggesting any such suffering but I do hope that we will find ways to take this journey seriously. That might mean the discipline of a firm commitment to reading Scripture each day or praying for God's guidance each night. It might mean taking on a new act of compassion and concern or it might mean giving up something (chocolate? bread? dessert? Or, more seriously, being judgmental or jealous) in order to think about the meaning of sacrifice. As the Lenten season begins, what will following the way of Jesus' cross mean for you? What will you do to remember the sacrifice of Jesus for you?

Words of Benediction Creator God, as you sent Jesus forth from the wilderness to proclaim that your Kingdom was near, so send us forth now in this Lenten season to love and serve in the world you created.



The First Sunday of Lent

Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.