

LENT

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

POWERED BY



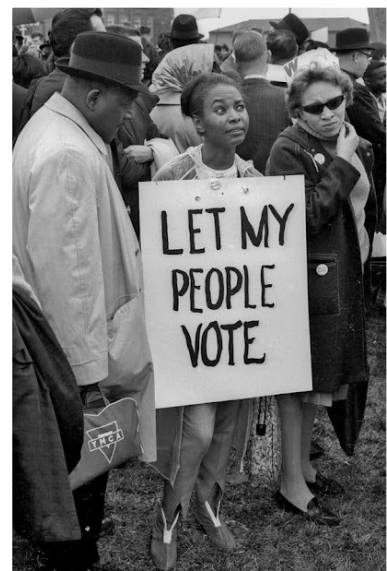
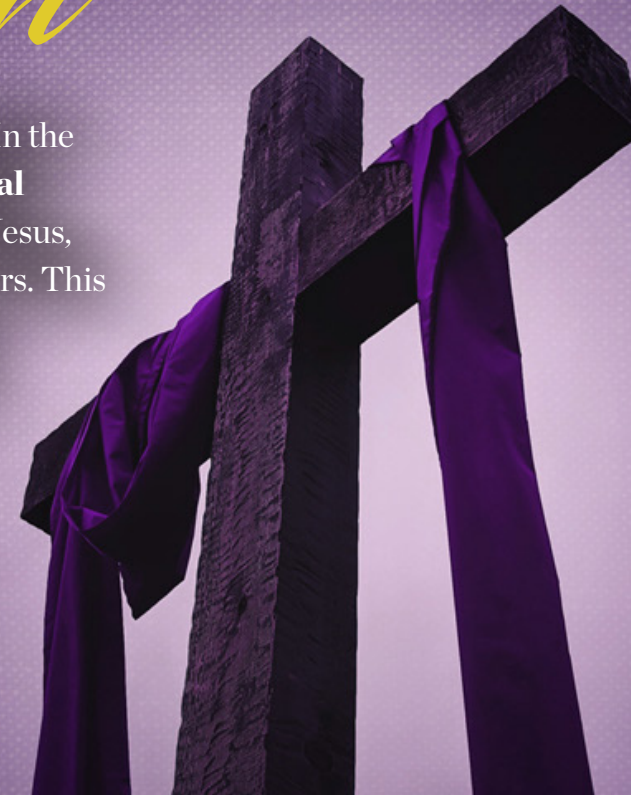
PNBC

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



Message from Rev. Willie Francois

Beloved PNBC family,

This week stands at the intersection of memory, power, and moral responsibility.

We mourn the passing and celebrate the life of Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., preacher, organizer, conscience of a nation. We prepare to commemorate Bloody Sunday on March 8, when John Lewis and countless unnamed foot soldiers faced state violence on the Edmund Pettus Bridge so that the right to vote might live. And we have just heard another State of the Union address, an annual ritual meant to define the condition of the nation.

Some watched. Some boycotted. But whether we tuned in or turned away, the question for people of faith remains the same: Did what you heard align with your lived reality? Did it reflect the economy you experience, the healthcare you struggle to access, the safety you seek in your own community? Or did it present a version of triumph disconnected from truth?

“As Christians, we are not called to consume political theater. We are called to discern the times.”



The Civil Rights Movement, our “Old Testament”, taught us that the vote was purchased with blood, prayer, and disciplined organizing. But what was secured through sacrifice is now being tested again. Over the past several years, we have witnessed renewed redistricting battles that dilute Black voting strength, legal challenges that weaken Voting Rights Act protections, restrictions on absentee and early voting, and federal proposals like the SAVE Act that could impose new documentation barriers for eligible voters.

These are not isolated headlines. They are part of a longer struggle over who belongs and who decides. This moment in our collective story is not about any single administration. Power shifts. Parties change. But the reality is that people in power centralize themselves, they protect privilege, and suppress participation. Absolute power still corrupts. And when systems begin to constrict rather than expand life, the church must ask hard questions and then, strive for a more perfect union.

That is our call this week: to use our vote as a moral instrument.

This week, let us honor Jesse Jackson not only with tears, but with participation. Let us honor Bloody Sunday not only with memory, but with movement. Let us respond to national speeches not with panic or apathy, but with discernment. Let us make our way to the polls not because the system is flawless, but because silence concedes ground.

Beloved, this week, “We, the people” vote.

Keep Hope Alive! Honoring Rev. Jesse Jackson



As we welcome Rev. Jesse Jackson into divine and eternal rest, we remember a life committed to expanding democracy and amplifying the voices of the marginalized.

This week, we invite you not only to read about him — but to listen.



Watch and Listen
to Rev. Jackson's words.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr1RK6T-HZY

Listen to the cadence of moral courage.

Listen to the insistence that hope is not naive — it is disciplined.

Listen to the call to participate, to vote, to organize, to build.

Let his voice remind us that democracy requires participation and that faith without civic action is unfinished.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK: Ephesians 6:12

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world...”

REFLECTION

Paul writes to believers living under empire, people who knew what it meant to live under concentrated political power. He reminds them that their struggle is not merely against individuals, but against systems, principalities and powers that shape public life.

In Lent, we remember that Jesus also wrestled. In the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11), He was tempted. He refused the shortcuts of empire and chose obedience to God instead.

So when Paul says we wrestle not against flesh and blood, he is widening our vision. Yes, we wrestle within ourselves against fear, cynicism, and the temptation to retreat. But we also wrestle against systems that constrict life and call injustice “order.”

Jesus also declared, *“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”* (John 10:10). Abundant life is not private comfort; it is shared dignity and communal flourishing. When civic structures restrict participation or silence voices, Christians must ask whether those systems reflect Christ’s promise.

Our struggle is not about personalities. It is about principalities.

Voting, then, becomes more than a civic duty. It becomes one of the ways that we participate in God’s work of expanding life rather than constricting it.

This week, reflect:

- In what ways are you reacting to personalities or discerning systems?
- Where are you tempted to retreat rather than engage?
- How does your vote serve as a moral witness this Lenten season?

Week 2

Weekly Action:

Pray. Verify. Vote



1) CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION

Make sure your voter registration is active and accurate.

Check your registration and polling place here: <https://vote.gov/>

Vote.gov is the official federal site that directs you to your state's verified voter registration and ballot information.

2) VOTE ON March 3rd (if Applicable)

If you are eligible to vote this week — do so.

Plan your trip.

Confirm your location.

Bring someone with you.

3) CALL SOMEONE IN A BATTLEGROUND STATE

If you are not voting this week, call someone who is.

Encourage them.

Pray with them.

Remind them that their vote is a moral witness.

Closing Prayer of Resolve & Resilience

God of justice and covenant,
We wrestle not against flesh and blood,
but against forces that distort truth and deny dignity.
Guard our hearts from cynicism.
Guard our minds from manipulation.
Guard our communities from fear.
Make us builders of a more perfect union.
Teach us to vote with conscience,
to act with courage,
and to love beyond division.
Let our hands and our ballots move toward justice for all.
And may our faith be visible
not only in what we believe,
but in what we do.

Amen.



