

February 15- February 19, 2021

# LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

JENNIFER LONG, STEVE LANGFORD, MIKE TRAUTMAN



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## INTRODUCTION

### **Jennifer Long, Steve Langford, Mike Trautman**

The nature of these devotions are writings by three colleagues and friends, who strive to be followers of Jesus in ways that are unique, individually, but who are connected to one another by a shared story of study and friendship. We decided on doing our devotionals independent of one another, letting the Spirit guide us as led. Doing this may seem strange but we see ourselves, as a trio, who over the years have thought together and produced numerous videos on the narrative lectionary. We borrowed from the Jazz world, a style of trust and working together, allowing each to highlight their gifts within the structure and the call of the Lenten season. We entitled these devotions, "Lenten Improvisations" to say a little about what we are trying to accomplish in doing a devotional this way.

Improvisation, as defined by the Jazz world, is the "spontaneous composition of melodies in the form and harmony of the song". Each member of the trio takes the melody and breathes new life into it, using their instrument in ways that are expansive and unique to the instrument. Jenn, Steve, and I are the instruments that God is using in this time and space to breathe new life into our Lenten journeys. We hope that you may experience the joy and understanding that comes from listening to a Jazz trio that has honed its life skills when reading these devotions.



**ASH WEDNESDAY****February 17, 2021**

No matter how you try to avoid it, Lent punches you in the face and tells you the truth: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19) Hmmnn, I think to myself, I am much more than dust. I am part of a species that is top of the food chain and is the apex creature in all the world. True, as that may be, when push comes to shove, one day all I shall be is dust, scattered to the four winds of the world, a speck in the sands of time. Lent brings us down and it hurts, no, wait, it is frightening. Yet, it also whispers of new ways of rising up and being selves, that make all of it, worth living in the first place.



**THURSDAY****February 18, 2021**

"You do you." It's a phrase I hear from my kids. Usually accompanied by a sideways glance or an eye roll. Usually preceded by the offering of unwelcome or unappealing idea... or maybe even some unsolicited advice. Not that I'd ever give any, of course. But when I move beyond just my automatic response to this automatic response... it's not a bad jumping off place for thinking. What does it actually mean 'you do you'... or more importantly, what does it mean for 'me' to do 'me'? Then instead of a pushing aside of something 'un'... unwanted, unappealing, unwelcome (feel free to add in other 'un's here) it's an opportunity for me to reflect... what did I offer that provoked the response? Did I offer that out of fear? Did I offer it out of hope? Did I offer it out of curiosity? What do I learn about myself, the other and the relationship as I explore this... suddenly, all the 'un's take a back seat, and opportunity takes their place. If I'm going to seize that opportunity... I might just need to take the log out of my own eye first. (Matthew 7:3)



**FRIDAY****February 19, 2021**

RiffPogo is credited with saying, "We have met the enemy and he is us!" How often am I my own worst enemy?! During this Lenten season, what might the Spirit show me about how to function in a healthier, less self-destructive way? Scripture & Prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10)

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**WEEKLY SUMMARY****Ash Wednesday**

No matter how you try to avoid it, Lent punches you in the face and tells you the truth.

**Thursday**

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