

# LENT: CULTIVATING AND LETTING GO



**Cultivate (verb):** to prepare and use for the raising of crops; to foster the growth of; to improve by labor, care, or study; to refine; to further; to encourage.

**Let go (verb):** relinquish one's grip on someone or something.

Lent is a season of spiritual gardening, of inviting God to unearth in us what lies fallow, what needs to be tended, and what needs to die for new life to emerge. This year, our lectionary offers us images and stories with themes of earthiness and grit. We'll explore these texts in worship each Sunday, and through the week engage in an intergenerational art project, Wednesday evening dinner church, and devotional reflections written by Muhlenberg members.

## ART

Each Sunday as you arrive for worship, you'll receive a work of art that you may color during the sermon—or sometime during the week for further reflection on the Bible passage for the week. Coloring activates a different part of our brain and can help us focus. Colored pencils are provided for this activity. If you miss a Sunday or you'd just like an extra copy, you can find them in the Gathering Area.

You'll also notice an intergenerational art project in the Gathering Area. Our "tree" will change through Lent, as we create origami art to reflect our personal cultivating and letting go. Visually and symbolically, this project will take us through the seasons, beginning with autumnal colors for Letting Go and ending with new growth for Cultivating. Pick up a packet by the tree and bring your origami back next week to add to the communal art!

### About the Logo...

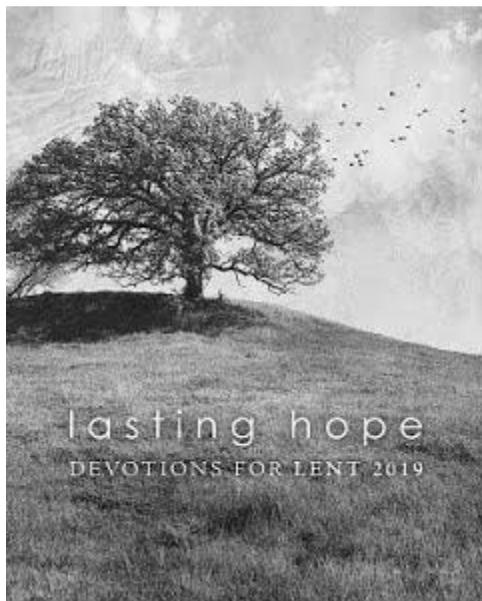
*"There's this moment as winter is reaching its end when the dead branches sway in the growing warmth of the sun, and I wonder, will these trees find new life? Will leaves and flowers begin to bud from these dead limbs, ushering in the spring—or will winter never cease? As we discussed the theme, what emerged for me visually was this moment when the limbs of trees seem suspended between the harsh cold of winter and the vibrancy of spring. These reaching branches need tending, water, and sunlight to grow, and this logo is meant to image that parched posture. The letters of 'letting go' are stripped bare to recall a returning to self and a letting go of that which keeps us from God and one another." —LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN, director of branding, A Sanctified Art*

# CULTIVATING & LETTING GO

## ***CULTIVATING AND LETTING GO DEVOTIONS***

We're providing many ways to cultivate faith daily throughout Lent. Choose one or two that you'd like to explore. In the Gathering Area, you'll find the *Cultivating and Letting Go* devotional booklet, with art, poetry, and space to journal. This booklet pairs with the large 11 x 17 coloring page with sections to color each week as you reflect.

Twice a week throughout Lent, reflections on our theme of *Cultivating and Letting Go* written by Muhlenberg members will be emailed to our mailing list. If you are not currently on the email list, you can sign up on our website, [muhlenberglutheran.org](http://muhlenberglutheran.org). Printed copies will also be available each week at the Connection Center in the Gathering Area. *If you are interested in submitting a devotion, contact Mycah McNett ([mcnett@muhlenberglutheran.org](mailto:mcnett@muhlenberglutheran.org) or 434-3496).*



Also available in the Gathering Area is a daily Lenten devotional entitled "Lasting Hope," a beautiful, full-color booklet exploring the Lenten Psalm texts; and resources for children and families.

Additionally, you can sign up for daily email devotions at <http://eepurl.com/bcbuf9>. These brief, meaningful reflections will take participants through the gospel of Luke during Lent. They are coordinated by an ELCA church in Michigan, but include a number of authors from Virginia, including Pastor Lauren.



# CULTIVATING & LETTING GO

## WORSHIP CHANGES DURING LENT

The season of Lent brings with it opportunities for us to cultivate and let go of aspects of our liturgy and worship practice. Such changes are intended to highlight the journey we make to the cross and engage us in a time of repentance, introspection, and discipline.

- On *Transfiguration of Our Lord*, we let go of the word “Alleluia” for the season of Lent. Based on the Hebrew word, hallelu yah, meaning “praise the Lord,” alleluia has been a word of great praise to God in the life of the church. Because of the penitential character of the Lenten season in the Western church, singing or saying the word alleluia has historically been suspended during Lent’s forty days.
- There are no flowers during this penitential season, and we receive unleavened wafers at communion.
- Through the season of Lent, communion will be received at the altar rail, either standing or kneeling as you are able.
- In our worship we sing only the “Kyrie” and not the Hymn of Praise, “Glory to God.” We use a musical setting that is more chant-like. It may feel new, but actually comes from the 1958 Service Book and Hymnal.

The use of these options invites us to consider what we are cultivating in our lives as well. They also provide a refreshing break until we return to a fuller expression of worship in the Easter season.

## MIDWEEK LENTEN DINNER CHURCH

On Wednesdays during Lent, worship will take place around the table: the dinner table. Think of a good dinner party with a spiritual twist – and then add art (music, poetry, Scripture), robust conversation, and prayerful moments (embracing simple liturgy and silence). Together we’ll cultivate relationships with each other and with God.

We’ll begin at 6:15 pm in the MAC and wrap up by 7:15 pm. This casual yet meaningful experience is great for all ages. (*Note: Arriving as close to 6:15 as possible will give you a better chance of finding a parking space. By that time, most Day Care and Second Home children have been picked up.*)

# CULTIVATING & LETTING GO

## LENTEN MIDDAY RECITAL SERIES

*Martin Luther said...*

*"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world."*

Please join us **Thursdays at noon** during the Lenten season as we feature a variety of incredible musicians. Each week this 30-minute program offers an opportunity to temporarily release the stress of the day and be rejuvenated through the power of music. Concerts are free and open to all. Artists performing this season:

- Mar 14 Muhlenberg Members**  
*Instrumentalists/vocalists from the Muhlenberg community*
- Mar 21 Gianne Ghe Zhu, piano**  
*DMA Candidate at JMU, and Music Ministry Accompanist at Muhlenberg*
- Mar 28 Elizabeth Williams, organ & piano**  
*Muhlenberg's Music Minister*
- April 4 Edward Gant, cello**  
*JMU Music Faculty*
- April 11 Florence Jowers, organ and John Bullard, classical banjo**  
*Florence: Minister of Music, Christ Lutheran  
John: freelance musician from Richmond.*



## LENTEN COLLECTIONS

### ELCA WORLD HUNGER BOX

Boxes are available in the Gathering Area. Funds raised will be used to help feed the hungry all over the world.

### BASKETS OF PROMISE

During Lent Christian Formation (through the JAMers elementary youth group) and Local & Global Mission are sponsoring Lutheran World Relief's *Baskets of Promise* appeal by collecting items for personal care kits.

We will **start collecting Sunday, March 10**. Look for a complete list of needed items at the Connection Center. Contact *Diane Bayer* ([bayer@muhlenberglutheran.org](mailto:bayer@muhlenberglutheran.org) or 434-3496) with any questions.

**Sunday, March 10**, we collect **BARS OF SOAP** (individually wrapped in original wrapping).

**March 17**, we collect **BATH TOWELS (lightweight, dark colors, 52" x 27")**. We ask for lightweight towels because they dry quicker in the sun!

