

Lent 2026

Dear South,

Lent is not about shame, it is about purpose.

It is a clarifying opportunity to see, feel, become open to receiving a Word about who you are and how you are being called to be and to take action to step into that calling.

Your individual calling is connected to our human calling in God which we learn about through Jesus. We are all and each called to participate in creating a world that has not yet been; a world shaped by the expansive Love of God met in Jesus.

Lent is the season which tracks Jesus' walk toward Jerusalem where he will eventually be killed, crucified by the Roman state for sedition.

Jesus was not alone in being crucified by the Roman state in the 1st century. It was a common punishment, a tool of control - authoritarianism - to attempt to squash any power other than its own.

In witnessing Jesus' crucifixion all these years later, through the stories of it conveyed to us in scripture, we begin to see our place in the story. We can have multiple parts in the story. We may at points in our lives, when engaging the story, see ourselves as one being crucified. Many of us are asked to recognize, like looking in a mirror, that we have had a part in crucifying Jesus, by standing silently or actively with the violence of the State against the healing, transforming, inclusive power of Love incarnated in Jesus.

Lent is a season to feel God's presence with us even if we feel like the one being crucified. It is to draw near to God in prayer as Jesus does in his crying out on the cross.

Lent is a season to feel God's invitation to us always, through the pain of witnessing - even at this distance of years - the killing of God's beloved Jesus, to notice and name the ways that we continue to crucify God's beloved among us, and to repent for those ways, and to change. It is to be haunted in a way by the question: what if we could have protected Jesus?



Yes, God's power in Love over all principalities and powers is shown through the eventual resurrection of Jesus as Christ. So in this way the crucifixion is used as a way to showing the ultimacy of God's Love as the power of powers. However, it is not a passive story meant to suggest that it just had to be: that Jesus just had to live in Love, be killed for it and then be raised. There could have been another path: Jesus could have been allowed to live. And how might we have known God's love incarnate then?

Walking with Jesus toward Jerusalem, feeling the injustice, loneliness, heartache of his crucifixion, is I believe intended to wake us up so that these crucifixions cease. The story gets conveyed to us - to our collective humanity - as a call to cease perpetuating such violence. In seeing troubling aspects of individual and collective human behavior revealed in Jesus' crucifixion, to be on guard for such behavior in ourselves and our societies.

In the United States today we are witnessing the persecution and crucifixion of brown bodied people - people perceived to be immigrants - by the State because the story goes that the White Christian Power of the State is being threatened by these people, by these bodies, and lives. Theirs are the bodies, the human beings, on the cross with Jesus.

In the United States, throughout our history and into present day, we have witnessed the persecution and crucifixion of black bodies by the state because the story goes that they were worth less than the White Christian bodies whom the State had decided it was intended to protect. Black bodied people on lynching trees and in slavery and in the modern day paradigm of stand your ground are the bodies, the human beings, on the cross with Jesus.

In the United States, in our early history, people Native to this land were deemed by our White Christian ancestors to be less valuable than themselves and their people and therefore, able to be pushed around, to be forced off their lands, killed and corralled.

In the United States throughout history and certainly today, those whose bodies have been deemed White have been afforded the protections of the State and have therefore been encouraged to be silent when the State has done violence against our non-white siblings. White bodied people have been the crowds chanting hang him; have been Pontius Pilate finding excuses not to stand against orders to kill, have been the throngs of silent onlookers letting injustice happen.

In all of these scenes God weeps.

Lent is not about shame, remember. It is about purpose, clarity and calling.

This Lent we will deepen our connection with God and one another through study, prayer and creativity. We will learn the violence of White Christian Supremacy alongside the suffering of Jesus. We will be reminded and called back to our core capacity as Creative beings, capable of a generous and generative Love. We will consider together how we will act in opposition to the crucifying violence of White Christian Supremacy and we will consider together who we will participate in creating the peace-bearing world of God's Beloved Kingdom.

Please join.

Rev. Lindsey

The Invitation: what, why, how

This Lent, I would like us to deepen our connection with God.

We will do this by reflecting with an Anti-White Supremacy Lenten Devotional and through in person sessions that continue that study, as well as engage creativity as a spiritual practice.

My hope is that we can increase our awareness of habits and systems of white supremacy that we have and continue to participate in and which are antithetical to the dream of God's beloved kingdom; and that we lean more deeply into creativity as we are called to participate in creating a world that has not yet been, a world shaped through by the expansive Love of God as we learn it in Jesus.

Devotional

We will be using DISMANTLE: An Anti-White Supremacy Lenten Devotional which was created by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in response to their churches call to condemn white supremacy and for all congregations "to engage in communal study of the structures and rhetoric that empower and fuel racism and white supremacy and to take to heart the teachings of scriptures, so we may all be better equipped to speak boldly about the equal dignity of all persons in the eye of God."

Here is the online access: <https://soco.ch.org/resources/>

You can download the PDF there.

A hard copy is available as you enter the Sanctuary on Sundays.

Additionally, for those who would like to receive it, Rev. Lindsey will be sending out a companion email weekly with prayers and reflections toward action related to the devotional. Sign up is in the Lenten Deepening RSVP form below.

In Person Sessions

These are opportunities to combine independent study and reflection with connection with others around a meal in person at the church.

Each session has some work you are asked to do before we come together. Please complete the Lenten Deepening RSVP form or email Carol to admin@sococh.org by the date listed to indicate your participation and so that we can plan food and the flow of the sessions. They will be in the Guild Room at South.

Please note: you can sign up for one, two or all of the sessions. I just ask that you do the pre-work that is required prior to the session that you can attend. Also note: if you are unable to join in person but would still like the pre-work activity, you are welcome to participate in that way - just indicate so on the Lenten Deepening RSVP form.

Session 1:

In person, Wednesday, February 25th, 5:30-7:30pm

Prep Work: Watch "Nurture the Soul: Dismantling White Christian Supremacy"

<https://www.youtube.com/live/-lIcz28kEwY?si=Azf-595pJjm0iUzb>

Make Note:

What resonated with you?

What challenged you?

What did you learn?

What are three takeaways from this lesson?

RSVP to Carol at admin@sococh.org by Sunday, February 22 at 5pm

Session 2:

In person, Wednesday, March 11, 5:30-7:30pm

Prep Work: Read "Healed, Whole and Holy" by Madeleine L'Engle. Copies will be available on Sunday, March 1st

Make Note:

What resonated with you?

What challenged you?

What did you learn?

What are three takeaways from this lesson?

RSVP to Carol at admin@sococh.org by Sunday, March 1 at 5pm

Session 3:

In person, Wednesday, March 25, 5:30-7:30pm

Prep Work: Create music, movement, art, food, anything...inspired by scriptures that will be shared with you on Sunday, March 15

Make Note:

What resonated with you in the creative process?

What challenged you?

What did you learn?

What are three takeaways from this lesson?

RSVP to Carol at admin@sococh.org by Sunday, March 15 at 5pm