

Lent 2024

Wondering and Wandering: *Observing the World Around Us*

An Invitation:

See.

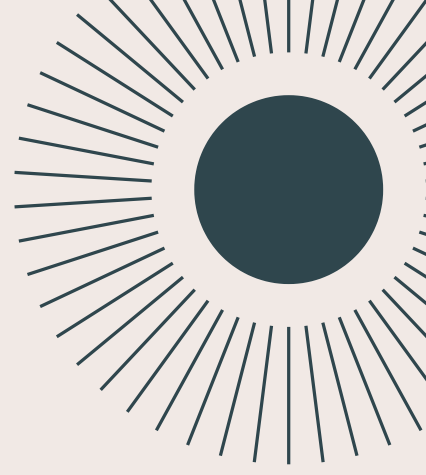
Reflect.

Think.

Live.

Connect.





During Lent, we remember wilderness: the Israelites in the desert; Jesus in discernment; even our own estrangements and disconnections from life, God, and community. But wilderness isn't all bad. When we wander, and wonder, and even meander, we make space to notice what's around us. We often channel a sense of empathy and compassion this world so desperately needs. We discover what gives us life. And we discover the liveliness in everybody and everything that surrounds us. In the season ahead, we invite you to observe your surroundings. Where do you see life? And better yet, where will you claim it?

IT'S YOUR —— TURN TO REFLECT

LENTEN
GUIDE
2024

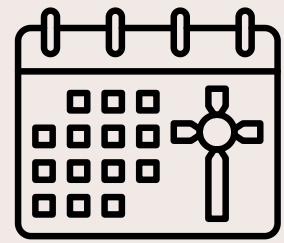
Journal &
Reflections —————

Take time to wonder, wander, and meander.

observant *adjective*

ob-ser-vant əb-'zər-vənt

WATCHFUL. KEEN. PERCEPTIVE. MINDFUL.



14

BREATHE

Take five deep breaths and observe how they feel in your lungs. How does your body react? Thank God for being present and sustaining.



Ash Wednesday

15

DRIVE

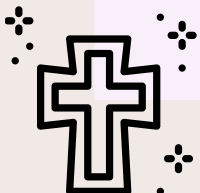
When driving a familiar route (to work/school/grocery store, etc.) observe it anew: what do you pass, take time to really notice your surroundings. Thank God for the mundane, everyday, things we are so familiar with that we hardly notice anymore.



16

SING

Turn on your favorite song. Close your eyes and listen closely - try to pick out the individual sounds. Thank God for the way each instrument and voice braid together to create something that you love.



17

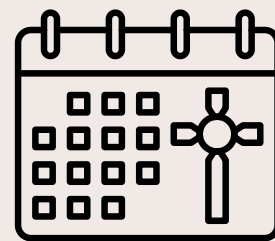
STRANGER

During an interaction with a stranger (at the grocery store, the drive-through, the coffee shop, etc.) observe their manner. Do they seem happy/sad/worried? What can you offer them that might help fill them in a meaningful way? Thank God for the way God loves and knows each one of us.

observant *adjective*

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WATCHFUL. KEEN. PERCEPTIVE. MINDFUL.



18

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



19

CHILD

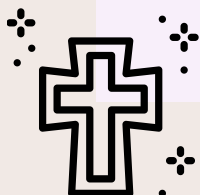
Take a moment to observe a child today. What are they doing? How do they interact with the world around them? Thank God for the unique way each one of us was created.



20

OUTSIDE

Step outside into the weather. Is it rainy? Cold? Sunny? Windy? Allow yourself to feel the way the elements feel on your skin. What do you notice? Thank God for the way God provides for the earth through the weather.



21

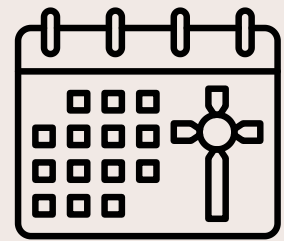
JOY

Be on the lookout for tiny moments of joy today – how amazing does your morning coffee taste? Did you hear your favorite song on the radio? Is it a great hair day? Thank God for these small joys.

observant *adjective*

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22

TOUCH

Touch something soft, fuzzy, silky, rough, scratchy, and hard. Pay attention to the different textures and how they feel on your skin. Thank God for the sense of touch.



23

NATURE

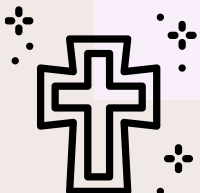
Find a way to observe nature today. Are there woods near your house? Do you have a garden? What do the clouds look like? See these things with new eyes, and thank God for the gift of nature.



24

EAT

Take a bite of food. Mindfully consider what it feels like in your mouth. Notice the taste. Consider how your body knows how to turn food into nourishment. Thank God for small joys like a good bite.



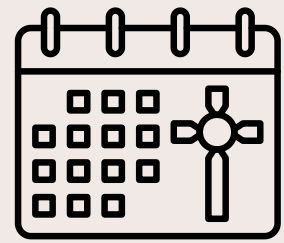
25

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

observant *adjective*

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WATCHFUL. KEEN. PERCEPTIVE. MINDFUL.



26

HELP

Keep your eyes open for someone who might be in need today. How can you help? Ask God for guidance, and pray for the wellbeing of the person you noticed.



27

JOKE

Tell someone the funniest joke you know today! How do they respond? Consider how it feels to laugh, and how offering someone an opportunity to laugh is a gift in itself. Thank God for our senses of humor and for laughter.



28

SILENCE

Set your timer for two minutes. For that two minutes, find a quiet place and try to be as still and quiet as possible. How does the silence feel? Observe how your brain reacts to the quiet. When your time is up, thank God for being with you even in the silence.



HANDS

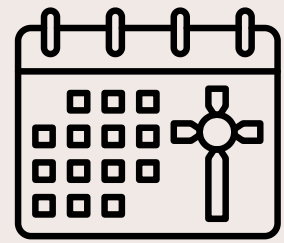
29

Take a good look at your hands. See the lines on your palms, the calluses, the wrinkles, the knuckles, the nails. Consider all the really amazing things your hands have done – the meals cooked, the babies held, the things lifted, carried, built, cleaned. Spend a few moments thanking God for the important things your hands have done.

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1

BIBLE

Grab your Bible and flip to your favorite verse, story, or passage. Read it with new eyes, and then read the surrounding chapters.

What is happening in the passage?

Who is speaking? What is the context of the passage? Thank God for the way God uses the Bible to reveal Godself.



2

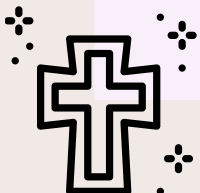
DIRT

Step outside onto grass or dirt. How does it feel beneath your feet? Take a few breaths and focus on being rooted. Thank God for the way we can feel planted and secure even though life may be filled with twists and turns.



3

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



4

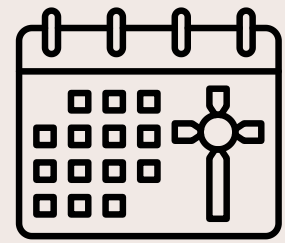
BESTIE

Call your best friend today and tell them that you value them. Really consider what it is about them that blesses your life, and make sure they know. Thank God for the meaning they add to your life.

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5

GENESIS

Grab your Bible and read Genesis chapter 1 with new eyes. Notice all that God created, notice the order in which it was created, all of God's dreams and plans for this new creation. Consider that God called all of it "very good." What does that mean to you? Thank God for God's very good world.



6

COLORS

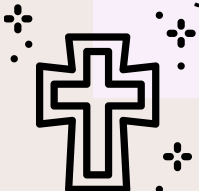
As you go about your day today, be mindful of the colors you see. Did you know that there are colors that human eyes cannot see? Thank God for this amazing world full of mystery and wonder.



7

HIGH/LOW

At the end of the day, take a few moments to play "high/low" either by yourself or as a family activity. Everyone says what their least favorite part of the day was, and then everyone says what their favorite part of the day was. Where can you see God in the low points? Where can you see God in the high points? Thank God for the gift of this day, good and bad.



8

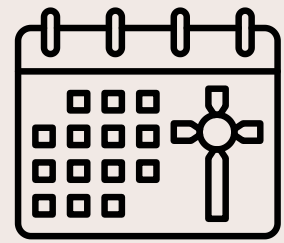
STRETCH

Take a few minutes to stretch. Reach out your arms as far as you can. Bend over and try to touch your toes. Stand up straight and take a really deep breath. Sink into those stretches and breaths. Notice how they feel in the moment and afterwards. Thank God for the simple joy of a deep stretch and a recentering breath.

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9

VISION

Grab your Bible and read Revelation 22:1-5 with new eyes. Imagine this scene. Consider all the promises held in these 5 verses. How can you let God use you to bring this wonderful vision to life in our world right now?



10

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



11

COMPLIMENT

Compliment a complete stranger today. Notice their reaction. Observe how you felt during the interaction and afterwards. How else can you be startlingly kind today? Ask God to open your eyes to the people around you!



12

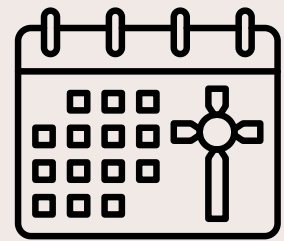
COUNT TO TEN

When you engage in conversations today, consider counting to 10 before you respond. What might it feel like to focus on listening to your neighbors rather than scripting your responses before you hear theirs? Thank God for new perspectives.

observant *adjective*

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13

DIVINE

Grab your Bible and read Psalm 139:1–18 with new eyes. What sticks out to you when you read this? How intricately does God know you? How much do you matter to the Divine? Thank God for this gift of being fully known and loved – as you are right now!



14

READ

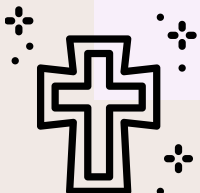
Find something to read: an article, a book, a blogpost. Anything. Within that document, focus on one single word that brings you a positive connotation. Think about how that positivity might frame your day. Give God thanks for the gift of communication.



15

SOURCE

At a meal today, consider all the hands that have played a part in feeding you. How was your meal sourced, prepared, and served? Give God thanks for the extended community that sustains you!



16

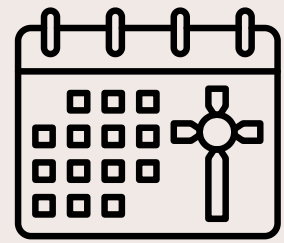
GOODNESS

The Psalmist (27:13) tells us that we shall see God's goodness among the living. Look around. Are there people? A house plant? A favorite tree? Furry companions? Running water? Birds at the feeder? Where do you see God's goodness?

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17

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



18

NAME

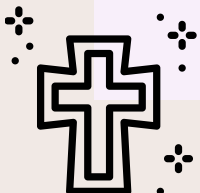
Write your name on a scrap of paper. Say it aloud three times. Remember that you are a child of God. Remember that God loves you no matter who, what, when, where, how, or why you are. Undergirded in God's creative love, what good thing(s) might you do today?



19

NOON

At Noon today, no matter what is happening in your life, pause, and speak aloud 5 things that you are grateful for. How does this feel? Is it a distraction/interruption, or is this an activity worth prioritizing? How might intentional gratitude transform your life?



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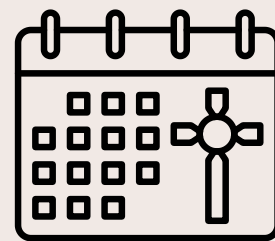
CALENDAR

Take a look at your personal calendar. Consider all the activities that require your attention today. How many of these activities are life-giving? How many are draining? Is there time for self-care? Is there time for genuine community? Are you finding intervals of meaning?

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MADNESS

21

Today is the beginning of March Madness. Millions of Americans will trade productivity for basketball fandom. Good for them! Are you carving out your own seasons of rest and renewal?

One does not need a bracket challenge to be intentional in investing in calling, relationships, and fulfilling activities. God gives us the grace to wonder and wander in the regular season, too!



22

A TO Z

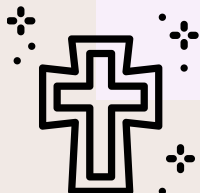
Beginning with A and ending with Z, consider some person in your ecosystem whose name begins with that letter. God gives us a diverse community of neighbors, partners, and kindred spirits. Give God thanks for the fullness of your village.



REJOICE

23

Consider reading Paul's letter to the Philippians. Even in awful conditions (imprisonment and alienation), Paul identifies joy. In fact, he uses the word rejoice nearly a dozen times. Where are you finding joy today? And what kind of impact might your expressed joy have on the world around you?



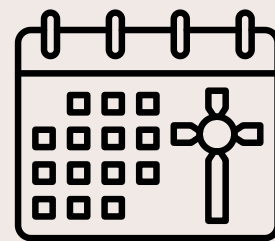
24

PALM SUNDAY

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25

DIRECTORY

Read through the names in our church directory. Are there names you don't know? Send them a text, or a letter, or even give them a call. How might an increased sense of connectedness transform the ministries of Millbrook?



26

LIGHT

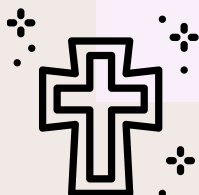
Find a quiet, dark space. Sit for a moment in silence. Now light a candle, or use the flashlight on your phone to illuminate the room. Observe the light and warmth. How can we be light in dark spaces? How can our light be inviting rather than blinding?



TRACE

27

Trace your hand on a sheet of paper. In your fingers, write the names of five people you love. Write God's name on your palm. Think about how you might be an expression of God's love and presence for these five people. Now make a fist. Consider that God holds you (and them!) in God's hands. Give thanks for a good and loving God who's got us.



28

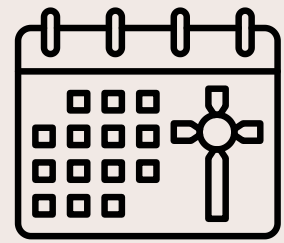
ACTS

Acts 2:42-47 tells the story of the earliest Jesus followers. They worshiped. They shared meals. They took care of one another. They lived with glad and generous hearts. Where are the spaces you find meaningful worship, lived generosity, and authentic fellowship?

observant *adjective*

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RADIUS

29

Consider the mile-radius around Millbrook's campus. There are schools, apartments and homes, shopping centers, healthcare providers, parks, banks, social service organizations, even a funeral home. Life is happening for thousands if not tens of thousands of neighbors in our midst. What are we doing individually and collectively to share God's love in 27609?



30

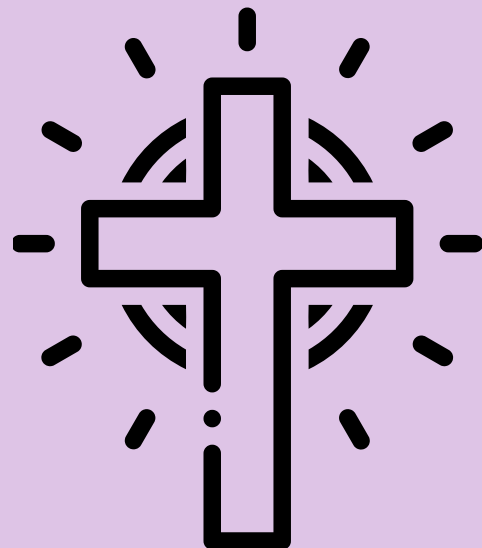
NEW LIFE

Easter is a story of resurrection, redemption, reclamation, and renewal. It's our 40th day of wandering and wondering about the world around us. How might we find, and indeed reclaim new life in the physical, emotional, and spiritual abundance that surrounds us? And how might we begin such a process today?



31

EASTER SUNDAY



SEASON OF LENT, 2024

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- Ash Wednesday, 2/14
- Communion Tuesdays @ Noon, 2/27, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19
- Friday Prayers in the Sanctuary @ Noon, 3/1, 3/8, 3/15
- Palm Sunday, 3/24
- Maundy Thursday Communion Supper, 3/28
- Good Friday, 3/29
- Easter Sunday, 3/31

