



Psalm 42:2

*My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?*

Lent in Latin is *Quadragesima* meaning 'Fortieth.' During these forty days we have an opportunity to open up ourselves to our Lord in a deeper sense. It is a time for renewal. Renewal of our minds, hearts, and soul. Some people take this time to fast and in prayers. Others spend it with Lenten devotion and reflection. All of these are ways where we can all be renewed. One may ask, "Why only do these during Lent?" Lent is described traditionally as lasting for forty days, it is to commemorate Jesus fasting in the desert for forty days in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and

Luke. Jesus proved that the power of the Word of God is our defense in facing temptations of this world. Temptations are never easy to deal with. It is always enticing, alluring and so appealing. But no matter how irresistible temptations are - we are reminded to rely on the Word of God just like what Jesus did in the wilderness. Matthew 4: 1-11, He did not turn the stone into bread, he did not test God and He declared to worship God alone. Imagine yourself for forty days reflecting upon all your needs. Your need as a mother, father, grandparents, daughter, son, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, and a friend. I would imagine this could be so overwhelming. We have so many needs personally and yet there are other needs that concerns us.

For many years of doing pastoral ministry, there are times that I have put aside my own personal needs. But there is one thing that I will never set aside, the need to be inspired and renewed through the Word of God. So I invite all of you to take this time to let yourself be open as the Word of God is revealed to you - by reading the Bible, by prayer, by fasting, by praising God, by joining your faith community in missions or just allow yourself to engage in healthy and meaning conversations about your Lenten journey with others. We need a renewal of heart and mind. We need to rejuvenate ourselves as Christians. As Jesus prepared for His Galilean ministry, He needed the forty days of fasting and prayers. It was not an easy earthly ministry for Him, but it was all worth it! It was Jesus' sacrifice by which God saves humanity from sin and death.

In this Season of Lent, may you all take the time to answer God's invitation, "Return to me with your whole heart" (Joel 2:12). Come to our God inspired and renewed!

In Christ I serve,

Pastor Nory Vedan Leachon

Holy Week Services

April 10, 2020 - Good Friday Services

1. Salem, NH Good Friday Walk Way of the Cross starting at Saints Mary and Joseph Parish at 9:00am. Second Station at Pleasant Street UMC/
2. Ecumenical Derry Way of The Cross starts at 1:00pm at First Parish Congregational Church and ends at Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (more information to follow).
3. Joint Good Friday Service at 7:00 pm with Pleasant Street UMC at 8 Pleasant St. Salem NH 03079

April 12, 2020 Easter Services

1. Easter Sunrise Service at Campbell's Scottish Highlands Golf Course (Time TBA)
2. Easter Sunday Service at Pleasant Street UMC at 9:00am
3. Easter Sunday Service at St. Luke's UMC at 11:00am