



Welcome to Longview Chapel Christian Church's Lenten Study! We invite you to participate with us as we prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Easter and Resurrection.

What is Lent? It is the 40 days before Easter that is a time for reflection, renewal and repentance, a time to "reboot" our lives. All of us can find ourselves letting things get in the way of our relationship with God and other people. When we do, this is sin. The Greek word in the Bible for sin is *hamartia*, which means missing the mark or the target. When we sin, God helps us to see our sin and gives us the opportunity to repent. Repentance in the New Testament is the word *metanoia*, which means to turn around and change your mind. As we repent and change our behavior, we are more open to receiving God's forgiveness and we are loved and empowered to start anew.

This Lenten season we are focusing specifically on repentance and forgiveness and how their presence in our daily life can change our hope, our joy, our ability to experience Christ's presence and much more as they bring us closer to God. We will intentionally be opening ourselves up to experience more of God's grace and power together.

Feel free to read and explore the following readings at your own pace. These readings can give you a great opportunity to talk about them with friends. Sometimes by hearing another person's experience, it helps us to understand our own.

A schedule of all Lenten events is included below to help you plan to get the most of this Lenten season.

I encourage you to pray our Lenten prayer daily:

**Loving and forgiving God, be present with me now on each step of this Lenten journey. Free me from every sin and unbelief. Set me free from anxiety, fear, self-pity, self-hatred and cynicism. Please anoint my life and my spiritual community with deep faith and complete trust in You. Open me to receive and share more and more of Your love. Let me be Your hands and face and words to all I meet. I love You. I praise You. I am thankful for You. In the name of Jesus. Amen.**

May God open all of us to God's hopes and desires for us,

Pastor Donna Rose-Heim

### **Lenten Schedule**

Week 1 – Feb 26 – Ash Wednesday Services at Longview Chapel CC at 6:30 p.m with Lee's Summit Christian Church

Week 2 – March 3 – Tuesday at 10 a.m. for Bagels & Bible Study or March 5 - Thursday at 6 p.m. for Soup & Study

Week 3 – March 10 – Tuesday at 10 a.m. Bible & Bagels Study or March 12 -Thursday at 6 p.m. Soup & Study

Week 4 – March 17 – Tuesday at 10 a.m. Bible & Bagels Study or March 19 - Thursday at 6 p.m. Soup & Study

Week 5 – March 24 – Tuesday at 10 a.m. Bible & Bagels Study or March 26 - Thursday at 6 p.m. Soup & Study

Week 6 – March 31 – Tuesday at 10 a.m. Bible & Bagel Study or April 2 - Thursday at 6 p.m. Soup & Study

Week 7 – April 9, Maundy Thursday Service at 6:30 p.m.

**EASTER SUNDAY** – Sunday, April 12 – Services at 9 and 10:30.

## STUDY 1

**Scripture:** Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

### Thoughts:

In the fifth grade we all lost a recess because some of the students in class were talking when the teacher left the room. Some of us decided it was time to write a petition and suggest to the teacher that when he needed to leave the room, various students take note of who was talking and only those students be deprived of privileges. We even sat and typed out the petition and got everyone to sign it.

Unfortunately, I ended up being the room monitor the first time. Another student, Queenie, talked several times. I wrote her name down. She lost a recess. She was not happy. Looking back, I was probably a bit self-righteous and picky in my actions too.

In the bathroom that day before we headed out to Wyandotte High School to see a play, Queenie came up to me and slapped me right across the face. I was stunned and definitely not used to being slapped. She left the bathroom and I stood there with tears on my face not knowing what to do next.

Other students reported what had happened and Queenie and I ended up in the principal's office together. I wish I could tell you what the principal said, but truthfully, I don't remember. What I do remember is that Queenie and I came to an understanding with each other. Somehow, we forgave each other.

We'd never been super close before, but we started to go to each other's houses. We gave each other little gifts. We hung out on the playground together. We talked about our churches, our families, our dreams and so much more. It was a really good thing.

None of that could have happened if we both had not repented, turned around and changed our behavior, and then looked for what God was creating in us and for us.

Far too often, we only see the mess we are in and we get stuck there. Sometimes it helps to see if we can figure out what the sins were that got us there in the first place. Then perhaps God can do a "new thing" in us too.



immediately change their behavior. Her love and care for them in the easy and difficult moments made them want to please her.

When we love someone, and we are responsible for them, we care about them getting what they need and doing what they need to do to live fully. God loves each of us so much that God does discipline, guide and challenge us and yes, God does allow consequences to come to us when we fail to live in God's ways.

The root word of "discipline" is "disciple." The Latin word, *discipulus*, actually means "student." It does not just mean to be a follower, but to be one who studies and seeks instruction and training, to be someone who really wants to learn.

When we are "on track," and learning, God celebrates that with us. When we are "off track," God uses all kinds of ways to help us see where we are missing the mark. Sometimes our Lord uses a scripture, like today's. Sometimes God speaks through another person or through our own inner struggle and lack of peace. And sometimes our Lord speaks in the silence. If we are wise, we listen.

At one point in a friendship, I was totally sure the person had betrayed me. My attitude towards that person definitely changed. Instead of dealing with the issue, I kept avoiding the problem and because of that, the nature of the relationship changed. It wasn't until later that I discovered my friend had not intentionally betrayed me. It took some fence-mending, but we are friends today. I needed to repent, turn around, change my mindset and change my path. I thought I was right, but I wasn't. Nothing could have been repaired until I stepped up and changed my behavior.

If we want to please God, we repent and change our path when we realize we are sinning. When we do, God comes in and dines with us – sharing the bread and the cup. What are you learning about being a disciple and pursuing God's ways above all others today?

### **Questions & Activities:**

- In what ways have you experienced God disciplining you so far during your life?
- If you were going to discipline yourself, what would be the one or two things you would focus on?
- Discipline can come as an affirmation of positive behavior, as redirecting attention and energy to another focus or as punishment. Which of these do you see God disciplining you with the most?



*salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.*

## **Thoughts:**

Are there any sins in your life that you find yourself continuing to hold onto? Maybe even repeating them? Maybe something you've never told anyone about before? Maybe something that almost seems like it was a part of someone else's life now? Maybe something that gives you real shame when you think about it, yet it keeps coming to your mind and heart?

In one of the congregations I served as an interim, there was a person who I just kept finding myself remembering in prayer and feeling as though there was something I needed to say or do for him. He was a delightful man to talk to. He had done well in raising his family and in developing a business. I kept wondering what God was trying to say to me about him. One day when I was in one of those kind of in-between sleep and awake states, I had a strong sense I was to go to him and tell him that God forgave him completely and totally. I did not know what the forgiveness was for, but I felt strongly that whatever it was really burdened him even though I was pretty sure it had happened long ago.

If you have ever felt the urging of the Spirit to tell someone something that didn't totally make sense to you, but you knew you were supposed to do it, it can be hard to know how to start the conversation.

I called him up and asked if we could meet that I'd like to talk with him. We sat on his sun porch and I worked my way into telling him what I knew, "I am not sure why God picked me to tell you this, but God wants you to know that whatever happened in the past that is burdening you, you are forgiven." We both just set for awhile with those words. His response was very simple and heart felt, "thank you for letting me know," and he smiled.

There is no sin in our lives that God is unable to forgive and wipe clean. We must trust God and release that sin that perhaps lingers in our hearts. If no sin is there for you like that, give thanks!

In Psalm 51, King David has been held accountable for his sin with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. David had taken what he wanted, when he wanted it and did not care about others or God or his commitment to create a just land. To read more on David's sin, read 2 Samuel 11 and 12. David's response to God's forgiveness prompted him to write this Psalm.

David was forgiven and we are forgiven too. All we need do is ask, receive and release.





## STUDY 4

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:5-13 (J. B. Phillips)

*“And then, when you pray, don’t be like the play-actors. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at street-corners so that people may see them at it. Believe me, they have had all the reward they are going to get. But when you pray, go into your own room, shut your door and pray to your Father privately. Your Father who sees all private things will reward you. And when you pray don’t rattle off long prayers like the pagans who think they will be heard because they use so many words. Don’t be like them. After all, God, who is your Father, knows your needs before you ask him. Pray then like this: ‘Our Heavenly Father, may your name be honoured; May your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day the bread we need, Forgive us what we owe to you, as we have also forgiven those who owe anything to us. Keep us clear of temptation, and save us from evil.’”*

### Thoughts:

We learn to pray the Lord’s Prayer when we first begin to pursue our faith. As the only prayer Jesus taught the disciples to pray, we should assume that there is much packed into each word and phrase for us to savor.

Perhaps the one that challenges us most (if it does not, it should), is “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Do we really mean this when we pray it? How well are we practicing forgiveness?

Practicing forgiveness begins with how easily or not we take offense. There are days when someone can look at me in a funny way and I take that very personally. There are other days when that same look just makes me think they aren’t feeling well or perhaps are thinking of something difficult or unpleasant that has nothing to do with me. Whether I need to forgive someone starts with how I understand their words or actions.

A second part of forgiveness is often trying to understand what went astray or caused the divide between me and the other. This can’t always be done, but when it can, it can often help us both to grow and stretch and forgiveness can come much more easily.

A third part is sometimes forgiving not because it makes logical human sense to do so, but because it is what God asks me to do, even when the other is not particularly sorry for what happened. God knows that when we hold a grudge against someone, it really doesn’t hurt them. It wounds us. Several different traditions have a saying something like, “holding a grudge is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.”

Do we really want God to forgive us as we forgive others? Be in prayer this week asking God to show you where you are not forgiving others (this could even be people who have passed or events) and help you to repent and accept God’s forgiveness.

**Questions and Activities:**

- Light a candle. Sit and watch its flame. Ask God to bring to your mind a time when you have truly forgiven someone. Remember what you did or did not do and how it felt. What difference did forgiving this person make in your life?
- At another time, light a candle. Ask God to bring to your mind anyone or anything you have not forgiven. Holding on to this lack of forgiveness is keeping you from experiencing God’s forgiveness for you. Pray and ask for God’s help to forgive. You may want to talk to your pastor or an elder to pray with you as well until you feel you are at least on a path to forgiveness.
- We repent or turn around to follow God’s ways – that is our response to God’s love for us. God’s response is forgiveness. Sit or walk and reflect on what it means to you to really experience and accept God’s forgiveness. Do you really believe God’s forgiveness and love are gifts to you?

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## STUDY 5

**Scripture:** I Corinthians 6:19-20 (NRSV)

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefor glorify God in your body.*

### Thoughts:

Close your eyes for a minute and imagine what you look like. Notice the color and tone of your skin. What is the shape of your body? What do your eyes look like? How are you standing or sitting? Are you smiling, straight-faced or frowning?

Now look in a mirror. What do you see? Is what you imagined you look like consistent with what you do look like?

As you look at your body, do you see a body that is well fed, well exercised and well rested, or do you see something else? Do you see someone who has cherished the gift of your physical body or someone who has sometimes taken it for granted?

I won't speak for you, but I know for certain there are times when I really do not take good care of my body. As I read this verse, I wonder how God feels about my decisions (and lack of them) to care for my body.

None of us are perfect at caring for our bodies. All of us can find some things both big and small that we could add or subtract that would give our bodies greater strength and energy. Take some time to name some of the ways you are really good at caring for your body. Now name some ways you are not taking good care of your body. Ask for God's forgiveness and seek to repent or "turn around" and make one or two changes God may be asking you to do differently to care more faithfully for your body. Perhaps God has nudged you more than once to make these changes. During this season of Lent, commit to changing just one thing and giving that commitment to God as an offering of yourself. Notice how this one offering changes you, both spiritually and physically. What can you do for your body that will make it more welcoming for the Holy Spirit within you this Lenten season?

### Questions & Activities:

- Make a simple inventory of how you care for your body. Here are a few questions to consider:
  - Do you eat at least 3 servings of fruits and vegetables each day?
  - Do you exercise 30 minutes or more, 4 times a week?
  - Do you sleep well most nights?

- How is your energy level?
- Do you do something that gives you joy and adds value every day?
  
- As you consider the gift of your body from God, what is the one thing you could do or stop doing that could make a difference in how healthy your body is? This may become a fast of stopping or starting a behavior.
- Consider a day of full or partial fasting. Be sure to pray and/or read scripture in the time you save and/or when you notice you are hungry.

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## STUDY 6

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:2-5 (NRSV)

*He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."*

### Thoughts:

In the time of Jesus, children were considered to be property. In some cases, they might even be sold as slaves to cover a debt. Children were considered to be unimportant and in many ways they were scorned and marginalized. They were the least of the least and often lived very difficult lives.

When Jesus told the disciples they needed to become as children, he was saying they needed to put themselves in the place of those who were poor, powerless, hated, feared or marginalized. While the world was telling the disciples and us we need to become great, Jesus was saying to be great, one must become weak and acknowledge that we are one with the poor, the suffering, the broken, the lost and the stranger. If we see ourselves as "other than" or "better than," we are not in agreement with Jesus and his ways. We are to become as children, completely trusting in God to care for us and to guide us.

When we welcome and help children, or other marginalized suffering people, we welcome Jesus. Can you see his face on theirs?

### Questions and Activities:

- Try to remember back to when you were a child. What is your first memory of connecting with God? Talk with God about this memory.
- How can you actively love the "little ones" of the world? What is a concrete, practical way you can assist the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters?
- Make time this week to take a child for ice cream or to share a book or craft together. Ask him or her about what they know about God and listen. If you don't have a child in your neighborhood, you might try talking with one of the children at church.

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## STUDY 7

**Scripture:** Luke 5:27-31 (NIV)

*After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."*

### Thoughts:

Tax collectors were some of the most hated people in the time of Christ. They purchased the right from the Romans to collect taxes and would pay the Romans what was owed to them and keep the extra they charged. They were considered to be sinners, unethical and were generally hated. So when Jesus welcomed Levi into his life and went to a great banquet Levi held for Jesus at his house, people were shocked! "Doesn't he know what a sinner Levi is? He's not much of a prophet if he doesn't even know this man's a bum."

When Jesus ate with Levi and his friends, he made it clear that he was willing to be and wanted to be in relationship with them. In Jesus' culture, you primarily broke bread with ones you cared about.

That is just how Jesus was and is. He eats and drinks with sinners. He eats and drinks with us. Part of following Jesus is opening ourselves up to be in relationship with those Jesus loves, even if they are difficult for us to be with.

Sometimes our sin comes in the form of us excluding others or judging them or seeing them as less worthy of God's love and care.

**Questions and Activities:**

- Spend some time being grateful that you are one of the unworthy ones Jesus has called to the table. You are there, because he forgives you and he loves you.
- Ask God to show you who you have seen as less worthy than you of God's love and your acceptance. Perhaps it is a specific person you have issues with or a type of person. Who are you unwilling or at least hesitant to share a meal or cup of coffee with? Are you willing to ask forgiveness for your judgment on these people? Are you willing to ask Christ's help to have a new stance with them?
- Invite someone you either don't know well or someone you have a difficulty with to a meal or cup of coffee. Choose to just get to know the person and set any differences aside. How is Christ present with you?
- Pray the Lord's prayer and reflect on what it means to forgive as you have been forgiven.

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## STUDY 8

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:26-32 (J. B. Phillips)

*If you are angry, be sure that it is not out of wounded pride or bad temper. Never go to bed angry—don't give the devil that sort of foothold. The new life means positive good. If you used to be a thief you must not only give up stealing, but you must learn to make an honest living, so that you may be able to give to those in need.*

*Let there be no more foul language, but good words instead—words suitable for the occasion, which God can use to help other people. Never hurt the Holy Spirit. He is, remember, the personal pledge of your eventual full redemption. Let there be no more resentment, no more anger or temper, no more violent self-assertiveness, no more slander and no more malicious remarks, Be kind to each other, be understanding. Be as ready to forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.*

### Thoughts:

A brother was restless in the faith community where he lived. He was often moved to anger. So he said, "I will go and live somewhere by myself. And since I won't be able to talk or listen to anyone, I will be tranquil, and my anger will stop." He went out and lived alone in a cave. But one day he filled his jug with water and put it on the ground. It suddenly fell over. He filled it again, and again it fell. And this happened a third time. In a rage he snatched up the jug and broke it. Returning to his right mind, he knew that the demon of anger had mocked him, and he said, "Here I am all by myself, and he has beaten me. I will return to the community. Wherever you live, you need effort and patience and above all God's help." And he rose up, and went back to the community. (From *Western Asceticism, ed.*, trans. Owen Chadwick (The Westminster Press: 1958), p. 92)

All of us get angry sometimes. Anger means we really do care about something or someone, otherwise we wouldn't let whatever it is we are upset about bother us. The question is, "What do we do with our anger?" Do we use it to get us to think of a better way for things to be? Do we talk to the people we are angry with? Do we use our anger to motivate us to change and alter the situation or do we hold onto our anger?

The scriptures tell us to never let the sun go down on our anger. Sometimes that is really hard to do, but it gives us a goal and a measurement to work towards. Holding onto anger is not acceptable in our walk of faith. It keeps us and others from living fully in God's ways. Are you holding onto any anger that God is asking you to release and work through? Are you ready to let it go?

### Questions & Activities:

- Take a walk or sit in silence and ask yourself if you have any anger you are holding onto? Or is there something that repeatedly angers you? Talk with God about what letting go



of it might look like. Commit this week to releasing the anger AND working through it wherever possible.

- Notice for one entire day any time you find yourself getting angry. Notice where you are and what is happening. Just be aware and note how you deal with the rise of anger inside you.
- Pray for someone you know who is struggling with holding on to anger.

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## STUDY 9

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:31-40 (NIV)

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”*

### Thoughts:

This passage can be very difficult to hear. How many times have we passed someone in need and not responded, for various reasons? Certainly, those that we assumed were out for a scam we couldn't see Jesus in, could we? Or what about that neighbor who is a bit irritating, but clearly lonely since their spouse passed? Do we see Christ in them? Or what about the child who is separated from parents or has a special need, how are we responding?

The righteous in this story clearly missed the opportunities of helping others right in front of them. How are we doing? Part of repentance is acknowledging our sin and choosing to make some changes. When we walk past or ignore those in need, we are walking past the suffering Christ without lifting a finger to help them. When we repent from seeing them as other than Christ, and begin to see them as Christ, perhaps it will stimulate in us some love, perhaps an idea of how to assist and certainly show some compassion.

### Questions and Activities:

- In the past week, who have you responded to in need? What motivated you? Looking back, can you see where Christ was in them and in you?
- Think about the people in need you have not chosen to help. What did God desire from you? Pick a few of these and ask for forgiveness as well as consider what options you might choose in the future.
- Close your eyes. Imagine someone you have passed by and not helped. See their face. Now imagine Christ's face is shining through theirs. Be with the thoughts and images that come to mind for you. Talk with God about how this feels to have passed by Christ. Ask for forgiveness and be with God as you sit with these images.

- The next time you see someone in need this week, imagine Christ’s face shining through theirs. How does this awareness empower you?

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**STUDY 10**

**Scripture:** Psalm 24:1-2 (NRSV)

*The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for God has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.*

**Thoughts:**

Whenever I have to borrow someone’s car, which is fortunately not often, I find myself being extra careful and looking one more time before backing up. I check additional times at intersections. And of course, I never ever eat or drink in their car unless they do. I’m the same way when I stay at someone else’s home. At my house, the bed does not always get made, but when I am a guest, it always does. Maybe that sounds familiar to you too.

When we care about someone, and something belongs to them, we take care of it. If someone gives us a gift of something precious that was theirs – a ring, a book, a pen, etc. – it is even more important to us because it was from them. We tend to take care of it, wear or use it only on special occasions and perhaps have a special place we keep it.

God created and owns the earth and all who live in it, not just some parts. God gives us the gift as people to care for the land and to use it wisely. How we care for the earth and other people – God’s creations – is directly connected to how much we honor God. In what ways have we as individuals sinned against God in the way we have cared for, or not cared for, the land and animals and people God has given to us?

How does God feel about the way we are caring for the planet? How will future generations be blessed or cursed by our decisions today?

### **Questions & Activities:**

- Take time to walk in nature. If it’s super cold, look out your window. Thank God for the incredible beauty and wonder of all that you see and for making us a part of creation too!
- Prayerfully consider the things you do right now that honor and care for God’s creation – the earth, animals and people.
- Are there some specific things you do that are hurtful to creation? Consider one or two things you could do differently. Some ideas are:
  - Purchase a metal straw to use at restaurants to reduce your plastic use. Buy cloth bags to use when you shop at any store to reduce the use of plastic bags.
  - Stop eating, or reduce, the amount of meat you eat. Try “meatless Mondays” during Lent.
  - Unplug devices you are not using. All electronics use energy when they are plugged in, even if they are powered down. Any time a cord is plugged into a socket it’s drawing energy and you are adding to your carbon footprint. (the amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds emitted due to the consumption of fossil fuels by a particular person, group, etc.) Plug devices in only when you are using them.
  - Drive less. Walk, bike or use public transportation or plan your stops to make fewer trips.
  - Plant a garden and have plants inside your home too. Plant trees and bee friendly flowers to help God’s creation thrive too.
  - Eat local foods. Organic is preferable when you can to avoid chemical build-up in the soil and water supply.
  - Line dry your clothes or hang them out. One dryer load uses 5 times more electricity than washing.

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**STUDY 11**

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 18:1-8 (NIV)

*This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.*

**Thoughts:**

When a potter gets a lump of clay, he or she first takes time to "wedge" the clay or remove any impurities, foreign objects or air pockets. As the potter tosses the clay on the wheel, if the pot is not forming correctly, or if the pot gets off centered, the potter pushes the clay back down and starts over. It's all still the same clay. It's all still important to the potter, but the potter keeps working with it until it becomes a beautiful piece.

The image Jeremiah shares of God being the potter and us being the clay is a beautiful reminder that God is always working with us. God does not give up. God wants us to be the beautiful creations God wants us to be.

How is God forming you today?

**Questions & Activities:**

- Take some playdough or clay and just work it in your hands. Allow your hands to keep working with it and seeing what forms you can make. How do you imagine God experiences forming us?
- Today as you are talking with others consider how you are helping to shape them. How are you adding value to those you meet? How are you bringing, or not bringing, Christ’s presence to others?

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## STUDY 12

**Scripture:** Acts 3:19 (NIV)

*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

### Thoughts:

Repentance at its best is not a one-time act but is a part of our every day lifestyle. Being aware of our need to repent or turn around from our focus, our behavior, our attitude or our decision requires that we stay open to God's leading. We can be ever so sure that we are in the right. It can make total sense to us. And yet, we can be totally out of God's desires for us. Can you think of a time this was true for you?

It takes openness to learning, humility and a willing spirit for us to allow God to reveal our sin, help us repent, change our behavior and accept God's forgiveness. God is always there willing and ready to guide us. We just need to be willing and available.

This Lenten season we have focused on repentance and forgiveness. Hopefully this focus will encourage all of us to be more ready and willing to make the process of repentance and forgiveness a part of our lives. If not every day, most days. Keeping our spiritual house clean gives us greater freedom to respond to God and to each other. Just like our house, it is so much easier to keep it clean with daily decisions and actions than to wait until it is a huge undertaking.

God is good, all the time, to forgive us. Will we open ourselves to repent and receive that forgiveness?

### Questions & Activities:

- What are the one or two things you want to remember and practice?
- As we ready ourselves to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, take a moment and prayerfully consider what new life has sprung up in you?
- Give thanks for Christ's presence in your life.

### Journal:

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*Thank you for sharing in this study with Longview Chapel  
Christian Church during the season of Lent!*

*This booklet has been created by our pastor,  
Rev. Donna Rose-Heim. You can find us at 850 SW Longview  
Road, Lee's Summit, MO 64081. We worship every Sunday at 9  
and 10:30 a.m. and we welcome you to love, grow and serve  
God with us!*

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