

## Lenten Journey

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*"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." - Jeremiah 29:11*

So how is your Lenten Journey coming along? Is it as planned? Were you able to give up everything you had hoped to give up? Have you taken on an unexpected journey this Lenten season? My Lent has not gone as planned. To begin with, it has rained more than I thought it could, but on the other hand, we've had more warm days than I thought we would. I never expected that so many would be sick during this Lenten season, and I didn't expect to spend these days waving to my neighbors as they walk their dogs or jog by my window. It's not the Lenten Journey that I planned, but it is the one that Christ has offered to share with me.

I've noticed a theme in the Scripture readings from John the last few weeks that are helping me along my Lenten Journey. Think back to the story of Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and the man born blind. In each story, these people had an encounter with Jesus with unexpected results for a new future. Remember Nicodemus came to Jesus at night with questions on his heart, and Jesus answered in unexpected ways telling him that no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above. The woman at the well had a chance encounter with Jesus. She was surprised that Jesus even spoke to her, a woman of Samaria. Imagine her shock when Jesus told her everything she had ever done. The man born blind didn't expect to meet Jesus at all. Jesus and the disciples encountered him as they were walking along, and Jesus healed him. None of these three people expected what Jesus gave or told them. None of these people were expecting the changes that Jesus would give. None of them expected a new life.

Susan is a friend of mine from Junior High School days. She's a very active person and was not expecting to be sent to "shelter at home" for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. Like many of us on these rainy days, she looked out her front window for a change of pace. Imagine her shock when she looked down into her flowerbed. All the pansies were pushed aside and there was a rather large egg. A few hours later, she looked again and there was a second egg. Then she heard a loud "quack, quack" and the mother mallard duck issued a warning to back away from the unexpected nest. The nest was not expected because Susan lives in midtown Memphis and no where near a pond or lake. Susan is delighted with the antics of her new neighbor and the hope for new life right there in the flower bed under the window.

New life and hope come in unexpected moments and in unexpected ways. Someone once said "life is what happens while we are making other plans". That might be true, but one thing is certain, our plans cannot compare to the plans our Lord makes which give us a future with hope.

In Christ,

*Rev. Dell King*  
Interim Associate Pastor

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