

Making the Road

Walking through Lent

WEEK 1

Sunday, March 6 Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist typically kicks off the season of Advent, proclaiming our need to repent in preparation for the birth of Christ. But I turn to Luke 3 to begin our 2022 Lenten journey. This devotion series is based on the Spanish poet Antonio Machado's poem "Walker." Machado writes: "Walker, there is no road, the road is made by walking."

This line resonates because it feels as if there is no road in front of us. The soil of our well-worn Lenten path has been overturned by the pandemic. If we want to follow Christ this Lent, we'll need to prepare the way and make the road. We'll need to rethink and recreate our Lenten practices.

The poem's phrase, "The road is made by walking," suggests that there is no road forward until we take the steps to create it. It's up to me, the walker, to forge the path. So, we will walk with Jesus this Lent, keeping in mind that faith was never meant to be a destination, but a journey — a never-ending, creating and recreating, dying to the old and rising to the new, walk with Christ. Let us step forward this Lent, doing the spiritual work of straightening the crooked paths, filling in the valleys of despair, removing the rough and mountainous obstacles so that, come Easter, we shall see the salvation of God.

God our Companion, the future is uncertain, and we stand poised before this season of Lent, unsure of this journey that feels altogether new. As we step into this 40-day journey, help us make a road that is straight and sure and free of obstacles. Help us make a road for ourselves and others that leads us to the salvation you offer to all weary travelers. Amen.

written by
TERI MCDOWELL OTT

Monday, March 7

Luke 1:78-79

Brian McLaren writes in *We Make the Road by Walking*, "[Faith] was to be a road, a path, a way out of old destructive patterns into new creative ones." There are many roads we can choose to make: roads of anger, hate, and violence; roads of disrespect and exclusion; roads of obstinance and arrogance. On life's journey, when we come to a fork in the road, we need a guide to advise which path, which choice, would best serve us and those around us. Christ is that guide, positioning our feet in the way of peace.

Living God, when there is a choice, steer us in your way and guide our feet in the path of peace. Amen.

Tuesday, March 8 ☞ Luke 9:1-3

To set out on a journey with nothing – no luggage, no snacks, no cash or credit cards, just your faith in the One you follow – sets a high standard for discipleship. The days when I felt comfortable traveling without a cellphone are long behind me. But the road Jesus encourages us to follow won't be made by the things we cling to for comfort or security. We must be willing to take risks, to step forward despite anxiety and fear.

You call us, Jesus, but we hesitate to follow. Fill our hearts with the faith necessary to step forward with you. Fill our hearts with courage, knowing that despite what we must leave behind, your promise of what lies ahead is worth the journey. Amen.

Wednesday, March 9 ☞ Luke 9:57-62

We long to walk the new road with Christ, but the people, places and memories to which we are emotionally attached can keep us looking back. We cling to beliefs, ideologies and worldviews taught to us by family or handed down with authority, but that can keep us from new ideas and discoveries. We are a part of a living Christian tradition. We can honor our past while remaining open to the new road Christ's Spirit leads us along.

Living Christ, help us not get so stuck in the old ways that we fail to see value in all that is new. Free us from past attachments so we can follow you down the road of your future. Amen.

Thursday, March 10 ☞ John 14:5

Was Thomas' doubt born of healthy skepticism? Of curiosity and a desire to learn? Or did his doubt emerge from cynicism, a dismissive denial? If it was the latter, then Thomas wasn't going to get far in making a new road with Christ. If he had already concluded Jesus was crazy and his way was not the way, then Thomas was going to miss out. The wisest among us are those who know how much we don't know, are open to being proven wrong and open to the epiphanies that await down Christ's strange and wondrous new road.

Lord, we believe. Help us in our unbelief. May our doubt not be a closed denial but an open curiosity towards a new road and new discovery. Amen.

Friday, March 11 ☞ John 14:6

Bidding farewell to his disciples, Jesus reassures them that his death is not the end. Jesus is our way, our road, our path forward. These words are not meant to exclude other religions. Rather, John is reminding his faith community of their particular and distinct identity in Jesus Christ. In a world full of religious expression, Jesus is our way. We are not wandering lost without direction. We are not alone in the wilderness without a guide. We will make this road with Jesus.

Lord, we are not lost. Christ is our compass and our guide. Thank you for showing us where to place our feet when life's paths feel so uncertain. Thank you for showing us the way. Amen.

Saturday, March 12 ☞ Act 9:2

The earliest Christians were called "people of the Way." Here in Acts, we read how these Christians lived in community, sharing possessions, land, and homes, caring for each according to their need. Their distinctive, small yet growing group stood apart. Now, as a majority religion, Christianity is no longer as distinct. But the way we live and how we care for others should still set us apart as "people of the Way." The road we create must include a way to embody Christ's ministry, to live as Jesus lived, and love as God loves.

Savior God, you have called us to a unique path. You have called us to a way that often counters the ways of the world. Help us make a road that is faithful to all you expect from us. Amen.