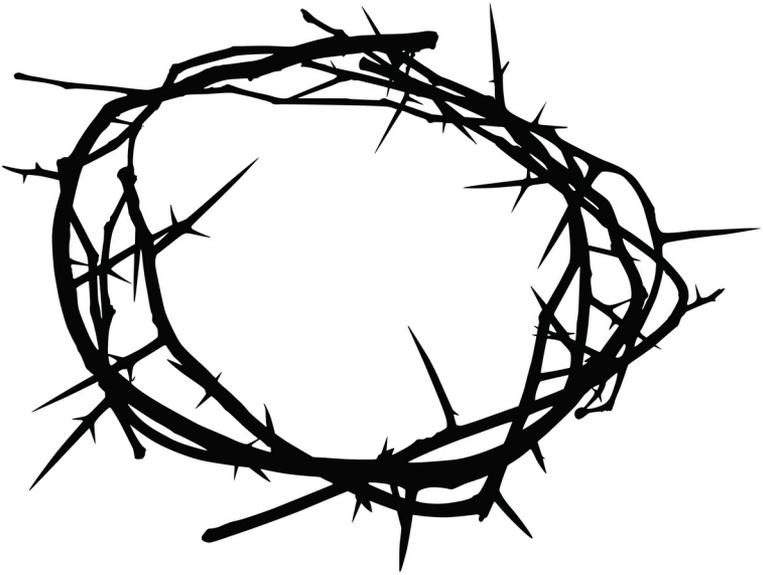


Lent and Holy Week  
Devotionals



Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Care Team  
2020

## CARE TEAM

*“Every member a minister”*

The Care Team of Westminster Presbyterian Church is dedicated to providing continued service to Westminster members, especially those who are ill or home bound and cannot attend regular church services and activities. It is the goal of our volunteers to serve the needs of the Westminster Church Family as well as support the work of the ministerial staff.

The team encompasses:

### Care Ministries

- Bereavement Cards
- Birthday and Care Cards
- Nursing Home Cards

### Visitation Ministries

- Hospital Visits
- Nursing Home Visits
- Care Facilities Visits

### Special Services

- Bereavement Care
- Memorial Receptions
- Advent & Lenten Booklets
- Knit ‘n Purl

There are many Westminster members who volunteer to add this compassionate touch from the Body of Christ.

Susan Hager, Chair

Dear Friends,

In this season of Lent, here at Westminster, we will be focusing our messages on one question: Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the most mysterious part of the Divine presence, and throughout the Bible, we have been given different metaphors to understand the Holy Spirit. As we look at each one, we will get a better sense of who the Spirit is and what the Spirit does in our world and in our lives.

I suspect, however, that our question can also be a personal one for each one of us. Rather than asking who the Holy Spirit is in the Universe, perhaps Lent is a time to ask: Who is the Holy Spirit for you? And how is the Spirit active in your own life? If we pay attention to that question, then this season of Lent can be a true spiritual experience for you.

This Lent, I invite you to pay deeper attention to the activity of the Spirit in your life by developing a devotional time. When we spend time in quiet meditation- reading Scripture, praying, and reading devotional messages- the noise of this world can decrease while our awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit can increase.

To assist you in your Lenten devotional life, we are happy to offer this devotional booklet. Each day in Lent, this devotional offers you a short scripture, and some meditative thoughts from people within our church community. As you use this devotional guide, along with your own prayer and meditation, you can prepare your heart for a deeper understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit in your life.

May this season of Lent be a time for spiritual growth for you, as you journey with Jesus to the Cross of our Salvation.

In God's Love,

Dr. Paul J Kirbas  
Pastor/Head of Staff

Wednesday - February 26, 2020

Matthew 6:1-6

*5 And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

Several years ago, I did an intensive study of the different types of prayer. I had no idea there were so many: Verbal, Contemplative, Reflection, and Action are the categories and there are different types of prayer in each category.

My favorite, however, is the contemplative prayer which can be done alone or in a group. The Care Team has a group of women who knit prayer shawls for those who are in the hospital or ill at home and want one. I got mine several years ago after an accident and I use it during my contemplative prayer time in the early morning hours. Several church members have joined with me in a contemplative prayer group and it has as many rewards as the solitary prayer time. We recently started “praying in color”. None of us are artists by any means, but it has been especially rewarding as well as revealing.

Each of us has our own way of being with God in prayer, but it doesn't matter what form you use; what is important is that you pray.

Dorothy Nan Gray

**Thursday - February 27, 2020**

**Psalm 51**

This Psalm is David's plea for God's mercy and forgiveness. The prophet Nathan had shown him how his actions with Uriah and Bathsheba had displeased the Lord. (2 Samuel 12)

David in his brokenness was able to ask for and receive forgiveness from God. Equally we are able to receive God's mercy when we are broken enough to recognize and truly confess our sins.

**Psalm 51: 10-12**

- 10 "Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me."

Sally Townley

Friday - February 28, 2020

## Jonah 4:1-11

The scripture tells of the dialogue between Jonah and God wherein God shows Jonah the love that God has for the people of Nineveh. To understand Chapter 4, however, one needs to know Jonah Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, Jonah proclaims that Nineveh will be destroyed because of their sin. Nineveh repented wholeheartedly, so God did not destroy Nineveh. In Chapter 4, Jonah laments that God was merciful. Why on earth would Jonah have been distraught that God did not decimate a city perhaps as large as 120,000 people? Every person in Nineveh repented, did not eat or drink, put on sackcloth and even did not allow their animals to eat or drink. Nineveh heard Jonah's call, turned to God and was saved. Jonah had achieved the best possible outcome. Why was he so upset?

Jonah was distressed because he was focused on his own mission, which was to rebuke Nineveh, rather than God's mission, which was to save Nineveh. Jonah did not want to be a crazy guy preaching doom without God backing Jonah up. Jonah's reputation and justification were more important to Jonah than God's redemption of people. In today's terms, Jonah was "judgey". We should take to heart the times when we put our desires and justification in front of what God is doing. We need to do what God calls us to do and then get out of the way and let good happen. Be proud of the God you love, not the things you do to prove that love.

Prayer: Dear Lord, remind us daily of the simple beauty of Your hand in the world. Be it a butterfly, a song, a gentle touch or a prayer, show us that You are working through us, and remind us to let You work through us. Amen.

Jim Witcher

**Saturday - February 29, 2020**

**Matthew 18:1-7**

When the disciples asked Jesus, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He told them, “unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!”  
“Whoever then humbles himself like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus also added, “whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me and if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea.”  
“Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks.”

Here we are reminded to be humble, to be an example of Christ to children. Then He warns us of the penalties of leading one of HIS children to sin. Perhaps Jesus doesn't just mean a small child here, but any of HIS human creation, especially those new to the faith, or seeking a life in Christ or the most vulnerable or the most innocent. We are to love, to humble ourselves, to lead faithfully, to represent Christ, to provide, and to protect one another from sin, as in, separation from God. We can renew our own walk and review our lives and the depth of our faith as Christians, for we, too, are His children. God has given us the road map in Christ. We have a choice, are we true followers of Christ or stumbling blocks?

Prayer: Lord, you lead and we follow. You are our father, our teacher, our provider, protector, and our Savior. Strengthen us to be good examples of your love, mercy and grace. Amen

Gayle Jones

## Sunday - March 1, 2020

### Psalm 32

The appointed Psalm for this day is one that offers hope and balm not only during this season of Lent, a time of repentance and turning again to God, but balm for the whole of our lives.

I would venture to say that there are times in each of our lives where we have said harsh words, thought bitter thoughts or acted in ways that have caused pain or sorrow. When left alone, those words or actions can fester. The Psalmist tells us exactly what can happen when regret and remorse are bottled up inside. “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” (3)

But the Psalmist does not leave us in this place of distress. We are offered a remedy for this remorse of conscience – it is the remedy of repentance and the blessedness of forgiveness that follows.

Assurance of this forgiveness can be found in verse 7: “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.”

God delivers us, God protects us, God loves us. We need to trust in that love and freely acknowledge where we have erred. In doing so, we are renewed and refreshed and can freely sing!

Rev. Jennifer Kirbas  
Parish Associate, Volunteer

**Monday - March 2, 2020**

*Reprinted from 2006*

**Psalm 32**

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are reminded daily of your love for us. You sent your Son, and through him your work was accomplished. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Ultimately Jesus died so that we can believe.

Thank you for the promise of eternal life. All we are and have, we owe to you, gracious Father. We rejoice in the opportunity each and every day to glorify you just as Jesus did. He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches, if a man resides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing."

Continue to help us love one another as Jesus commanded the disciples. Almighty God, make of heaven and earth, we pray that we will encourage others to come to know you, to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, and to work together to discern and carry out your will.

Ann Cameron

**Tuesday - March 3, 2020**

*Reprinted from 2015*

**Hebrews 4:14-5:10**

Prayer: Eternal God, You have revealed to us our attitude and may we keep living by that standard.

May I follow your example and live with my citizenship in heaven and look forward to being with you, my Savior.

I know how to live with humble means and how to live in prosperity. I have been hungry and have had abundance. I've learned to be content in whatever circumstances.

Thank you, Lord, for knowing I'll be with you some day. Grant me the courage to acknowledge my sins and know your mercy and compassion for me. In Jesus' name, Amen

Nancy Riddell

**Wednesday - March 4, 2020**

**Matthew 18:10-14**

The parable of The Lost Sheep is intended to show that it would be in direct opposition to God's desire for our salvation to lead someone "astray" and cause him or her to be lost like a strayed sheep. The practical lesson here is to be kind and honor members of His church. However, if they go "astray," we must seek gently to reclaim him or her, like the Good Shepherd. (Note: this parable is also found in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15)

Prayer: Lord, thank you for our gift of salvation. May we not be so pious that we forget to pray and show LOVE to those who may have strayed from your "flock" and may we help to bring them back into fellowship with You. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Jane and Bruce Blincow

**Thursday - March 5, 2020**

**Isaiah 51:1-3 and 2 Timothy 1:3-7**

After reading the two scriptures assigned for today, we looked back on our spiritual upbringing. We were blessed with parents and grandparents who loved the Lord. Timothy's faith was founded on love from the example of his grandmother and mother.

Unfortunately, today we are challenged by contemporary lifestyle and electronic distractions that make it difficult to direct our children and grandchildren toward a life of faith and love of God and a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Prayer: We ask the Holy Spirit to help us live that life of love, faith, joy and self-discipline as an example for those that follow. In His name, Amen

Nan and Fred Buxton

## Friday - March 6, 2020

When we sin and feel guilt, how do we try to get back into God's good graces? Do we try doing "good works" in hopes that He will notice and lessen our punishment?

### **Micah 7:18-20**

The prophet Micah predicts the coming of Jesus and writes that when our Messiah comes, God will no longer punish us for our transgressions. He will tread our iniquities under foot and cast our sins into the depths of the sea. He will pardon us and forgive. He won't remain angry with us; He will give us mercy.

### **Romans 3:21-31**

When we sin, we are heavily burdened with guilt. But now, God has lifted that burden from our shoulders and put it on the shoulders of His son, Jesus Christ. God publicly sacrificed His own son in order to restore the relationship between Him and us. We could not do this ourselves, so He did it for us. He put us back on the path that he intended for us, to live the glorious lives that He wants us to live. Jesus is the sacrifice of atonement for our sins. We no longer win God's favor by doing good works. We win God's favor by believing in Jesus Christ. By acknowledging that we cannot live this life on our own and that we must allow Jesus to guide us through it.

When we have faith, trusting in God's promise and relying solely on Christ, He forgives us with grace and mercy. Grace, mercy, Faith, forgiveness are now offered to ALL people. So, it isn't about what we do, it's about what God does. This privilege, this unearned gift of FAITH, given to us by sheer grace and mercy, will lead to our salvation. Thanks be to God!

Judy Hamra

**Saturday - March 7, 2020**

**Luke 7:1-10**

“He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup>That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>9</sup>When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” <sup>10</sup>Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.”

The centurion was a Roman soldier who had sent Jewish elders to reach out to Jesus to come to his house and heal his servant. He was reaching out to Jesus on behalf of someone he loved... not himself. Jesus agreed to go but on the way to the house something unusual happened... the centurion sent another messenger with a humble message... I am not worthy but I have faith and if you say the word it will be done.

The centurion believed without seeing Jesus, without being there, without needing proof! Jesus responded by the words, “I have not found such great faith even in Israel”

It is this basis for our hope to trust in the Lord, believe in Him and have faith that he walks with us every day and longs to be on our journey with us.

Alison Taylor

## Sunday - March 8, 2020

Matthew 17:1-9: *Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. 3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I[a] will make three dwellings[b] here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved;[c] with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." 8 And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. 9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."*

Ah, the transfiguration—the magical and mysterious passage in Matthew about Jesus being claimed as God’s own amidst the holy giants of Moses and Elijah. This passage is both somewhat unbelievable and enchanting all at the same time. It’s unbelievable, of course, because the disciples saw their friend, Jesus, interacting with ancient religious relics who are long dead. That had to have been incredibly strange and hard to believe. On the other hand, it is enchanting because God speaks and they all hear. Collectively, they hear God claim Jesus as God’s own son.

I think it’s often hard to believe miracles like this because we don’t often see people gathered together, fully present in the moment, listening and hearing together. We often carry our own agendas into the moment and then are limited in our ability to hear or see miraculous things as a group. So, think with me now.

*When is a time you’ve had to discern something important with other people?*

1. Were you able to discern as a group what *God* wanted or did you all just give your opinions about what *you* thought was right? Did the group pray? Did they discuss faithful attributes or qualities to look for as you discerned?

2. What is discernment? How do you do it? How do you know you're doing it correctly?

*When have you heard God speak? What did God say?*

*How did that message from God affect or change you?*

These are some of the things of which I think the transfiguration is meant to remind us—that we can experience God in our midst, that we are supposed to hear God together. We are occasionally given the opportunity to stand in the presence of God and when we do, I hope we don't miss hearing what God says.

Rev. Abbey Walker  
Associate Pastor

**Monday - March 9, 2020**

## **Hebrews 3:1-6**

The outline for this passage is the following: Fix your thoughts on Jesus - Jesus is greater than Moses in his person - Jesus is greater than Moses in his ministry

As we all know, we live in a world full of distractions. Schedules to keep, health issues, business projects and commitments, deadlines at home and work, financial responsibilities, thinking about our family, career and the future. And the list goes on.

Jesus taught that we are to focus on one thing but that isn't easy in our everyday world. There are many distractions that grab our attention. It is increasingly difficult to keep our minds "fixed on Jesus" because we have a tendency to focus on the things we can see, feel and touch. But, Jesus, whom we can't see and touch, often becomes far from our thoughts.

The writer of Hebrews is warning that we are to focus our thoughts on Jesus; that we are brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling and that we are to fix our thought on Jesus whom we acknowledge as our apostle - "One who is sent". This passage compares Jesus to Moses whom the first century Jews thought to be the greatest person to ever live because it was through Moses that God gave them the law. The writer of Hebrews knows that Moses was a great believer and follower of God and he was faithful to God's people.

"House" is a key word in this passage, which, according to scholars, refers to God's people. The Jews idolized Moses so much that some were tempted to put Moses above Jesus. The writer wants us to know that Moses was part of the house but Jesus is the builder of the house and therefore greater than Moses and we are to focus on not the things of life but rather on the teachings of Christ.

Glenn Dunn, Associate Pastor

**Tuesday - March 10, 2020**

**Romans 4:6-13**

*So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works.*

*Blessed are those whose iniquities  
Are forgiven,  
And whose sins are covered;  
Blessed is the one against whom  
The Lord will not reckon sin.*

Romans 4 is the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. It is authored by Paul the Apostle while he was in Corinth in the mid-50s AD.

There is an important truth Paul is getting at: This covenant relationship happened long before the token of it. Abraham was declared righteousness before God simply because he believed what God told him. This pattern can be true for us. We can obtain a right-standing with God simply by trusting in His provision, which is Jesus, and not in anything we can do to earn it.

This is important for us to remember because like those who came before us, we can relate to God in one of two ways: 1) trying to earn our way, being good, following the rules or 2) trusting in God's kindness toward us, while knowing we can never be good enough or do enough right things.

Today, where are you trying to earn God's approval? Where can you simply stop and thank Him for what He's already done? How does understanding this usher you into peace today?

Rob Abernathy

**Wednesday - March 11, 2020**

**John 7:53 – 8:11**

This moment in Jesus' life has a lot going on. There are bad guys disguised as good guys. A moral sin has been committed and a death has been demanded. An adulterous female has been caught in the act. The scribes and Pharisees arrive and "set her in the midst" of what they must feel to be a foolproof trap.

God's perfect son sits on the ground in his Father's Temple filled with people. We watch as Jesus does the seemingly impossible. He survives their test by confronting her accusers, one-by-one, with their own sinfulness. He admonishes the woman to sin no more. He condemns no one.

Jesus offers grace and mercy to all, "for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Tim and Sue Cheek

## Thursday - March 12, 2020

### Exodus 16:1-8 Manna and Quail

The slaves entrusted their lives into the hands of Moses, and they began a journey together. They left their homes in Egypt in search of a better life. Life's experiences usually have a beginning and an end, but there is also the "in between" – the journey.

The leaders and their followers experienced the miracle of the Red Sea crossing in Exodus 14. As they continued their journey, they encountered legitimate hardships. They are hungry, doubtful, and weary. The life of enslavement in Egypt suddenly becomes more attractive as they go through the daily drudgery of their journey.

They grumble. They moan. They whine. "What have you done for me lately?" God responds by providing their needs, with instructions: Gather the manna in the morning; the quail in the evening. Only get one day's serving; gather for two days before the Sabbath. He cared about the details!

How is this story relevant as we approach Easter? God's promise of a Messiah is found throughout the Old Testament and realized in the New. His promises to Mary, his revelations to Jesus, and his assurances to His followers were trustworthy. Jesus told his disciples how it would all end. They observed His peace approaching Jerusalem, knew what He told them would occur, and yet his followers who celebrated his arrival quickly turned once things became difficult. "What have you done for me lately, Jesus?"

As we go through many of life's journeys – such as a new marriage, becoming parents, or preparing for the loss of a loved one, we do experience these three stages in the journey – anxiety/excitement at the beginning, relief at its completion, and much doubt, difficulty and impatience during the journey. Exodus 16 provides a wonderful example for us. As we reflect on or anticipate life's journeys, remember that there is a Triune God who is there for us if we will listen, learn, and follow HIS lead.

Susan Turpen

**Friday - March 13, 2020**

**Ephesians 2:11-12**

In this Lenten season these verses spoke to us because of the news we read and hear every day. The divisions in our country and over the world cause all of us to have an unsettling feeling in our lives. We need to listen to how Jesus ministered to the different groups of Ephesians – the Jews and the Gentiles. Two groups that were separated by distance and animosity toward one another. These people were brought together by Jesus reaching out to both groups with his teachings and with the sacrifice of his body on the cross. Paul says Jesus is the cornerstone for bringing all groups together. No matter what religion is your preference, we all need to love one another as God has loved us. We can disagree with policies or with friends' political beliefs, but still offer love and acceptance. That is what Jesus was teaching the Ephesians and also all of us today.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us follow your commandments. Let us be good stewards of our faith to all people we come in contact with each day of our lives. Help us remember we are all one under the unity of Jesus' love and sacrifice. Amen.

Patti and Dick Marshall

**Saturday - March 14, 2020**

## **John 4:1-6**

*Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John” – although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized – he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.*

Can’t you just picture that last line? “...Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well.” It was in the heat of the day and Jesus has been traveling a long way on foot. He was hot and thirsty so he probably drank some water and sat in the shade of the well.

These verses help us remember that Jesus was human like us and got tired and thirsty just as we do from time to time. And just as we all thirst for water, as Christians we also thirst for the peace that Jesus promised we would have with our faith in God. We need to take time from our busy lives to sit by the well and drink in the peacefulness God gives to us.

Sunday - March 15, 2020

## Romans 5:1-11

*Reflect:* Lent is a season for self-examination, contemplation, and prayer as we prepare for Easter. In the *Companion to the Book of Worship*, it states, “In order to embrace the resurrection, we must experience the passion of Jesus. The way of the cross, the way to Easter, is through death of the ‘old self.’ In dying, we live.” As Christians we affirm, claim, and find strength from Romans 5:8 powerful declaration, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” This verse identifies our problem - we are sinners in personal and common life. The very next verse offers words of mercy which declare God’s grace and testify to God’s love. Four words speak volumes. Christ died for us. The reality that we sin and fall short of God’s glory should, especially during the season of Lent, cause us to recite or sing the ancient Greek prayer *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy). As the call for mercy ring out from our lips, we know the words “Christ died for us” declares assurance of God’s grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ, who raised us to new life. We accept God’s forgiveness, confident that in dying to sin, Christ raises us to new life. So take time this season of Lent to reflect on how you fall short of God’s glory and what changes you can make toward a renewed life of faithful discipleship. However, we fall short, we know that Christ died for us. It is a powerful, amazing proclamation of divine love. It reminds us as Roman 8:34 states, *The old life has gone; a new life has begun.*

*Ask:* How am I called this Lenten Season to more fully live by Christ’s grace? Am I ready to use this time of Lenten reflection to let the reality of sin in personal and common life press upon my heart do that the joy of forgiveness and promised new life in Christ is appreciated when the forty days of Lent conclude?

May this season of Lent reawaken us to the amazing grace revealed in the verse, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Rev. Michelle Junkin

**Monday - March 16, 2020**

**John 1:1-13**

John was sent to us by God to tell us of “the Word” who he called Jesus Christ. John called Him the Word because he came to believe the words of Jesus as the truth of God. He came to show us that Jesus himself was made in Gods image and came to us to deliver a message from God. He wants us to know the infinite majesty of God and it is up to us to decide whether we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Do we trust that Gods loves us enough to send his only son to save us?

If we choose to believe we are told that our lives will change and that we will be given eternal life. This is God’s gift to us. We make a choice to be a Christian and in doing so we are choosing to follow Jesus’ teachings. Jesus came to earth to demonstrate God’s love to everyone, and to give eternal life to anyone who chooses to believe in Him. God wants to have a relationship with us. A relationship that begins when we declare ourselves believers and continues to grow daily if we spend time with God. Jesus came to show us what it looks like to live a life as God would. And he died on the cross in our place, to pay the price for our sins.

We will never be perfect. Only God is perfect. But we can use Jesus’ teachings as a blueprint for our lives. Let us be examples of the fruit of the spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Let us provide outward evidence of the Spirit that is present within us to others.

Karen Frederickson

**Tuesday - March 17, 2020**

**Genesis 29:1-4**

Jacob was on a journey and it was proceeding well after having a successful communion with God in Bethel. His journey has now brought him to his uncle's field where flocks of sheep were to be watered. You could say that the way shepherds take care of their flock of sheep, may remind us of the way Jesus Christ takes care of his flock. He is known as the Great Shepherd that knows his sheep well.

In this field was a covered well. It was well secured because water was scarce. It was not there for everyone's use. When the shepherds all came together, like loving neighbors, they watered all the flocks together. Jacob was civil to these strangers as they were civil to him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I thank you for the works that you have done in your Father's name. For they bear witness to you. I believe in you because I am your sheep. You are my good Shepherd and I give thanks to You. Amen

Louise Hickey

Wednesday - March 18, 2020

## Jeremiah 2:4-13

“Has a nation ever changed its gods?  
(Yet they are not gods at all.)  
But my people have exchanged their Glory  
for worthless idols.  
Be appalled at this, O heavens,  
and shudder with great horror,”  
declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 2:11-12 NIV

The book of Jeremiah is the longest book of the bible, with more words than any other. Many (I'd say most) of these words are decidedly negative. In fact, Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as the “prophet of doom”. Definitely a ‘glass half empty’ kind of guy. But Jeremiah had a clear message from God and was steadfast in carrying out his task. Today’s reading is part of a larger group of discourses that laments the apostasy of God’s people. Though our life situations are very different from those of Jeremiah’s time, our behavior unfortunately is not. We routinely replace our God with the gods of consumerism, money, power, etc. The Lenten season is a time for us to reset our priorities, refocus our energies, remember Christ’s sacrifice for us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, during this season of preparation, help us to be pure in thought and in deed. Help us to focus our lives, our wills, our wants only on the things that please you. Be with us as we seek a better, closer relationship with your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen

Jane Puls

**Thursday - March 19, 2020**

**Ephesians 4:25-32**

We as Christians do not lose our emotions at conversion, but our emotions should be purified. Some anger is sinful, some is not. No anger is to outlast the day. It is not enough to cease from sin, one must do good. One should now help those in need. The Christian not only stops saying unwholesome things; he also begins to say things that will help build others up. This basic Christian attitude, which is a result of being forgiven in Christ, along with being kind and compassionate, brings to others what we have received from God.

One way of imitating God is to have a forgiving spirit. The way we imitate our Lord is to act “just as” He did. The sacrificial way Jesus expressed his love for us is not only the means of salvation but also an example of the way we are to live for the sake of others.

Prayer: Dear Lord, our basic Christian attitude, which is a result of being forgiven in Christ, along with being kind and compassionate, brings to others what we have received from you. The sacrificial way Jesus expressed his love for us is not only the means of salvation but also an example of the way we are to live for the sake of others.  
Amen

Ferrelyn Oakes

**Friday - March 20, 2020**

**1 Samuel 15:22-31**

God of my understanding speaks through people. Samuel and Saul illustrated several examples of God's work:

1. Rebellion: Saul defies God and loses being king.
2. Stubborn: Saul won't take Samuel's suggestions.
3. Childish Behavior: God gave Saul a second chance.
4. Fear: Saul's rebellion begins to soften.
5. Willingness: Saul finds faith in God.
6. Patience: Samuel was quietly following God's will.

God's lessons are simple, but not always easy. I am grateful for the opportunity to praise God.

Kathy Funston

Sunday - March 21, 2020

## John 1:1-9

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.*

The first chapter of John establishes the deity of Christ. He always was and always will be. He is the Light of the World. Many of us grew up hearing that statement but not really giving it much thought. The light is the holiness and purity of Christ which shines in the darkness of sin and wrongdoing. Each one of us has the light of Christ in our lives

These verses remind me of a song I used to sing as a child called "This Little Light of Mine." One of the verses was, "Hide it under a bushel 'No', I'm going to let it shine." That is what we should do now. Let the light of Christ in us shine into the darkness and illuminate the lives of others.

Prayer: Dear God, Let me shine Your Light in the darkness just as you have shined Your light into my life. Amen

Linda Sheffield

## Monday - March 22, 2020

### John 9:1-41 *Blindness Into Sight*

Although there are 20 other chapters in the Gospel of John – this one packs a punch. There are so many shoes we can stand in and be enlightened by. But the blind man's journey into sight is the most intriguing. We see his journey through his addresses to Jesus – first Jesus is a man, then Jesus is a prophet and finally Jesus is the Son of God. So is our journey with Jesus.

As we study, listen, encounter, discuss and experience our lives as Christians, we grow into a relationship with Jesus. We experience the grace, we experience the mysteries, we experience the guidance, we experience the forgiveness, we experience our relationship with Jesus. Unlike our earthly relationships, the more we get to know each other the more we encounter each other's weaknesses and flaws. Whereas the more time we spend on our relationship with Jesus the more awesome and Wonder filled He becomes. That's not to say we shouldn't develop relationships with one another – we need connection. But during this time of Lent when we participate in self-reflection and walk into vulnerability, who better to go to than to Christ – that relationship that holds all the trust and love we need.

Kim Mitchell

**Monday - March 23, 2020**

**Acts 9:1-20**

The Holy Spirit's ability to affect change in a person is nothing short of a miracle. For most of us change does not come easy. The Scripture's account of the conversion of Saul is no exception.

Saul was going about his business of arresting anyone displaying an acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. People were living in fear of what he had shown himself capable. It was not until he was knocked off his horse in the middle of a road, spoken to by Jesus, and struck blind that Saul reassessed his priorities. God had his undivided attention.

What do you suppose Saul thought about during those three days he spent in Damascus? Our passage says that he did not even eat during that time. He was doing some serious soul searching, and his life would never be the same.

I am reminded of John Newton, the writer of the great hymn, *Amazing Grace*. Not only did he captain a slave ship which, of itself is horrible enough, but lived a life filled with anger, profanity, and rebellion. As he sank deeper into sin, the same loving Father through the Holy Spirit who rescued Saul, changed Newton's heart. No wonder he could write, "I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see."

Bethany Sanders

**Tuesday - March 24, 2020**

**Colossians 1:9-14**

This year my bible study has led me through the book of Acts. It has taken us not only through this book but others where Paul is living out his faith as a disciple dedicated to many churches and especially the word of God.

When we think of Paul there are many things that could come to mind. It may be the absolute grace Paul was shown by God in redeeming him into a Christian man, or it may be something more subtle we don't really think about as much. Paul never stopped praying for his people. He worked day and night, but his passion was for others to know this life with Jesus Christ that brought hope. Paul gave hope through prayer, encouragement, support and communication. He gave thanks for the people and their changed hearts for the Lord.

I ask myself, what hope am I giving to others? We, too, are Christian disciples and we too can pray, encourage, and give hope to others. It is always comforting to know that in the midst of our season of renewal and refining there is a greater hope ahead we will experience with joy and thanks as we fulfill our life's work.

Ashley Duncan

Wednesday - March 25, 2020

## Hebrews 10: 4-10

The Old Testament sacrificial system included a complex set of rules for ceremonial purity and cleanness. Approaching God required eating clean foods and abstaining from unclean ones, following strict rules for dress, not touching various objects, and more. Various sacrifices were offered in the tabernacle and temple to atone for sin and place the worshipper in right standing with God. This sense of being in right relationship or standing with God did not last, and the cycle of sacrifices was repeated again and again to make the Israelites spiritually clean to enter into the Lord's presence.

“Here I am! I am coming to do your will” we read in Hebrews 10: 9-10. This is joyous news of Jesus Christ carrying out God's intentions for humanity freely and perfectly. His sacrifice has immeasurable and infinite value, so that it is available to all God's people forever. The cycle is over, as his suffering and death are able to fulfill all the Old Testament ceremonial laws once and forever. The temple veil torn in two at the moment of Jesus' death points to the new covenant in Christ and right relationship restored.

*Prayer: Father, in this year's journey of Lent, grant us new eyes to see the immeasurable and infinite gift of restored relationship through Jesus Christ our Lord. May our lives reflect gratitude for your grace, and may we reflect your love and mercy to others each day.*

Angela Powell

**Thursday - March 26, 2020**

**Revelation 10: 1-11**

The question of when Jesus will return has been debated for centuries with countless Biblical interpretations. John's words in this scripture tell us that 'God has revealed all we need to know to live for Him now'. In our desire to be ready for His coming, we must not place more emphasis on speculation about the last days than on living for God while we wait.

Ultimately, we can take comfort in Jesus' actual words to us. In Matthew 6: 25-34, He sums it up by telling us not to worry. Again, in Mark 13:32, He reminds us that only His Heavenly Father knows when that day or hour will occur, and that we need only keep alert – and keep awake.

Let us:

Trust His timing.  
Rely on His promises.  
Wait for His Answers.  
Believe in His Miracles.  
Rejoice in His goodness.  
Relax in His presence.  
Be prepared.  
Study His Word.  
Reflect His Light.  
Continually thank Him  
for His endless Grace.

Thanks be to God.

Tina Love Ridley

**Friday - March 27, 2020**

**Ezekiel 33:10-16**

Jesus did not come to punish man, but to save him. The way of the Lord is just. God's covenant with us is that even those who are sinners will be saved if they repent and change their ways. A righteous person who sins and does not repent will not be saved just because he has been righteous in the past. None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. He will die for the evil he has done. Yet, even a wicked person will be saved if he repents and turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right, not going back to his wicked ways. None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. We will each be judged according to our own ways.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we are thankful that even our evil ways will not be remembered at our judgment if we take on the ways of the righteousness. You are a loving and merciful God. Amen

Mary Stanley

Saturday - March 28

Luke: 24: 44-53

*Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

*The Ascension of Jesus*

*Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.*

--Wow! Have you ever stopped to consider what this might have looked like to the people who were there with Jesus? Is the author telling us that after listening to Jesus speak to and bless them, the people saw Jesus visibly float up into the clouds, that perhaps angels carried him into the sky, or that something else entirely happened?

While the exact imagery might be debatable, does it really matter to us? In the end, isn't the message the same? Jesus lived, taught, suffered, died, rose from the dead proclaiming forgiveness of sins, and then ascended into Heaven, entrusting us to worship and witness what the Father promised. Let us celebrate the miracle of the resurrection!

Jeb Joseph

**Sunday - March 29, 2020**

**Ezekiel 37:1-14**

In this well-known verse, the Lord causes Ezekiel to have a vision of a vast valley, filled with innumerable, dry and disarticulated bones. The setting calls to mind the admonition, which we recently received on Ash Wednesday, that we are merely dust, and to dust we shall return. Our life is brief, God-given and precious. What a waste were we to lose sight of this, however briefly; to misplace our ability to discern the Holy Spirit that breathes meaning into our lives; to spend part of our brief lives in a kind of spiritual coma, like the legions of dry bones in the valley of Ezekiel's vision.

Indeed, ignorance of and insensitivity to the Holy Spirit can be more than individual. It can be corporate, affecting our families, communities and nations. Speaking to Ezekiel, the Lord ascribes to "the whole house of Israel" the spiritual desiccation of that endless plain of dust and desolation, of trackless waste and dry bones.

We must embrace what the Lord showed Ezekiel, that the breath of the Holy Spirit brings together the scattered and disconnected parts of our lives, unifies bone and sinew and flesh and skin, and renders us whole.

A prayer for today: Heavenly Father, open our spiritual sepulchers, open the temporal tombs in which we have trapped ourselves. Set us free from the captivity into which we have fallen, in a world whose ways are not Yours. Let us conform ourselves to Your will and law, and rest in the land You promised to our ancestors and to us. We pray this in the name of Your son, Jesus, who came not to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. Amen

Dave Thompson

## Monday - March 30, 2020

1 Kings 17:17-24 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>17</sup>Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. <sup>18</sup>She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?”

<sup>19</sup>“Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. <sup>20</sup>Then he cried out to the LORD, “LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?” <sup>21</sup>Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the LORD, “LORD my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

When you first read 1 Kings 17, you see many similarities between this story and the story of Jesus and Lazarus in John 11. Resurrection in many instances has been seen as proof of God’s power within the Bible. His prophets such as Elijah and Paul gain the respect and trust of the people around them when this miracle is performed, even in the face of anger and distrust like in this passage. The widow is distrustful and even angry at God for not saving her son and yet Elijah uses this as a moment for a miracle. The woman immediately believes in the power of God and in Elijah’s close relationship with him.

Now this is not something we see every day in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. God doesn’t need to raise the dead as an example of his power anymore because he gave us the greatest example of all: Jesus. God gave us his only son and resurrected him to cement Jesus’ place at his right hand. The amount of love and power that an action like that takes is insurmountable. And while we don’t get to see the great miracles of Jesus’ time, we know for certain that when we believe in God and embrace his righteousness, beautiful and extraordinary things can happen.

Tylar Gregg, Seminary Intern

## Tuesday - March 31, 2020

A Lenten Hymn

*The Christ, Who Walks Among Us Still*

Tune: Palmer Square

The Christ, who walks among us still,  
Is calling us to greet  
The souls, this day, akin to those  
Who walked the Naz'reth street.

The call of Christ is heard again,  
As one in Galilee,  
The fisher and the merchant lord  
Become both you and me.

The sacrament of bread and wine  
Begins the life of care,  
When liturgy of love prevails  
For all, a task to share.

Then take our lives, O Christ, this day.  
Transform and e'er refine.  
As, it the Cana feast, you changed  
The water into wine.

The Christ, who walks among us still,  
Is calling us to greet  
The souls, this day, akin to those,  
Who walked the Naz'reth street.

Prayer: May the call of God in Christ be evidenced by the life he has transformed and we must ever refine. Amen

**Wednesday - April 1, 2020**

**Matthew 22: 23-33**

As we reflect during the season of Lent, many people enjoy reading the scriptures on a daily basis in preparation for the celebration of Easter and gain a better understanding of its real meaning.

The 22nd chapter of Matthew's Gospel describes the question posed to Jesus in his confrontation by the Jewish religious leaders. The Sadducees, a small powerful group of aristocrats in society who controlled the temple, questioned Jesus about what marriage would be like in heaven?

Jesus responded by saying, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures and you don't know the power of God. For when the dead rise, they will neither marry or be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the Angels in heaven. But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead, haven't you ever read about this in the Scriptures?"

Jesus continued to say that it is more important to understand God's power than to know what heaven will be like. We tend to envision heaven by experiences and images in present life. Our concentration should be more focused on our personal relationship with God instead of what eternity will look like. Eventually, all believers will experience heaven and it will be beyond our greatest expectations.

"Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. So he is the God of the living, not the dead.'"

During the Lenten season, let us feel God's presence by focusing on how alive Jesus is among us every day. He wants us to live with this reality. How would we treat and care for people if Jesus was standing beside us everywhere we go? He wants us living in the present and not missing opportunities because we are so caught up in little details of life.

Marsha and Don Swift

**Thursday - April 2, 2020**

## **Philippians 1:1-11**

Timothy helped Paul found the Christian Church in Philippi which had been, until this time, the center of Bacchus, mystery religions and Roman Emperor worship.

Timothy and Paul had become servants of Christ, and as such had no will of their own, no business of their own nor time of their own. They were acting for Christ, dependent upon him and obedient to him.

Paul's summation of the Christian life: the most intimate and living union between the believer and his Lord.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us examine the true Christianity in our lives during this Lenten season. Are we servants of Christ and are we leading the lives he would ask us to lead? If we are, ask that we continue and if not, help us to ask his guidance that we may change and seek to become his servants. Amen

Carole Sue Muller

Friday - April 3, 2020

## Philippians 1:21-30

*27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well – 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*

In this scripture, Paul is being held under guard and some of his followers have become suspicious. Paul asks us to put our faith in Jesus Christ no matter what struggles come our way.

Prayer: Dear Lord, when we come to that bump in the road and the world seems to be closing in on us, help us remember that we can turn to you. We know that the troubles won't magically disappear, but your presence will help us become more at peace with the situation. Amen

**Saturday - April 4, 2020**

**Mark 10: 32-34**

During this season of Lent, we remember that Jesus took the road *toward* Jerusalem. He knew exactly where he was going and what lay ahead. His disciples were "amazed" that he voluntarily chose this road and that he "walked ahead of them" with strength and tenacity, while they followed and "were afraid." Jesus did not sugar coat what would happen. He told his followers: "The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests. . .and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise."

As we travel with Jesus, we will encounter evil, trials and tribulations, and even death, but his strength helps us overcome our fears. On our journey, we experience his truth: Easter follows the cross. Let us remember his strength and his revelation.

Kathy Waldo

## Palm Sunday - April 5, 2020

### Matthew 21:1-11

In the village, the crowds gathered shouting hosannas and praising God with bold exclamations, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Jesus Christ sits humbly atop a borrowed donkey fulfilling the words of the prophet Zechariah and simultaneously through his actions, this promised messiah reminds us that he is not the God we expect but rather a humble servant. And if we are honest, it is so easy to get drawn in by the festivities of the parade, the unbridled joy and emotion exuding from the crowd as they shout praise and raise their voices. We forget for a moment what is coming. This boisterous joy filled parade will not last for long.

And thus, we need to stop, pause and reflect that this donkey trod road with strewn palms is indeed the road to the cross. We need to be keenly aware of how quickly the crowds voice in scripture will change from shouts of praise-filled exclamation to that of “Crucify!”

We must place ourselves on that dusty street and just as we imagine raising our palm branches high, we must prepare ourselves to become the misguided crowd that soon gathers demanding his death. For as soon as we read this scripture passage, we then must realize that we are located between two crowds, the one that gathers in happy celebration, waving green palm branches and soon to form angry mobs filled with resentment. And despite how quickly humanity shifts our stance, God loves us still for God’s ways are neither the world’s way nor the ways of earthly rulers. God’s powerful love is beyond our comprehension. Martin Luther once summarized it this way, “Jesus sits not upon a proud steed, an animal of war, nor does he come in great pomp and power, but sitting upon an ass, an animal of peace fit only for burden and labor and a help to man. He indicates by this that he comes not to frighten [us], nor to drive or crush [us], but to help [us] and to carry [our] burden[s]” (Martin Luther, Sermons of Martin Luther, p. 19)

Rev. Michelle Junkin

**Monday - April 6, 2020**

*Reprinted from 2008*

**John 12:1-11**

*Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair.*

Lord, help me to accomplish the things that are put in front of me, as easy or as difficult as they may be.

I know that life will not always be painless, but with the strength that you install in me, I know that you will carry me through the challenges that are presented.

Let me hear your voice over the words of doubt that may be whispered in my ear.

You cast a ray of light around me when all that I can see is darkness.

Your ever-present love assures me that the toughest choices may be endured. Amen

**Tuesday - April 7, 2020**

**1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

In 1971 I joined Westminster Presbyterian Church and Susan renewed her membership when we moved to Oklahoma City. When we met with the Session each candidate for membership was asked “Why are you joining Westminster?”

I have no memory of my response except it was trite and definitely not remembering. The next person to answer the question was a 16-year-old young man who replied, “Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior and I am joining to worship God”.

From this experience I learned to listen in any surrounding and from any individual for the word of God.

Prayer: Dear God, open my heart and ears to hear your word. Amen

Don Hager

**Wednesday - April 8, 2020**

*Reprinted from 2006*

**John 12:20-28**

Merciful God, you provide our for our every need. You hear our prayers and give heed to our calling. Help us to see that as the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, from it springs the stalk that produces much fruit. Help us not cling to old ways that hinder our ability to realize the hope of the gospel. Rather, let what we glean from the past lead us to a fresh insight, so that we may mature in faith.

Jesus Christ, your Son, was sent to us as a sign of your love and who, throughout his life, offered up prayers on behalf of the least of those among your people. He taught us to follow his example to care for those whom the world considers unimportant and insignificant. Thank you that through his death on the cross, the gift of grace is available to all. You strengthen us each day by your blessings and love. So let us, in turn, give help to others who are less fortunate.

And dear Lord, open our hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit, kindle in us the fire of your love, and strengthen our lives for service in your kingdom.

It is in Christ's name that we pray. Amen

## Maundy Thursday – April 9, 2020

*Reprinted from 2014*

### Exodus 12:1-14

Answers Come and Go, But a Good Question...(Ex 12:1-14)

A rabbi friend once told me that the difference between Christians and Jews is this – Christians come to church wanting answers; Jews go to Synagogue wanting questions – or at least to trade in old, worn out questions for new, better questions.

The story of the Passover is given instructing the Hebrews to obey the commands of God explicitly, but at the same time institute the practice of inviting questions. The Passover celebration would commence each annual celebration with the children asking the adults: “Why is this night different from every other night?” This was more than a *pro forma* exercise. True education comes by questioning authority and encourage the learning to place a higher value on wanting to know than on wanting to be told.

As educational psychology teaches, that in place of dead-end questions and answers, a skilled teacher gives the student a “long arc” of questions and answers. Across this long arc of questions and answers, they pursue an investigation in which simple factual inquiries give way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge. For an observer, there is an impression of a kind of mutually constructed improvisation unfolding (Mehan 1978).

Being asked “why” can be irritating, but it is also the occasion for broadening and deepening not only our knowledge, but our faith.

Answers come and answers go, but a good question can last a lifetime!

Rev. Randy Spindle

## Good Friday – April 10, 2020

### Hebrews 10:VS 19-25 \*

In this message I hear that although following the “rules and regulations” may bring good behavior medals, the results from “living the faith” will be more rewarding “as the Day approaches”.

How does one “live the faith”? John tells us. Keep a true heart that holds no evil conscience, and keep our bodies washed with pure water. He further pleads with us to have love for each other, worship together and encourage all good deeds.

We thank you, God, for helping us to lovingly hold to the confession of hope that as we live in faith, we will overcome our doubts and fears and grow closer to you and all of your creations.

\*Life Application Bible NRSV

Patti Leeman

## Holy Saturday – April 11, 2020

Meantimes...

For a Christian there are times between...  
neither full of pain, nor full of joy,  
ordinary times,  
steady-as-you-go times,  
...meantimes.

Times like today  
between Good Friday and Easter,  
between agony and ecstasy,  
between calamity and celebration,  
between valley and peak,  
between death...and new lift.  
...meantimes.

What do you and I do in our “meantimes”?

Prayer: We thank you for your ever-present Spirit, God, as we lean away from yesterday’s agony and stretch toward tomorrow’s joys. We know you are with us at all times even when we don’t recognize it, or feel it, or act like it. Thank you, God, for your ever-present Spirit.  
Amen

Richard Hershberger – 1982

## Easter Sunday – April 12, 2020

### Luke 24:13-35

One of my favorite experiences is something that I have included in the pilgrimages to Israel that I have led during my ministry. It happens on a Sunday. We often spend the day in continuing our visits to the important places in Jerusalem, but in the late afternoon, we get on the bus and begin a short drive to a small town called Emmaus. As we drive along the countryside, we can imagine this road back in Jesus' time, as people would walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. When our bus arrives there, we are at an ancient monastery. The sanctuary of the monastery has some of the oldest frescos in the world. In that special room, the monks and nuns sing through a beautiful service honoring the events that occurred in that town on the Sunday evening of the first Easter Sunday.

This monastery, and this service, honor the scripture passage before us in this devotional. On the evening of Easter Sunday, two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The Risen Christ joins them on the journey, but they do not recognize him until they arrive in Emmaus and spend time in a meal with him. It is when they spend time in fellowship with him that their eyes are open, and they recognize that he is, indeed, the risen Christ.

In your own spiritual walk, I invite you to take the journey to Emmaus. Perhaps Jesus is always walking by your side, but you fail to recognize him too. Spend time in fellowship with Jesus, breaking spiritual bread. Then too your eyes can be open, and you can see the living, risen Christ standing by your side!

Have a blessed Easter!

Dr. Paul J Kirbas  
Pastor/Head of Staff

## Notes