

# LENT: A TIME OF PREPARATION AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

**FEBRUARY 10 — MARCH 26, 2016**

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday (February 10) and ends on Holy Saturday (March 26). The season is a time of preparation and renewal for celebrating Easter.

We invite you to observe a holy Lent. This is a perfect time to return to Sabbath worship if you have found yourself disconnected, as well as a time to deepen the ongoing spiritual practices that nurture your faith. Through prayer, fellowship, study, worship, and service; come and journey with us this Lent.



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## WORSHIP SERVICES

<b>ASH WEDNESDAY:</b> FEBRUARY 10	12:15 PM WORSHIP AT WESLEY 7:00 PM WORSHIP ALDERSGATE UMC, 1048 MAIN ST., WORCESTER
<b>WEEKDAY TAIZÉ PRAYER SERVICES</b>	WEDNESDAYS AT 12:15 PM, WESLEY CHAPEL
<b>FIVE SUNDAYS IN LENT:</b> FEB. 14, 21, 28, MAR 6,13	WORSHIP AT 8:30 AND 10:30 AM
<b>PASSION/PALM SUNDAY:</b> MARCH 20	8:30 AM AND 10:30 AM
<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY:</b> MARCH 24	7:00 PM WORSHIP AT WESLEY
<b>GOOD FRIDAY:</b> MARCH 25	7:00 PM WORSHIP EPWORTH UMC, 64 SALISBURY ST., WORCESTER
<b>EASTER:</b> MARCH 27	6:30 AM SUNRISE SERVICE AT INSTITUTE PARK COMMUNITY BREAKFAST FOLLOWING AT WESLEY 8:30 AM AND 10:30 AM WORSHIP AT WESLEY COMMUNITY BREAKFAST BETWEEN SERVICES

## LENTEN STUDIES

### **SUNDAY MORNING SMALL GROUPS FOR ADULTS: 9:30-10:20 AM**

**BREWER HALL STUDY GROUP** meets in Brewer Hall, Led by Charles Kiefer.

**GIFTS FROM THE DARK WOOD STUDY** meets in John Wesley Room, co-led by Anthony Phillips & Lisa Fagerstrom. This DVD study is based on the book *Gifts of the Dark Wood: Seven Blessings for Soulful Skeptics (and Other Wanderers)* by Eric Elnes and correlates with our Lenten worship themes. There will be time for reflection on the previous week's theme as well as time for sharing and discussion of the video presentation. Each Sunday will be a "stand alone" session and all are welcome to any or all of the Sundays! [Note: If there is interest, an additional evening session will be added for those unable to attend the Sunday group.]

**TWI BIBLE STUDY** meets in Mary Ellis, Led by Joseph Wilson

### **LENTEN BIBLE STUDY:**

#### **WHAT IS THE BIBLE? THURSDAYS, 10:30 A.M.-NOON (BEGINS FEB. 25)**

Do you long to better know the stories of the Bible? Do you want to know how the Bible is organized and how those texts were chosen? Have you ever thought about all the different ways people approach the Bible and wondered for yourself what to think? Join us on Tuesday mornings as we consider these and other questions in exploring the many things that the Bible has to offer us.

This first course in the Massachusetts Bible Society's "Exploring the Bible" series gives a broad overview of the entire Bible, including chapters on how to select a Bible suitable for your needs, how the Bible is organized, how the collection of books that comprise the Bible were chosen, different ways that people approach the text, and what archaeology has to tell us about the text and its stories. Lisa Fagerstrom will lead this study group.

### **INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT , TUESDAYS, 7-8:30 P.M.**

This study is Part Two of the Dickenson Bible Series—for those who have already completed the introductory study *What Is the Bible?*. This group is being led by Debbie O'Driscoll.

## **SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **SHROVE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 6:00-7:30 PM**

Come enjoy a PANCAKE SUPPER with all the extra goodies (pancakes, fruit, toppings, bacon and sausage). There will be something for all ages with crafts and an opportunity to create Lenten journals...as well as bowling! There will also be a devotional reflection time for adults in East Hall from 6:45 – 7:15 p.m. This event is hosted by Sarah Circle and Christian Education and Formation. Great time to invite friends!

### **LENTEN RETREAT, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 12:30-4:30 PM**

#### **THE ARTFUL JOURNEY OF GRIEVING: GRACEFUL LIVING IN THE MIDST OF LOSS AND CHANGE**

The retreat will begin with a light lunch of soup, salad, and sandwiches followed by opening worship. There will be time for group discussion, personal reflection on materials and exercises, craft projects, and a closing circle for sharing experiences of the afternoon. All are welcome to this day of fellowship and reflection! Please e-mail or call retreat leader Lisa Fagerstrom at: [Lisa@wesleyworc.org](mailto:Lisa@wesleyworc.org) or 508-799-4191, ext. 106.

### **LENTEN CHORAL CONCERT, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 5:00 PM**

#### **ALL SAINTS WORCESTER, 10 IRVING STREET**

The Wesley Choir will join other area church choirs in singing several movements from John Rutter's beautiful Requiem. Each choir will also perform individual anthems. Come hear the sound of many voices singing together, accompanied by organ, piano, harp, and cello.

### **EASTER EGG HUNT, SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 10:00-NOON**

Fun for all ages and a great way to invite friends to Wesley! Join us for an Easter movie, crafts, donuts, and a great Easter Egg Hunt. Please bring one dozen filled plastic eggs for each child you wish to participate.

## LENTEN PREACHING SERIES: “GIFTS OF THE DARK WOOD”

This series, based on the book by the same name by Eric Elnes, is about “seeing life through new eyes, recognizing that experiences of failure, emptiness, and uncertainty are as critical for finding our way through life as they are unavoidable.” We will see how experiences of life through the “dark wood” are actually clues to our “calling” or “life path.” How can the struggles of life be the seedbed of spiritual awakening to the fullness of life? .

### FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT: FEBRUARY 14, 2016

**The Gift of Uncertainty:** Life is uncertain. Rather than a problem to be solved, what if we saw uncertainty as a gift—helping us let go of all we cannot know so that we can live more wholeheartedly?

### SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT: FEBRUARY 21, 2016

**The Gift of Emptiness:** For many, there has been a time of emptiness inside. In our journey this Lent toward the Cross, we know even Jesus felt empty despair...and it was at this moment that God’s possibility of life beyond that pain was revealed.

### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT: FEBRUARY 28, 2016

**The Gift of Being Thunderstruck:** Storms of life can make way for moments of insight, like the sun radiating in a clearing in the woods, that can offer us direction, helping us to negotiate life’s path and see our unique place in the world.

### FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT: MARCH 6, 2016

**The Gift of Getting Lost:** The path of life is rarely clear or straight-forward. Perhaps we are looking for blatant signs when the subtle nudges of Spirit are already right there. Our Lent journey invites us to get quiet and open wide our senses.

### FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT: MARCH 13, 2016

**The Gift of Temptation:** Temptation often takes the form of following the “shoulds” dictated only by logic, outside expectation, or shiny “rewards” Our Lent journey invites us to face the temptations that erode our fullness and steal us away.

### PALM SUNDAY: MARCH 20, 2016

**The Gift of Misfits:** As Jesus comes into Jerusalem at the beginning of that fateful week, he is surrounded by those who will live the uncertainty, temptation and emptiness right alongside. Sojourners in the Dark Wood do not go it alone but are blessed with the presence of others who help us see, reflect with us and discover together with us the riches of a life lived with intention.