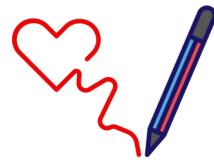


FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



Stepping Into the Season of Lent

As the church prepares to enter into Lent, we are reminded to slow down, quiet our hearts before God, and re-examine the direction of our lives. Lent is not a period to be hurried through, but one of spiritual discipline to intentionally slow down – a time to pause amid the busyness of daily life and listen anew to God's promptings for us.

This year, the first day of Lent coincides with the second day of the Lunar New Year, a significant festival in the Chinese culture. The church has made corresponding arrangement to our Lenten services, after considering pastoral needs and cultural traditions. This presents an opportunity for us to live out our faith in real-life situations, bridging our spiritual practices with cultural ones. Such an arrangement does not hinder our spiritual discipline during Lent, for the significance of the Lenten season is not tied to specific gatherings or rituals, but lies in how we respond to God's calling for our lives. At the heart of Lent is repentance – not superficial change but an inner re-orientation that brings our true selves back to God.

The prophet Joel reminded God's people: "***Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God***" (Joel 2:13). This is not a call for us to imitate the expressions of grief or repentance of the ancient days. It is a reminder that what God values has never been the outward display of piety, but an honest and contrite heart that turns back to Him. Though the ways people express repentance may vary across different eras, what God seeks remain the same: a heart willing to return and be renewed by Him. Lent is a time for us to pause, repent, and allow God to renew our lives.

Psalm 51:7 reminds us that **God will not despise a broken and contrite heart**. These words bring profound comfort to our faith. For Lent is not meant to plunge us into self-condemnation or burden us with more spiritual obligations, but for us to come before God with our authentic selves. Even a quiet prayer, an honest moment of reflection, or a small turn of the heart towards Him – God sees it all and will not despise it. Therefore, entering Lent is not stepping into a burdensome responsibility, but towards renewal and hope. May we learn to make space for God intentionally – to quiet our hearts and listen to His voice anew, to adjust the pace of our lives through spiritual discipline, and to fix our gaze once again on Christ in prayer. The purpose of spiritual discipline is not to make us busier, but to lead us to the resurrected Lord and help us to continually rely on the One who loves us and gave His life for us.

May the Lord Himself guide us as we walk with Him step-by-step during this Lent, to experience His grace in repentance, and to receive renewal in waiting.

Pastor May Yee

**The above is a translated version of the original letter written by Pastor Chan May Yee in Chinese, which was posted on JACM's bulletin on 1 February 2026.*