



Saint James Lenten Consecration Guide 2018

The Christian Church recognizes “Lent” as a period of 40 days (February 14th – March 31st, excluding Sundays) that believers prepare themselves for the celebration and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Over the years, many believers have used the Lenten Season to draw closer to Christ, imitate Christ, and commit to a spiritual fast. This year, the Saint James Family is celebrating, “A Season of New Beginnings.”

As your pastor, I’m humbly requesting that you covenant with me over the next 40 days to fulfill our 2018 Lenten theme of “Enjoying the Journey to the New You.” Below you will find the 2018 Consecration Guide. The Consecration is holistic and encompasses every area of our lives. This consecration is practical and requires sincerity, honesty, and most of all, discipline. I believe if you adhere to this consecration guide, you will find yourself in a better position holistically.

2018 Holistic Guide

- A) Spend quality time with God daily in centering prayer.
 - Take advantage of Saint James' Prayer Conference Call daily at 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM and the 2018 Lent Devotional Guide.
- B) Be intentional in what you put in your body.
 - Fast every Monday from 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM. For a more intense fast, please refer to the Daniel Fast (also available on the church's website).
- C) No social media on Thursdays and Fridays (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)
- D) Participate in EVERY 2018 Lenten Worship Series by being physically present each night.
 - Sow a minimum of \$20 for each Lenten Worship Experience.
- E) Read a chapter a day from the suggested reading list.
 - *Talking with God* or *The Return of the Prodigal Son*
- F) Participate in some type of "non-sinful" activity that helps you to relax 😊.
 - Bowling, massage, yoga, reading, movies, family games, visit to the psychologist, etc.
- G) Make a commitment to become more physically fit over the next forty days.
 - Exercising, running, walking, sit-ups, push-ups, etc.
- H) Make a commitment to HONESTLY tithe 10% of your gross income.
 - Make a pledge to the "Dirt to Destiny Campaign" that will please God.
 - Make an investment in a savings account, mutual fund account, or invest in the stock market.
 - If you do not have a Life Insurance Policy, get one over the next forty days.
 - Pay off at least one creditor.
- I) Engage in godly and positive conversations/lifestyles (positive language).
 - Make it a priority to encourage somebody else.
 - Convey to those that are near and dear to you, that you love them.
 - Commit to NOT gossiping, slandering, or using abusive language.
 - If you do not have anything positive to say, then put a gate around your mouth. (James 1:26)

Suggested Books to Read During Lent:

Nouwen, Henri, *Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* (Image Books Doubleday)

Weber, Adam, *Talking with God: What to Say When You Don't Know How to Pray* (Crown Publishing Group)



SAINT JAMES A.M.E. CHURCH

One Church, Two Locations

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Rev. Ronald L. Slaughter, Senior Pastor

Enjoying the Journey to the New You!

God's Promises

Read Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

February 19-24, 2018

Reflect & Journal:

By trusting in God you can enjoy and anticipate wonderful changes within you. As with the promise to Noah and his descendants to never destroy the world by a flood again, God is faithful. Moving forward in reliance on God's many promises, you can stretch beyond your fears and inadequacies to have a better relationship with God and others. Take courage and do the gritty work of self-examination through the strength of Jesus. Reflecting on God's promises gives you the assurance that despite any challenges and discomfort, the Holy Spirit is well able to produce good fruit in you to make you more like Jesus. During this Lenten season, practice your spiritual disciplines such as reading the word, praying, and fasting to draw closer to Jesus. Enjoy where you are on your journey to the new you!

Sing a Song of Meditation: Blessed Assurance

Prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you for your promise of eternal life and an intimate relationship with you through the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We pray that we will have the courage to do your will resting on your promises. Help us to yield ourselves more fully to the Holy Spirit to do the inward work on the heart. Open our spiritual ears to discern your voice among the many sounds and distractions in the world to give us wisdom and insight to recognize and follow your divine plan for us.

Rev. Theresa Andrews



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Souled Out - Mark 8:31-38

February 26 – March 3, 2018

Sometimes the devil will make suggestions to us through a friend. When God has given us an assignment or mission which is right but may cause trouble or adversity, we must stay with God's way instead of another way, even if suggested by a friend.

There is a genuine honesty with Jesus. No one can ever say that they were induced to follow Jesus by false pretenses. Jesus doesn't offer an easy way but he does offer a glorious way.

If we are to be true followers of the Lord Jesus then we must sacrifice our own desires for what Jesus desires for us to do. We must say no to ourselves and yes to Christ. We must be able to say like Paul: "It is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me."

There are certain things which are lost by being kept, saved and unused. Any talent a person possesses is like that. If he or she uses it, it will develop into something greater. If he or she refuses to use it, they will, in the end, lose it. Ultimately, our lives are like that. The question becomes "What do we really value?" And we should not be so concerned about what people think about our choices, rather what God thinks about them. We've got to be "souled out" for Jesus.

The hymn writer put it this way:

Some folk would rather have houses and land.
Some folk choose silver and gold.
These things they treasure and forget about their soul;
I've decided to make Jesus my choice.
The road is rough, the going gets tough,
And the hills are hard to climb,
I've started out a long time ago,
There's no doubt in my mind;
I've decided to make Jesus my choice.

Prayer: *O Most Gracious and Eternal God Our Father, help us to have a yielding heart and a willing spirit to follow you even when it may cause us to be uncomfortable. We stand on your Word and on Your Promise that, "whoever loses his or her life for your sake and for the sake of the gospel, that life will be saved." In Jesus name, Amen.*

Rev. Reginald Clark



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John 2:13-22

March 5–10, 2018

Key verse #19 “Jesus answered them and said: *“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”*”

Home

Have you ever awakened to find yourself in a strange place? Afraid; lonely; broke; busted; disgusted; far from home; in a situation with no idea how you got there; loved ones nowhere to be found; then you realize you were not sleeping. You just want to go **home**!

In the *The Wiz*, Dorothy (starring Diana Ross) woke up to find herself in a strange place, far from **home**, and all alone with her dog. She embarked on a journey to the Land of Oz in search of the “Great Wizard” down a yellow brick road where she encountered many *dangers, toils, and snares, (the devil comes to steal, kill and destroy)*. She met a scarecrow, a tin man, and a cowardly lion who needed a brain, a heart, and some courage. She makes it to the “Great Wizard” to find he is just a fake ventriloquist, hiding behind a machine. Dorothy knew this was not her final destination, she wanted to go **home**. What Dorothy did not know is that she already had everything she needed living inside of her to get her back **home**.

Our bodies are a living sacrifice. We want to keep our bodies clean and holy so the Holy Spirit can dwell inside of us. “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.” We want to get rid of anything that would prevent The Holy Spirit from dwelling on the inside of us. The Holy Spirit is all we need. God gave us a “yellow brick road,” the Bible to lead, guide, and direct us, we just have to read and meditate on it daily. “**God’s word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**” Need wisdom, “**Trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways...**” Need a heart to love, “**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you..**” Need courage “**Be strong and courageous.**” “**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**”

Prayer

*God, we thank you for your spirit that dwells inside of us. This week as we **pause-breathe-inhale-then exhale**, you are invited to come in. We want to draw near to you so you can draw near to us. We have*

*no power, strength, or courage of our own. As we move forward and walk boldly into new places, with new ideas, in this new season, help us O'God to turn from our sinful and wicked ways and live a new life that is pleasing to you. Create in us clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us and help us to always remember it's not about us. Because you live, we can face tomorrow and we can enjoy this journey to becoming the people of God you have already created us to be by following your instructions with our hearts, minds, and our souls so we can always find our way **home** to you. I pray this prayer in Jesus name! Amen!*

Sis. Elfrieda Johnson



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Salvation is more than good works – Ephesian 2:1-10

March 12–17, 2018

The Apostle Paul describes our salvation as the incredible gift God has given to us. A gift for a people who were not only sick and needing help, but dead and needed life. God's love, mercy, favor, and grace prompted Him to do the unthinkable and unite us through His Son. Therefore, allowing us to share in the life of Jesus Christ who died to forgive us of every sin. He died so that we could receive everything He receives. Everything the resurrected Christ gets, we also now get. His righteousness is now our righteousness. His life becomes our life. God's love for Him is now God's love for us.

Verses 8 and 9 reminds us that good works do not determine or guarantee our salvation. It is by grace that we have been saved through faith, not by our deeds. Let us be reminded that those who were angry with Jesus Christ during His ministry weren't immoral people. They were, in fact, moral, faithful, consistent, and disciplined. However, Jesus made it clear to them that it was not their works; their discipline, consistency, or their morals that were the reasons for their salvation. He taught them that it was only because of God's love that the gift of salvation was theirs.

We are alive because Christ died for us. It was God's love of humanity and His grace that motivated God to unite us with His Son, Jesus Christ. We must, therefore, realize that the gift is freely available to all (John 3:16). We were dead; we couldn't do anything, except in Christ Jesus, who has made abundant and everlasting life available to us.

Prayer: *We thank you Lord for thinking of us and reclaiming us through a gift that is too enormous for us to contain. We thank you for your grace and mercy that will follow us all the days of our lives. We pray this day that we are a blessing to someone, without boasting of good works, because your love cannot be contained within us.*

Rev. Garvey Ince



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Jeremiah 31:31-34 NIV and MSG

March 19-24, 2018

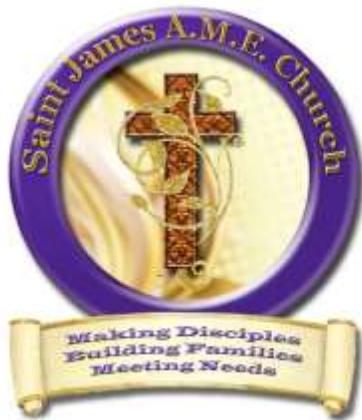
Reflection, Meditation, and Journal:

God desires for us to walk and abide in a place where we receive what has been prepared for us. God is intentional and remembers the work and relationship of our ancestors. Jeremiah is positioned here to declare God's faithfulness and sought to establish a new covenant with them. God was the one taking action and swearing by himself in this new covenant. Generations matter to God, but God seeks something fresh and new with us. God's love is a deep pursuit and forgiveness, repentance, renewal, and restoration at the forefront of what God seeks to do within our hearts. As children of God, we are living under the new covenant that God has prepared from long ago. Inscribed upon our hearts are the words that only the Omniscient, Ever-Loving and Ever-Living God could do by writing the law in our minds and placing it within our hearts. As we love God, we intentionally pursue the things that would be pleasing to Him. We are redeemed; accepted and belong to Him because of Christ shed his blood for our redemption. We are in right standing with God. As the Word is hidden within our hearts we endeavor to please God and not to miss the mark.

Song: *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

Prayer: *Gracious, and loving God, whose compassion and unfailing love knows no boundaries. We are grateful for your provision and foresight that you have evidenced by creating a new covenant; we are partakers. Lord, thank you for enabling us to walk and enjoy the covenant that binds our hearts with yours through your Son Jesus Christ. Thank you for blotting out our transgressions for your own sake that you remember them. In Jesus Christ's name, we pray. Amen.*

Rev. Janelle Greene



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Enjoying the Journey to the New You! Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV)

March 26–31, 2018

If we recall, the focus of our Tuesday night prayer meetings for January and February have been about relationships. Surprisingly, Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV) also begins with the same topic, “In your relationships with one another...” Yes, during this Lenten Season, we want to become acquainted with the power of Jesus’ resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. We want to reflect, be refreshed, and *enjoy the journey to the new you*. But we can’t overlook how we are to treat one another. We can’t forsake our family and friends on our destination to Christ. And we can’t ignore that apology that we need to make, the forgiveness that we need to extend, and the bond that needs to be restored. Gratefully, from Paul we can extract some practical advice: have the mindset of Christ, become a servant, and we must humble ourselves to the death of our personal cross. Then and only then will our relationships be exalted and as a community of believers, we can exemplify the glory of God the Father.

I invite you during these 40 days to embrace solitude but avoid unnecessary isolation. Enjoy servitude, but reject unhealthy self-deprivation. On purpose, cherish those whom God has strategically placed in your life, giving honor to the Name that’s above every name: Jesus Christ our Lord! Your journey to the new you includes your relationship with God, self, and others. And with God’s help, we will achieve greatness in *this* and every area of our lives.

Dear Lord, on this 40-day journey, help us to cherish our relationship with You, self, and others so that we can be refreshed, revived, and renewed during this Lenten Season and the days that lie ahead. In Jesus’ Name, we pray. Amen.

Sis. Keshia Spencer