



LENT DEVOTIONAL 2026



The Challenge:

This Lent, we are inviting everyone at Trinity to read the Gospel of John.



Sabbath Time:

Set aside 20 minutes (or whatever time you can) each day to spend time with God.

Daily Read:

One chapter a day. Intermixed in these readings from John are chapters from other parts of Scripture that relate to John's Gospel.

Journal:

Reflect in a journal on the questions posed after each reading. If the questions aren't helpful, feel free to write your own thoughts or questions about what you've read.

Pray:

Spend some time in free prayer taking your concerns or thanksgivings to God.

Community:

For those who desire to discuss Scripture in community, a group will gather in the Fellowship Hall at noon on Mondays during Lent beginning on February 23. Feel free to bring your lunch as we informally discuss the previous week's Scripture. This group is led by Pastor Daniel.

A second group will be discussing the weekly readings while walking. Gather in the Trinity Atrium on Thursdays at 4:15pm beginning on February 26. This group is led by Becky Els-bernd, Trinity's Parish Nurse.

Helpful Tips/Thoughts for Reading John's Gospel:

- John includes many stories and teachings of Jesus' life which are not found in the other Gospels.
- Jesus talks a lot in this Gospel, sometimes for a whole chapter!
- Watch for the "I am" statements Jesus makes. Watch also for when Jesus says "I am he." In these moments Jesus is revealing his divinity. God's divine name, as revealed to Moses, is "I am."
- When you read "the Jews", the author is referring to a subset of Jewish religious leaders. Judaism in Jesus' day is diverse. It is helpful to understand "the Jews" as a particular faction of people in conflict with Jesus and not the whole population. Sadly, anti-semitic beliefs have been espoused by Christians reading this Gospel.

Day 1: February 18

John 1—The Word Became Flesh, Jesus’ First Disciples

“No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son... who has made God known” (v. 18). How do you picture Jesus? What do these images reveal about who God is?

What might Jesus be calling you to “come and see”? Might this call you out of your comfort zone?

Day 2: February 19

Genesis 1- Origin Stories

John’s Gospel echoes the opening lines of Genesis 1, “In the beginning...”, placing Jesus with God in the act of creation. What is your first memory of Jesus?

Compare how “light” is used in both John 1 and Genesis 1. What does light do in each story?

Day 3: February 20

John 2- The Wedding at Cana, Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Jesus turns 120-180 gallons of water into wine, far more than any wedding party could drink. Jesus uses this sign of abundance to bless others. When is a time you’ve experienced abundance?

John’s Gospel differs from Matthew, Mark, and Luke in telling when Jesus cleansed the Temple of the money changers. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, it happens days before Jesus is crucified. John places the event at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Where do you think Jesus would stage an act of protest today?

Day 4: February 21

1 Kings 6- Solomon’s Temple

Note the details given about how the Temple was built. It took seven years to complete. It was destroyed in 587 BCE. The 2nd Temple was constructed in 516 BCE and underwent significant renovations by King Herod. It would be destroyed a generation after Jesus’ death in 70 CE, never to be rebuilt. Which detail from Solomon’s Temple is most interesting to you? How does the beauty of sacred spaces connect you to God

Jesus tells you a meaningful sacred space will be destroyed (Trinity Lutheran Church, Notre Dame Cathedral, The Sistine Chapel etc). How would you react?

Day 5: February 22

Sunday Theme: “The Good News is... so Good it Catches Us by Surprise.”

Reread John 2:1-11 (Wedding at Canna) and Matthew 13:31-32 (Parable of the Mustard Seed) When is a time God surprised you?

Throughout the next week, pay attention to moments when Jesus surprises the disciples and crowd.

Day 6: February 23

John 3- Nicodemus Visits Jesus

If you could visit one on one with Jesus, what is one question you would ask him?

John 3:16 and the verses following are some of the most well-known bible verses. How would you describe what these verses mean to someone who has never heard them before?

Day 7: February 24

Numbers 21:1-9- Moses and the Serpents in the Wilderness

What is your reaction to this story?

Jesus references this story in John 3:14. Why do you think he used this story?

Day 8: February 25

John 4- Jesus and the Samaritan Woman the Well

“Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans” (v. 9). It is a surprise to the disciples Jesus would associate and speak with a Samaritan woman. What does this say about Jesus?

Who are Samaritans today? Who would Jesus be talking to at the well?

Day 9: February 26

Genesis 29:1-14- Jacob Meets Rachel at a Well

Where is the place you first met a good friend and/or partner?

Notice the time of the day in each story. Why would the Samaritan woman go to the well at noon? (Special Note: Often the time of day in John’s Gospel reveals something- night is associated with unbelief (Nicodemus) while day light is associated with belief and relationship with Jesus (Samaritan Woman). Pay attention to what time of day the story says it is for a clue what will happen in the text).

Day 10: February 27

John 5- Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

Jesus asks the man, “Do you want to be made well?” How would you answer this question if Jesus asked you? In what areas of your life do you seek healing and renewal?

Think of someone you know who has a health challenge. Hold them in prayer. Perhaps send them a text or a note that you are thinking of them and praying for them. If they need physical help, offer what you can.

Day 11: February 28

Old Testament Teachings About the Sabbath-

Exodus 20:8-10, Exodus 31:12-17, Deuteronomy 5:12-15

How do you practice Sabbath? Why is Sabbath important? What is the rationale behind why God commands Sabbath?

After reading Exodus 31, consider the reaction of the religious authorities. How do we make sense of this text in our modern world?

What are moments from the past week's reading where Jesus surprised the disciples and crowd who followed him?

Day 12: March 1

Sunday Theme: The Good News is...Great Love for God and Neighbor

Read Luke 7:36-50 and Matthew 25:35-40

How do you show love to God and to your neighbors?

In Matt. 25, both the sheep and goats are surprised they have (or have not) served Jesus. Who is Jesus showing up as today? Might we also be surprised?

In the following week's readings, look for places where Jesus modeled love for God and love for neighbor.

Day 13: March 2

John 6- Feeding the 5000, I am the Bread of Life

In what ways does Jesus feed you?

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (v. 68). When is a time you have relied on your faith?

Day 14: March 3

Exodus 3- Moses and the Burning Bush- The Revelation of God's Name: I AM

God reveals God's name as "I am" (Yahweh). Jesus claims this name for himself in the I AM statements throughout John. What is Jesus saying about his identity?

Watch for moments in this Gospel where Jesus says "I am he" or "I am the..." These are revelation moments for Jesus's identity.

When you talk to God, what name for God do you use? Why?

Day 15: March 4

John 7- Confrontation From Religious Leaders

The religious leaders are often at odds with Jesus in this Gospel. Imagine the stories from their perspective. Why do you think they react so strongly against Jesus?

The crowds are divided about who Jesus is. What process do you go through to discover the truth on issues where people are divided?

Day 16: March 5

John 8:1-20- A Woman Caught in Adultery, Jesus the Light of the World

Jesus said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (v. 7). What does this verse mean to you?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." What does this verse mean to you?

Day 17: March 6

Isaiah 9:1-7- The People who Walked in Darkness Have Seen a Great Light

What good news do you hear in this passage?

What names are given for the Messiah?

Day 18: March 7

John 8:21-59- Jesus and Abraham

How do you discern what is true in life?

Notice the religious leaders call Jesus a Samaritan, seeking to discredit him (v. 48). In what ways do you hear people use culture, race, or ethnicity to discredit or tear down a group of people? How do you think Jesus feels about this?

Week Recap: In the past week's readings, where did Jesus model great love for God and for neighbor?

Day 19: March 8

Sunday Theme: The Good News is... Together the Impossible is Possible.

Read Mark 6:32-44 and Ephesians 3:20-21

When is a time you've experienced God's abundance?

What five loaves and two fish do you possess that Jesus can use to bless others?

As you read the text of this week, take note of moments where the impossible is made possible.

Day 20: March 9

Genesis 15- God's Covenant with Abraham

The people of Judea claimed Abraham as a common ancestor. They were a fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. What is a promise God has fulfilled to you?

The later half of the story describes the making of a covenant (promise). By walking through the dead animals, God is saying, "If I don't keep my promise, may I be like these animals." What does this say about God's faithfulness?

Day 21: March 10

John 9- Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

In this story, the religious leaders are blind, while the man born blind can clearly see who Jesus is. When is a time you saw Jesus in a new way?

Some people are quick to name suffering, disease, or disaster as punishment from God. Based on this story, what might Jesus have to say to them?

Day 22: March 11

Exodus 13:17-22- God Leads the Israelites as a Pillar of Fire

When is a time God guided you when you didn't know what to do?

When is a time you've longed for guidance, but felt like you were wandering?

Day 23: March 12

John 10- Jesus the Good Shepherd

Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd." Describe the attributes of the good shepherd.

Jesus says, "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So they will be one flock, one shepherd" (v.16). Who do you think these other sheep represent?

Day 24: March 13

Psalm 23- The Lord is my Shepherd

Which verse brings you the most comfort? Why?

Imagine the sheep in this psalm without a shepherd. How might the experience of the sheep be different?

Day 25: March 14

1 Samuel 16 and 1 Samuel 17:12-37

King David is famously a shepherd. Kings in the Old Testament are often referred to as shepherd of their flock. How does David describe his vocation as a shepherd. How does this compare with the images Jesus uses?

David is a skilled musician. What kinds of music bring peace to your soul?

Week recap: In this week's readings, what were moments the impossible was made possible?

Day 26: March 15

Sunday Theme- The Good News is... Protection and Care for the Vulnerable

Read Matthew 19:13-15 and Deuteronomy 24:17-22

Because of high child mortality, children were viewed differently in the ancient world. What statement is Jesus making as he blesses the children?

Rewrite the verses from Deuteronomy using modern language.

As you read this week, look for moments where protection and care for the vulnerable is practiced.

Day 27: March 16

John 11- The Death and Raising of Lazarus

Jesus weeps at the death of his friend. How does Jesus accompany us in our grief?

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). What do you believe happens after we die?

Day 28: March 17

Ezekiel 37: 1-14- The Valley of Dry Bones

Who is someone who has died that you are most excited to reunite with?

How might belief in resurrection of the dead affect how you live today?

Day 29: March 18

John 12:1-19 Mary Anoints Jesus; Palm Sunday

What is a way you show devotion to Jesus?

Let's pretend Judas' intentions are good in this passage. How do you balance devotion with God and care for the poor?

Day 30: March 19

Deuteronomy 15- Laws Concerning Jubilee

"You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me" (John 12:8) is a text often referenced by Christians to absolve their responsibility of care for the poor. It appears as if Jesus is referencing Deuteronomy 15:11. After reading Deut. 15, what do you think Jesus was teaching them about care for the poor?

What might a Christian practice of Jubilee look like today?

Day 31: March 20

John 12:20-50- Greeks Visit/Jesus Speaks of his Death

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus" (v. 21). Why do you want to see and know Jesus?

Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also" (v.26). Where do you think Jesus is found today?

Day 32: March 21

Isaiah 53- The Suffering Servant Song

Which verses from this chapter foreshadow Jesus' death?

From the past week's reading, where are moments protection and care for the vulnerable is practiced?

Day 33: March 22

Sunday Theme: The Good News is... Rooted in Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness

Reread John 8:2-11 and Mathew 23:23

Write a definition for the words justice, mercy, and faithfulness based on these verses.

Look for moments justice, mercy, and faithfulness are practiced in this week's readings.

Day 34: March 23

John 13- Jesus Washes His Disciples Feet, A New Commandment

How do you live out Jesus' servant love?

Jesus washes the feet of both Peter and Judas who deny him and betray him. What does this say about Jesus' mercy?

Day 35: March 24

Exodus 20:1-21- The Ten Commandments

Which commandment is the most difficult for you to keep? Why?

If we love one another as Jesus has loved us, how many of the commandments would we keep?

Day 36: March 25

John 14- Jesus says Farewell, The Promise of the Holy Spirit

How does Jesus prepare his disciples for a time when he will no longer be with them in a physical body?

Where do you desire peace in your life?

Day 37: March 26

Deuteronomy 31: 1-8- Moses' Farewell

How is Moses' speech similar to Jesus' farewell speech? How is it different?

If you knew you were seeing a loved one for the last time, what would you want to make sure to tell them?

Day 38: March 27

John 15- Jesus the True Vine

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love (v. 9). What does this verse mean to you?

Jesus calls his disciples friends, not servants. What does this say about God's love?

Day 39: March 28

John 16- The Disciples Struggle with Jesus' Words

Which teachings of Jesus do you struggle to understand?

Where are moments mercy, justice, and faithfulness practiced in this past week's readings?

Day 40: March 29

Palm Sunday Theme- The good news... is inspiring us to act

Read Mark 11-1-11

What inspires you to act for good?

Where is God calling you to act for good?

Day 41: March 30

John 17- Jesus Prays for His Disciples

Create a list of ways you'd like Jesus to pray for you.

Has someone ever prayed for you out loud? What was it like to hear their prayer?

Day 42: March 31

John 18- The Betrayal and Trial of Jesus

How does Jesus act as the Good Shepherd for his disciples in this passage?

How would you answer Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (v. 38)?

Day 43: April 1

John 19- The Crucifixion of Jesus

How does fear affect Pilate's ruling at Jesus' trial? How does fear impact our own decision making?

Compounding the tragedy of Jesus' execution, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is present for her son's torture and death. Jesus charges the beloved disciple with caring for his mother. How are we called to care for others in times of tragedy and grief?

Day 44: April 2

Exodus 12:1-28- Institution of Passover

In John's Gospel, the time of Jesus' death coincides with the slaughtering of the lambs for Passover. John foreshadows this moment in chapter one, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." How is Jesus like the Passover lamb?

Passover continues to be celebrated as an important holiday in Judaism, remembering God's liberation from slavery. What is the most meaningful religious ritual or religious holiday that helps you remember what God has done for you?

Day 45- April 3

John 20: The Resurrection of Jesus

What do you think it will be like to see the resurrected Jesus face to face?

Thomas wanted to see the scars on Jesus' hands and feet. What 'proof' of Jesus existence do you long to know?

Day 46- April 4

John 21: Jesus Appears to the Disciples

What do you think Jesus means when he commands Peter to "Feed my lambs." (v. 15)?

After reading John's Gospel, what are three things you learned about Jesus/three ways you saw Jesus in a new light?

Day 47- April 5

Easter Sunday- The Good News is... Alive in the World.

Read Matthew 28

The disciples still doubt and have questions, even after seeing Jesus raised from the dead (v. 17). What questions do you hold in your heart?

Jesus said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (v. 20). How does this promise help us face the challenges of life?

Well done! You've completed the Scripture reading challenge! Lent is over... but you can keep reading Scripture! Suggestions to keep reading: Genesis, Mark, Ephesians