

*The appointive cabinet has written a daily Lenten devotional for the Arkansas Conference called 40 Days of Lament for Lent. You may share in this journey toward Easter by reading the daily post via an email blast from the Center for Technology, checking the Network for Discipleship and Mission for daily posting, or downloading a weekly set of the 40 Days of Lament for Lent document to use or reproduce and distribute in your church. The daily postings began Wednesday, March 5, and the weekly downloadable documents will be available on [arumc.org](http://arumc.org).*

# 40 Days of Lament for Lent



Welcome to the Season of Lent. For most of us this is an unsettling season of personal sacrifice and self-examination. Few of us approach Lent with joy; however, for many of us Lent offers precious days for honesty and truth telling within the Body of Christ. Walter Brueggeman writes that the life of faith is a life of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. If this is true, then Lent is our season to admit our disorientation and claim a new reorientation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The process for this movement of the Spirit in our lives requires lament. Lament for our own sin. Lament for the suffering we endure. Lament for the world. Lament for all that is not right, oriented, and true, in spite of the grace of God. Without lament, our losses, shortcomings, and disappointments feel like punishment. However, through honest lament, we can discover a new way as we admit our disorientation and experience God's reorienting grace.

Such honesty is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage to admit when we are lost, afraid, ashamed, angry, and vengeful. Yet the scriptures, especially the Psalms, attest to the power of such honesty before God. When the faithful lament, we are always led to affirmation that God is with us and God alone can lead us to new life. Ultimately it is this new life, this reorientation that we seek when we enter Lent, knowing that it is through the cross that resurrection is possible.

Thank you for joining us in this Lenten journey of Lament. May God show us the way forward.

**Monday, March 31**  
**A Lament that Living in the Past Blocks Revival**  
**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17**

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1) How has your faith matured since you first became a disciple?
- 2) When have you led another person to Jesus?
- 3) What sermon would your life preach?
- 4) Describe the ways you exhibit being a "new creature in Christ."

**Prayer:**

You have made us new creatures, following Jesus and led by the Holy Spirit. Our identity is found in your Spirit, and our purpose is to proclaim your Grace and Truth to broken lives and a broken world. We live in hope of your ultimate rule, when every knee shall bow and every tongue proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord. Make it so, in us and through us. Amen.

**Tuesday, April 1**  
**A Relationship Lament for Grudges and Lack of Forgiveness**  
**Read Psalm 32:1-2**

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1) What are some of your grudges?
- 2) How old are some of your grudges?
- 3) Who have you forgiven and have you discovered a stronger relationship?
- 4) What is the greatest barrier you face in forgiving someone who hurt you?

**Prayer:**

Lord, you teach us to forgive, but it so hard. We are hurt and broken, and you are the only one who can make us whole. Help us from the brokenness of our lives, communities, church, and world. We are your disciples, but we live in broken relationships. Help us to know that forgiveness brings wholeness. Above all else, you are the God of forgiveness. Amen.

**Wednesday, April 2**  
**A Global Lament Concerning the Environment**  
**Read Psalm 19:1-4**

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1) How do you understand creation as "God's handiwork?"
- 2) What does it mean to be a "steward" of God's creation?
- 3) Why do we ignore the many small ways to do long term damage to creation?
- 4) What simple steps to you or your congregation can do to care for the environment?

**Prayer:**

Almighty God, creator of this earth. Bless all who live on it and may it be filled with your glory and praise. Lord, help us to care for this precious gift that You have given to us. Help us to find new ways to be good stewards of this creation which you have blessed us with. Forgive us for the many ways that we neglect the most precious gift of all, the gift of one another and the gift of this earth. Amen.

**Thursday, April 3**  
**A Neighborhood and Mission Field Lament for Drugs and Addiction**  
**Read Psalm 88**

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1) How have drugs and addiction within individuals left an impact on families and communities? What are the effects not only to physical health, but also to family systems?
- 2) How is God present in places where individuals, families, and communities suffer?
- 3) How does all of this resonate within you?
- 4) How do you respond to this issue as a Christ follower?

**Prayer:**

Almighty God, we come to you and we pray for all those who struggle in the community and sit alone in the silence of their homes, struggling with addictions and abuse in all their forms.

We see the changes that addiction can make in a person, and the isolation that it brings in so many who try to cover up the effects, spinning into deeper layers of silence and being overwhelmed by life. It is truly the dark night of the soul and a heart cry of distress. In your mercy, Lord, be present with all of those who are caught up in its web and unable to see any way to be set free.

In your love, O God, set them free. Entrust to your church the avenues and ways to engage our communities, maybe even the home next door, to open doors of acceptance and support; to be your agent to stand alongside another. In love, may they know of your love that is always present. Amen.

**Friday, April 4**  
**A Global Lament for Natural Disasters**  
**Read Psalm 29**

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1) What has been your experience with natural disasters? Recall the times natural disasters have impacted your life.
- 2) How do natural disasters fit into your theology of the character of God?
- 3) How do you know God to be in the midst of natural disasters?
- 4) What can you do as a disciple of Jesus when natural disasters strike?

**Prayer:**

God of all creation, we feel anxious, frightened, and helpless in the face of the awesome destructive forces of nature. We know you created the world and called it good, and we wonder why your creation sometimes wreaks such havoc and pain on your children. But we trust in you. And we know that whenever we suffer, you are there with us. Be a Presence of strength and healing for those whose lives are devastated by floods, fires, drought, tornadoes, hurricanes, and the like. Empower us to be agents of compassion, through gifts and service, when we know of needs. Thus we seek to honor you. In the name of Christ, Amen.

**Saturday, April 5**  
**A Local Church Lament about Apathy**  
**Read Psalm 51:6-12**

**Reflection Questions:**

- 1) What are some examples of apathy within a worshipping community?
- 2) Why does a decrease in membership and worship attendance create an apathetic response?
- 3) As we look outward to our mission fields, how may we move beyond apathy to more effective ways to address communal issues?
- 4) Instead of apathy, what are some healthier emotional actions that can drive our mission and purpose?

**Prayer:**

Almighty God, we know that you are able to do all things. You are able to take our inward struggles and make them intentional actions. Take our attitudes about others and turn them into heart-felt movements. Guide us from life as a building and into being the living body of Christ. Lead us beyond apathy into making disciples, who then make disciples who transform lives, communities, and the entire world. Amen.