

Trinity Church  
Daily

Devotions for Lent



## Epigraph

*Lent invites us to make our hearts ready for remembering Jesus' passion and celebrating Jesus' resurrection. ... As a period of preparation, Lent has historically included the instruction of persons for baptism and profession of faith on Easter Sunday; the calling back of those who have become estranged from the church; and efforts by all Christians to deepen their piety, devotion, and readiness to mark the death and resurrection of their Savior. As such, the primary focus of the season is to explore and deepen a "baptismal spirituality" that centers on our union with Christ rather than to function only as an extended meditation on Christ's suffering and death.*

- Emily Brink and John D. Witvliet, *The Worship Sourcebook*, pages 551-552

# Introduction

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;  
they shall run, and not be weary;  
and they shall walk, and not faint.*

**--Isaiah 40:31 (King James Version)**

Last spring, in a sermon, I said that the pandemic would be for us a marathon rather than a sprint. I received quite a few responses from our church family about that sermon. Some people appreciated the marathon analogy, while others thought I was being too negative. A few thought I was simply wrong. However you were thinking about the future during March and April of last year, it seems clear—as we enter the second year of living in a time of pandemic—that we are running a marathon.

There have been other marathons for many of us: health challenges, work difficulties, family wear and tear. There is also the national backdrop of these last twelve months. The work of racial justice is also something that will require a marathon approach of commitment and energy; there is no sprint in that regard, either. Of course, the Lenten season can seem to be something of a marathon, with its talk about repentance and renewal, sin and forgiveness. For many of us, the weeks of Lent are marked by attempts at giving up something (chocolate or soda or alcohol or television or gossiping or Facebook, etc.) or taking something up (daily Bible reading or making sandwiches to Cathedral Kitchen or praying more or doing a kind thing each day for someone, etc.). It can seem like a long stretch from February 17 to April 4...kind of like a spiritual marathon.

Of course, the Christian life is a commitment to what Eugene Peterson called “a long obedience in the same direction.” Isaiah says that to keep on waiting, to keep on running, to keep on walking is exactly how we experience the blessing of knowing the God revealed in Jesus Christ and made known by the Holy Spirit. This little book of devotions will help you with the marathon . . . of Lent and of life in 2021.

I would like to take this moment, as we begin the Lenten journey, to thank all of those who have contributed to Trinity's Lenten Devotional 2021. Susan Bastnagel served again as our editor and Alysia Badskey once more oversaw the formatting and production of the devotional. We owe them deep thanks. I also would like to thank the chair of the Adult Ministries Committee, Elder Larry Miller, for his support and continued reaching out to our members, inviting people to write a devotion. We owe Larry and the entire AMC (*Elder Kim Windt, Eby Banas, Stacey Blackmer, Barb DeSanto, Michele Strobel, Linda Thorpe, Donna Croker and Ed Behrens*) our gratitude for their good work. *(continued on next page)*

This is our ninth Trinity Lenten Devotional and I would like to express my thankfulness for being part of this project. I have been inspired and moved and gratified to read the expressions of our members' faith, hope and love; as I'm sure can be said by every contributor, I found in preparing devotions that my own spiritual life was deepened.

As you move through this devotional, you will find that, on weekdays (Monday-Friday), the devotion follows the common format of Scripture passage, devotional thought, and closing prayer.

Saturdays provide you a prayer by a famous African American; the faith conveyed in each prayer speaks to our hope for a Church that works for justice for all people. In the Western Church, Sundays are not part of Lent since Sundays are always days of celebrating the Resurrection and are technically exempt from Lenten observance. For our Sunday devotional time, I have given the Gospel passage suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary for this year in the church's three-year worship cycle. This means that a passage from the writings of the Apostles is offered to help us "run and not grow weary."

I hope that each devotion will be a gift for you and that you will make time to slow down and to read, pray and meditate; if you do, I'm believing you "shall mount up with wings as eagles." I am sure that all those on the Adult Ministries Committee join me in praying for all of us at Trinity: May the Lord use these devotions and your time with them to help you in this marathon

so you might wait, and be raised up;  
so you might run, and not grow weary;  
so you might walk, and not faint.

With My Prayers for You and Asking for Yours,

Gregory

# Day 1

## ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

### **Matthew 6:17-18**

*But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

If you grew up in a church that observed Lent, then you probably remember childhood conversations around the question: What are you giving up for Lent? A friend of mine says she gave up chocolate when she was a child and when she got to college, she added soda to her Lenten practice. To this day: chocolate and soda are off her early Spring diet. That might work for someone. It might be helpful for you. Honestly, I like chocolate too much!

Seriously, though, isn't Lent about more than giving up chocolate or beer or meat?

Maybe Lent is really less about giving something up and more about realizing that God wants to give us something. Jesus seems to say that fasting for the sake of fasting accomplishes little. Fasting as a way to focus more on God's presence in our lives seems to be what Christ points to as the way of spiritual growth. Lent is about our getting to know the Father as he gives himself to us; the purpose of giving up things, if we do give something up, might be so we are more open to the gift of God in our lives.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me in this Lent not to be so focused on what I'm giving up. Help me, instead, to be more aware of what you are giving me in the secret place where your Heart speaks to mine. Amen.

# Day 2

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

**Confusing the Seasons?**

**John 15:13**

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

*Celebrate His coming, meditate the cost.  
Look beyond the cradle and behold the cross.*

When I first sang *Christmas Communion Song* (music by Susan Naylor Callaway and lyrics by John A. Ray), I was struck by the reference to what seemed to be a Lenten message as part of a Christmas anthem. Isn't Christmas supposed to be a happy and joyful time? Why are we being told to contemplate the cross when we are focused on the birth of Jesus?

Upon further reflection, I realized that without the cross, the manger loses its meaning. Christ comes to us at Christmas in what is God's introduction to His love. The ultimate culmination of that love is demonstrated in the fact that this baby has come to save us all from our sin by dying on the cross. God's plan is evident only if we realize that the glory of the manger is pointing to the sacrifice of the cross.

**Prayer:** As we progress through the Lenten season, may we never forget that God's love for us is shown by the sacrifice of the cross. His love is constant and unfailing.

# Day 3

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021**

**Mark 9:18-24**

*Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you are able! —All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!"*

Faith, it seems to me, is a living, growing thing. Like anything that is alive, faith takes attention and care and the right kinds of nutrients. Lent is a good time to ask the Lord to increase our faith; to help this living trust in God to grow.

What is God inviting me to change this Lent? How do I know what God might be stirring in me? I begin my listening to the movements in my heart. Where am I feeling uncomfortable with the choices I am making? With the things I have done? With the habitual ways I respond? The Lord will be speaking to me in those small nagging moments of discomfort in my heart.

Asking where Christ would have us grow is a central question for Lent. What pattern of behavior in my life needs changing? What do I need more of in my life? Patience? Unselfishness? More loving behavior toward my spouse or children? Where is Jesus nudging my faith to increase? Key to the process of growing in Christ is asking the Lord and then being willing to listen, all the while having an attitude that says: 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!'

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I believe! Help my unbelief! I invite your Holy Spirit to guide me in being a more faithful follower. Grow my faith, Lord! Help me to stop resisting and begin anew in trusting your amazing grace in my life. This I ask in your saving name. Amen.

**Greg Faulkner**

# Day 4

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021**

*God, you know how much I am distressed,  
for I have told you again and again.  
Now, God, help me get my son.  
If you were in trouble, as I am,  
and I could help you, as you can me,  
think I wouldn't do it?  
Yes, God, you know I would do it...  
Oh, God, you know I have no money,  
but you can make the people do for me,  
and you must make the people do for me.  
I will never give you peace till you do, God.*

from *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*

Sojourner Truth was born Isabella "Belle" Baumfree around 1797. She was an American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Born into slavery in New York, Truth escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. After going to court to recover her son in 1828, she became the first black woman in America to win such a case against a white man. She reported frequently offering the above prayer as she worked for her son's emancipation. She died in 1883.

# Day 5

## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

### Mark 1:9-15

*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.*

*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."*

# Day 6

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

## **Musings on God's Providence**

### **Matthew 6:26**

*Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

"You are," I am paraphrasing the middle part of that long-ago letter from the medical school's admission office, "exceptionally qualified. But the admission policy of this medical school requires that the applicant has had at least a semester of Latin. You had none and we cannot accept you."

A couple of months earlier I applied and received a scholarship from the only government-sponsored medical school in the Philippines. A scholarship meant free tuition, free books, and free board and lodging but the scholarship depended on being accepted by the Admission Committee. I was not accepted for lack of a language requirement. There were no student loan programs, corporate sponsors, or any other scholarships available. My father told me that he could finance one year but I had seven other siblings, six of them younger than me, who depended on my parents. I was subsequently accepted by another medical school.

Midway through my freshman year I got a letter from a group I had never heard of before: The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society or ABFMS. ABFMS told me it would pay for all my medical tuition if I agreed to do an internship in one of its two Mission Hospitals, a condition quite agreeable to me. Then a businessman told me he would help pay for my board and lodging if I helped him distribute his radios in the towns surrounding my hometown. Now, as Paul Harvey used to say in his radio program, you know the rest of the story.

This was not the only time God's providence helped me. After finishing the 6th grade (there was no 7th or 8th grade during my time), I had to go to high school 45 miles away. My affordable school closed after my first year but Providence (I think I'll use this word from now on instead of the word luck) led me to a school founded by Baptist missionaries. The school told me it would waive the tuition fees if I agreed to do school maintenance work for my education. They called us "work-students." My first year involved cleaning three to four rooms (each room hosted 40 students) after each school day and waxing the floor one or two times a week. After my first year I was promoted to the school librarian. I did this until I finished my pre-medical degree.

*(continued on next page)*

I was looking for examples of God's providence while trying to write this devotional. Then I remembered my own journey and said, why not share my own? My understanding of God's providence is simple. God is taking care of you and me no matter what happens, just like the birds in the verse from Matthew. But in some sense, God's providence is much deeper. It involves his Sovereignty. It involves his attribute of Transcendence, that he is apart from and far higher than us, His creation. It involves His Immanency, that he is in us, with us, and upholds us.

Henceforth I will look at each fluttering wing with a little more awe and each lily with a little more wonder. God is *Transcendent* and *Immanent* and never, as one poet used to say, shall the twain meet. But didn't God bring His transcendence to dwell immanently in each and every one of us?

**Prayer:** Thank you God.

# Day 7

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021**

**Matthew 5: 13-16**

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

I am writing this on January 8<sup>th</sup> and I am filled with sadness over the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> at the United States Capitol—the “People’s House” as it is called. I remember taking our children there many years ago and being in awe of the beauty and power of its significance in our country’s history.

It has been more months than any of us wish to count since we have been able to worship in our house, the one we call Trinity. Our steeple and cross shine as a beacon of light for all to see. A dedicated group of volunteers has worked tirelessly to bring us together for Sunday worship and other events, sometimes through trial and error, but their work has been such a blessing to us all, giving us a light and allowing our children to be connected even though they are apart.

Our mission works continue and the outpouring of support for Cathedral Kitchen and the Cherry Hill Food Pantry, to name just a few, has been overwhelming—a light in the lives of many that we will never meet but who God has called us to help feed.

We have been enlightened on racial issues, the experiences and fears of some of our members, and we have listened to Pastor Greg and Rabbi David educate us on our relationship with our Jewish neighbors. Trinity’s light has continued to shine and as the church is the people, we have proven that these many isolated months.

In the words of Thomas Rhett’s song *Be a Light*:

*In a world full of hate, be a light.*

*When you do somebody wrong make it right.*

*Oh, don’t hide in the dark, you were born to shine,*

*In a world full of hate be a light.*

May this be true for all of us in the days to come.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant us peace and light in the days to come as we continue to shine from your love for us. Amen.

# Day 8

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021**

**Joshua 1:9**

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

**Psalm 29:11**

*The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.*

I've been doing a lot of introspection lately, trying to figure out who I used to be, who I am now, who I'd like to be as I grow older. I know that when I was younger, in my pre-teens and through most of high school, I wasn't always afraid. I had the sense that nothing wrong or bad could happen to me. I was invincible as I climbed trees, rode my bicycle, had my first date.

As I grew older and saw more of life, I became more afraid that "things" would hurt me, would cause me pain. I was afraid all the time – that I was a bad person, that the decisions I made would be wrong, that the people I spent time with would hurt me more. I lost sight of myself during this time and saw myself as weak and undeserving of even the simple pleasures in life.

It took just a few close friends to see me through some tumultuous times; they stayed by my side to show me that I wasn't weak. I was truly deserving of happiness, a new life for myself, one where I believed in all the possibilities. I started to realize that not only did I need to use the strength that I was given by God for myself, but for a good life for my son as well.

Now that I have rebuilt my life and moved on from my past, I am contemplating where to go from here. What do I want to be now that I am a grown-up? What do I want my accomplishments to say about me? How do I continue moving through my fears into the life that God wants me to live? I know that life is a journey, and that God is by my side no matter what choices I make. Knowing that makes my angst dissipate and I look forward to my future.

**Prayer:** My God, I know that you are by my side. No matter what choices I make, I am strong because of you. This strength gives me peace.

**Michele Strobel**

# Day 9

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021**

***Be Still and Know That I Am God***

**Psalm 46: 1 & 10**

*God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.*

*Be still and know that I am God.*

I have kept this verse in the back of my mind this past year.

I have tried to be still and let the scientists figure out what is best to combat this virus. Thank goodness for the knowledge we have obtained and the wonderful doctors and scientists that have been working on a solution to this pandemic.

The best thing we could do this past year was to be still and not spread this disease. While it goes against our natural desire to gather in times of need, unless we were doing something to help, we knew we should stay away from others and let God work through the people that could help figure this out.

Some have not had the option to just be still. We have needed essential workers, and I have prayed for God to be with them. There are others who have not been able to put food on the table or provide the necessities of life for their families. The pandemic has also put a strain on relationships—Who do I choose to see and keep in contact with? What is safe? Will they understand? I am glad that we have the technology to keep in touch and check on those we love.

“Be still” has taken on a very different meaning this year, but in the stillness, I’ve held fast to the knowledge that God is with us.

**Prayer:** Lord as we go into this year may we appreciate the ability to gather together as a congregation and sing and praise you and listen to your word. Thanks be to God that we have been able to gather in our homes and worship you through the technology that has been developed.

**Linda Craven**

# Day 10

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021**

## **Psalm 91:1-2**

*You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."*

The storm was worsening. The rain had gotten to such a force that it was almost impossible to see the highway in front of us. In the car, we debated: should we pull off the road or keep going and hope for the storm to pass. As the winds picked up, shoving the car out of its lane, we decided; at the next overpass, we're pulling over.

For half an hour, we sat under the protecting presence of a highway overpass, one of many other cars seeming to huddle together as the winds and rain worked together in a fury. The rain was beating down all around us; the nearby trees were shimmering back and forth from the blasts of wind but we were safe under the cover of our concrete protection.

So many days, it has been the promise of the Almighty's nearness that has gotten us through 2020. Hoping in the sovereignty of our faithful Creator has helped us face the terrible—and often silent—fury of the last 12 months. We have learned again and again that in the midst of life, God is our truest protection. The storms of life come to all of us, but how we get through them makes the difference. Where we find our protection does change things; it changes us.

Perhaps today you can think about how the Lord watches over you and cares for you, even in—perhaps especially in—the midst of life's storms. When you think about God's loving care today, also thank him for his nearness.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, thank you that you are my truest refuge and surest protection when the storms of life rage. When the winds howl and the rain beats down, help me to sense you are all around me and that whatever happens, with you, I am safe. Amen.

**Greg Faulkner**

# Day III

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2021**

*Give us grace, O God,  
to dare to do the deed which we well know cries to be done.  
Let us not hesitate because of ease,  
or the words of men's mouths,  
or our own lives.  
Mighty causes are calling us—  
the freeing of women,  
the training of children,  
the putting down of hate and murder and poverty—  
all these and more.  
But they call with voices  
that mean work and sacrifices and death.  
Mercifully grant us, O God, the spirit of Esther,  
That we say: I will go unto the King and if I perish, I perish.*

Educator and civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963) became the first African American to receive a doctorate from Harvard. In this prayer, Du Bois recalls the Biblical story of Esther, who daringly confronts her husband, King Xerxes, and demands that he overturn his court's order to kill all the Jews of the Persian Empire.

# Day 12

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

### Mark 8:31-38

*Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."*

*He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

# Day 13

**MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021**

## **Minding My Own Business**

### **Romans 14:1-12**

*But as for you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you as well, why do you regard your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all appear before the judgment seat of God.*

I like to read the daily “Our Times” meditation and prayer booklet. Sometimes the lesson hits so close to home that I pull it out and keep it. That happened on September 10, 2020. Our country was in the midst of an intense and divisive presidential election. Truth was blurred, lines were drawn, and many, so many, good people found themselves on one side or the other of a deep political divide. This was upsetting and unsettling and these verses offered me comfort and a directive. That directive: Take care of my own life before God and do not judge or worry about what others are doing.

In these verses, Paul tells Christians to go and serve their Lord, to forget comparing their faith and practices with the next person. It is not about how good you are at being a Christian, but how we live to serve God. Paul uses the example of people who fast or eat only vegetables who may look down on their non-fasting brothers and sisters. Fasting may focus these people on prayer and be a blessing for them. However, another person might find fasting an unhelpful distraction and avoid the practice.

Paul tells us that God has already given us God’s Law. All other religious rules and regulations are simply manmade and can be unnecessary obstacles in the path to our redemption. Judgment is God’s alone.

Who am I to judge? To weigh my neighbor’s faith or actions? I need to worry about my own faith and whether I am keeping God’s law. I need to mind my own business.

**Prayer:** God of mercy and love teach me to look at all of your people with love and acceptance.

# Day 14

**TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021**

**Isaiah 41:10**

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

**1 Peter 5: 6-7**

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

So much of what is happening in this country and the world today seems to be driven by fear: fear of a virus, fear of others who are different than ourselves, fear about the damage we are doing to the environment, fear about the future of this country, fear of economic uncertainty. The list seems to go on and on.

What does the Bible say about fear? The term "fear not" appears in the Bible over 350 times. Admittedly, it is used in a variety of different contexts, but there does seem to be an underlying message.

There are many great scripture verses to choose from when considering fear. Isaiah 41:10 very clearly states "**do not fear**" and that God "**will strengthen you and help you.**" This is about as clear as it gets.

1 Peter 5: 6-7 commands us to "**humble yourselves.**" This tells me I need to let go of my ego and accept that I am not in control and not the "master of my universe" when I bring my fears to God. It says, "**that He may lift you up in due time.**" This reminds me that I need to be patient (not one of my strong points). Things will happen in God's time, not mine. It again directs me to "**cast my anxiety (another word for fear) on Him.**" And finally, it tells me why: "**because he cares for you.**"

The message from these two verses is crystal clear: Do not be afraid. We have a loving God who will strengthen us and help us if only we humble ourselves and bring our fears to him. So why do I have so much trouble letting go of my fears (and the worry that accompanies them) and trusting God?

**Prayer:** Good and gracious God, you know that we live in a world full of fear. When life gets to be too much, please help me come to you. Calm my thoughts and emotions and open my heart to your peace, comfort, and wisdom. Help me not to live in fear and become paralyzed by it. Guide me on what I can do to address the causes of fear and be a contributor to positive change. In Your Name, I pray, Jesus. Amen.

**Anonymous**

# Day 15

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021**

## **Philippians 4:7-8**

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

I have used the term “a good person” many times to describe people who have had a positive impact on my life and the lives of others. Since my wife Linda’s first diagnosis of Renal Cell Carcinoma in 2012, I have met many “good people.” There have been doctors, nurses, technicians, hospital maintenance staff, and cafeteria workers who have been such “good people.” (I hope that if I were to meet them again, it would be somewhere outside of a hospital.) Obviously, I also feel surrounded by good people in my daily life. Good people who have provided food and friendship and love to both me and Linda. Good people who have seen my tears and sorrow and have been there to help just by being themselves.

Paul’s message to the people of Philippi gives a guide for us as Christians: that we allow God to take care of our hearts and minds while we turn our focus to those things which are pleasing to Him. I am blessed to have so many in my life who fit Paul’s message.

**Prayer:** God our Father, please help me to focus on those “good people” who fill my world and help me to be “a good person”!

# Day 16

**THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021**

**Proverbs 22:6**

*Train up a child in the way he should go and even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

This verse in Proverbs is familiar to many parents. It is to guide Mom and Dad to nurture and raise children in faith. Parents are to build a strong foundation to sustain that child in faith throughout their lives.

One of the Epiphany star words we received this year was “nurturing.” I immediately thought of how I brought my children to the church nursery and how the years of Sunday School and Commissioning class led to my oldest confessing their faith over a decade ago.

As we became empty nesters, I needed to turn that nurturing instinct inward. I went from helping as a parent with the choirs and bells to joining the adult choir. After years of teaching Sunday School and Commissioning, I took an Adult Education class here and there. I needed to nurture my own faith to keep it strong.

**Prayer:** Dear God, Please guide me in ways that will nurture my faith. Help me to nurture the faith within myself, so that I am better able to help nurture faith in others. Amen.

**Jen Dukelow**

# Day 17

**FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021**

## **Exodus 20:8-11**

*Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.*

## **Matthew 11:28-30**

*Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Sunday was never a day of rest for me—there was always so much to do! Get up early and be at church early for either bell rehearsal or choir rehearsal. Spend a restful, restorative hour in worship (and thank goodness for that!), then go to the choir room, hang up my robe, and run to Fellowship Hall for a cup of coffee or signups before going to Adult Ed or a Membership Info Session or any number of other meetings. Hit Wegmans on the way home to buy dinner and supplies for the upcoming work week. Finally, at around 2:00 pm, I could change into my sweatpants and relax a bit, before starting the laundry and cooking dinner. Sunday was often a totally exhausting day!

And then the pandemic hit, and I was forced to reimagine not only my Sabbath practices, but my entire existence, and, out of necessity, I was finally able to fully indulge in Sabbath rest.

Miriam Circle is studying Walter Brueggemann's book, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying NO to the CULTURE OF NOW*. The first lesson spoke to all of us, as we learned that God didn't just give us the Sabbath as a gift, God actually mandates rest for us. In the preface, Brueggemann quotes author Michael Fishbane:

*Sabbath is a sphere of inaction. On the Sabbath, the practical benefits of technology are laid aside, and one tries to stand in the cycle of natural time, without manipulation or interference. To the degree possible, one must attempt to bring the qualities of inaction and rest into the heart and mind ... The Sabbath is thus a period of sacred stasis, a duration of sanctity through the cultivation of inaction in body and spirit.*

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We also learned that the telomeres within our cells (which are a sort of countdown clock of cell life) are regenerated during rest. So, resting is not only good for our spiritual lives, observing Sabbath rest could literally lengthen our lives!

When life is “back to normal,” my hope is that I’ll continue to take the gift of Sabbath as seriously as I do now. As Greg often says, may God make it so for me, may God make it so for you, may God make it so for all of us.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for your gift of Sabbath. Our culture is full of restless anxiety, and we are indeed weary and heavy laden. Teach us how to lean into your gift of Sabbath rest. In the name of Jesus, who calls us to take his yoke upon us, and find rest for our souls, Amen.

**Pam Dougherty**

# Day 18

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2021**

*Father, we call Thee Father because we love Thee.*

*We are glad to be called Thy children,  
and to dedicate our lives to the service  
that extends through willing hearts and hands  
to the betterment of all mankind.*

*We send a cry of Thanksgiving for people  
of all races, creeds, classes, and colors the world over,  
and pray that through the instrumentality  
of our lives the spirit of peace, joy, fellowship,  
and brotherhood shall circle the world.*

*We know that this world is filled with discordant notes,  
but help us, Father, to so unite our efforts  
that we may all join in one harmonious  
symphony for peace and brotherhood,  
justice, and equality of opportunity for all men.*

*The tasks performed today  
with forgiveness for all our errors,  
we dedicate, dear Lord, to Thee.*

*Grant us strength and courage  
and faith and humility sufficient  
for the tasks assigned to us.*

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) was one of 17 children born to parents who had once been slaves. She was an American educator, philanthropist, humanitarian, and civil rights activist. Appointed as an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Bethune was the only African American woman officially a part of the US delegation that created the United Nations charter.

# Day 19

## THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 7, 2021

### John 2:13-22

*The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

# Day 20

**MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021**

**Luke 2:38**

*And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.*

Like many of you, I found that prayer and moments of contemplative silence helped me navigate the turbulent waters of the very early COVID-19 lockdown we experienced. I noticed that as the weeks and months passed, there was an increased emphasis on the ways to deal with our worldwide epidemic. Those of faith were drawn to various methods of comfort while some who were perhaps lapsed from their faith, found renewed sustenance from online services and calls to prayer. I used all of these methods to get through the year and also found immense satisfaction in my sewing room where my mind is allowed to settle and think about the fabrics I use, whose homes have been warmed by my quilts, or the masks I created.

I also came across an Australian quilter who designed a "Women of Advent" quilt, the construction of which was to span the entire month of November. The concept was really intriguing to me and I began to make a quilt for Hayley's new church. (Hayley, my daughter, was ordained in December as a pastor in the Church of Scotland.) Each week I received patterns and daily devotionals related to the women who inspired each of the 24 blocks. The passages were mainly about Old Testament women whose faith was unshakable and formed the foundation of the generations who preceded Mary. The impact that women of the Bible have on our faith journey is well documented as the names of our Presbyterian Women's circles are all women of remarkable faith. Reading about each of the "Women of Advent" and their struggles to maintain their commitment in times of great personal challenges made me consider the women of Trinity and their dedication to our Christian lives. It also highlighted the women in my life who have been influential in my personal faith journey.

Consider the individuals in your life who have nurtured your faith over your lifetime. Also, consider those whom you have influenced. We are truly fortunate to be surrounded by men, women, and children who have in one way or another supported and encouraged us this past year. My Lenten hope for you is that you continue to be a light for others and find a spark in your daily routine that leads you to silent prayer for all those who continue to suffer loss, pain or discouragement. And most importantly, don't forget to acknowledge others for their support of you – it will mean the world to them.

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**Prayer (Attributed to Anna Blythe, "Women of Advent"):** Loving God, thank you for the incredible prophets and teachers in my life. Thank you for their guidance in learning more about you and seeing your hand at work in my life. I want to grow closer to you and truly get to know you. Open my heart and my eyes to see you at work in the world around me, and to help others see your blessings too.

**Janet H. Cohen**

# Day 21

**TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021**

## **A Layman's Musing on One Unheralded Life**

**John 15: 13**

*Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

I was 7 or 8 years old when one of my maternal uncles was sent to jail. It was not a violent crime but a political one. In fact, it was not even his crime but his brother-in-law's.

In the 1950's, the struggle between democracy and communism in the Philippines was a lot more intense in the provinces and rural areas where my family lived. A group of pro-communist intellectuals was able to convince a significant number of previous anti-Japanese guerillas that communism would be better for the Philippines than democracy. To deprive the rebels of arms, the government ordered every citizen to surrender their arms to the army. There were a lot of arms because WWII just ended. My uncle's brother-in-law (his wife's brother) had several guns, acquired during his anti-Japanese guerilla days, stashed in the family property. The army discovered the weapons and was poised to put my uncle's brother-in-law in jail. My uncle had no children, but his brother-in-law had four young ones. His brother-in-law's wife and children would have had an incredibly difficult life with the family's main support in jail. My uncle had no children and he admitted ownership of the guns. He was sent to jail 200 miles away.

My uncle was one of those meek people who would have inherited the earth. He was not involved in the democracy/communist conflict, nor was he involved in the anti-Japanese guerilla movement. I don't even know if he could read or write since there were no books or magazines in his house and education was very limited in the rural areas at that time. He was content with tending his little farm and fishing in the nearby river. Since he and his wife had no children, he would bring my older brother and me to their simple three-acre farm once or twice a month. The farm was full of fruit trees and vegetables and the nearby river always seemed full of fish. I never heard him raise his voice, get angry, or express worry. He never talked about God or church, which was a half a day's walk away, but he always told me to love my parents and to be good to other people. I did not see him when he was released from jail 10 years later. I was away at school. He died a few months after his release, apparently from tuberculosis he got in jail.

I remembered my uncle while I was meditating on John's 15th chapter....

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Like some (or probably many) of you, I still wonder what happens to those who have never heard of Christ and only know the idea of the good. I am, of course, aware that good works cannot save, and that Paul came down hard on those who didn't believe in God because God is plainly manifested in the things that are made. Peter Abelard, the 11th century theologian and philosopher, somewhat sided with those pagans who are “more Christian” than Christians.

The Greeks have many names for love, including philia and agape. My uncle had, in a certain way, given his life to his wife's family. If my uncle were still around, I would have introduced him to One who has also given His life. My uncle had the greatest filial love and the one I would introduce him to had the greatest agape love, for “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

**Prayer:** Thank you, God. Although we do not understand the ultimacy of all things, we know we are in the hollow of your hands.

# Day 22

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021**

## **Habakkuk 3:17-19**

*Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines,  
The produce of the olive fall, and the fields yield no food,  
The flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,  
Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
God, the lord, is my strength; He makes my feet like hinds' feet,  
He makes me tread upon my high places.*

My wife Willemijn and I were reading through this chapter a few months ago as we finished our read-through of the Bible. This is one of the passages that stood out to me as “so 2020.” While we may not be able to fully grasp the lingering terror of an invading horde not far from our borders, as Habakkuk was written just before the Babylonian Captivity, we can definitely relate to the first half of this passage, which presents vivid images of utter despair, of everything going wrong. Lack of livelihood, being cut off from the support system that we unexpectedly realized that we are connected to, with no obvious relief in sight.

I’ve been lucky in that other than working from home, not much has changed with my job situation (in fact, I’ve dealt with a rather exhausting work schedule). But like so many others, I’ve shared the pain of losing good friends this past year and dealt with the daily stress of uncertainty. It seems like we have traveled so far down a one-way tunnel that returning to our “old normal” just isn’t a possibility.

It is striking, then, that Habakkuk follows it up with one of the greatest shows of faith imaginable, actually “rejoicing in the LORD.” He fully trusts in God to lead him onward through that tunnel, which may lead to new “higher places” with “hinds’ feet.” I believe that God is ultimately merciful to the faithful through all the trials and tribulations ahead.

**Prayer:** Most powerful and merciful Creator, I pray that you support us in all those times when the fields are barren and we are cut off from the fold. Continue to be our strength and help us to know that you are our supporter and sustainer, and we can reach out to our brothers and sisters to go rejoicingly through the tunnel ahead, confident that we will come out on the other side. Amen.

# Day 23

**THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021**

## **Be the Light**

### **Matthew 5: 14-16**

*You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

In the year 2020 we saw a lot of darkness. There was an invisible cloud that came over the earth. The virus was not something that we could physically see, but we saw the destruction it caused. Many have felt the ramifications of having to close businesses and not having enough.

But in the darkness, there were people shining their light. They were the people who kept things running with the supplies that were needed, those who helped the sick, and those who sought a cure. They were the grandmothers who helped to teach their grandchildren and those who shopped and checked on the elderly. As I write this, it is a Mission Thursday, a new church effort in the midst of the pandemic, to help shine light by collecting sandwiches and food for those in need.

May we continue to be a light in dark times whether there is a pandemic or not. May you find your light, whether it be actual sunlight, the smile of a child, music, or something else... and may you bring light to others through prayer, listening, or action.

**Prayer:** Lord help me to find my light and be the light to others. Amen.

# Day 24

**FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021**

**Spiritual and physical wellness are linked in several passages in Proverbs:**

**Proverbs 14:30**

*A tranquil heart is life to the body...*

**Proverbs 15:30**

*Bright eyes cheer the heart; good news strengthens the bones.*

**Proverbs 18:14**

*A person's spirit can endure sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit?*

**Proverbs 17:22**

*A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

A dry wall contractor came to our home by mistake, as often happens due to the proximity of 4 Lynford Court and 4 Lynford Road; a late-night delivery of pizza we didn't order is another example. As my husband donned his mask and explained the mix up, I quipped that we would gladly accept the pre-paid work on behalf of our neighbor. The man said it was refreshing to find someone with a sense of humor in this time of pandemic. The twinkle in his eyes revealed that he was smiling under his mask.

We need to wash our hands, keep our hands from our face, maintain social distance. But what about our spirit? I would add to avoid the news, connect with loved ones and our Trinity family, and look for ways to smile and even laugh.

I often try to find a way to lighten the mood and lift my spirit and that of others in difficult times—not to be irreverent but to make people smile. It feels good. There is evidence that there are health and life-lengthening benefits from maintaining a routine religious practice and a peaceful heart.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, Thank you for your gift of a sense of humor. Help me to let go of worry, stress, and pain about things over which I have no control. Empower me to find and share laughter and a joy in life. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Stacey Blackmer**

# Day 25

**SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2021**

*Our little lives, our big problems—  
these we place upon Your altar!  
The quietness in Your temple of silence  
again and again rebuffs us:  
For some there is no discipline  
to hold them steady in the waiting,  
And the minds reject the noiseless invasion of Your spirit.  
For some there is no will to offer  
what is central in the thoughts—  
The confusion is so manifest,  
there is no starting place to take hold.  
For some the evils of the world  
tear down all concentrations  
And scatter the focus of the high resolves.*

*We do not know how to do what we know to do.  
We do not know how to be what we know to be.  
Our little lives, our big problems—  
these we place upon Your altar!  
Pour out upon us whatever our spirits need  
of shock, of life, of release  
That we may find strength for these days—  
Courage and hope for tomorrow.*

*In confidence we rest in Your sustaining grace  
Which makes possible triumph in defeat,  
gain in loss, and love in hate.  
We rejoice this day to say:  
Our little lives, our big problems—  
these we place upon Your altar!*

Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was an American philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader. He was selected as the first dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University, serving there from 1932 to 1944. Leaving his tenured position at Howard, he helped establish the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, where he served as co-pastor with a white minister, Alfred Fisk. In 1953, Thurman was invited to be the dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University, a position he held until 1965. He was the first black dean of a chapel at a majority-white university or college in the United States. A prolific author, Thurman's theology of radical nonviolence influenced a generation of civil rights activists, to whom he was an important mentor, including Martin Luther King Jr.

# Day 26

## **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 14, 2021**

### **John 3:14-21**

*And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."*

# Day 27

**MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2021**

## **Jeremiah 1:4-8**

*Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord."*

An interesting aspect of call stories in the Holy Scriptures is that the one called often puts up excuses. Jeremiah said he was too young. Moses said he was not a public speaker. Esther objected that she would be in danger. Peter demurred because he was "a sinful man." Mary said that the whole idea was impossible. And, yet, the call came and the Almighty used them, in spite of their uncertainty of being fit for the call. Does it ever seem that you are not worthy of God's love for you? Do you sometimes think that God made a mistake when enlisting you in the divine mission? Well, you're in good company!

**Prayer:** God of surprising grace, I have heard your call to live as your dear child. Sometimes I cannot believe you have truly given me this vocation—it seems too great and, to be honest, too much. Help me to trust you; enable me to find in your call upon my life the freedom to rest in your love and to serve you with gladness. For Christ's sake I ask it. Amen.

**Greg Faulkner**

# Day 28

**TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021**

**John 13: 35**

*By this all people will know that you are disciples if you have love for one another.*

The bell rang in my high school Latin class of so many years ago and, as students gathered their books to move on to the next period, she approached my desk. It certainly was not an unusual occurrence, students often stopped to check a grade, schedule make-up work, or clarify a new grammar point. But her question caught me off guard. "Mrs. Thorpe, you go to church, don't you?" Her query was unusual since we were not yet studying Roman religion and nothing in our current reading addressed the subject. "Yes," I answered. "Why do you ask?" Her reply was as unexpected as her question. "I want to start a prayer group before school and would like you to be the advisor."

In that time of the clarifying division between church and state, I replied that she should talk to the principal about such a club in a public school and let me know what was said. She returned a week or so later to tell me that it was approved and that there was an open classroom on the first floor that we could use. In her hand was a morning announcement slip that she asked me to initial as advisor. I did so, not knowing what such a commitment would mean for me.

On the appointed date, I entered that first-floor room and waited with her. Soon we were joined by a half dozen or so students, many of whom I did not recognize. After a few minutes of milling around, she directed them to take a seat. And so the club began.

After a short introduction to the purpose of the group, she invited the students to pray aloud. And pray they did. I was moved by their earnest words. Prayers were not about themselves but about others, family members, friends and even the high school staff. They asked for healing, for insight, for reconciliation and "traveling mercies." Prayers were never self-serving but given over to the plight of others. How refreshing were their words. How they expanded my own beliefs and prayer life.

A few weeks later there was a National Day of Prayer and our student leader instructed the group that we would meet around the flagpole outside before the school day began. I was interested to see what the day might bring. Not only were we joined by those who had already come to the prayer group but also by other students and staff who were obviously wondering what we were doing. I learned, too, that there were even some clergy from the churches the students attended. Again, the students led the prayers and there was also a time for silent prayer on that beautiful sun-lit morning. (continued on next page)

Another faculty member expressed interest in joining us for the next meeting and several students approached the student leader to ask when the next meeting would be held.

And so, our numbers grew. In a year or so, the student organizer graduated; those who attempted to carry on did not have her same zeal and direction, so eventually that club ended. What continued, however, was the impression that they left on me and my own prayer life.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank you for the blessing of being recognized as a Christian for how I live my life. Thank you, too, for those who help to enrich and expand our Christian lives by observing theirs, no matter their age or church affiliation. Such are the blessings of the Christian community.

**Linda Thorpe**

# Day 29

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021**

**Mark 12:28-31**

*And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."*

Jesus taught us that loving God is the greatest commandment, and that the second commandment is to love our neighbor as our self. It is very hard not to be impatient with God at times. Have we not all been angry at God for taking someone from us or placing a heavy burden upon us? Sometimes, it is very hard to meet the first commandment. Then, there is the even more difficult second commandment. We find ourselves trying to love someone who has just stolen from us or done us harm. How can you love someone who has done that to you? It is very difficult, indeed.

Lent is a good time to examine our love for God, as well as our love for others. We can also thank God for his never-ending love for us.

**Prayer:** Lord, I confess that I often fall short of showing my love to you and to others. Please forgive me and help me to love the way you do.

# Day 30

## THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021

**Isaiah 41:10**

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

These words of Scripture are a wonderful promise of protection, strength, and help. Could we ever ask for more? Everyone faces challenges in their lives that seem difficult, even insurmountable, but remembering God's promise of help and strength gives us the wherewithal to cope with all challenges.

The year 2020 presented many problems, but with God's help, we have been able to face those problems head-on and gradually overcome the obstacles in our path. God's grace has given us intelligence and fortitude, all of the tools necessary to remedy the bad circumstances that have befallen us. We can rely on His help. Knowing this has always been a comfort to me.

**Prayer:** Gracious God, thank you for your constant help in our lives. It is such a comfort to us to know that you are always with us, giving us what we need in order to face life's many adversities. Amen.

Lynda Ritterman

# Day 31

**FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021**

**Romans 12:9-12**

*Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.*

As I opened my Trinity envelope, two yellow stars fell out of the folded letter. The excitement I felt at receiving our Epiphany stars was immediately followed by a sigh as this was yet one more church event not happening in person. As we approach a full year since in-person, in-sanctuary services, I looked to the words on the stars.

One of the words was *genuine*. This is not a word I can readily find in scripture, so I started looking at comparable words and what that means for me and faith.

I know we all have missed sitting next to each other in the pews, sharing faith in circles and prayer groups, and the fellowship of coffee hour. While many of us have “hopefully” tackled the various online ways of Staying Connected, I have found, at times, a disconnect. It just is not the same.

While how we practice our faith has been altered, our faith itself is still genuine. My faith is the same whether I am sitting in the sanctuary, outside in the church parking lot or on my couch on Sunday morning watching the services online. While we cannot have breakfast downstairs to raise money for mission trips, we can make sandwiches for Cathedral Kitchen or drop off food for the local pantry. While we can't have long visits with our shut-in members, we can still go shopping for them or make a call to see how they are doing. If what we do is genuine in love, we still are serving God.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, lead me to discover how I can be genuine in love and faith today and serve your will. Amen.

**Jen Dukelow**

Day 32

**SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021**

*Eternal and everlasting God,  
who art the Father of all mankind,  
as we turn aside from the hurly-burly of everyday living,  
may our hearts and souls,  
yea our very spirits,  
be lifted upward to Thee,  
for it is from Thee that all blessing cometh.*

*Keep us ever mindful of our dependence upon Thee,  
for without Thee our efforts are but naught.  
We pray for Thy divine guidance  
as we travel the highways of life.  
We pray for more courage.  
We pray for more faith  
and above all we pray for more love.*

*May we somehow come to understand  
the true meaning of Thy love as revealed to us  
in the life, death and resurrection of Thy son  
and our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.  
May the Cross ever remind us of Thy great love,  
for greater love no man hath given.  
This is our supreme example, O God.  
May we be constrained to follow  
in the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray.*

Coretta Scott King was the wife of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After Dr. King's assassination, she continued to work—for over 50 years—for racial justice. In her memoir, *My Life, My Love, My Legacy*, she wrote: "The bombings, the murders, even the assassination of my husband only intensified my devotion and solidified my resolve that God had allowed me to be born at the right time in history, a time when the Spirit tracked down the willing, empowered the waiting, and magnified human outcomes far above what finite minds could conceive" (page 329).

# Day 33

## FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, MARCH 21, 2021

### **John 12:20-33**

*Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.*

*"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.*

# Day 34

**MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021**

## **Psalm 46**

*Be still and know that I am God...*

What a profound statement! That phrase is printed on a piece of paper given to me by one of my sisters who had had a mastectomy. It has been on my refrigerator door for many years and always reminds me that whatever issues are going on in my life, God is in control. It is comforting to me because I do believe that I will receive an answer from God. God lives within me and I live in God. I get strength from that phrase. I am always at peace when I repeat it or even think of it. It is a feeling deep within me that is comforting and peaceful. I am concerned about many things in my life and I hand them all over to my Savior and I believe that that is what our Savior wants us to do. I think of the hymn *I Surrender All*. I remember that I am never alone.

When I read my Bible, there are always messages I take away from it. How spiritually strong and joyful I feel! In one of my Bible study groups, we recently discussed the difference between being “happy” and being “joyful.” Being “happy” is more of a superficial experience, which quickly goes away, but “joy” or being “joyful” is a much deeper feeling. We all have these experiences but now I really know the difference.

*Thank you, Holy Spirit, for teaching and guiding me.*

**Prayer:** I thank you Jesus for my Church—Trinity Presbyterian Church—and for our Pastors Greg, Sarah, and Barry and Staff. Thank you for the friendship of the many members I have come to know. Bless us all, Almighty God, and thank you for the Holy Spirit who leads and guides us through our daily lives. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**Marguerite Houck**

# Day 35

**TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021**

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

I used to trust everyone and everything when I was a child, in my teens, and into my early twenties. Then life happened. I made so many poor choices and allowed myself to be put in situations that hurt me. I learned not to trust anyone, like a feral animal. I second-guessed all that happened for years. I just couldn't understand why my life felt so difficult and rocky. It took years for me to learn again that not everyone will hurt me. Through just a few good friends that stood by me through thick and thin, I learned that not everyone will hurt me, if only I will let them in and trust them.

Now I'm growing in my faith and learning to trust in God more than I ever have before. He has made my way to this point in my life so much easier than it could've been. My path had the potential to be so rough, there could have been so many more hardships and heartaches. As I look back, I see God was there with me, showing me exactly what I needed to learn, about life and about God. And I continue to learn. To trust. To grow.

**Prayer:** Lord, I long to walk with you on straight paths, you leading me in the right direction. Please help me to lean on you so that I may grow the way you want me to grow.

Day 36

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021**

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path.*

I'm sure everyone has the same thoughts: who would have dreamed of the events that happened this past year – more like a nightmare! Masks, frequent hand washing, and six feet of separation ... and trust in the Lord!

I was a student nurse doing my “Communicable Disease” rotation at Municipal Hospital in Pittsburgh the summer when there was a large outbreak of Polio. There were many theories about how it was spread – including swimming pools. Polio was as scary as COVID-19 is now! Jonas Salk was doing research in his Rhesus Monkey lab on the second floor. And there were iron lungs in almost every room!

I remember walking down the hall with a student from another hospital when the ambulance crew rushed past us with a woman on a stretcher. My friend gasped and said she thought the woman on the stretcher was her sister! It was. When we would be in her room administering the Sister Kenny hot pack treatments, the woman was sure she would get well. As the mother of five small children, she demonstrated her confidence in her faith for all of us to see. I learned later that she did go home, healed! A great example.

**Prayer:** Let each of us have the confidence of that mother and put our trust in You. You know our needs before we do and we pray as we did as children, sure that we are in your care. Amen.

**Opal Stockwell**

# Day 37

**THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021**

**Isaiah 58:11**

*And the Lord will continually guide you,  
And satisfy your desire in scorched places,  
And give strength to your bones;  
And you will be like a watered garden,  
And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.*

**2 Corinthians 12:10**

*Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

For me, 2020 was a yin and yang year; a time of great change, darkness and uncertainty, followed by a time of such grace, light and gratitude. It's difficult to be surrounded by months of heavy unemployment, striking Covid numbers and such volatile political challenges and stay positive. And yet, it can be that your hardest times often lead to the greatest moments of your life. Keep the faith. It will all be worth it in the end. The hard times can be blessings in disguise. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what the storm is all about.

This reminds me of a phrase in a song by country artist, Brantley Gilbert:

*You would've never learned the words to "Amazing Grace"  
Never felt the chill of a pew when you lost faith  
Well, blood, sweat, and tears wouldn't mean a thing  
If you didn't strike out a couple hundred times  
If you never hit rock bottom, never cussed the sky  
You would've never known to ask the good Lord why  
Or ever changed your life.*

*If you never had hard days  
If you never had a heartbreak  
Never had more than you can take  
Or carried the weight  
Of life on your shoulders  
Would you feel like you earned it?*

*(continued on next page)*

*Would you live with a purpose?  
Or ever know your own strength  
If you never had hard days?*

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, Please continue to show us that the struggles we face - personally, professionally, medically, financially - have their place as they show us great value in allowing ourselves a deeper appreciation of the good times when the clouds finally part, allowing the light to shine your strength and positivity into our lives.

**Susan Achey**

# Day 38

**FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021**

**Romans 8:26**

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

God has stayed by my side during this year, even when I have neither listened nor looked.

I signed up to participate in Trinity's Prayer Vigil in July 2020. I took an early morning time, set my alarm, and went to bed early. I set the alarm for a full 30 minutes before my scheduled time so that I would have time to make and drink some coffee. The next thing I knew, I heard some early birds tweeting. I opened one eye and looked at my clock ... I had only 15 minutes until I was supposed to be praying. My alarm never went off because I had set it for the PM instead of AM. God, however, had other plans and did not let me oversleep.

During the vigil, I prayed and reflected on Romans 8:26. This is a favorite verse for me, and during this hard time, I know the Spirit has interceded for me when I have been unable to get there. I am thankful for that. Today I am reminded that God understands me even when I don't understand myself. God understands when I am terrified, spiritually paralyzed, and speechless.

**Prayer:** Thank you God for helping me to be on time. Thank you for sending me the Holy Spirit to intercede for me even when I don't know how to pray. Renew and restore my faith and show me the way you want me to go.

**Barb Clarke**

# Day 39

**SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2021**

*Thou Eternal God,  
out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence  
the whole universe has come into being,  
we humbly confess that we have not loved thee  
with our hearts, souls and minds,  
and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us.*

*We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses  
rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ.  
We often give in order to receive.  
We love our friends and hate our enemies.  
We go the first mile but dare not travel the second.  
We forgive but dare not forget.*

*And so as we look within ourselves,  
we are confronted with the appalling fact  
that the history of our lives is the history  
of an eternal revolt against you.  
But thou, O God, have mercy upon us.  
Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be.*

*Give us the intelligence to know your will.  
Give us the courage to do your will.  
Give us the devotion to love your will.  
In the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray. Amen.*

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) followed in his father's footsteps, becoming an American Baptist minister, congregational pastor, and civil rights activist. The most visible spokesperson and leader in the Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination, King is best known for pursuing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, both inspired by his Christian faith.

# Day 40

## **PALM/PASSION SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2021**

### **Mark 11:1-11**

*When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,*

*"Hosanna!*

*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*

*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!*

*Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

*Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.*

### **Mark 15:1-39**

*As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.*

*Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?"*

*(continued on next page)*

*They shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.*

*Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.*

*They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.*

*It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.*

*When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"*

# Day 41

**MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021**

**Luke 19:35-40**

*Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."*

How is my life a Hosanna! to God? Could there be ways that my thoughts or words or actions are a "Crucify Him!?" In this Holy Week, what one area of my life do I sense the Spirit working to bring about change or growth? How might I turn from betraying the Lord and live more fully a life of praise?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, who did send forth your Only-Begotten Son to live, die and be raised for me and my salvation, help me to not turn away from his sorrowful Passion, but rather let me walk with Christ. Let me walk with him through his last week of earthly life. Let me eat with him at the Table. Let me stay with him in the Garden. Let me not turn away from His dying cry from the Calvary. Let me carry him to the sepulcher. Let me wait for Him through the silence of Holy Saturday. Yes, Father, let me walk with Jesus through his suffering so I might welcome Him in His Resurrection power on Easter morning. And as I walk with him this Holy Week, let your Holy Spirit shape of my life an on-going Hosanna! For Christ's sake, I ask this of you. Amen.

# Day 42

**TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 2021**

## **Philippians 4:4-7 NIV**

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

This is an often-cited verse to be sure in Lenten devotions. But it is so reassuring and so true! Remembering these lines of scripture can be so very reassuring in times of trouble or despair. I have turned to this passage many times during the past 20 years. When times got tough, Philippians was my go-to.

The year 2007 was a bad year for me. I lost a baby and my mom within three months of each other. I never thought I would make it to the other side. But in those quiet times, laying in my bed sobbing and grieving my losses, if I really tried, I could feel God right beside me, holding my hand, pulling me through, reminding me of everything else I had to live for and be strong for—first and foremost, my five-year-old daughter.

In 2010, I had what some might call a mental breakdown. Marital problems and the emotional abuse I suffered through pushed me to the edge. I gave serious thought to whether I was strong enough to carry on and how much easier it would be just to call it quits. But once again, God jumped in and grabbed me tight, reminded me of my Abby and Ethan and how much they needed me, even if no one else did. He got me through.

This passage helped me get through my separation, my subsequent job loss, and home foreclosure. These things all occurred when I lived in North Carolina. Shortly after the foreclosure, I was able to come back home to New Jersey with my children and start over again. Thank God for my dad and stepmother, who were our financial and emotional support during this time. But once again, God and Philippians were by my side. No job, no medical insurance, no money, single mom, two children...it was a dismal outlook. Through it all, this Philippians passage hung on my refrigerator, calling me to read it several times a day. It reminded me that I was going to get through it, as long as I turned to God, my Friend, my Father, my support.

And He did get me through. We came through it stronger and closer and more prepared for whatever life had to throw at us from that point forward.

**Prayer:** God, please help us to remember that you walk with us, you carry us, you hold us in your loving arms when we need it most. All we need to do is look for you. You are always there. You put our bodies and our minds at peace when we need it most. Your love is unconditional. Amen.

**Jenny Leitinger**

# Day 43

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2021**

**John 9:1-3**

*As He passed by, He saw a man blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him."*

It was particularly cold that winter, not only because of the location, Niagara Falls, near Buffalo, New York but also because it was my first winter since coming from a temperate country. We had, I recall, a blizzard in early March; those who knew me as a neophyte to the snow told me to take heart because March "comes in like a lion but goes out like a lamb." I was the intern on call that month which meant I stayed in the hospital 24 hours every third day and on the other days I had the 8AM to 5PM schedule. That was the regular schedule of all interns in the US at that time.

My schedule slackened by April and by mid-April the weather could be a balmy 45-50 degrees especially when the sun was out. One day I followed for some distance the outline of Lake Erie and the banks of Niagara river. What greeted my eyes surprised me and evoked in me a feeling of awe. A whole field blanketed with blazing yellow blossoms flinging their flirtatious petals to the sun. What are they? I have never seen such an expanse of beauty. It reminded me of William Wordsworth's poem, *Daffodils*. I gathered an armful to present as a bouquet to my three-year-old daughter. I met our medical education secretary on my way home, and she asked with a big smile. "Dr. Banas, what are you doing with those weeds?" I cannot now recall my answer, but I kept saying: "Weeds? Weeds? But they are so pretty." There are no dandelions (as I subsequently learned they were named) in our part of the Philippines and, like most of us, I equate weeds with being a nuisance and devoid of beauty.

*Taraxacum officinale!* Yes, that is the official name. The French call it dent-de-lion or the lion's tooth. We call it dandelion in our American parlance. Are dandelions flowers or weeds? The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) defines a weed as a plant that grows where it is not wanted. In other words, it can be a flower or a weed depending on where it grows and how you view it.

I recalled this while I was meditating on John 9:1-3. The man was born blind and no matter how much his parents loved him, it must not have been easy to take care of him. In fact, when he became an adult, he supported himself by begging. In some ways he was a weed, of little use and at times a nuisance. The disciples of Jesus concluded that the man's blindness must be a result of sin, either by the man himself or his parents. (continued on next page)

Jesus disagreed. This happened, He said, so the power of God could be seen in him.

As we celebrate this Lenten season, I ponder more about humanity in general and about myself in particular, and I cannot see a reason why Jesus died for me or you or any of us. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We do not love God with our heart, soul, or mind. We are blind to the misery that our wars cause. We abuse our planet. We are weeds, but Jesus saw us as flowers. And even if we are weeds, God still loves us; both the flowers and the weeds are His creations.

Is the dandelion a flower or a weed? It does not really matter, does it? Both are filled with beauty and both proclaim the vastness and the glory of God.

**Prayer:** Thank you God for both flowers and weeds.

# Day 44

## MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021

### Revelation 11:15

*The seventh angel sounded, and great voices in heaven followed, saying, "The kingdom of the world now belongs to our Lord and to his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever."*

My Epiphany star word for 2021, received in the mail during these interesting times, is "forever." That seemed like a huge concept to apply to my activities in what we all hope is going to be a better, more hopeful year. There are some things we really hope won't go on forever. Plus, is forever something I alone can do? Maybe not. But is forever—God's kingdom is forever—something I can believe in and hold close in 2021? Definitely yes.

There are so many Bible verses that emphasize the "forever-ness" of God's kingdom, but the one that instantly sprang to ear was the one tied to the closing verses of George Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" in his *Messiah*, announcing Jesus' reign after his resurrection. "And he shall reign forever and ever!" That's the best kind of ear worm to have for the day.

It reminds us that we are God's children and part of his forever Kingdom. In fact, later in Revelation (21:7) we are told that the kingdom of God is a family—God and all His children. Those God adds to His family will inherit all things God has created (Revelation 21:7).

In these times, it is comforting to be reminded that while the kingdoms of man come and go, the kingdom that God has established for his people is forever—and that it is a kingdom of peace. Our Savior, Jesus of Nazareth, enabled us to inherit the kingdom of God by opening the door to eternal life through the forgiveness of sin, and that forever promise sustains us through all our days.

**Prayer:** Gracious God, comfort us with the knowledge that your kingdom is forever and it is a kingdom of peace. We pray all this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill your promise. Amen.

# Day 45

## GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2021

### The “Good Thief”

#### Luke 23: 39-43

*... Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”*

It is interesting to look again, with adult eyes, at Bible stories that confounded me as a child. The nuns at my elementary school in upstate New York called this the story of “The Good Thief.” It is a little side story included in Luke’s narrative of the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus.

Young me did not understand how this bad man could still go to heaven. It did not make sense and it did not seem fair. But later, with maturity and study I learned, as Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8-9 that “... by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works...”

This “Good Thief” with his last breaths believed and was blessed with the grace of God. His sins were forgiven and that day—I am sure of this because Jesus promised it—he was with Jesus in Paradise.

**Prayer:** God of mercy. God of power. Help me to grown in faith and to forever trust in Your mercy and grace. And please, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. Amen.

## Day 46

### HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2021

*I'm going to hold steady on You,  
an' You've got to see me through.*

This brief prayer was often said by Harriet Tubman (c. 1822 -1913) as she led runaway slaves to freedom in the North. Often called the African American Moses, having been a slave, she never lost a person along the Underground Railroad and attributed her success to the providence of God.

It is reported that Tubman would offer this prayer as she began each of her daring escapes. It teaches us that length of prayer is not as important as honesty and faith. Perhaps this short prayer can be added to our chest of prayers so we might use it from time to time.

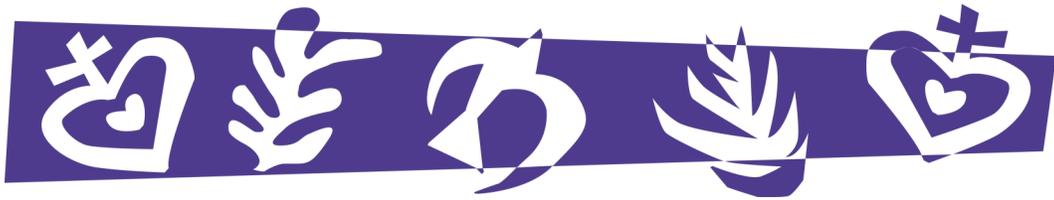
## Day 47

### RESURRECTION SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2021

#### Mark 16:1-8

*When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*





*A farmer is helpless to grow grain; all he can do is provide the right conditions for the growing of grain.*

*He cultivates the ground, he plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of the earth take over and up comes the grain. . . .*

*This is the way it is with the Spiritual Disciplines - they are a way of sowing to the Spirit. . . .*

*By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done.*

~ Richard J. Foster

