

Hungering for Hope

Lenten Guided Prayer 2024

An Introduction

Anticipating the Theme and Process

Participating in this 6-week experience will take you on a journey of seeking, discovery and challenge. As you pray with the scripture texts for Lent, you will be invited to go deeper into that place within, where you experience God's calling from even greater depths of mystery and grace.



As we wrote these materials, the world seemed to be in a very weary place. We recognized we were hungering for hope. Where can authentic hope be found? Can we see both the terrible **and** the wonderful, the tragic **and** the gorgeous? What happens when we embody trust, surrender, openness, beauty, rebirth and reconciliation? Join us in our searching and hungering.

Using the Weekly Prayer Guides

Throughout Lenten Guided Prayer (LGP), you will be practising contemplative prayer, which invites you to notice how God's spirit is moving within your everyday life experience, through listening, pondering and wondering.

Each weekly guide begins with an invitation, introducing you to the theme of the week, followed by an opening prayer, a meditative reading of one of the scripture passages, a time for reflection when you will be guided to place a symbol in a bowl, and a closing prayer.

There are four additional suggestions for prayer each week. You may choose to explore any of these options as well. Some of the prayer exercises will easily draw you in, while others might stretch you into new ways of praying and responding. Be open to God's leading. There is no limit to how contemplative prayer can happen and where it can lead you. The key is that whatever you do, you do it in a prayerful, reflective way - even if it means getting curious about your resistance. Our hope is that, through these prayer options, the themes of the Lenten texts can interact deeply with your life experience.

An opening and closing prayer is included. It is written for a group experience but we encourage individuals to use it in preparation and closing reflection.

Before Lent begins, you may want to prepare a quiet prayer space, where you are not likely to be disturbed. **Place a bowl in this space to be used for the Reflection time.** A candle and a Bible or access to biblegateway.com is also recommended.

New this year: We have created a *Hungering for Hope* playlist. You will need to create a free Spotify account if you do not already have one. Access it by following the playlist option and searching *Hungering for Hope*.

Sharing and Responding in a Weekly Small Group

Although these guides are written for individual use, we recommend meeting in a small group to share your experiences of God and any of your learnings and struggles. We recommend 3-4 people who are open to share and to listen. You might share reflections from your journal, some created artwork, a hymn that resonated, a calling you sensed, what felt challenging or something that caught your attention. It is meant to be a relaxed time with trusted companions, paying careful attention to each member in turn and honouring their sharing.

Opening and Closing Group Prayer Included in this packet is an Opening and Closing Group Prayer. Use the Opening Prayer at the start of the first group session and the Closing Prayer at the end of the last session. You could also add 2 meeting times, one just before Lent begins and one just after Lent ends to spend some focused time on preparation and reflection.

Help for Facilitators of Small Groups Two options for leading small groups are available online at the Mennonite Spiritual Directors Eastern Canada/Lenten Guided Prayer website.

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual directors are available to help you process your prayer experience throughout and beyond this time of Lent. To find a spiritual director visit:

- Mennonite Spiritual Directors at mennospiritualdirectors.weebly.com
- Spiritual Directors International (SDI) at sdicompanions.org

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