

## DAY TWENTY-THREE OF LENT



***“Fools say in their hearts,  
There’s no God. They are  
corrupt and do horrible  
deeds; not one of them  
does anything good.”***

Psalm 53.1 CEB

You know them, maybe you have only met them and maybe you are one of them, but there are people on the road to Jerusalem who, for lack of a better description, ‘know everything worth knowing’. The world is no mystery to them: politics is based only on money, government is a conspiracy, the global community is a

sham, diseases and plagues are inevitable and God, if there is a God, cares little about what anyone is going through. Humanity is just a mass of carbon, water and dark desires, with little redeemable qualities and is more to be endured than enjoyed.

These are the same people who, on a walk through DuBois Center hosted by Green DuBois, would see the Coral-root Orchid and say, ‘Pffft. It is only nature’, dismissing both the beauty of the Orchid and the myriad of other plant and microorganism species which have found their root and home on the side and in the shade of the Oak which protects them. They are the fully-sighted, yet nearly blind, the fully-hearing, but never listening, the fully-sensate, yet rarely feeling of God’s people among us.

Let it not be so with you.

Rather than take umbrage with the fool, seek out the Wisdom of quiet appreciation to be found in the unhurried walk to Jerusalem. Allow the Spirit of God to open your eyes to visions of multiple layers of community, in the woods as in the city. Invite the Spirit of God to unplug your ears that you might hear the songs and purpose of migrating geese, in the skies and along the roads. Pray for the Spirit to cause your senses to tingle with understanding in the sight of Coral-root Orchid, while not turning away from the child playing in the war-torn lands of the Middle East.

Anyone can be a fool. The wise among us seek the way of Christ.

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Lord God, Holy God, forgive my moments of disbelief and open me to new treasures of Faith each day. Amen.

DAY  
TWENTY-  
FOUR OF  
LENT

*“God looks  
down from  
heaven on  
humans to see  
if anyone is  
wise, to see if  
anyone seeks  
God.”*

Psalm 53.2  
CEB

Sunrise is the  
moment we are  
reminded God is



With Us, Immanuel. God is not a sneaky God, glimpsing around the corners of buildings, hiding in the shadows, running from tree-to-tree. God is the Bold, Pungent, Piercing, All-Encompassing, Filling-Every-Crevasse, In-Your-Face, From Sunrise to Sunset to Sunrise, again, kind of God. God searches out our searching, ponders in our pondering, waits for our waiting, listens to our listening, and is aware of our awareness. God’s breath is our breathing, God’s beating heart is the rhythm of our living, God’s prayers are for our prayers, God’s hope in our hope, God’s joy in our joy, God’s love builds our love. God never stops – and God never stops seeking our eagerness to move forward with God in faith.

The Psalmist envisions a God who can only ‘look down’ from the Heavens. Jesus introduces us to the God who is With Us, Immanuel, leading us on the pilgrimage of the wise, the journey of those who seek God. At sunrise God takes us by the hand and, with wind-sweeping movement, stirs the leaves to dance and shutter, the streams of sunlight to glisten and the song of the meadowlark to carry across the hills. At sunrise God rebirths us in the opera of woodland creatures and the sky ballet of hawks and eagles. At sunrise God opens us to the skitter of chipmunks and ground squirrels who hearken our attention to the changing of seasons and remind us that, in one manner or another, we are all to be busy living into the Name by which we are called.

Sunrise is the moment we are reminded God is With Us, Immanuel.

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Yes, Lord, I am eager for Easter to be found in this very sunrise, but the way is long and the days, my days on this earth, are numbered. Make me wise in this sunrise to walk with You always. Amen.

## DAY TWENTY-FIVE OF LENT

*“Let Israel’s salvation come out of Zion!*

*When God changes his people’s circumstances for the better, Jacob will rejoice;  
Israel will celebrate!”*

Psalm 53.6 CEB



I don’t remember us ever feeding the hummingbirds when I was growing up on the farm. Yes, there were always hummingbirds around: they were around the flowers Mom grew, they were in the garden Mom and Dad had, they were even found in the clover fields and pastures where I walked to bring the cows in for milking, but they were never found at a feeder in the backyard such as this. Whether it was because we didn’t have or take the time for them or because we didn’t need one more thing to feed and keep up with on the farm, I really cannot say, but in

my life, hummingbird feeders are a fairly recent addition to our home.

So, I have to wonder, do we feed hummingbirds so that they have enough food throughout the season to mate, raise a family and prepare to migrate South in the Winter? Or do we feed the hummingbirds so they can entertain us? Is it a necessary thing we do or a self-serving thing we do? Is it we who are training them to come to us? Or is it they who train us to prepare the feed for them? Perhaps we will never fully know the answer to that, but I suspect the truth is somewhere in the middle and, in the end, everyone benefits.

The hummingbird feeders at DuBois Center fairly hum with the attentions the hummingbirds give them. Hummingbirds are territorial, often chasing off the competitors for what is an ample food source, though they probably are not aware of it. The hummingbirds stake their claim to the goodness of God, the affability of their human stewards and the geography of abundant food sources. When their circumstances are changed for the better the hummingbirds rejoice . . . and become protective of the gift.

Unlike hummingbirds protecting their turf, the gift of God’s love is not ours alone, nor is it ever to be protected as if there is a limited supply. God’s goodness and care is for all and for all time. Rejoice! Then, share the gift! The more of us at the feeders, the more gracious the Gift. Think about it. Israel certainly did.

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Though we hover about your precious Food, set upon the Table by the hand of Christ, never allow us to ‘own’ it, only to share it with the Grace You give to all, O God. Thank You. Amen.

## DAY TWENTY-SIX OF LENT

*“When the Lord changed Zion’s circumstances for the better,  
it was like we had been dreaming.”*



Psalm 126.1 CEB

Whether in the Spring of the year as the first flowers emerge, the Summer of the year when long days bring the heat and humidity, in the Fall of the year when trees begin to unveil their true inherent colors and wonder or the Winter of the year when snow deepens and the echo of Snow Geese calling

high above carries throughout the countryside, there are few better places to dream God’s dreams than DuBois Center. There is something which sparkles in the soul as one settles in for a walk along the dam road or puts in a canoe to traverse the lake or seeks the most darkened open spot in the woods to observe the stars and planets. Here at DuBois Center one encounters the Lord who changes Zion’s circumstances, freeing the exiles from forced labors, healing the broken-hearted of their pains, bringing a balm to Gilead and leading the children Home.

ly, sacred and needful in taking time to step back and assess where one has been, where one is and where one is to go . . . and there are few places on earth so ready to facilitate and nurture such spiritual, holistic endeavors as is DuBois Center. For academic and spiritualist alike, this is a place to ponder the deeper questions of pilgrimage, to face the harder issues of self, sin and redemption or to seek out that which has seemed elusive in coming to terms with loss, grief or transgression. In the New Community of God’s own people, God’s Light shimmers across the waters, stopping, as it were, at the place where our dreaming begins and our journey continues.

On this day consider why it is and where it is you go to dream of Zion’s deliverance in your own life. When was the last time you were there? When will you go again?

God is at work changing your circumstances for the better each day. Today would be a good time to return the Gift in faith.

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Glisten in my life, O God, like a dream awakening my senses to incredible Glory. Then, in my awakening, use me to guide others to your Goodness in Christ. Amen.

## DAY TWENTY-SEVEN OF LENT

*“Our mouths were suddenly filled with laughter; our tongues were filled with joyful shouts. It was even said, at that time, among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them!”*



Psalm 126.2 CEB

It is one thing for snow and ice to melt leaving the landscape less treacherous, it is quite another thing when the blooming trees begin their annual fashion show. Suddenly the entire land begins to fill with robin chirp and cardinal song. Bees begin the humming of flight and turtles find their way to the banks of ponds and lakes to take in the warming sun. There is a smell in the air, a pungent aroma of beauty and joy, as though such things could produce their own fragrance like the earth itself. Dogs stretch out on softening blankets of grass in the yard and cats curl up on perilous perches warming their coats in sunray streams.

When redbud bloom and crab apples blossom, when magnolia trees open and tulip trees push forth color, the world fills with laughter and children’s voices sing the hallelujahs of hope once again on playgrounds throughout the land. When what once seemed dead finds life, when Lazarus walks out of the tomb, when Spring announces her triumphant return, is there anyone, anywhere not caught up in the dance of earth’s budding newness?

There have been times in my life when it seemed Winter overstayed its welcome, times when darkness could not be lessened by light, when optimism found no root, nor joy any voice. There have been times when the distance between my life and God seemed to be a chasm which could not be crossed, like the abyss between the rich man and Abraham who had poor Lazarus by his side or as the exile of the Israelites from the land which they knew to be their destiny, their home. There have been times when the winter of my sins dispatched my soul to the furthest reaches of the coldest regions, freezing solid my heart and leaving desolate my future. Then a friend spoke His name, “Jesus”, and everything changed.

In that Name alone is the metamorphosis of ‘trudging along in life’ to ecstasy-filled confidence and expectation. In that Name alone is redbud bloom and crab apple blossom. In that Name alone is magnolia tree opening and tulip tree color. In that Name alone is New Life on the journey. Do not allow your Lenten pilgrimage to be without it. The Lord is doing great things for you.

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Thaw me out, O Lord, and blossom in me as we journey together towards Jerusalem this day. Amen.

## DAY TWENTY-EIGHT OF LENT

*“Let those who  
plant with tears  
reap the harvest  
with joyful shouts.”*

Psalm 126.5 CEB

There is an Australian Aboriginal Proverb which says, “We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love . . . and then we return home.”



The Green DuBois Initiative opens the meaning of that Proverb to Master Gardener and novice herb grower, to learned Magi and amateur star gazer, to trained Botanist and one who just likes to walk and look at the trees, to Veterinarian and pet owner alike: “Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love . . . and then we return home.” What brings Green DuBois into being is a shared desire to turn tears into joyful shouts, sadness into singing and pain into Divine pleasure. Green DuBois reminds us that we are not alone on the journey of life, that we are interconnected with people in Illinois in the same way we are interconnected to people in Botswana, that though we may be different in birthing we are one on the pilgrimage . . . and all which is around us is ours only for a moment, but that moment is ours to steward collectively for the next generation to come. It is God who is at the heart of our shared DNA – and it is to God we return.

Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning. (Psalm 30.5b)

On the Lenten journey to Jerusalem with Jesus, live for the joy. Recognize the reasons for tears, address the causes, repair the breaches, tend to the wounded and hurting, comfort the sorrowing and sighing, but live for the joy. For such Jesus made His way in the midst of those who longed for a Savior. For such Jesus made His way in the midst of those who knew Him not. For such Jesus turns tears into joyful shouts, still. The Green DuBois Initiative is a powerful example of such joy living today. Thanks be to God!

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Set my tears, O Lord, as seeds in the soil of your Love that they may rise with You in joy. Amen.

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

***“Let those who go out, crying and carrying their seed,  
come home with joyful shouts, carrying bales of grain!”***

Psalm 126.6 CEB

Sabbath Peace be with you!

There used to be a show on television called, “The Beverly Hillbillies”, and the theme song began with the words, “Come and listen to a story ‘bout a man named Jed, Poor mountaineer barely kept his family fed . . .” Those of you old enough to remember this show are probably beginning to smile right now and have started singing that theme song word-for-word as you remember Jed Clampett, Granny, Elly Mae, Jethro, the constantly scheming banker, Mr. Milburn Drysdale, and his very intelligent, yet often caught in the middle secretary, Jane Hathway, and a large cast of others. It was a comedy spoof about a backwoods country family that came into a huge amount of money as the result of an oil strike, moved to Beverly Hills, California, then proceeded to not fit in very well. Most often there were comical disasters in every show, cultural and otherwise, but nearly always there was something of a lesson to be learned. In many ways, this show shaped the attitudes of a generation of folk concerning the common sense of country people and the scheming ways of bankers and city folk. Mainly, it gave the audience a reason to smile during some very hard times in our nation’s history.

On this Fifth Sunday of Lent where is it you will go, or have gone to, ‘Come and listen to a story ‘bout a man named Jesus’? In the midst of government wrangling over walls and ethics, politicians posturing about who is right and who is wrong, television personalities trying to direct your attention to particular causes or attitudes, growing concerns around the emerging conversations focused by #Me2, LGBTQ, Black Lives Matter, civil unrest around gun control, and with ever increasing consideration being given to the growing rate of the un- or underinsured and the inaccessibility of quality affordable healthcare: Where is it you go? To whom is it you listen? Who has your undivided attention? Where do you find respite?

Or do you simply find yourself, much like Mary, waiting outside an empty tomb crying, wondering what happened that the world has changed so? For you, for me, and for all of Creation, there is Good News!

Let your tears turn to joy! Come and listen to the story ‘bout a man named Jesus! He Lives that we might live and tell a new narrative in faith! Thanks be to God!

Something to ponder on the Lenten journey, a gift of DuBois Center.

**Prayer:** Lord, when I am ready to give up, toss in the towel, hang my head and cry because I cannot take it any longer, lift me up, dust me off and tell me Your Story that Joy might fill my soul. Amen.

