

# Sharing the Good News

from the pen of the Mission Interpreter



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## Taking Hold of the Promise

We are in the season of **Lent**, during which we focus primarily on Jesus' journey to the cross. To assist us in our Lenten journey, four disciplines are suggested: *repentance; prayer and fasting; sacrificial giving; works of love*. These all work together, the first two particularly in correlation, and the latter two growing out of the first two.

Martin Luther wrote that repentance consists of two things: contrition for sin and "taking hold of the promise." The "promise" here is the gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the promise of new life in the fullness of God's reign. It is the promise of the gospels and the prophets, the promise our ancestors in the faith clung to, and the promise that carries the people of God today into communities around the world, accompanying neighbors amid staggering challenges of poverty, hunger, and injustice.

In the Gospels Jesus not only proclaims the promise but lives it. From Galilee to Calvary, he shows us what it means to live according to the promise—boldly, courageously, with faith unceasing. In the face of religious and political persecution, Jesus lives the daring life of faith in God's grace.

While his trial before Pilate gets more attention, Jesus' unrelenting march toward Jerusalem is one of the clearest examples of what it means to "take hold of the promise." He travels from town to town, teaching as he makes his way to Jerusalem. Jesus knows he is facing death, but not even death can stop the work of God in the world. It is that grace-formed confidence that people of faith bring to the calling of the church—seeing even in the midst of death that there is work to be done.

In **Lent** we remember Jesus' long walk to Jerusalem and to Calvary. But in faith we know that nothing can stop the work of God. Together we "take hold of the promise" with confidence, knowing that even out of death, God will bring life and hope to the world. This week think about how you, your family and this congregation bear witness to courage and hope in an uncertain world.