

METROPOLITAN AME CHURCH

LENT 2025

The Right Reverend Reginald T. Jackson, Bishop
Reverend Dr. Jonathan L. Weaver, Presiding Elder
Reverend William H. Lamar IV, Pastor



Foreword

To God Be the Glory!

Two Thousand Twenty-five—A New Year

We are heirs who have witnessed the beginning of a new year. Our new year began with a bevy of storms; climatic, political, physical, emotional. There is a song that begins, “Though the storms keep raging in my life and sometimes it’s hard to tell the night from day...” The chorus ends with, “My soul has been anchored in the Lord.” Those words should be a mantra for us as we traverse the storms we’re witnessing this New Year; wildfires, unusual snowstorms, climate changes, changing administrations, plane crashes, upheavals, homelessness, deaths, destruction, mental and emotional concerns.

Yet, there is Lent, that time of year we seek renewal, repentance, revival. We acknowledge our sins, indiscretions, weaknesses (especially those we resolved to give up at the beginning of the New Year). Now we call on our anchor, replay Jesus’ crucifixion, but rejoice in the knowledge of His resurrection, our salvation.

The reflections in this booklet represent the ways the members and friends of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church acknowledge and confront their storms living from day to day. Our griefs are with us as we move through the Lent season to reach the celebration of the Resurrection.

This booklet is a component of the outreach ministry of the Commission on Christian Education. The scriptures, reflections, prayers and beliefs serve as testimonies of the writers, both past and present, who shared their spiritual journeys.

We hope you will find this booklet to be a useful resource for your daily devotions. Join us as we focus on our anchor through Lent and Easter!

RESURRECTION!

Yvonne L. Bolling
Director, Christian Education

March 5, 2025
Ash Wednesday

BLOW THE TRUMPET

"Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers, but their delight is in the law of the Lord..." Psalm 1:1-2

Reading is fundamental. The reading of our world and the reading of texts yields "a thousand sacred sweets" as the hymn writer says. I have lived with the Ash Wednesday texts assigned for us this year for decades. In reading them again to prepare for this brief devotion I unearthed a diamond.

Joel 2:1 declares, "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!" Isaiah 58:1 thunders, "Shout out; do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!" Joel blows the trumpet to alert us that the day of the Lord is coming. God will partner with us to make right the injustices and exploitation visited upon God's people. Isaiah's trumpet blows to shake us out of our rebellion against God. We have chosen war over peace, greed over abundance, and death over life. Our social, political, and personal sins are abhorrent to the Divine.

We begin 40 days of trumpet blowing today. Blow the trumpet. The day of the Lord is coming, and the systems of death will die if we collaborate with the Divine to make it so. Blow the trumpet. God abhors our rebellion and disruption of the divine dream of abundance and overflowing love dancing throughout creation.

Maybe if we blow from the depths of our souls, we may be transformed by early Sunday morning.

Prayer: *Heavenly Parent, we have heard you, but often did not follow. Forgive our rebellion as we try once more to do the work that you have called us to do. Amen*

**REVEREND WILLIAM H. LAMAR IV
PASTOR
METROPOLITAN A.M.E. CHURCH**



March 6, 2025

FREEDOM

"Now the Lord is the spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

2 Corinthians 3:17

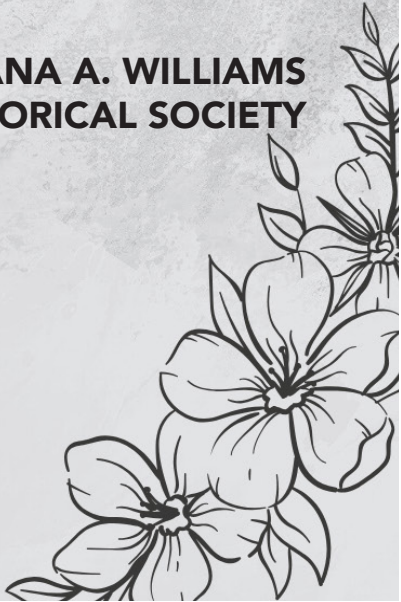
A few short months ago, we celebrated the Epiphany, a reminder that Jesus's birth was intended to bring freedom from oppression, tyranny, and imperialism. Jesus came to bring the reign of God to earth, in other words to bring freedom. Christianity, at least that aspect that has the gospel as its core, is about freedom. As John's Gospel states so poetically, the Spirit blows where it will (see John 3:8). The gospel and its people flourish in the realm of true freedom.

Freedom is not the capacity to be what we are not, but the capacity to be fully who we already are, to develop our inherent selves as much as divine time and circumstances allow. This expectation of Jesus (for us to live into the fullness of life) is made clearest in His death and resurrection. What an incredible opportunity the resurrection presents for us to do Kin-dom work.

During this Lenten season, let's take up the challenge of embracing and living into the perfect and full freedom God has given us to join with all nature in manifold witness to God's faithfulness and to God's declaration that God's kingdom must come on earth, as it is in heaven. The time for dead things has passed. The time for living into the freedom of who God has called us to be is now.

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Parent, as you have shown us the way, strengthen us to follow. Amen*

**SISTER DANA A. WILLIAMS
BETHEL 21 HISTORICAL SOCIETY**





March 7, 2025

LENT: THEN AND NOW

"After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was tempted by the devil." **Matthew 4: 2**

Lent is a period of grief that necessarily ends with a great celebration of Easter. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer for Easter through prayer, mortifying the flesh, repentance of sins, almsgiving, simple living, and self-denial. In Lent, many Christians commit to fasting, as well as giving up certain luxuries in imitation of Christ's sacrifice during his journey into the desert for 40 days. This is known as one's Lenten sacrifice.

Prior to the 6th century, Lent was normatively observed through the practice of the Black Fast, an observation which includes fasting from food and liquids, allowing one vegetarian meal after sunset. This form of fasting continues in certain denominations, such as the Coptic Orthodox Church.

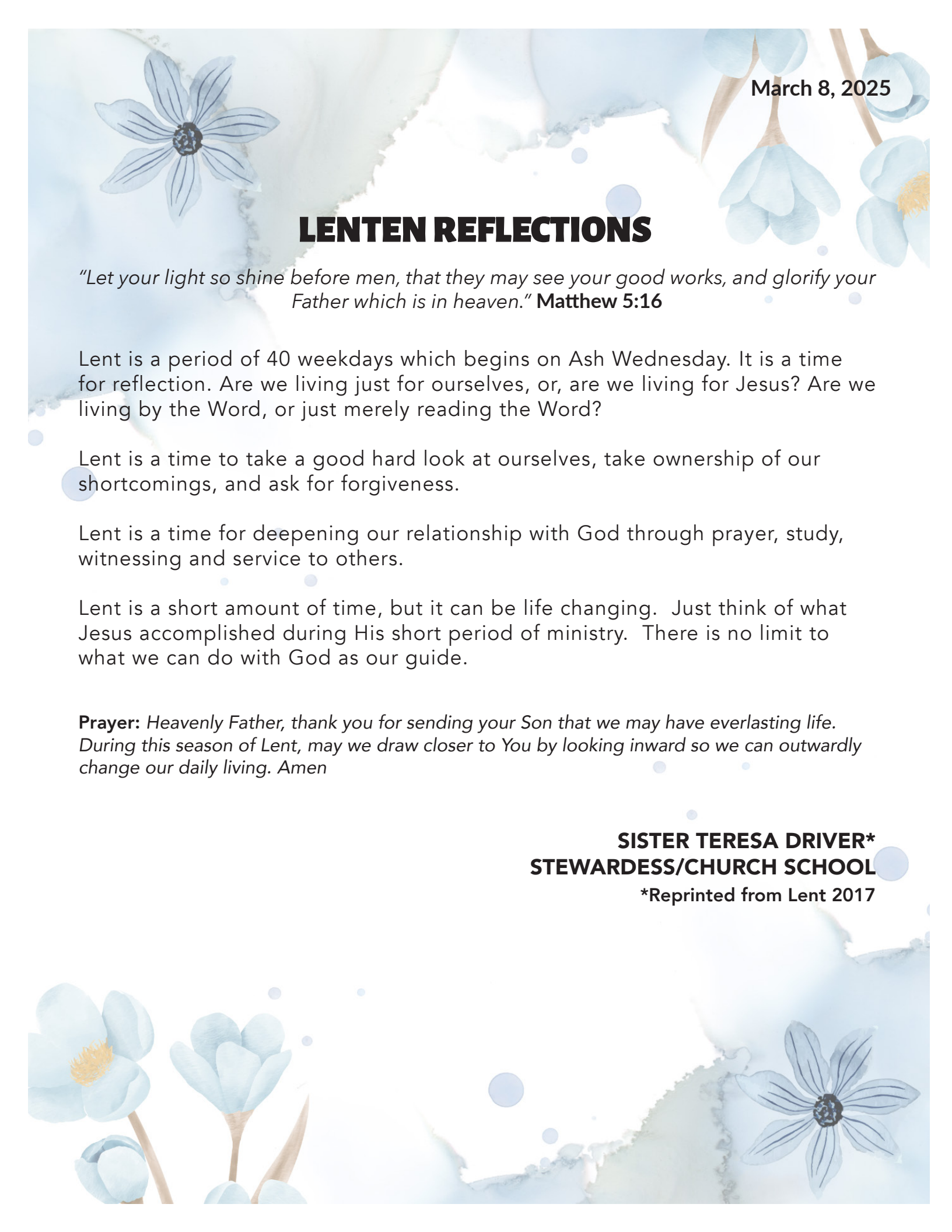
Many Lent-observing Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a daily devotional or praying through a Lenten calendar, to draw themselves near to God. Forty-six days prior to Easter, on Ash Wednesday, ashes are applied to your forehead in the shape of a cross.

To be identified with Christ is needed this year more than ever. You may want to continue the experience of Lent beyond Ash Wednesday by fasting. It doesn't have to be from food. Consider fasting from complaining or from worry. Fasting may be considered the "pleasant pain" of self-denial.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, during this Lenten season, help me to recognize my sins and turn my heart toward you in genuine repentance. Amen*



BROTHER ELIAS "PETE" PRIOLEAU III
STEWARDS BOARD



March 8, 2025

LENTEN REFLECTIONS

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." **Matthew 5:16**

Lent is a period of 40 weekdays which begins on Ash Wednesday. It is a time for reflection. Are we living just for ourselves, or, are we living for Jesus? Are we living by the Word, or just merely reading the Word?

Lent is a time to take a good hard look at ourselves, take ownership of our shortcomings, and ask for forgiveness.

Lent is a time for deepening our relationship with God through prayer, study, witnessing and service to others.

Lent is a short amount of time, but it can be life changing. Just think of what Jesus accomplished during His short period of ministry. There is no limit to what we can do with God as our guide.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son that we may have everlasting life. During this season of Lent, may we draw closer to You by looking inward so we can outwardly change our daily living. Amen*

**SISTER TERESA DRIVER*
STEWARDESS/CHURCH SCHOOL**

***Reprinted from Lent 2017**

March 9, 2025

RE (LENT) LESS GRIEF

"Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning..."

Joel 2:12

Grieve with me, my liberation partner.

It's time to extend your hand into mine, united in discomfort.

A stampede of emotions—who dares to confront the rhythm of our collective brokenness?

In this Lenten season of reflection, renewal, and response, we can no longer escape—grief.

Grief is relentless for partnership and not suppression.

Grief isn't here to spar with you but to wrap its arms around you and offer memorable comfort.

The revolution we seek demands that we first engage and assess our hearts before implementing a plan or intervention.

Our hearts carry the burdens of systemic injustice, personal loss, and communal despair.

In this sacred season, how are we consciously choosing to handle the grief residing within us?

Are we bypassing this state of being or embracing the journey?

Are we allowing it to sculpt our hearts, turning the unequivocal pain of loss into the beauty of resilience?

Where is grief inviting us to engage more deeply with the world?

How is grief empowering us to advocate for change around us?

How is grief permitting us to celebrate the beauty we still encounter daily?

Let our tears water the seeds of change, nurturing a vision of hope that will rise from the ashes of despair.

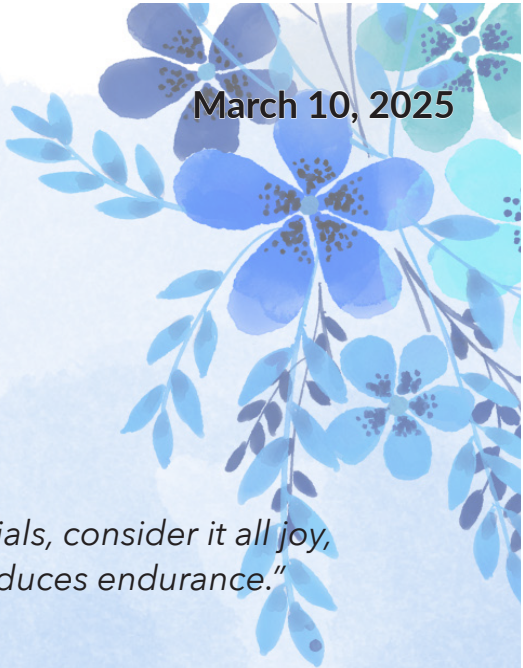
Before Jesus initiated the revolution on the cross, he lamented.

May this Lenten season become a transformative passage, leading us from communal lament to liberation, as we walk hand in hand with Jesus, trusting.

Grieve with me, my liberation partner.

Prayer: *God, I render unto you my heart. Please help me to grieve. Amen*

REVEREND CHRISTOPHER BONNER
MINISTERIAL STAFF



March 10, 2025



LENT 2025

"My brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, consider it all joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

James 1: 2-3

Responding to a gentle prod from my ever-present conscience and with some anxiety about another brief submission, I pondered what I would write for LENT 2025.

I have been stuck in a never-ending cycle of death and funerals. As a "senior senior," those events come with the territory. This week the snow would not stop falling, I have an annoying sty on my eye, Prince Georges County's failing snow removal plan, and a wind chill in the teens consumed me. On Wednesday morning, I awoke to the news of Derrick Ward's passing of cardiac arrest at age 62. Derrick was an excellent reporter at WRC/Channel 4, who I have watched for many years. As I mourned this man who I had never met, the Bible verse "for you do not know the time or hour" resonated.

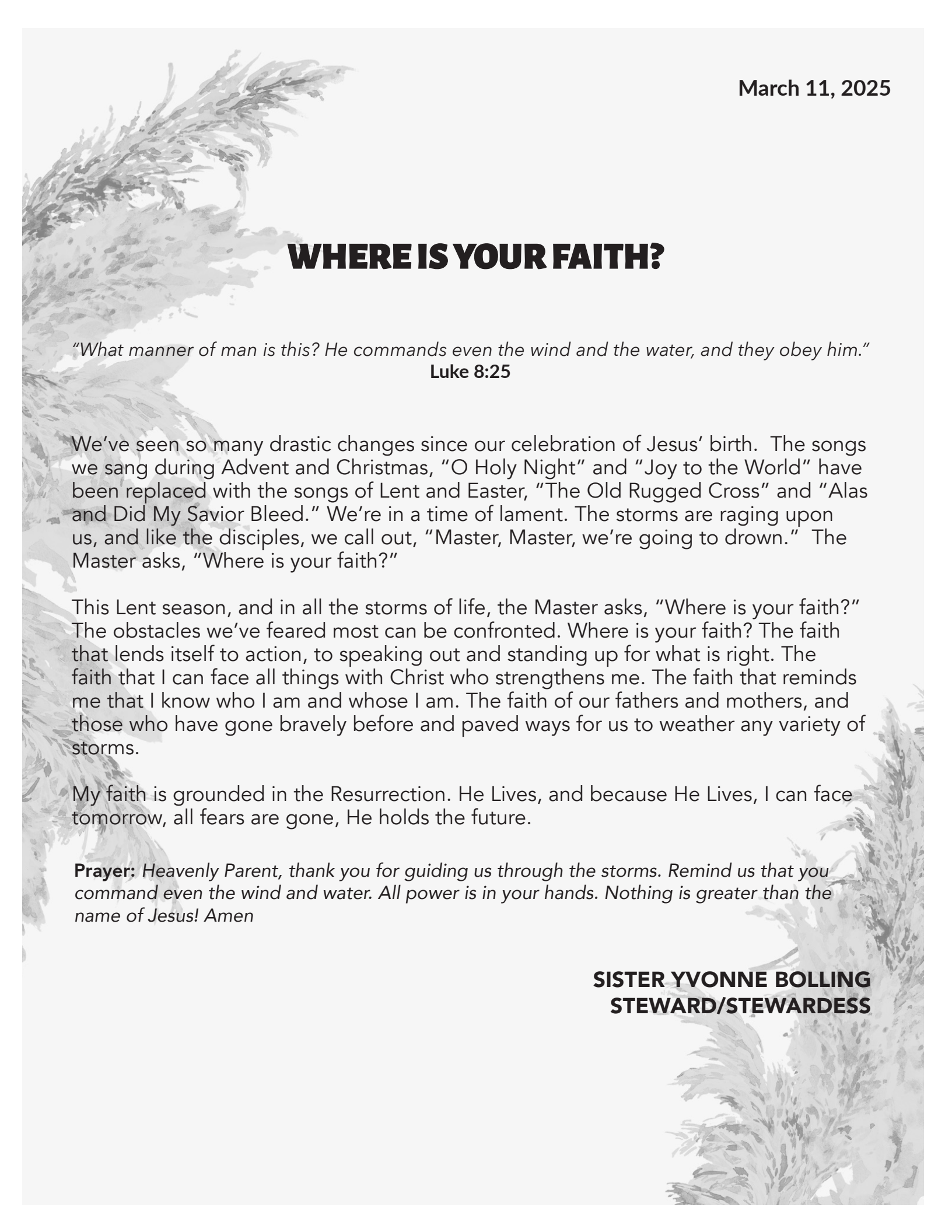
Lent is a time of fasting, prayer, and reflection in preparation for Christ's resurrection. As we focus on Lent, living for this day and hour is our challenge.

Prayer: *Lord, I thank you for allowing me to see another day. Amen*



**BROTHER JAMES F. ROBINSON
STEWART EMERITUS**





March 11, 2025

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

"What manner of man is this? He commands even the wind and the water, and they obey him."
Luke 8:25

We've seen so many drastic changes since our celebration of Jesus' birth. The songs we sang during Advent and Christmas, "O Holy Night" and "Joy to the World" have been replaced with the songs of Lent and Easter, "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Alas and Did My Savior Bleed." We're in a time of lament. The storms are raging upon us, and like the disciples, we call out, "Master, Master, we're going to drown." The Master asks, "Where is your faith?"

This Lent season, and in all the storms of life, the Master asks, "Where is your faith?" The obstacles we've feared most can be confronted. Where is your faith? The faith that lends itself to action, to speaking out and standing up for what is right. The faith that I can face all things with Christ who strengthens me. The faith that reminds me that I know who I am and whose I am. The faith of our fathers and mothers, and those who have gone bravely before and paved ways for us to weather any variety of storms.

My faith is grounded in the Resurrection. He Lives, and because He Lives, I can face tomorrow, all fears are gone, He holds the future.

Prayer: Heavenly Parent, thank you for guiding us through the storms. Remind us that you command even the wind and water. All power is in your hands. Nothing is greater than the name of Jesus! Amen

**SISTER YVONNE BOLLING
STEWARD/STEWARDESS**

March 12, 2025

I GAVE UP HOPE

"Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."

1 Corinthians 13:13

Lent usually calls for us to give up something. After a continuously long period of anger, I gave up hope. Now don't go off thinking, "wow, he has lost it."

No, recall if you will, how on the Sea of Galilee while the waves were violently rocking the boat and thunder was booming, Jesus remained calm. But his long-term followers, the disciples, were in a panic. Some began to look around for items or people to remove from the boat. Finally, after many calls, Jesus awakened, chastised them and commanded the seas, winds and rain to cease. They had lost hope, but the master of the universe called them back to faith. For together with hope and love, faith guides us through life's turmoil and joys.

This year opened where last year ended with the absence of hope in this world. Now chaos, calamity, extreme stress and financial ruin reign. But through it all Jesus commands that we remain calm, knowing that He's got us. Jesus remains steadfast, solidly and boldly declaring, "keep the faith baby." They are not like us. We have Jesus on our side. Let us continue in faith; safe in His loving embrace.

Prayer: *May God's loving blessings continue to embrace us and all we love. May His righteousness continue to guard our world. Amen*

**BROTHER CLAYTON AARONS
TRUSTEE BOARD**

March 13, 2025

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, HOLY FAITH!

"I said, 'let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.'"

1Timothy 4: 12

I am borrowing Sam Cooke's lyrics, "It's been a long time coming, but I know a change is gonna' come." Lent suggests change, and surely change is upon us. There is a new administration, one that seems determined to revisit the sins of their ancestors. Expecting lost jobs and lost businesses, separated families, and lost constitutional rights, anxiety is palpable.

Oh, but there is a God...and my ever-present reminder of His hand in my life is in the legacy of faith of my beloved grandmother "Bigma." Her favorite hymn is "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still." We just celebrated her 107th birthday, and though we have witnessed gradual weakening of her earthly body, she has demonstrated her unflagging faith in the resurrected Spirit that she knows is hers. She has told us, "I won't be here forever and neither will YOU. I'm just trying to do my best each day, until God calls my name."

I am sharing Bigma's simple confession of faith, which is rooted in the faith of our ancestors. Amidst the anxieties of political, economic and social injustice, it is a reminder that we can place everything in God's hands and "do our best until God calls our name."

Prayer: *Dear Lord, please help us to rise to the occasion with COURAGE and FAITH to run the race that you have assigned us. Help us to ensure that the legacies of love and faithfulness of our ancestors endure. Amen*

**SISTER MAURITA COLEY FLIPPIN
STEWART EMERITUS
DANIEL PAYNE CDC**

HOW GREAT THOU ART

Oh Lord, my God
When I, in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

March 15, 2025

HOLD ON TO GOD'S UNCHANGING HAND

*"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." **Jeremiah 29:11***

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will." **Romans 12:2***

Even though it has been extremely difficult to avoid, I have drastically reduced my cable and network news intake. The news does not make me feel good. I know that the objective is confusion, but I will not capitulate to this madness. There are so many positive things to accomplish that will allow me to feel better during the day and possibly encourage someone else to feel better.

During this Lenten season, pray and focus on God's unchanging hand because He has already shown us the right direction. He is faithful and will continue to carry us through.

Prayer: *Our Father, thank you for your consistent love and thank you for Jesus, Amen*

**SISTER BARBARA FARROW JONES
STEWARDESS BOARD**

March 16, 2025

I'M BLESSED

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

Numbers 6: 24-26

Today is a good day to count blessings. Young and old, we all have blessings. I'm getting up in age and when I think about how good God is to me, I am grateful. Each morning, I worship the Lord for waking me up, in my right mind with a reasonable portion of health.

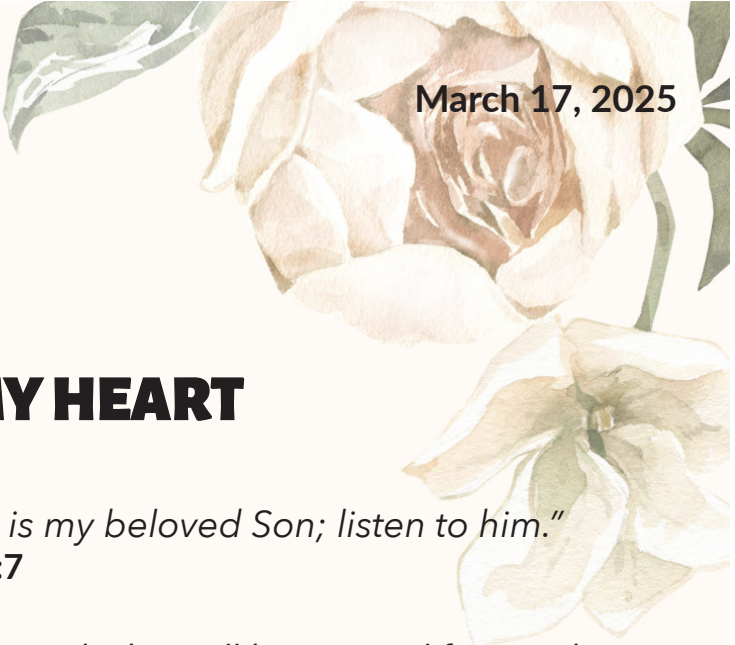
I'm blessed. As we enter the season of Lent, I am thankful for forty whole days to count blessings. As I count blessings, doubts & fears are erased. Looking back over my life, I remember seeing myself as limited, ordinary and powerless. But, as God heals my body and strengthens my mind, I have the assurance of God's almighty power living within me and I'm blessed.

The challenges around me are daunting. It just seems like I'm facing one crisis after the other, some real and others mentally invented. All of them are intended to zap the life from me. But God still listens and speaks. And God still hears my cry.

I'm blessed. It's become clear to me, with Christ I have all that I need. And, because God is for me, does it matter who's against me? The answer is "No." Did you ask me why? It's simple, I am blessed and please know, so are you.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for blessing me. Amen

**REVEVERND AISHA KARIMAH
MINISTERIAL STAFF**



March 17, 2025

SPEAK TO MY HEART

"And a voice came out of a cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.'"

Mark 9:7

"Speak to my heart Holy Spirit. Give me the words that will bring new life. Words on the wings of a new morning, the dark night will fade away. If You speak to my heart now."

- Donnie McClurkin

In Matthew 3: 13-17, we read about the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by his cousin John the Baptist. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness and he was there forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. He then began to travel and preach the good news that the Kingdom of God has come near.

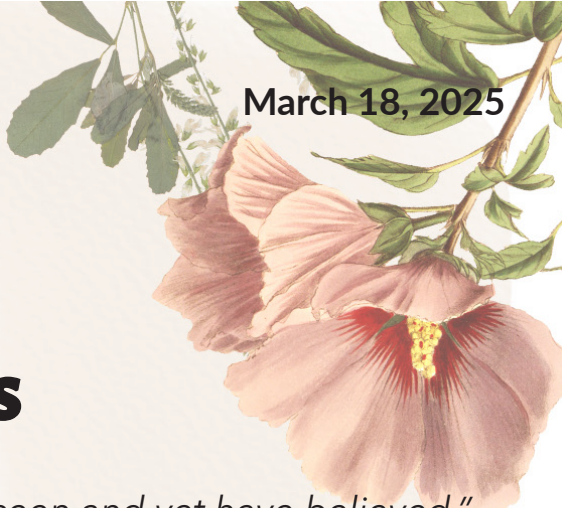
He selected disciples, cast out impure spirits, healed people, and was questioned by the Pharisees. Through it all Jesus stayed strong knowing what was ahead for him.

As a follower of Jesus who has experienced the ups and downs of life, I have learned to sometimes just be still and let the Holy Spirit speak to my heart.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for providing for your people. Amen



**SISTER LINDA AARONS
CHURCH SCHOOL**



March 18, 2025

I KNOW HE LIVES

"Jesus said to him... blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
John 20: 29

Each year as we approach Easter, I have this vision of how I would have reacted had I lived in the time of Christ. Would I have believed or would I have wondered? Well, I didn't live then. I live now and I believe.

One of my favorite songs is "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." The words are poetic and remain as meaningful today as when they were penned in 1742. There are two versions and I share both to express their meaning to me.

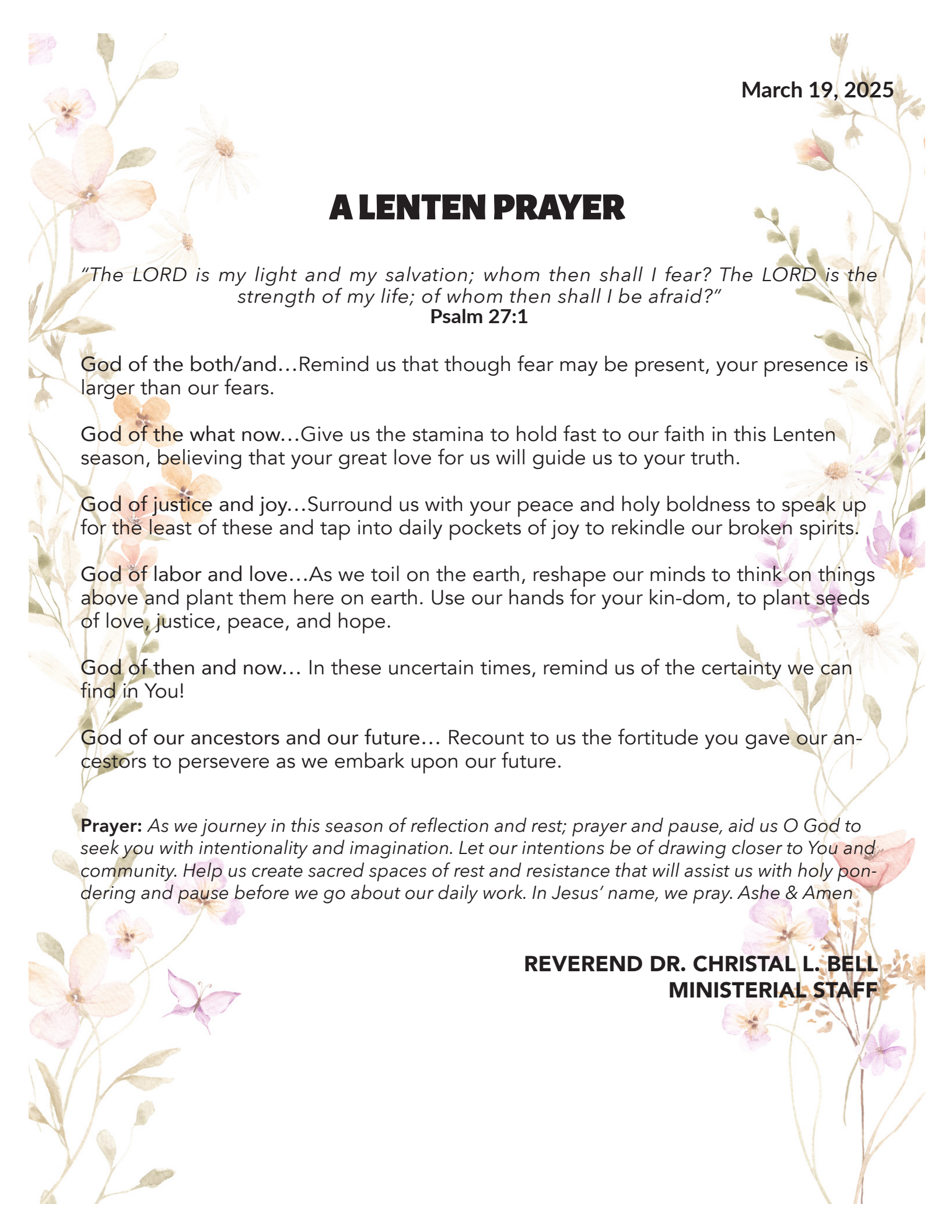
I know that my Redeemer lives, He lives who once was dead.
To me in grief, He comfort gives. With peace He crowns my head.
I know that my Redeemer lives and ever prays for me;
A token of His love He gives, a pledge of liberty.
I find Him lifting up my head; He brings salvation near,
His presence makes me free indeed, and He will soon appear.
When God is mine and I am His, Of paradise possessed,
I taste unutterable bliss, and everlasting rest.

Those who are musical scholars will know that I put two songs together, but the verses give the meaning I want to convey. Today, we need to know and believe that our Redeemer lives and will not leave us. Pray for me as I pray for you so we can get through these times together.



Prayer: Heavenly Parent, be with us and give us the courage to do your will, in Jesus' name I pray. Amen

**BROTHER THEDFORD COLLINS
STEWART, PRO-TEM**



March 19, 2025

A LENTEN PRAYER

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?"

Psalm 27:1

God of the both/and...Remind us that though fear may be present, your presence is larger than our fears.

God of the what now...Give us the stamina to hold fast to our faith in this Lenten season, believing that your great love for us will guide us to your truth.

God of justice and joy...Surround us with your peace and holy boldness to speak up for the least of these and tap into daily pockets of joy to rekindle our broken spirits.

God of labor and love...As we toil on the earth, reshape our minds to think on things above and plant them here on earth. Use our hands for your kin-dom, to plant seeds of love, justice, peace, and hope.

God of then and now... In these uncertain times, remind us of the certainty we can find in You!

God of our ancestors and our future... Recount to us the fortitude you gave our ancestors to persevere as we embark upon our future.

Prayer: *As we journey in this season of reflection and rest; prayer and pause, aid us O God to seek you with intentionality and imagination. Let our intentions be of drawing closer to You and community. Help us create sacred spaces of rest and resistance that will assist us with holy pondering and pause before we go about our daily work. In Jesus' name, we pray. Ashe & Amen*

REVEREND DR. CHRISTAL L. BELL
MINISTERIAL STAFF



March 20, 2025

“BUT NOT” PROMISES

“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

This year Lent will be observed during one of the most corrupted and unfathomable periods in the history of the United States. I have been watching, heartsick, as the sacrificial ancestral work committed to making this country a more perfect union has been wiped out by poison pen signatures on unlawful executive orders. We truly are hard pressed on every side as we witness our system of governmental checks and balances being eroded further each day.

When will this end? Surely tougher days lie ahead. I believe that our ability to persevere will be based on our ability to remember the “but not” promises of God. We will experience fear, “but not” be forgotten; confusion “but not” ever be cast away; loneliness “but not” separated from God’s love.

Bright hope and the assurance of better days ahead are possible because of our Creator’s unshakable love for us. We have been delivered before and we know that our God will deliver us again if we live faithfully, purposefully and courageously right now.

During this Lenten season, may we stay focused on the old rugged cross and the triumph of life over death that it represents.

Prayer: *Holy Parent, thank you for your love and protection during painful times. Keep us forever on the path we pray. Amen*



**SISTER MARIE C. JOHNS
PASTOR’S STEWARD**



March 21, 2025

WHAT TIME IS IT?

"Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart."

Psalm 90:12

The above scripture in the January-February 2017 issue of The Upper Room resonated in my thoughts for days and inspired me to consult my Touch Point Bible. Under "power" I found answers to my questions.

How is the power of God seen in a world where political leaders have the power to destroy the planet many times over?

God's power is clearly seen in the wonders of creation: "The God of glory thunders. The Lord thunders over the mighty sea." **Psalm 29: 3-11**

"God's power is greater than any army. Some nations boast of their armies and weapons, but we boast in the Lord our God." **Psalm 20:6-8**

Earthly rulers and authorities have power only because God has allowed them to exercise it temporarily. "I will raise up Cyrus to fulfill my righteous purpose, and I will guide all his actions." **Isaiah 45:13** Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above." **John 19: 1-11**

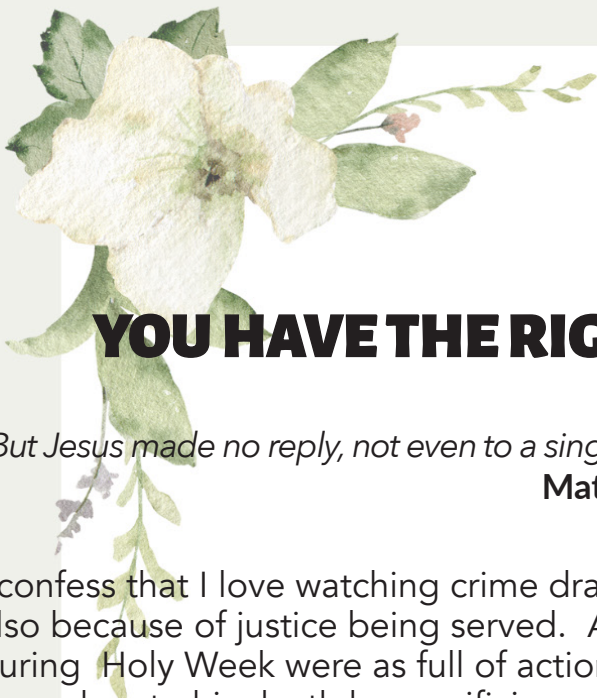
The power of the Holy Spirit can transform any life for eternity." For the power of the life-giving Spirit...has freed me from the law of sin and death." **Romans 8:1-14**

Prayer: *"Praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved Son."* **Ephesians 1:6-12.** *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."* **Lamentations 3:22-23**

SISTER JANICE C. EVANS*
CHURCH SCHOOL

**Reprinted from Lent 2017*

March 22, 2025



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT

"But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge- to the great amazement of the governor"
Matthew 27:14

I confess that I love watching crime dramas because of the mystery and intrigue - but also because of justice being served. And the narrative of events that Christ endured during Holy Week were as full of action as any episode of CSI, from his entry into Jerusalem to his death by crucifixion.

While writing this meditation, I decided to imagine Jesus in his humanness as he stood accused of crimes that he did not commit. And through my study of Jesus, I have concluded that he was a quiet man, an introvert.

Yet Jesus in his humanness could only have come into Holy Week "hot" knowing his fate, and yet what characterized him most was that trait of silence in his own defense. Beloved, do not misunderstand the silence of Christ: Jesus wasn't the victim, but rather the Victor – and in his silence, we are victorious as we grow in quiet reflection.

There are lessons in this silence. In our times of stress and anxiety, what if we took the time to be silent and be still? The 5th Amendment gives us the right to remain silent – so what if we simply remain in silence until God speaks?

Prayer: *God of mercy, may souls find strength healing and resting as we stand in silence with Christ - Amen.*



SISTER GRETA KENDRICK
SENIOR STEWARD/USHER



March 23, 2025

LET GO - LET GOD

"He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"
John 20:15

As Christians, we are blessed to have music and the written gospels that allow us to express our love and our devotion to our God who is worthy of all praise. These elements enrich our spiritual walk, and deepen our faith in God who is ever faithful to us.

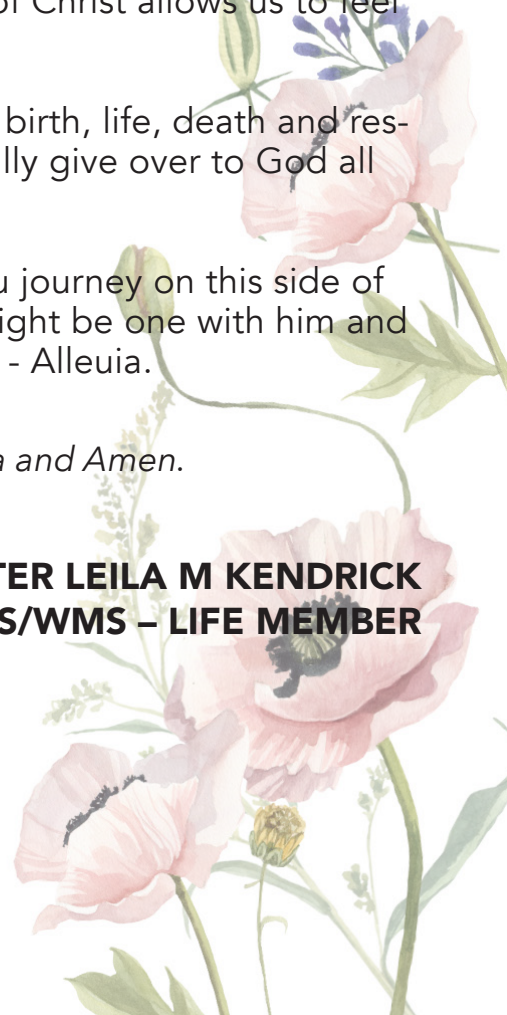
During the Advent season, Handel's joyous Messiah oratorio presents aural splendor of the events leading to Jesus' birth. The Lenten season offers us a more solemn remembrance of the 40 days that Jesus endured in the desert and during Holy Week. During Lent, music such as The Seven Last Words of Christ allows us to feel and worship in the undertone of the season.

All that we face and endure in this life has taken up in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. I would encourage you to literally give over to God all that is weighing you down - let go and let God - Alleluia.

Christ came to carry your load and to walk with you as you journey on this side of Jordan - Will you trust him? Christ gave his all that we might be one with him and the Father. My brothers and sisters - Let go, and let God - Alleluia.

Prayer: *All praise to Jesus; we surrender all to Christ - Alleluia and Amen.*

**SISTER LEILA M KENDRICK
SAMS/WMS – LIFE MEMBER**



March 24, 2025

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE!

"Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Ephesians 5:19

Every breath you take
And every move you make
Every bond you break
Every step you take
I'll be watching You.

Every single day
And every word you say
Every game you play
Every night you stay
I'll be watching you

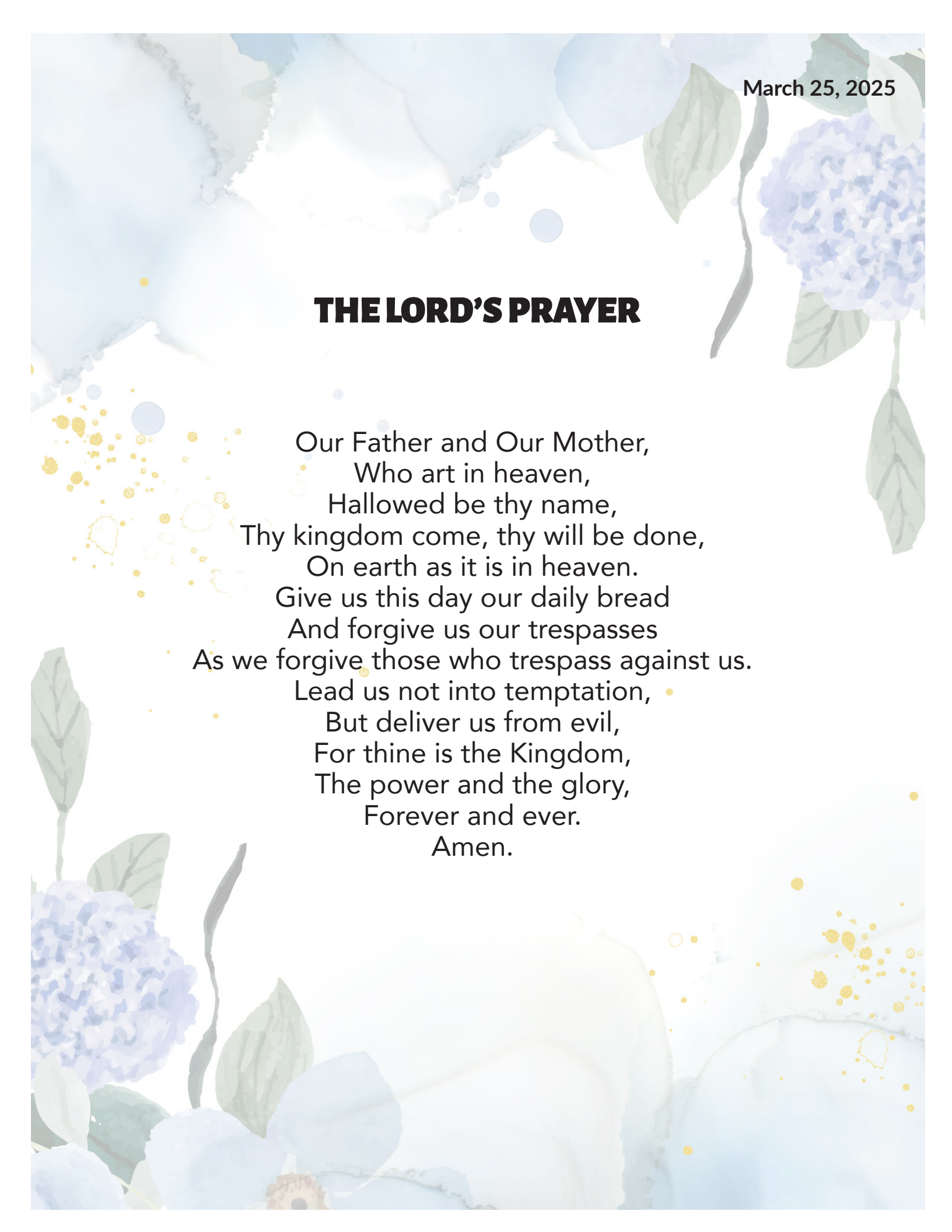
These lyrics are the first two verses in a song from the musician, Sting. I believe the song should read "Every breath we take God is watching you and we belong to Him because each day He breathes life unto us."

Most music has a message. Artists have taken time to let God motivate them. It may be a hymn, spiritual, gospel, jazz, country, rock or hip-hop rendition with a relatable word or two. Music is an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions; helping us to connect with all societies regardless of age, race, religion, when or where you grew up. Music brings us joy and happiness. It can also trigger sadness or help to reduce pain and stress.

In these troubling times, I pray that during this Lenten season we will rise and take time to listen to the music – it is a powerful tool to bring people together.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, I am inspired by William McDowell's "I Give Myself Away." Use our gifts and talents, dear Lord, as life goes on. Let the music play. It helps our soul to walk in the spirit. Amen*

**SISTER WILLIE "DEE" ELLIOTT
STEWART**

The background features a soft watercolor wash in shades of light blue and white. Scattered throughout are numerous small, golden-yellow dots of varying sizes. In the upper right and lower left corners, there are illustrations of blue hydrangea flower clusters with green leaves.

March 25, 2025

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father and Our Mother,
Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the Kingdom,
The power and the glory,
Forever and ever.
Amen.



March 26, 2025

NEIGHBORS

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!"
Psalm 133:1

It's a cold, snowy January evening and I have gathered with my neighbors to celebrate a birthday. We are a colorful menagerie of women who, by chance, live in the same condominium community. I think that Jesus would approve of the way we have come together to chat and eat. The eight of us resemble the lyrics "...be they yellow, black or white; they are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the (little) children of the world."

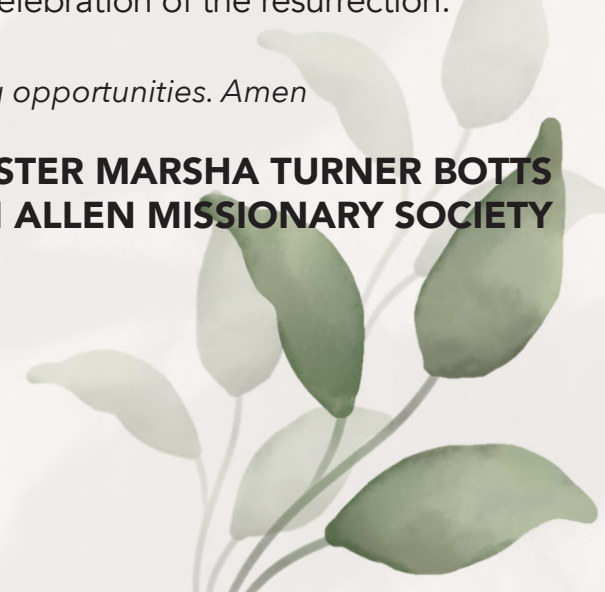
We are Christian, Jewish, non-practicing and somewhere in between; parents, single, married, retirees, employed, world travelers, cancer survivors, and creatives, all of whom are thriving and striving to exist in a world that often appears topsy turvy.

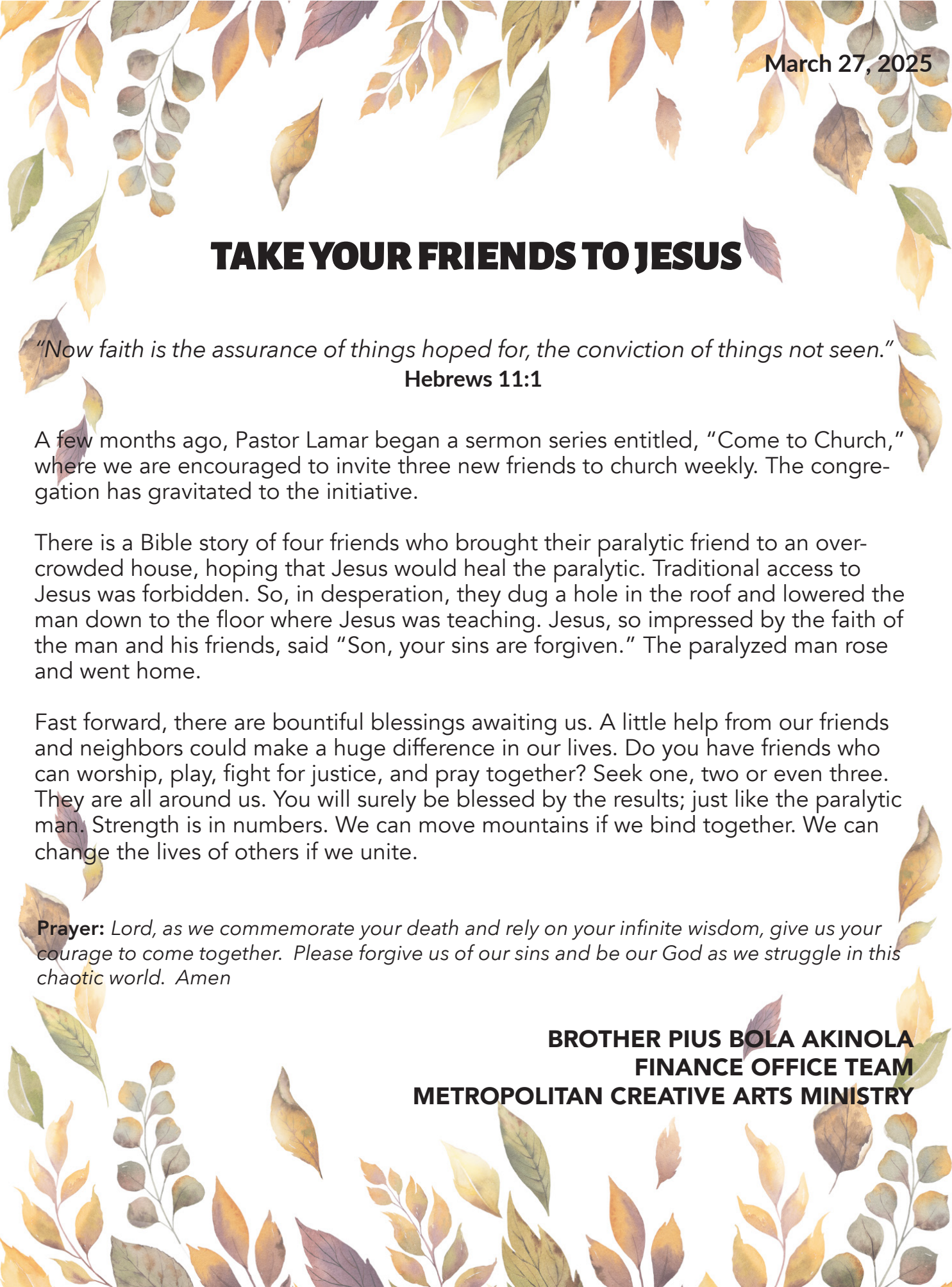
As we travel through Lent, it occurs to me that the under-represented women of the New Testament probably resembled my neighbors and me. I am certain that some were excellent seamstresses, teachers, cooks, bakers, midwives, weavers, caretakers and gardeners. They gathered at the threshing floor, riverbank, shops, or communal oven to sort out life and gain better insight regarding an expected "Messiah," unfair taxation, and to envision a better day.

It's 2025 and we have innumerable texts about the Messiah and his intention for those of us who claim to follow Him. Fortunately, He understood that we would never perfect our following, but He did offer generous incentives for our effort. Join me in community with persons of shared values on the trek to Calvary and celebration of the resurrection.

Prayer: *Heavenly Parent, thank you for kingdom-building opportunities. Amen*

SISTER MARSHA TURNER BOTTS
SARAH ALLEN MISSIONARY SOCIETY





March 27, 2025

TAKE YOUR FRIENDS TO JESUS

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Hebrews 11:1

A few months ago, Pastor Lamar began a sermon series entitled, "Come to Church," where we are encouraged to invite three new friends to church weekly. The congregation has gravitated to the initiative.

There is a Bible story of four friends who brought their paralytic friend to an overcrowded house, hoping that Jesus would heal the paralytic. Traditional access to Jesus was forbidden. So, in desperation, they dug a hole in the roof and lowered the man down to the floor where Jesus was teaching. Jesus, so impressed by the faith of the man and his friends, said "Son, your sins are forgiven." The paralyzed man rose and went home.

Fast forward, there are bountiful blessings awaiting us. A little help from our friends and neighbors could make a huge difference in our lives. Do you have friends who can worship, play, fight for justice, and pray together? Seek one, two or even three. They are all around us. You will surely be blessed by the results; just like the paralytic man. Strength is in numbers. We can move mountains if we bind together. We can change the lives of others if we unite.

Prayer: *Lord, as we commemorate your death and rely on your infinite wisdom, give us your courage to come together. Please forgive us of our sins and be our God as we struggle in this chaotic world. Amen*

**BROTHER PIUS BOLA AKINOLA
FINANCE OFFICE TEAM
METROPOLITAN CREATIVE ARTS MINISTRY**

March 28, 2025

TAKE ME TO THE ALLEY

"It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two."

Luke 23: 44-45

Gregory Porter wrote "Take Me to the Alley," inspired by his mother, who canvassed their neighborhood identifying and helping people in need. Rev Lamar preaches that same "alley ministry" when he reminds us that we must serve the marginalized.

(Lyrics)

*Well, they build their houses
In preparation for the king
And they line the sidewalks
With every sort of shiny thing
They will be surprised
When they hear Him say
Take me to the alley*

I spent many delightful hours playing with my siblings and friends in our neighborhood alley on Orleans Place NE, but not on Good Friday. On those days the alley would take on a persona of doom and gloom: pain, betrayal, and death. I expected the sun to drip blood at any moment and the earth to crack open. Alleys can be fun. Alleys can be dangerous.

Marsha and I raised our sons in the Bloomingdale area of Washington. I was bewildered that the garages had chimneys. We later learned that those garages previously housed people who worked as domestics. They were forbidden to buy houses in the redlined neighborhoods but they could live and travel in the alley. Alleys can provide survival or emotive sadness or camouflage resistance.

Prayer: *Holy Parent, "Take me to the alley. Take me to the afflicted ones. Take me to the lonely ones that somehow lost their ways..." Amen*

**BROTHER CARLOS E. BOTTS
METROPOLITAN CREATIVE ARTS MINISTRY
MIGHTY MEN OF METROPOLITAN**



March 29, 2025

BREAK FREE THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING

"Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Matthew 6: 16-18

This Lenten season presents a defined time to look deeper into my daily decision making, where I will reflect upon the obstacles that challenge my desire to have a closer relationship with God. With an attitude of gratitude, prayer and fasting, I will continue to seek His guidance. It is my heart's desire to listen, walk and talk in ways to grow closer to Him.

Prayer: *Divine One, thank you for Calvary. So that I may fulfill your purpose for my living, help me to...break free.*

**SISTER BARBARA BOOKER WOOD
FRIEND OF METROPOLITAN**



March 30, 2025

THE SHEDDING

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens."
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Last year brought many obstacles. The prayers I offered, the thoughts I held onto a decade ago, and the dreams I once envisioned are now materializing. Yet, I find myself unsure of how to receive them. They appear in unexpected ways—through bad habits, anxiety, moments of goofiness, and sometimes in ways I unintentionally irritate others. A mentor reminded me to slow down. In that stillness, I am beginning to uncover me.

I don't know what the new year will reveal, but I know that I must embrace openness and vulnerability with myself, a level of honesty I haven't allowed in the past. It's time to confront what needs to mature within me, to use my voice in a way that is dignified and rooted in my North Star. My past hasn't broken me, but it has shattered parts of me that I realize I must shed.

Some of these pieces are a part of me; others reflect you. So, I ask: what will you do with what you need to shed? As for me, I know my faith, my prayers, and my walk will continue to lead me. The shedding is a necessary step toward growth. The tools I've gathered along the way are my armor. I will keep sharpening them.

Prayer: *Heavenly Parent, may we create space for where we are right now. May we trust that this space will guide our steps. May we speak with dignity, act with passion, and continue to evolve into better versions of ourselves. Amen*

SISTER ANNTONETTE McENTYRE
GIRL SCOUT TROOP 3089



March 31, 2025

MY YEARLY DO-OVER

"And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him." **Mark 1: 13**

This year Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. The forty days of Lent represent, for me, the time Jesus spent in the desert where He fasted, prayed, and was tempted by the devil. During this liturgical season, I also prepare for Good Friday and Easter.

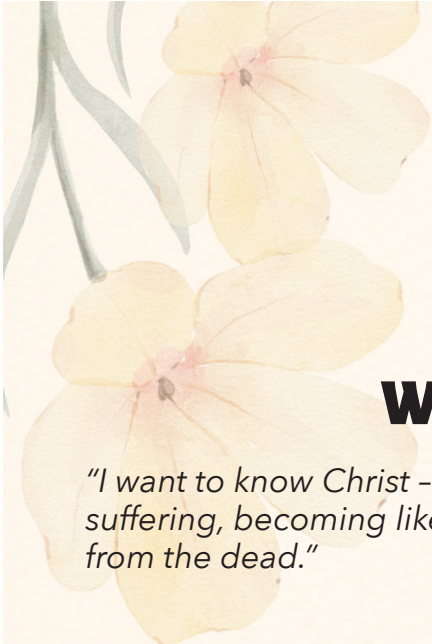
The Lenten season reminds me that God wants me to be reconciled to Him and others around me. He wants me to release anger, bitterness, and resentment. If I truly desire God's love and mercy, I must learn to humble myself and seek not only divine forgiveness, but to establish long lasting relationships around me.

I am not a Starbucks coffee drinker or a sweets eating person, BUT Lord knows I am an honest to goodness Mickey D's two times daily "Sprite junkie." I pray that He will help me turn away from the Sprite and turn to Him. Lent will help me to return to God with my whole heart.

One can look at Lent as my yearly do-over, my second chance.

Prayer: *Lord, during my do-over this year, show me areas in my life that I need to change. Open my heart to Your grace and mercy, so that I may honestly repent and draw ever close to you. I pray that my Sprite sacrifice be an offering of love and a testament of my faith. Amen*

**SISTER MAE I. HAWKINS
LORRAINE GILLIAN HEALTH MINISTRY**



April 1, 2025

WHO TOLD YOU TO DO THAT?

"I want to know Christ - yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His suffering, becoming like Him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:10-11

The audacity to stand up for what you believe.
To go places and do things they said you could not do.
To wear your hair like that, and what about those clothes?
Who told you to do that?

To dream dreams of being the best and in control.
And then to actually see those dreams come true.
Who told you to do that?

To have a plan and execute it with precision.
To be your authentic self and not care if others approve.
To step out of your comfort zone and ignite the world.
Who told you to do that?

To overcome all obstacles thrown in your path.
To continue to live, thrive, and shout HALLELUJAH!
regardless of those who try to oppress you.
Who told you to do that?

A brown baby boy was born over two thousand years ago; born of a virgin, who came to change the world.
A brown baby boy who came to save the world, was crucified, dead, and buried.
But on the third day He arose.
Who told him He could do that?

The same God who tells me and tells you – We can do that!

Prayer: *Thank you, God for your ever living Son, who taught us that yes, we can. Amen*

**SISTER ELLEN YOUNG FIZER
STEWARD EMERITUS
PEARL P. COOK SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB**





April 2, 2025

WHY LENT MAY BE EXTRA SPECIAL THIS YEAR

"So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

1 Peter 5: 6-7

Why are people who have ignored the Lenten Season in the past finding themselves observing the holy period this year? They may be feeling anxious, uncertain, and fearful of the future.

People who have been living comfortably middle-class lifestyles are finding that their stable jobs are no longer secure. Actions and behaviors that were taboo have become accepted behavior. Climate change is disrupting weather patterns, subjecting many to unusual temperatures, storms, floods, fires, and health issues. The new federal administration is making people feel threatened, as established rules are being changed, including some "guarantees" found in the U.S. Constitution.

The Lenten season is a perfect time to meditate, pray, fast, and find a new relationship with God. It is a time to gain an understanding of what is happening in the world. Why is there so much pain, so much ugliness, and so much hatred?

Let us use the Lenten season to cry out for forgiveness, understanding, healing, courage, protection, and strength to fight the evils of the world.

Prayer: *Dear God, we come to you in our time of need, when the forces of evil are overwhelming. Hear our prayer for strength, toughness, fortitude, and endurance. Amen*

**SISTER ELSIE L. SCOTT
STEWART EMERITUS**

April 3, 2025

IN ROME

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen to loose the bonds of injustice...."

Isaiah 58:6

As we walk through resolution season, research shows the most common resolution Americans make is to lose weight. With weight loss marketing so omnipresent one cannot be surprised by this fact. Compound this marketing with the shame we feel from a toxic social media environment thanks to the usual suspects like the fashion industry and seemingly well-intentioned self-help gurus. One can feel overwhelmed and yearn to hear the quiet voice of Christ commanding troubled waters: "Peace. Be still."

In this silence, we can reflect on more than our food intake but our spiritual diets. We can cease our participation in systems that aid in the destruction of communities, the early demise of our bodies, and in the oppression of refugees and minorities.

The expression "when in Rome..." implies that we do as one does wherever you may be. However, the Roman Empire was an oppressive regime that crushed resistance by crucifying revolutionaries, prophets, and The Messiah. This Lenten season I challenge us to sit in stillness and analyze the Rome we are in. Contrary to the saying, when in this Rome, our God calls us not to do as "Romans" do but resolve to resist.

Prayer: *God of Restoration, comfort us in our walk away from the masses that care not for the least of these. Feed our spirits so that we are energized and willing to do this work. Amen*

**BROTHER JONATHAN E. BOTTS
CHURCH SCHOOL**

April 4, 2025

RESIST!!!

"Therefore, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."

Ephesians 6:13

When he who shall not be named was elected President of the United States, I thought I would disengage for the next four years. "Evil incarnate" is reigning over America. `Americans surrendered to the devil. I would watch them burn. Long ago, my people learned to navigate hard times. For the rest of you, good luck.

Like so many, I am disgusted with the foolishness of blaming immigrants for low wages and high bills while lifting a devil who will dance on your grave. Yep, there's nothing I can do for you, I arrogantly declared. You'll learn the hard way.

Then a friend shared a packet of Penzeys spices, a local company. Its advertisement screamed the words " RESIST! Keep America Alive." The back of the packet reads "Corrosion's come to town." Penzeys is undertaking a campaign to RESIST evil.

My focus on local justice will not suffice. I may not agree that the America of yesteryear needs to be retained any more than the existing one. The challenge is, we need a way to fight corrosion and create an America embracing goodness; not evil. Jesus' death was not a statement to stand by and watch others burn, but a challenge to do something so that no one ever has to.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, soften our hardened hearts and redouble our armor so that we may stand firm and build your kingdom. Lord, help us RESIST! Amen*

**SISTER CELESTE M. BRYANT
WIN SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY
MARRIED COUPLES MINISTRY**

April 5, 2025

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

1 Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee:
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not:
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided:
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided:
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide:
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided:
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

April 6, 2025

RESISTING EVIL, AWAKENING TO JUSTICE

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness where for forty days he was tested by the devil..."

Luke 4:1-13

In Luke 4:1-13, Jesus faces the devil's temptations in the wilderness, resisting offers of power and comfort that compromise His mission. His refusal isn't passive; it's an active resistance against evil and the systems that exploit, divide, and oppress. Jesus' strength comes from His reliance on God's word and His commitment to God's vision of justice, not the world's empty promises.

Today, we are called to resist the temptations of apathy and complicity in a world plagued by inequality, violence, and greed. The wilderness we face may be the fight for global justice—seeking peace amidst war, equity amidst exploitation, and hope amidst despair. Yet, Lent reminds us that the Spirit empowers us to resist evil and awaken to God's possibilities for restoration.

As we live and pray, let us align with Christ's mission, becoming instruments of God's justice in a hurting world.

Prayer: *Lord, strengthen me to resist evil and work for justice. Amen.*

REVEREND KENDAL L. McBROOM
MINISTERIAL STAFF

April 7, 2025

MUSTARD SEED FAITH

"He said to them, 'Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.'" Luke 17:20

In 1956, African American lyricist Albert A. Goodson, wrote this now familiar hymn:

We have come this far by faith
Leaning on the Lord
Trusting in His Holy Word
He's never failed us yet, can't turn around
'Cause we have come this far by faith

As we journey thru the 40 days of the Lenten season, commencing six weeks after the inauguration of Donald John Trump (convicted felon, President of the USA) let us ask ourselves: "How can I put my faith into action each day?" We must remind ourselves that "faith without works is dead!!"

Here are three ways to allow this trek to be fruitful:

1. Create a prayer jar---On slips of paper, write down the names of people you encounter every day---family members, friends, neighbors, church members. Pull one name out of the jar each day and pray specifically for that person.
2. Support a single parent---Offer to run errands, cook a meal, clean their house, or babysit for an evening to give them some much-needed support.
3. Become a mentor---Our wisdom and life experience can be some of the best things we can offer to someone else.

Prayer: *Heavenly Parent, on this journey, please lead me, guide me. Amen*

**REV. MS. ROBBIE G. MORTON
PEARL P. COOK SENIOR CITIZEN CLUB
MINISTERIAL STAFF (RETIRED)**

PERSEVERING THROUGH THE STORM: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

"Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or the left; turn your foot away from evil."

Proverbs 4:25-27

Friday, January 27, 1978, was a challenging day. A blizzard had buried the city under 4–5-foot snow drifts, and although I had a "snow day," I was expected to deliver newspapers. At 12 years old, I grudgingly bundled up and trudged through snow drifts nearly as high as I, each step taking me farther from home and deeper into the biting cold. When I finished, my frozen jeans and ice-packed face mask reminded me of my struggle.

Though I hated that day, it served as a powerful lesson. Serving God often includes facing overwhelming, unexpected challenges. Proverbs 4:25-27 urges us to keep our eyes focused ahead. Despite wanting to quit, I had a task to complete. Life, too, calls us to push through hard seasons. When the road is tough, God asks us to stay the course, to not swerve to the right or left.

In those moments of struggle, we are reminded that perseverance isn't just enduring—it's trusting God's guidance. Keep moving forward, knowing He's with you every step of the way.

Prayer: *Lord, I humble myself before you, placing my faith in your word on the path ahead through all days, whether fair or stormy. In the name of my Savior. Amen*

**BROTHER BRYON GARNER
VETERANS COUNCIL**

April 9, 2025

PRAISE GOD -- JUST BECAUSE

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands . . . for the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth for all generations." **Psalm 100: 1,5**

Some people find God at what I call "the zero hour." They may have received a serious diagnosis from the doctor -- cancer, heart disease; suffered a debilitating illness such as a stroke; or maybe they were victims of some catastrophic event, a car crash or a mugging, or sustained a life-altering condition such as a brain injury or immobility.

The first call for help, either by instinct or habit, is to God. Whether from your hospital bed, on a darkened street or in the privacy of your home, the plea's still the same: "God, please help me!" I know. Recently, I experienced excruciating lower-back pain that came out of nowhere. Afraid that I'd be sidelined from my life, I cried out to God. By God's grace, the condition passed. But why should we wait until there's a dire need in our lives to seek God? Why not praise Him anyway?

Now, I always praise God -- for blessings such as waking up, moving without pain, and for having a warm home, food in the fridge, enough money and decent people in my life. And I praise Him because He's God.

Praise God everyday -- just because.

Prayer: *Father God, help me to remember that you are worthy to be praised. Amen*

**SISTER RITA D. FORD
MEMBER**



April 10, 2025

TRUST IN THE LORD

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

Proverbs 3:5 NIV

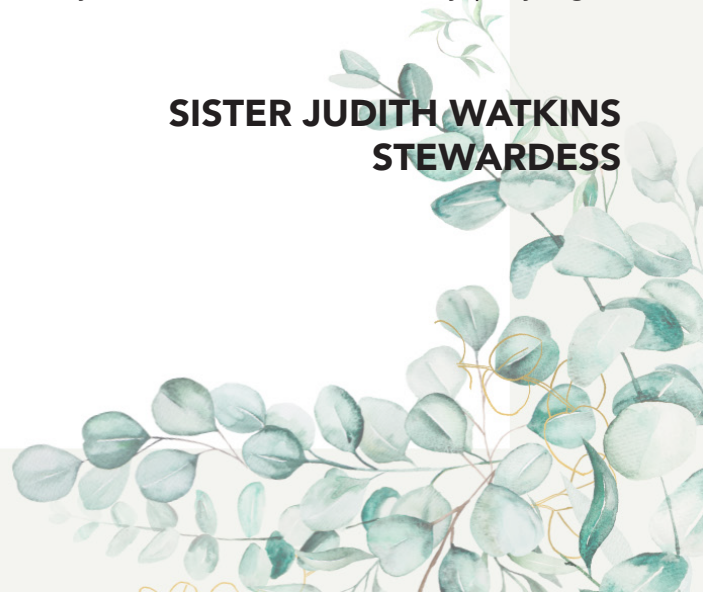
One Sunday, a man was driving his family to church when he saw a woman walking along the side of the road carrying a gas can. After he took his family to church, he found the woman and filled her tank with gas. She told him she had five dollars. He gave her the forty dollars in his wallet.

Several years later the same man's mother needed a caregiver and the assigned worker could not keep the appointment. A substitute caregiver was sent to his mother's house. The mother and substitute caregiver bonded, so the son decided to meet the substitute. He realized that she was the lady he met on the highway. She shared with him that she wanted to become a nurse. After hearing her story, the son was inspired to start a GoFundMe account on her behalf.

In this Lenten season our goals should be to pray, fast and repent. As in the story above we can show love to others, help when needed and know that the only thing that makes a difference is what we do for Christ. We can always improve our present moment.

Prayer: *Dear God, help us remember to draw closer to you this Lenten season by praying, fasting and repenting. Amen.*

**SISTER JUDITH WATKINS
STEWARDESS**



April 11, 2025

REGENERATE, REPLANT, REBIRTH

"I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong." **Ephesians 3: 16-17**

Deep, sturdy plant roots need the right ingredients to replenish and grow strong. Among my houseplants there are distinctive, adaptive, enduring, independent yet obedient varieties. Sometimes unpredictable, yet always responsive, resilient and true to the roots that nourish. They seek and turn toward the sunshine to thrive. Plants remind me of how we are nurtured and grow in God's grace; changing through the seasons and the ever-present love of Jesus, sometimes when we cannot clearly see the evidence of His presence.

A particular house plant in my collection, scientifically known as *Alocasia reginula* (black velvet) has fascinated me. It was tall and full when I received it and initially it liked the outdoor porch location. Then it lost stature and blooms and appeared to be barely hanging on. However, the right amount of watering, nutrients, another location, and more focused attention restored it.

The resurrection of Christ is like that black velvet plant and other miracles of nature. With spiritual nurturing we too can regenerate and be reborn to thrive in our purpose.

Prayer: *Lord God, daily revive, renew and strengthen us as we seek the Son, shine in His light and grow in His grace. Thank you for showing us the love, peace and miraculous healing power of Jesus our Lord. Amen*

**SISTER JACQUELINE BROWN WOODY
FRIEND OF METROPOLITAN**

April 12, 2025

LOVE AS HONEY, JUSTICE LIKE SUGAR

"to the hungry, even what is bitter tastes sweet"

Proverbs 27:7

Memories of making challah loaves during elementary school keep returning as I reflect on this Lent season. A common staple for Shabbat and Jewish holiday dinners found its place on Easter tables in the spirit of the traditional Feast of the Resurrection. A simple unleavened bread offering of the past evolved across geography to become today's soft, tender dough enriched by eggs and oil and sweetened with sugar or honey.

The abundance embodied in challah's braided density is a delightful climax ending Lent atonement. Some focus on what is given up in sacrificial austerity rather than gained in healing curettage. This span of fast to feast, penance to celebration, abstinence to fulfillment, brokenness to restoration overlays American governance. Fascist policies are cementing a bitter road ahead of certain famine of truth and drought of dignity. History confirms that liberty from oppression is also certain to come.

We must not let our hunger for freedom find temporary appeasement in the deceptive comforts of death's shroud covering all people (Isaiah 25:6-8). God will swallow up death and we will triumph, like Jesus the Christ, in new life. As spices infuse anointing oils to bind bodies for burial, we must elevate authentic love as honey and equal justice as sugar into plaits of holy passion for our liberated unity.

Prayer: *God of our ancestors, prepare us to rise sweetly beyond burial into resurrected humanity. Amen.*

**SISTER DORA MUHAMMAD
SARAH ALLEN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**



April 13, 2025
Palm Sunday

O'ER ALL THE WAY

1 O'er all the way green palms and blossoms gay
Are strewn this day in festive preparation,
Where Jesus comes, to wipe our tears away,
E'en now the throng to welcome Him prepare.

Join all and sing His name declare,
Let ev'ry voice resound with acclamation,
Hosanna! Praised be the Lord!
Bless Him, who cometh to bring us salvation!

2 His word goes forth, and people by its might
Once more their freedom gain from degradation,
Humanity doth give to each his right,
While those in darkness find restored the light.

Join all and sing His name declare,
Let ev'ry voice resound with acclamation,
Hosanna! Praised be the Lord!
Bless Him, who cometh to bring us salvation!

3 Sing and rejoice, O blest Jerusalem,
Of all thy sons sing the emancipation,
Thro' boundless love, the Christ of Bethlehem
Brings faith the hope to thee forevermore.

Join all and sing His name declare,
Let ev'ry voice resound with acclamation,
Hosanna! Praised be the Lord!
Bless Him, who cometh to bring us salvation!



A TIME TO FORGIVE

"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." **Mark 11:25**

The Lenten season is a time for giving, praying, and fasting. When Jesus spoke of each of these practices (giving, praying, and fasting), He basically said the same thing about each one: do it in private and your Father who sees in private will reward you openly. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you..." (Matthew 6:14)

Lent is a time to go deeper with God. It is a time to tackle the question of how true forgiveness can be achieved. I must admit that forgiveness is difficult for me. I struggle with falling into the trap of asking God to change someone else's heart instead of asking for the grace to see that person as God does. In this season, especially, we need to come to terms with the fact that none of us is perfect. It is a difficult truth to face in any season, but especially during the Lenten season. The world is a place filled with imperfect people who do evil things. We forgive because forgiveness is for us.

Prayer: *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Amen*

**SISTER TORI COLLINS
MEMBER**



April 15, 2025

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

*"Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'
And they cast lots to divide his clothing."*

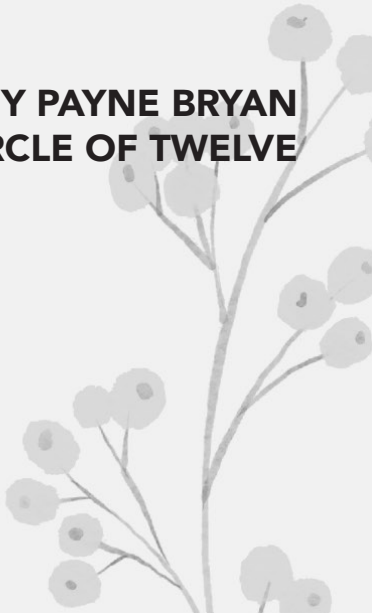
Luke 23:34

Those words from the Book of Luke became recorded scripture as Jesus looked down from the cross upon a scene that must have been distressing to Him. There were Roman soldiers gambling for His clothing (John 19:23-24); criminals on crosses on each side of Him reviling Him (Matthew 27:44), religious leaders mocking Him (Matthew 27:41-43); and the crowd blaspheming Him (Matthew 27:39). Surrounded by this most unworthy lot, Jesus prayed for them. "Father, forgive them!" This prayer is only one example of His unmatched love. Surrounded by this most unworthy lot, Jesus still prayed, "Father, forgive them" this prayer of unmatched mercy and love.

Jesus' words teach us how remarkable it was that, while in excruciating and mind-numbing torment on the cross, He had the heart, will and mind to pray for others.

Prayer: *Father, I pray that I will feel your spirit and you will give me the mind of Jesus that no matter what my circumstances are that I may have the heart, will and mind of Jesus to pray for others.*

**SISTER DOROTHY PAYNE BRYAN
CIRCLE OF TWELVE**





April 16, 2025

HUMILIATION AND SUFFERING OF JESUS AT CRUCIFIXION

"And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him." **Mark 15: 20**

Jesus suffered and was crucified on the cross. He carried His cross for crucifixion. It was heavy and difficult, but Jesus did as He was told. They mocked and spat on Him, stripped off His clothes, pierced him in His sides, placed thorns on His head, smote Him on the head with a reed and nailed Him to the cross. He never said a word to His accusers.

The cruelty, pain and humiliation that Jesus suffered and withstood makes me sad and want to do something to help Him. He calls out to His father for help, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" But Jesus had to bear the cross alone as this was the will of God to deliver us from our sins. Jesus suffered and died on the cross for forgiveness of our sins so that we will have eternal life with God. His sacrifices teach us hope, faith, love, endurance, strength, obedience and compassion.

This Lenten Season let us learn and understand the purpose of his crucifixion. His humiliation and suffering are examples of goodness, obedience, patience, faithfulness and love that can guide us through life's challenges.

Prayer: *Lord, this Lenten Season, help us to understand the purpose of your crucifixion and how it affects our lives today.*



**SISTER BETTY J. D. SMOOT
CHURCH SCHOOL**

April 17, 2025

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"

Acts 1:10-11

Years ago, I watched a television program where a man recently had undergone a procedure on his neck. For recovery, he was told to keep his head back and look up at all times. As he left the doctor's office and entered the street, he stopped to light a cigarette and continued to look up. People began to look up and follow him to see why he was looking up. They stared up and whispered to each other pointing to the sky at what they presumed was the object being observed. No one ever asked what he was looking at but just continued to follow and wonder.

In the scripture, we find the disciples looking skyward as Jesus ascended on a cloud. I surmise that they wondered if they would see Jesus again. The disciples were blessed to have two men (presumably, angels) tell them what they were witnessing and what will happen in the future. Jesus will return just like He left.

We, too, will look up and see Jesus' return if we continue to walk the path of righteousness and represent him on earth. What a promise! We have reason to look up and know what we are observing.

Prayer: *Almighty God, let us continue to look up for the coming of your Son, Jesus the Christ. Amen*

**BROTHER WADE DUGGER
STEWART EMERITUS**

April 18, 2025
Good Friday

**Father,
forgive
them, for
they do
not know
what
they do.**

**Truly, I say to you today you will
be with Me in Paradise. Woman,
this is your son. This is your mother.**

**My God,
My God,
why have
you for-
saken me.**

**I thirst. It
is finished.
Father, into
your hands
I commit
my spirit.**

RESURRECTION AND LIFE

"Jesus said to her I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me though he may die he shall live." **John 11:25**

Coming to Jesus brings us new life; not just a few more years on earth or a better way of living, but real, exciting and a wonderful life. It brings the ability to do the right things for the right reasons.

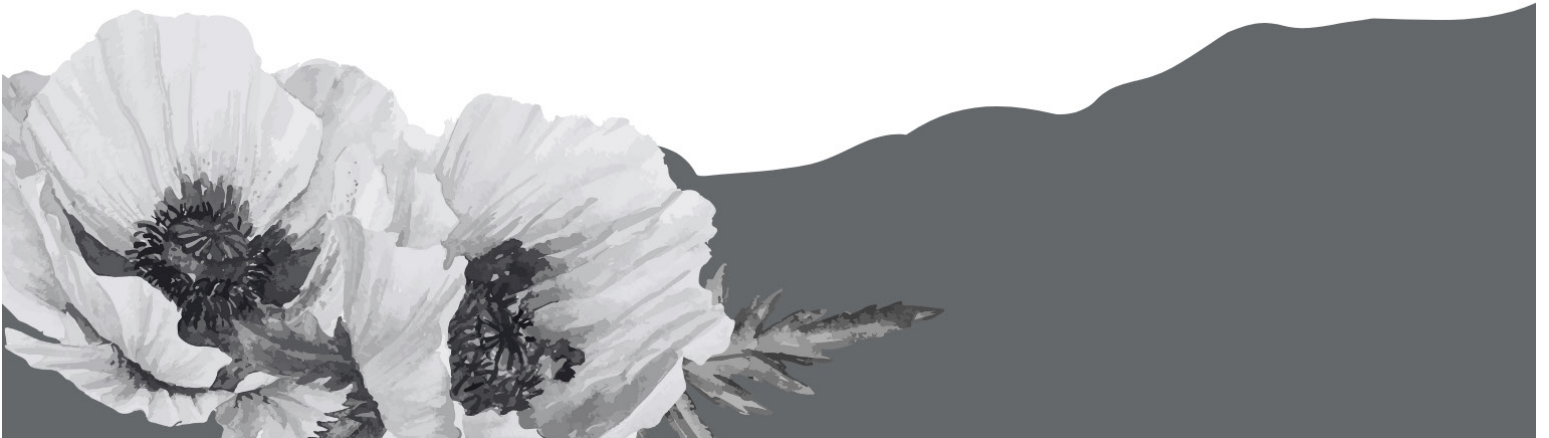
As the resurrection does wonderful work in our lives, we receive life from death. God sent his son to die for us so that we could improve our lives, make better choices and feel good about our life on earth. We have the life that God intended for each of us, connected to God.

No matter what struggles we may have, God's resurrection power works again and again in our life. Nothing can separate us from God's eternal life. During this Lenten season give and show God's love.

Prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for your love and care. Help me to remain faithful and ready to serve you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

SISTER MARY G. BURROUGHS*
DEACONESS BOARD

**Reprinted from Lent 2017*





April 20, 2025
Easter Sunday



CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY

1 Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

2 Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

3 Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

4 Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

5 Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!
Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

6 King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!



CONTRIBUTORS

Ash Wednesday

March 6

March 7

March 8

March 9

March 10

March 11

March 12

March 13

March 14

March 15

March 16

March 17

March 18

March 19

March 20

March 21

March 22

March 23

March 24

March 25

March 26

March 27

March 28

March 29

March 30

March 31

April 1

April 2

April 3

April 4

April 5

April 6

April 7

April 8

April 9

April 10

April 11

April 12

PALM SUNDAY

April 14

April 15

April 16

April 17

Good Friday

April 19

EASTER SUNDAY

Pastor William H. Lamar IV

Sister Dana Williams

Brother Elias "Pete" Prioleau

Sister Teresa Driver* (deceased)

Reverend Christopher Bonner

Brother James Robinson

Sister Yvonne Bolling

Brother Clayton Aarons

Sister Maurita Coley-Flippin

Song: HOW GREAT THOU ART

Sister Barbara Jones

Reverend Aisha Karimah

Sister Linda Aarons

Brother Thedford Collins

Reverend Christal Bell

Sister Marie Johns

Sister Janice Evans* (deceased)

Sister Greta Kendrick

Sister Leila Kendrick

Sister Willie "Dee" Elliott

LORD'S PRAYER

Sister Marsha Botts

Brother Pius Akinola

Brother Carlos Botts

Sister Barbara Wood

Sister Anntoinette McEntyre

Sister Mae Hawkins

Sister Ellen Fizer

Sister Elsie Scott

Brother Jonathan Botts

Sister Celeste Bryant

SONG: GREAT IS THOU FAITHFULNESS

Reverend Kendal McBroom

Reverend Robbie Morton

Brother Bryon Garner

Sister Rita Ford

Sister Judith Watkins

Sister Jacqueline Woody

Sister Dora Muhammad

SONG: O'ER ALL THE WAY

Sister Tori Collins

Sister Dorothy Bryan

Sister Betty Smoot

Brother Wade Dugger

SEVEN LAST WORDS (with Cross)

Sister Mary Burroughs (deceased)

SONG: CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY

*Yvonne L. Bolling,
Christian Education Director
Marsha Turner Botts, Editor
Evan Taylor,
Layout Editor/Production*

