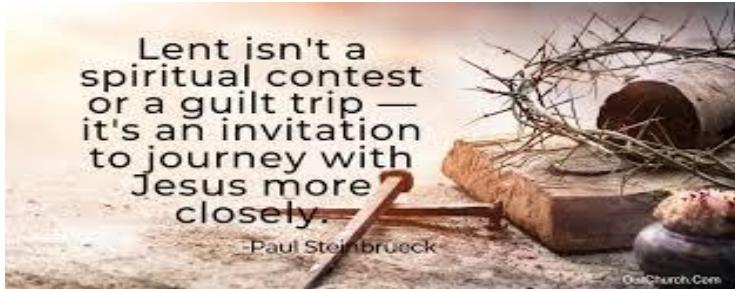


## An Advent Lutheran Church Jubilee 2026 Celebration Devotion

### LENT – Pilgrim Journey

**By Pastor Debra Loudin-McCann**

*(Former Director of Music Ministries at Advent and ministerial daughter of the congregation.)*



***"I want Jesus to walk with me.  
I want Jesus to walk with me.  
All along my Pilgrim journey Lord,  
I want Jesus to walk with me."***

*-ELW #325*

Welcome to your journey, Pilgrims! For the next forty days you will be following Jesus, the original twelve disciples and centuries of numerous desert Fathers into the Wilderness. I exhort you to travel lightly. *Take no heed to what you shall wear or what you shall eat for your Father in Heaven knows you need these things.* Be prepared to encounter angels and demons, and surprise appearances of The Holy Spirit.

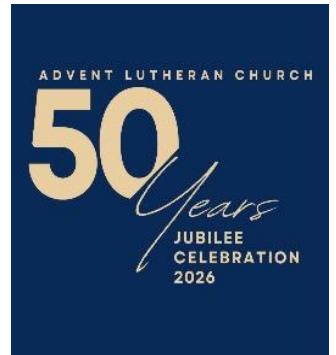
The image of JOURNEY is a favorite to describe the season of Lent, and the Bible holds many stories of journeys – like the journeys into and out of exile for the Children of Israel, including a forty-year journey through the desert *Wilderness* to a Promised Land. Jesus' journey into the desert lasted forty days, a symbolic number or remembrance and connection. The Promised Land to which he was bound was His life of Word and Service, of trials and miracles that made up His ministry on earth. Jesus' journey ended in Jerusalem ... but not really! Jesus Himself was and is the Promised Land because He fulfills the ancient promise from God to send a *Savior, The Messiah* who would be the *Light of the World* to show *The Way*\* out of the exile of sin and darkness and into the Light of The Kingdom of God. For us as baptized Children of God, Jesus is our Promised Land, and the only way we know *The Way* is to walk with Him, to follow in His footsteps and trust Him to guide us.



Now you may be thinking, but the Disciples weren't with Jesus in the wilderness. And you'd be right. They were not with Him physically. He had not even met them yet in person. But surely, He had them in mind. So it is with us. We are always on His mind. We may not have the experience of Jesus walking with us in the human flesh of the Incarnation, but we believe, we trust by faith that He is with us as we make our spiritual journeys through life. We talk to Him in prayer and train our spiritual eyes to look for him to show up ... and He does! We see Him in the words of Holy Scripture. We see Him in the love and compassion of His followers who serve the hungry, the sick, the poor and the poor in

spirit, the alien strangers in our midst, the homeless ones, the imprisoned ones, and all the suffering ones crying out in grief, crying out in despair, crying out for justice. Jesus shows up *even in all of us* if we walk with Him. Jesus shows up to remind us who He is, and who we are. He shows up in the Water of Baptism, and in the Bread and Wine of The Eucharist.

When we face our own trials and temptations in the Wilderness places of life, Jesus is our guide, our example, and our companion. One of the things I always appreciated so much in the worship life of Advent was that the leadership took Lent seriously and worked hard to make it a rich and meaningful experience. It was (and I hope and expect still is) meant to draw us closer to God both as individuals and as a faith community. It was a time for spiritual growth, and an opportunity for a renewal of our commitment walk with Jesus on our paths of Discipleship. We know both from our own experiences of life, and especially through the life of Jesus that this is no casual stroll through a fragrant garden on a lovely Sunday morning. We know there will be hard places, rocky places; the burning heat of temptation and struggles to overcome the ugly and unholy parts of our flawed and vulnerable mortal human selves. We will hunger. We will thirst. We may stumble and even fall. But We will not be alone. There will be *manna from Heaven*. There will be *water from the rock*.



When we receive ashes on our faces, the sign of the cross reminds us that though we will some day die, *yet shall we live*. And though we journey through wild desert places, we *shall* see the Promised Land, because Jesus knows the way through. Jesus IS the Way through. And if we invite Him, Jesus WILL walk with us ... *all along our pilgrim journey*.

***Let us pray ...***

*Oh God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your Love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN +*

\* *The Way* was the earliest name given for the message of Jesus, and His followers were known as followers of *The Way*.



**MAY YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY BE SPIRITUALLY REFRESHING AND DEEPLY MEANINGFUL!**