

LENT

in the **Black Church Tradition:**
A 40-Day Justice Journey

POWERED BY



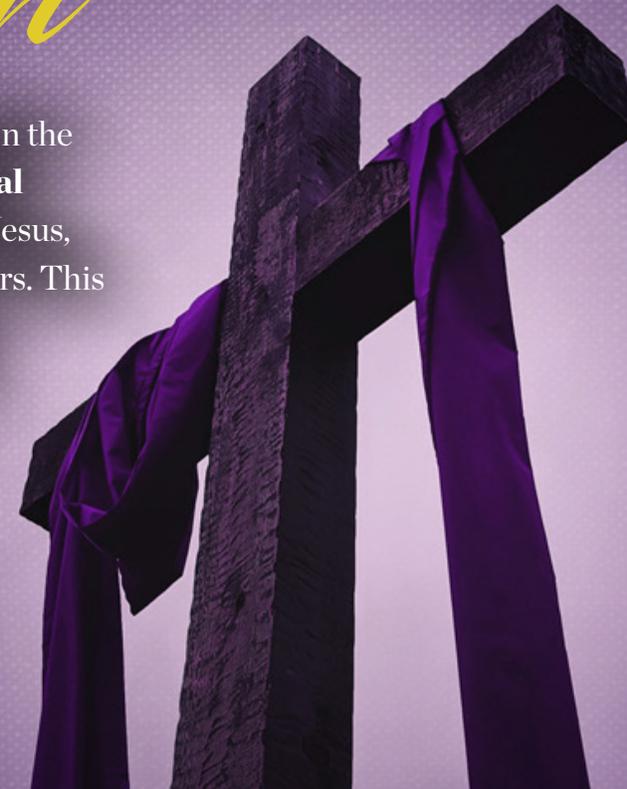
PNBC

PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL
BAPTIST CONVENTION, INC.

Introduction

Lent is a sacred season of reflection, repentance, and renewal. In the Black Church tradition, it has also been a time of **deep spiritual resistance and liberation**, echoing the prophetic witness of Jesus, the Hebrew prophets, and the freedom struggles of our ancestors. This 40-day devotional is designed to ground faith communities in **scriptural reflection, prayer, and direct action**, equipping us to confront racism, economic injustice, and the rise of white nationalism.

Each day includes a **full scripture passage, prayer, reflection question, and action step**, guiding us to embody justice as an act of faith.



From The President's Desk

Beloved Progressive National Baptist Convention family,

We enter this Lenten season in a moment that feels almost unimaginable.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. This milestone will be celebrated in many spaces with patriotic pride. But for those of us who walk with the oppressed, who preach liberation, and who carry the sacred memory of our ancestors, this anniversary demands more than celebration. It demands moral truth-telling.

We are witnessing an America where power is increasingly unchecked. The machinery of government is being used not as a safeguard for the people, but as a weapon against the people. We are watching the expansion of state-sanctioned violence and the normalization of cruelty: cruelty against immigrants, cruelty against the poor, cruelty against children, cruelty against women, cruelty against elders, cruelty against the sick, and cruelty against voters. And all of it is being justified by new characters propping up old lies using old language: “crime and safety”..... “law and order.”

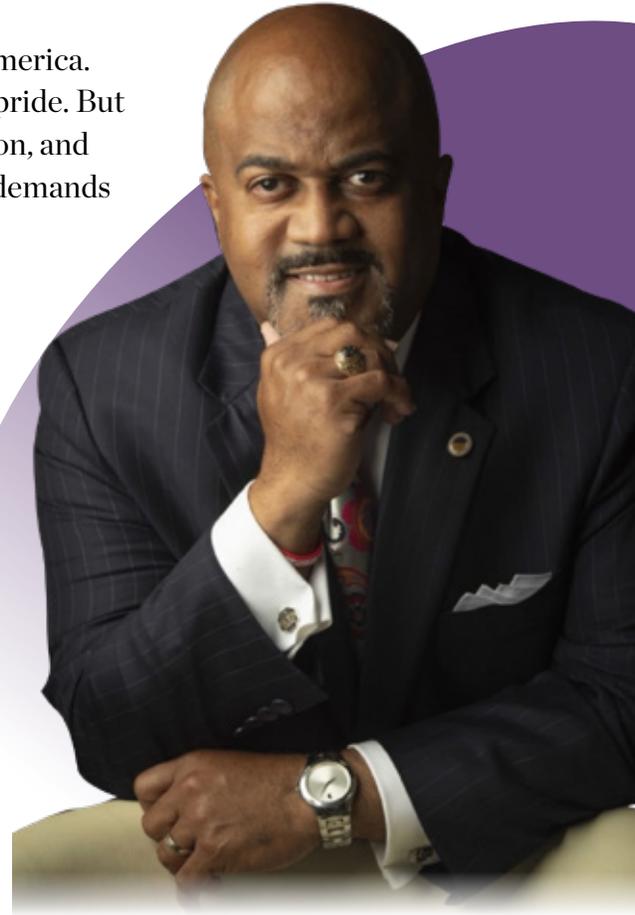
In the face of such a powerful adversary, many are tempted to retreat into rugged individualism and to lean into a survival mindset that whispers: “Protect yourself, Protect your family. Stay quiet and let the storm pass!” And beloved, we understand that temptation.

But the Gospel does not allow us to remain there. Beloved, the struggle is real. But so is the Spirit.

And as the Convention of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we enter into Lent not only as a time of reflection, but in preparation for continued resistance. From the hush harbor to the pulpit, from the prayer meeting to the picket line, God has repeatedly proven that oppression is never permanent. And so, from Ash Wednesday to Resurrection Sunday, we will bear witness that death does not have the final word! God's resurrection power continues to shape how we live, organize, and bear witness to God's power.

This season will prepare us for the road ahead, including our gathering in Washington, DC this July, where our faith must meet the demands of this hour.

In faith and holy resolve,
Rev. Dr. David Peoples



Leaning into Lent: *A Call to Action from PNBC's Social Justice Commission*

Beloved PNBC family,

There is an ancient problem in Scripture that keeps showing up in every generation: the problem of Power, Pharaohs and Kings. We are witnessing when power men goes unchecked and are allowed to rule as “kings; they rule by fear. This fear is not accidental, it is tactical. It is how empires maintain control when they cannot maintain legitimacy.

They criminalize the vulnerable, militarize the public square, and preach “order” while producing chaos. Pharaoh did it. Caesar did it. And America has done it through colonial conquest, the transatlantic slave trade, Jim Crow terrorism, and modern systems of state-sanctioned violence.

But the Bible teaches us something else: when rulers must escalate from threats to real violence, it is often the death rattle of a falling empire! It is the pattern of Exodus: when Moses demanded freedom, Pharaoh answered with bricks without straw: work without resources, survival without support, obedience without dignity. It is the pattern of Esther: when the oppressed began to rise, the empire responded with decrees designed to erase them. And we have witnessed it throughout our history. We saw it in the Jim Crow South. Every time Black people made progress, white backlash escalated! First through oppressive laws, then through intimidation, and then through bloodshed.

And here we are again.

Across the nation, we are witnessing marches, protests, and public outcry. And we honor every act of courageous witness because protest has always been one way the people declare, “*We will not consent to evil.*” But we also must tell the truth: in this moment, many of our communities are not mobilizing at scale. Some are exhausted. Some are afraid. Some are uncertain that public demonstration can restrain an increasingly authoritarian state.

And beloved, we understand that too.

Because when kings rule by fear, they do not merely threaten violence, they display it. And when the other branches of government fail to provide meaningful restraint, the tactics that once felt powerful can begin to feel muted. Calling Congress can feel like shouting into the wind. Voting can feel like pushing against a locked door. Speaking out can feel costly.

But this is precisely the moment when movements must mature.

The work of movement-building teaches us that when those in power hunker down, the people must move from being a community that only mobilizes to becoming a people who organize. We must build the relationships, structures, discipline,

and spiritual stamina to sustain the struggle—not just for a moment, but for the long arc of history. That is why we will use this Lenten season to pray, reflect, and prepare—not as spectators, but as builders of power for the year ahead.

Each week, we invite you to engage this series in three ways:



READ & REFLECT: Sit with the scripture, commentary, and prayer. Let God sharpen your moral clarity and deepen your spiritual courage.



ACT CIVICALLY: Complete the weekly action steps. Call Congress. Vote early where available. Resist harmful legislation. Use local power—mayors, governors, sheriffs, school boards, and attorneys general.



AMPLIFY & MOBILIZE: Share the reflection. Teach it in your church. Organize your people. Invite others into the work. Speak with your dollars as well as your voice.

This is only the beginning. Lent will lead into Freedom Summer action, convention training in July in Washington, DC, and faithful engagement through the midterm elections.

Beloved, the empire is loud, but love is stronger. And when kings overreach, God is already making a way.

In solidarity and holy resistance,



Rev. Dr. Willie D. Francois, III



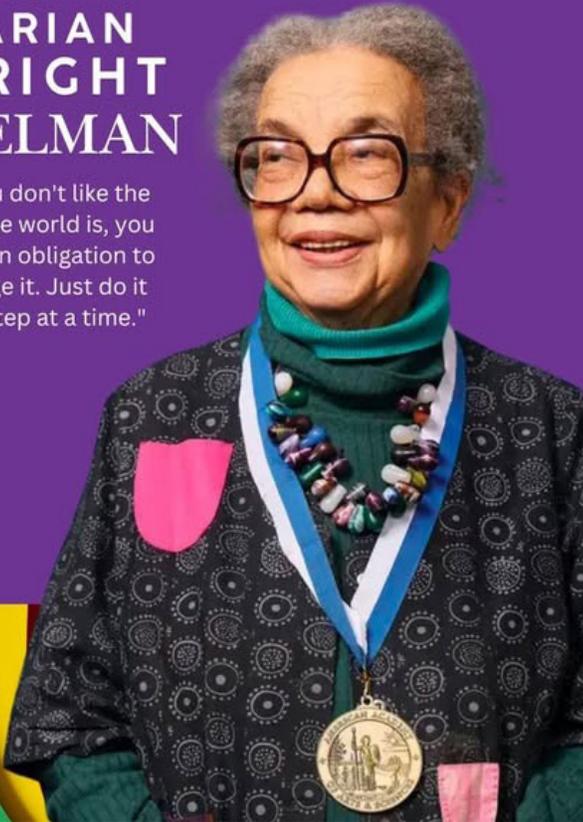
Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III

Our Rich Nation

Spiritual Practice by

**MARIAN
WRIGHT
EDELMAN**

"If you don't like the way the world is, you have an obligation to change it. Just do it one step at a time."



O God, forgive our rich nation where small babies die of cold quite legally.

O God, forgive our rich nation where small children suffer from hunger quite legally.

O God, forgive our rich nation where toddlers and school children die from guns sold quite legally.

O God, forgive our rich nation that lets children be the poorest group of citizens quite legally.

O God, forgive our rich nation that lets the rich continue to get more at the expense of the poor quite legally.

O God, forgive our rich nation, which thinks security rests in missiles rather than in mothers, and in bombs rather than in babies.

O God, forgive our rich nation for not giving You sufficient thanks by giving to others their daily bread.

O God, help us never to confuse what is quite legal with what is just and right in Your sight.

Amen.

The Call To See & Act

This first week of Lent, invites us to see what laws and policies normalize suffering and to examine how easy it is to become complicit when injustice is "legal." The injustices that surround us are not abstract; they are the lived realities for Black, Brown, poor, immigrant, and oppressed communities.



SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK: Micah 6:8

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

This week’s scripture challenges us to *do justice*. And doing justice means action, not simply internal humility or private faith. It is the concrete work of confronting policies that weaken human dignity and degrade the common good.

🗨 **Reflection:** In this text, Micah speaks to a broken society. *Doing justice*, “mishpat”, in the Hebrew Bible refers to public fairness: confronting structures that exploit and oppress. Loving mercy, “hesed”, is about loyal compassion that strengthens communities. *Walking humbly* with God is relational fidelity that leads us toward liberation for all, especially those marginalized by power.

We invite you to see this passage as a mandate for *collective public witness*: God’s call to us to embody community and not to withdraw from society’s injustices but to engage boldly, to disrupt oppressive systems, and to build alternatives rooted in God’s justice and mercy.

HOW WE SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE THIS WEEK

We speak with one voice because collective moral witness matters in defending fundamental dignity. This week’s focus areas are:

- **Immigration Policy Protections** — Congress is considering the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act, a bicameral bill that would codify limits on immigration enforcement actions at places like schools, hospitals, courthouses, and places of worship so that families can access essential services without fear of enforcement.
- **SAVE Act (Voter Access) — The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act** passed the House and would require documentary proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote. Analyses warn this could **disenfranchise more than 21 million eligible citizens** who lack access to passports, birth certificates, or other documents — including many voters of color, young people and individuals who have changed their names.

These issues touch *who gets seen, who gets protected, and who gets heard* in our democracy. They are about access to life-sustaining services, safety, and the right to vote. For communities of faith committed to justice, silence is neither ethical nor faithful.

Week 1

Weekly Action:

Pray + Reflect + Engage Power



1) PRAY & REFLECT

- Meditate on Micah 6:8 as a public justice calling, not private piety.
- Ask: Where has legality blinded us to injustice?
- Pray for courage to act with justice and mercy, locally and nationally.

2) CALL CONGRESS EACH TODAY!

Capitol Switchboard: (202) 224-3121

Ask to be connected to your U.S. Representative and Senators.

Talking Points:

• Immigration Policy – Protecting Sensitive Locations

Faith communities urge Congress to support the bicameral **Protecting Sensitive Locations Act** to ensure that immigration enforcement does not occur at essential service and sacred spaces like schools, hospitals, and churches.

• Voter Access – Oppose the SAVE Act

Call on Congress to reject the **SAVE Act**, which would require documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration and could disenfranchise millions of eligible voters.

You can say:

“As a person of faith, I urge you to support protections for immigrant families and sacred spaces, and to oppose policies that restrict access to the ballot box for eligible voters in our democracy.”

3) VOTE & MOBILIZE

- If your state has early voting, cast your ballot this week.
- If not, call one friend or family member in an early-vote state and encourage their participation.
- Share this reflection with your congregation and encourage their engagement.

Closing Prayer Of Resolve & Resilience

God of justice and mercy,

You call us not to settle for survival, but toward abundant life for all.

Teach us to do justice that transforms,

to love mercy that heals,

and to walk humbly with You — in solidarity, with resilience, and with purpose.

Steady our feet.

Strengthen our voices.

Guide our actions — this week and beyond — as we work for healing, liberation,
and the flourishing of all Your children.

Amen.

