

Artwork by Laurie Freeman Young

Intentional Pursuit

2021 Lent Sermon Series at Grace Sacramento

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you,
O God. My soul thirsts for God for the living God. (Psalm 42:1-2)

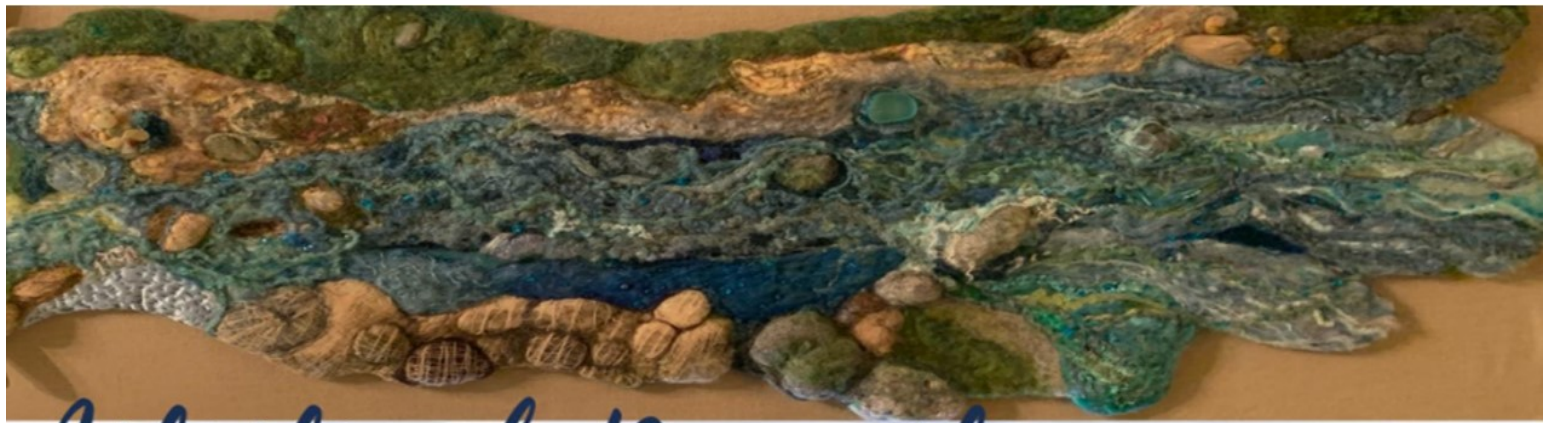
Over the next six Sundays, our sermon series will explore Biblical ways Christians in history have intentionally prepared for Easter by learning to walk with Jesus through Lenten practices in anticipation of walking with Christ during the last days of His earthly life during the week of His passion, death and resurrection on Easter.

As part of our Lenten journey at *Grace Sacramento*, we will hold a special season of giving in concert with the practices of Lent. This effort to give above and beyond our regular Sunday offering coincides with our Lent 2021 teaching theme: INTENTIONAL PURSUIT . Through it, we hope to intentionally pursue caring for children and youth from our neighborhood and city, across the state and around the world. Our goal is to raise \$7500. \$2500 will sponsor our first ever Vacation Bible School (pandemic permitting) this summer for children at Grace, families in our Grace Learning Center and the neighborhood at large. \$2500 will sponsor a Vacation Bible School hosted by a partner ministry in Compton East LA. \$2500 will sponsor distance learning and English as a second language for children and youth of refugee families fleeing persecution abroad and relocating to Sacramento through our partnership with World Relief.

What is Lent?

How do we get ready to celebrate Good Friday and Easter Sunday—two of the most important days of the Christian calendar? Over the years, the church developed a tradition called Lent. Lent can be traced back to the 2nd century. During this season, new Christians would fast and study in preparation to be baptized on Easter Sunday. Eventually, entire congregations practiced Lent as a sign of Christian discipleship. Christians counted forty days back from Easter (excluding Sundays), like Christ's forty-day fast in the desert (Luke 4), to determine the time frame of the Lenten journey.

Lent is a forty-day journey on which we can stop, look, and listen to what God is doing. It's a journey for which we should ask ourselves "What things do I need to leave behind so I can travel closer to Jesus? What things should I take with me?" On that journey, we stop to see what God wants us to do. We stop to see what saying "I'm sorry" to others looks like. We stop to see what it means to suffer for Jesus' sake and to see what the Bible says about Jesus' suffering. Finally, we walk, step by painful step, with Jesus on the road to the cross during passion week. It's a hard road, but it shines with glory on Easter morning when we celebrate Christ's resurrection!



Intentional Pursuit

Weekly Lenten Themes Over the Next 40 Days

Grace's Lent Prayer Calendar February 14th - 20th

Take home an INTENTIONAL PURSUIT prayer calendar or find it on our website and join *Grace Sacramento* in daily prayer for our church, our community, and our world and the *Intentional Pursuit* season of giving this Lent.

PRAYER February 21st - 27th

Following your prayer calendar, be in daily prayer this week for our GraceKids, Mercy and Care resources and team, missionaries, church leadership and the *Intentional Pursuit* season of giving this Lent.

CONFESSION February 28th - March 6th

Take home the worship folder you will receive on Sunday, February 28th and use the words of confession as part of your daily prayer this week. Pursue two conversations in relationships in your life that need healing.

MEDITATION March 7th - 13th

Choose a regular item or activity to abstain from for one week (or for the remainder of Lent) and dedicate the time to meditate on God's Word (memorize scripture or rewrite the psalms in your own words) Consider an item or activity that regularly costs you money and donate those funds to *Intentional Pursuit*. Example: Daily Coffee Stop (\$3.50/day x 7 days = \$24.50 to donate to World Relief/VBS)

WORSHIP March 14th - 20th

Scripture emphasizes giving our first and best attention to God in worship. One way this is described is by an offering of "first fruits" - (Deut 26) the first part of the harvest was given to God in worship and anticipation of his provision. Consider giving a "first fruits" worship offering to help us *Intentionally Pursue* the care of children and refugees, a tithe on an unexpected bonus from work, a gift from family, a government stimulus check or the profit on a recent sale of property.

SUBMISSION March 21st - 27th

Consider how simplicity might be a part of submission. Take the simplicity challenge: choose items to purge from your home and services or memberships (Hulu, Netflix, Carwash, etc) to cancel. Sell items on craigslist or have a garage sale - donate proceeds from sales and savings from memberships to World Relief & VBS

SERVICE March 28th - April 3rd

Reevaluate your engagement in ministry at Grace and in your neighborhood. Consider joining a new ministry team at Grace (Welcome, Set-up, Worship Music, AV, GraceKids, Womens Ministry, Prayer Ministry), volunteer to help with VBS this summer or join the World Relief Good Neighbor Team.



Our 2021 Prayer Calendar includes prayer requests in numerous ministry areas; for local/international partner missionaries, for our Tahoe Park community, our pastors/staff, Session and Diaconate. You will be receiving a short **Daily Lenten Prayer video** via email each morning (starting Feb. 17th) that goes along with each person or ministry we are praying for that day. Watch the video, and use it to frame and lead you in your daily prayers below. We hope that this season would be both an “emptying” and “filling” time of preparation as you journey towards Easter.

Week 1

February 17 (Wednesday)

Ash Wednesday: As we begin our 40-day journey through Lent, pray that this season of “filling” and “emptying” will lead us closer to Christ.

February 18 (Thursday)

GraceKids: Pray for the many infants, toddlers and elementary students who fill our tent and watch the worship stream. Pray that every child would hear the gospel in a way that they can understand every Sunday. Pray for GraceKids as they prepare to relaunch a post-quarantine ministry.

February 19 (Friday)

Mexico: For *Yugo Ministries in Ensenada* (whom we have partnered with to build houses in the past). Multiple staff members have contracted COVID as they struggle to determine how to continue to do ministry with the poor and share the gospel.

February 20 (Saturday)

Pastor Brad: As he prepares to preach from Luke 18:1-14 on prayer. Pray that our intimacy with God would deepen. Pray for Brad’s leadership in our Presbytery in planting new churches.

Week 2

February 21 (Sunday)

Grace Sacramento: That we would be a church that seeks to put Christ on display in Sacramento and in the neighboring communities around us.

February 22 (Monday)

The Homeless: Those who live in our neighborhood and often seek shelter under our awnings. Pray for health and permanent solutions to various reasons for their homelessness. Pray for Steve, our janitor - for warmth and safety on the streets.

February 23 (Tuesday)

The Diaconate: our *Mercy and Care team*; that they would be good stewards of the resources we have as we use them to care well for the people and needs of Grace Sacramento.

February 24 (Wednesday)

Intentional Pursuit: Pray for this season of giving. For God to provide resources and people to organize a Vacation Bible School in our neighborhood and pay for every child who wants to come to participate regardless if they can afford to come. Pray that this might bless even more than just the Tahoe Park neighborhood.

February 25 (Thursday)

Youth: For our growing youth ministry. That they would grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus to face the challenges of temptation and doubt. Pray for Mia and the team as they prayerfully consider how to do post-quarantine ministry

February 26 (Friday)

Ladies of Grace: Pray for the women at Grace as they consider how to safely gather for Bible study and fellowship. That they would seek to deepen in relationship with God and with each other. Pray for creative and fruitful times of fellowship.



February 27 (Saturday)

Pastor Daniel: As he prepares to preach from Psalm 51:1-17 on corporate confession. Pray that we would walk in the light with God. Pray for his family: Karen, Joshua, Caleb and Abigail.

Week 3

February 28 (Sunday)

Pray for St. Paul's Lutheran (our landlords): For their regathering, their flourishing and witness in Tahoe Park and that we would care well for the St. Paul's facility we have been blessed with.

March 1 (Monday)

Patrick and Elisabeth Thompson. Pray for these friends of Grace as they prepare for inner-city ministry in Compton with the Navigators. Pray that God would provide ways to partner with them and join their ministry. Pray for their kids Eliana, Miriam and JJ.

March 2 (Tuesday)

The Session: For our elders and elder families as they shepherd the flock at Grace Sacramento. Pray for wisdom for them, as well as their oversight and leadership.

March 3 (Wednesday)

GraceKids Volunteers: Please pray for God to provide volunteers and leadership for our GraceKids ministry as time to restart post pandemic draws nearer. Pray for elementary teachers, as well as coordinators for our toddler and nursery ministry to step forward. Pray for a Kids Ministry that is bold, gentle and wise as we open up the Bible with kids.

March 4 (Thursday)

Kris Glass: For our Church Administrator. Pray for ministries that are empowered by the details she takes care of, and that God would use her to bless those she comes into contact with daily. Pray for her family: her husband, Ken, kids Brady (as she recovers from liver transplant surgery), and Bryan and Shelby (as they await the birth of their first child).

March 5 (Friday)

Baptism & Profession of Faith: Celebrate the many families and individuals who will be baptizing their children this month and partnering with Grace Sacramento to raise them in the love and knowledge of the Lord. Pray for adults and youth considering professing their faith in Christ and joining us at the communion table.

March 6 (Saturday)

Pastor Daniel: As he prepares to preach from Psalm 1:1-6 on meditation. Pray that we would learn to be still and know that God is with us. Pray for Daniel's leadership in multi-ethnic gatherings for clergy in the Sacramento area.

Week 4

March 7 (Sunday)

Partner Churches: For the neighboring churches in our denomination: Valley Springs and New City Fellowship. For their growth and thriving in the neighborhoods in which they minister.

March 8 (Monday)

Intentional Pursuit - World Relief: For their work in resettling refugees. For their care and support of families moving to unfamiliar places. For their partnership with churches who will assist in this. For this season of giving. For God to provide all the necessary resources through Grace Sacramento to welcome a new refugee family to Sacramento.

March 9 (Tuesday)

Membership: For those considering joining the church at Grace Sacramento. For opportunities for accountability and affirmation in their walk with God.



March 10 (Wednesday)

Youth Leaders: For Mia Bordisso and our youth leaders: Chris, Christine and Julie. As they seek to model Christ to our youth through our events/outings and personal relationships.

March 11 (Thursday)

Intentional Pursuit: For this season of giving. For God to continue to provide contact with new families in our neighborhood through Tahoe elementary school, our learning center and the witness of the tent on the corner. Pray that these families would feel intentionally pursued with the love of Christ.

March 12 (Friday)

Mia Bordisso: For our worship and arts leader. As she coordinates teams, music and liturgy in our services. Pray for her new role in leading our youth. Pray for her, for her mom, Carol and her sister Santi. Pray for the kids in her neighborhood that she mentors.

March 13 (Saturday)

Pastor Brad: As he prepares to preach from Romans 12:1-2 on worship. Pray for our walk with God and continued journey in discipleship. Pray for his family: Olivia, Flannery, Asher and Story.

Week 5

March 14 (Sunday)

Gospel-preaching Churches: For churches in the downtown core that minister to people in the city. Pray as they seek to minister in these diverse ethnic, social-economic and culture making places. Pray for these missional churches that seek to live out the gospel in their context.

March 15 (Monday)

The Reiter's: For our missionary family in Brookton, Western Australia. For new relationships with new neighbors, as well as, the Australian church community.

March 16 (Tuesday)

CRU Sac Metro: For the para-church collegiate ministry across five campuses in Sacramento (and the hope for 13 campuses) as they seek to reach every student across every campus through gospel communities. For the Clay's and the Mockford's as they serve on various college campuses with CRU in Sacramento.

March 17 (Wednesday)

Turkey: Pray for [REDACTED] planting churches in Turkey [REDACTED] Pray for Grace Sacramento's developing support and connection to their ministry.

March 18 (Thursday)

Intergenerational Ministry: For singles, for young people, for married couples, for families, for widows, the elderly. Pray that folks would find their place in the greater family of the church at Grace Sacramento.

March 19 (Friday)

Grace Groups: For our smaller communities of faith at Grace Sacramento who gather regularly to study the Word, deepen in relationships and find ways to utilize their gifts and serve the body. Pray for new groups to form as restrictions loosen and people feel greater comfort gathering together. Pray for new leaders to emerge.

March 20 (Saturday)

Pastor Daniel: As he prepares to preach on submission from Philippians 2:1-11. Pray that we would grow in our ability to rest and be with Christ alone. Ask God to show you how simplifying might be a form of submission. Pray for Daniel's wife Karen, and their children Joshua, Caleb and Abigail, and for them as they prepare to send their first (Joshua) away to college.



Week 6

March 21 (Sunday)

Church Planters and Plants: Pray for pastors and church plants to find favor in their communities. Pray for success in locating worship spaces, funding for this kingdom work and for strong ministry marriages and families.

March 22 (Monday)

Mercy & Care: For God to provide new leaders in our mercy and care ministry. Pray for people who want to train and prepare to join our Diaconate. Pray for our mercy ministry training through this Lenten season.

March 23 (Tuesday)

Missions Task Force: For our new leaders for this new ministry to help with outreach training and begin the task of rolling out a mission's philosophy that honors our mission and helps us focus on missions and outreach at home and around the world.

March 24 (Wednesday)

Intentional Pursuit: For this season of giving. For God to provide a great foundation for ongoing ministry to the families and children in our surrounding community and continued resources to care for refugees.

March 25 (Thursday)

Men's Ministry: As we prayerfully and thoughtfully create spaces for men to connect with one another and with God to talk to real needs and issues men face. For God to provide leaders who have a heart for ministry to men.

March 26 (Friday)

Worship Team: For Mia, as she prepares to lead three worship services this week: Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter. Pray for our musicians, singers and A/V teams.

March 27 (Saturday)

Pastor Brad: As he prepares to preach from John 13:1-16 on service. Pray to reach out to one another and to our community with mercy and care. Pray for Brad as he continues to pursue a doctoral degree.

Week 7 (Holy Week)

March 28 (Palm Sunday)

Every Church: And every pastor in our city preparing for passion week and Easter. Pray that the message of the resurrection would be proclaimed with power across our city.

March 29 (Monday)

Jesus Cleanses the Temple: Pray that Grace Sacramento will be a worshipping church and one that seeks to serve those who find their way through our doors or into our tent.

March 30 (Tuesday)

Jesus Confronts the Religious Leaders: Pray for those whom God has called to lead Grace Sacramento. Pray that our leaders would lead with humility, wisdom and discernment.

March 31 (Wednesday)

Jesus Anointed: A woman breaks an alabaster jar and begins to wash the feet of Jesus with her hair. Jesus praises her repentance and devotion and shows her forgiveness. Pray that in our repentance, we would remember our first love.



April 1 (Maundy Thursday)

The Last Supper: Pray for the ways we love each other at Grace. Pray that we would follow Christ's example of serving each other and washing each other's feet.

April 2 (Friday)

Good Friday: Spend time considering the ways we have sinned against Jesus. Pray for forgiveness. Pray for a deep anticipation and need for resurrection power in your life.

April 3 (Saturday)

Holy Saturday: For those who will worship for the first time or the first time in a long time tomorrow at Easter. Pray for Daniel as he prepares to preach that the gospel would be clearly presented. Pray for relational connections at Grace.

Upcoming Easter Events of Interest

Ash Wednesday - (February 17th)

The beginning of Lent starts with Ash Wednesday

Passion Week Services

Throughout the week leading up to Easter, Christians around the world will worship together anticipating Christ's resurrection. Grace will celebrate the following services:

Good Friday Service (April 2nd)

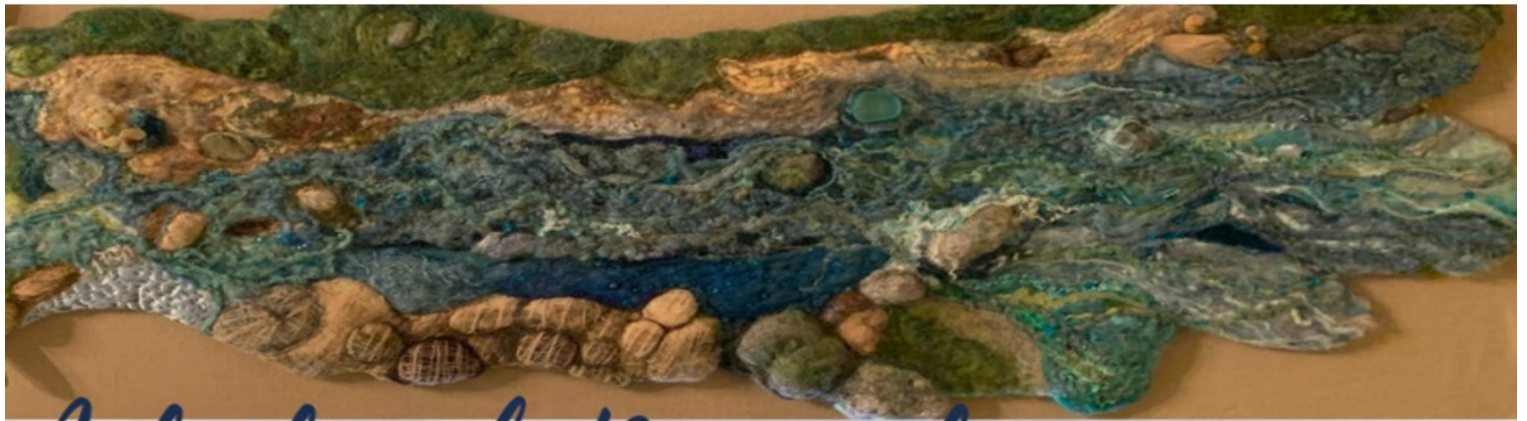
7pm - Communion and Tenebrae service under the tent

Easter Sunday (April 4th)

10:30am - invite your friends and family to *Easter under the tent*

12:00noon - join us after our service for our annual Easter Picnic

Grace is hoping to host some version of our annual Easter Picnic on the corner on Easter Sunday (protocol permitting). There will be an egg hunt, games, BBQ, food served and lots of fun. To help with planning, contact Kris Glass (kris.glass@wearegracesac.org).



Intentional Pursuit

Additional Resources

Each Sunday during Lent, we will offer suggestions of ways that you and your family might experiment with the practices of Lent and help with our *Intentional Pursuit* giving season at the same time.

Here are a few additional resources you might find useful for your own Lenten journey and for celebrating Lent together as a family. Look for the following resources on the internet, or you can find their links on our website.

Jesus is Tempted (You Tube Video)

To Ash or Not to Ash (article by Dr. Tim LeCroy)

What is the Deal with Lent? (article by Fr. Aaron Damiani)

Illustrations and Coloring Pages for Lent 2019 (website)

How to explain Ash Wednesday to Children (blog by Robin Floch)

Keeping a Holy Lent (book by Craig Higgins - available on Amazon)

Lent Resource Guide (website for Calvin Institute of Christian Worship)

Holy Week Resource Guide (website for Calvin Institute of Christian Worship)

History of Lenten Fasting (website by Dr. Tim LeCroy)

Liturgy Letter (website by Phil Majorins)

About our Lenten Artist - Laurie Freeman Young

Laurie has attended Grace Sacramento for five years. She was introduced to Grace when she received a postcard advertising our first Easter Sunday service in Tahoe Park in 2016, and has been coming to Grace ever since. She is one of several talented artists at Grace, and her Easter piece, *God's Flow*, is featured in this year's 2021 Lenten Calendar.

Laurie also wrote this poem to go along with the Lenten piece.

*Slowly tip-tow in, or dive in headlong. Get in God's flow.
There will be rapids; rocky, rough and tumble. Stay in God's flow.
There will be rest; float, be still. Stay in God's flow.
There will be obstacles; distractions, good and bad. Stay in God's flow.
This is why we are on this journey of growth. Stay in God's flow.
Be diligent. Live intentionally in the current of God's glory.*

"Spiritual Disciplines"

Laurie Freeman Young