

First United Methodist
New Philadelphia



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Devotional 2021

Submissions from the
New Philadelphia First UMC Family

Dear New Philadelphia First United Methodist Church,

Within the pages of this booklet are the prayerful meditations of many of our members and friends. We have selected 40 scriptures to study and pray over as a way to commit ourselves to learning more about our God and to be drawn closer to him. We invite you to open this booklet each day and to reflect on the words that are within and allow them to have an impact upon your daily lives. Take the words with you when you leave the house and choose to be different from how you have been living. Share the meditations with others and intentionally let God work through you.

I find that it is best to set up a routine for following this devotional. Designate a specific time every day to read and pray over the scriptures and your fellow parishioners' words. Make it so that this activity would take precedence over everything else that might demand your time. Shut off the cell phone or the television, find a quiet and comfortable place and invite God into your space. Understand that this should take between 5 to 15 minutes every day.

Do not be discouraged if you miss a day as we are all human and to take on a discipline like a daily devotional can be tough. If you find that you missed a day, return to it quickly and read that day's offering and plan for another time when you could explore the missed meditation.

My hope is that this Lenten Daily Devotional will help to guide you closer to the Knowledge and love of God!

Pastor Brandon

Wednesday February 17, 2021

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

The season of lent is all about seeking understanding from God. We participate in special disciplines so that we might feel temptation that intentionally helps us share in the experience that Jesus had while he was in the desert for 40 days. This whole process is supposed to get us thinking about and praying to our God. The scripture for today tells us to humble ourselves. When we pray, we often will bow our heads, clasp our hands and close our eyes. These are all things that are meant to get us humbled. Through these actions we prepare ourselves to wait on God. On this day of Lent, let us be humble and patient. Let us wait and listen for God to lift us up.

Gracious, heavenly Father, we know that you are God and we are your creation. You love us, you teach us, and you care for us. Help us to be patient as we seek your blessing through this season of Lent. Open our hearts and minds to what you need to speak to each of us this day. In your Son's most precious name, AMEN.

Pastor Brandon Keck

Thursday February 18, 2021

Isaiah 58:6

Fasting combined with prayer can help you prepare yourself and others to receive God's blessing. In Isaiah 58, the prophet lists reasons for fasting including verse 6 where he states, "to loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke." The purpose of a true fast is to help us overcome personal sins which have burdened us and to help us gain strength for difficult tasks or problems. We are told that we fast as a way to petition to the Lord to intervene on behalf of others and for our loved ones.

The Lord knows when our fast and our worship is shallow. The people cried out that they had fasted, but that their prayers were not answered. However, the Lord does not expect a fast as an empty ritual for selfish needs, but instead as a sincere heart of obedience. God reaches out to his people through Isaiah and instructs them that if they want to fast the way that pleases Him, begin with getting right with your brothers and sisters, stop oppressing one another, and reach out to help others. People need to stop acting wickedly towards one another, but instead spread kindness and love.

Heavenly Father, let us not use this time of fasting as an empty ritual that we do to selfishly please the Lord, but as a time for reflection in how we treat one another. Allow us to open our hearts and our doors to others, to satisfy the needs of the oppressed, and to not engage in maliciousness towards one another. Only then will your light rise in the darkness and the Lord will guide you always.

Deirdre Newburn

Friday February 19, 2021

Psalms 42:1-2 (NLT)

*¹ As the deer longs for streams of water,
so I long for you, O God.*

² I thirst for God, the living God.

When can I go and stand before Him?

Have you ever been thirsty, really thirsty? Sure you have! My most vivid memory of real thirst was after working in the haymow of my grandfather's farm on a sweltering summer afternoon and, then, the indescribable feeling of that long cool drink of water afterward. The Psalmist captures that longing and likens it to the intensity of his search for God. Do we seek God with equal fervor? Have we perhaps lost some of our dedication to Him? In 1984, after a 19-day fast, Martin Nystrom wrote the popular hymn, "As the Deer" whose inspirational lyrics are in our song book and expand on this theme. (Page 2025, The Faith We Sing, Abingdon Press, 2000). Let's use this Lenten season to re-dedicate ourselves to God, to truly make him our heart's desire. Because, we all know the answer to the Psalmist's question in verse 2 above – we can stand for and before God everywhere and anywhere!

Prayer: Lord of all Creation, we stand in awe of you and are thankful for all of your blessings to us. Create in us a desire to know you better and follow your paths more faithfully. Help us to truly stand before you, ready to soak up your wisdom as we face life's journey. Amen

Jim and Linda Angel Rice
Lent 2021

Saturday February 20, 2021

Joel 2: 12-14

12 "Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." 13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. And he relents from the sending calamity. 14 Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing- grain offering and drink offerings for the Lord your God.

The prophet Joel has been called the "Prophet of Pentecost." The name Joel means "Yahweh is God." The book was written between 835 and 800 B.C., during which time a terrible locust plague is followed by a severe famine throughout the land of Judah. Joel uses these happenings as a catalyst to send words of warning to the people of Judah. Without repentance, judgement will be harsh, thorough and certain. Our trust should not be in our possessions- which can be taken from us- but in the Lord our God. God at times may use nature, sorrow or other common occurrences to draw us closer to him. God's covenant with his people will endure forever.

Gracious; and Heavenly Father, please help us to humble ourselves and see your forgiveness and place our trust in you. If we will but respond we can receive renewal and spiritual blessings. We will find our refuge in the Lord.

Amen.

Bill Harding

Monday February 22, 2021

Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

It's a rush, busy, go, get as much as you can world. We tend to focus on the material STUFF. But the STUFF that will cling to, our earthly possessions, are simply temporary. It will ultimately fade, break and crumble. Now God has given us many talents and abilities. He wants us to succeed while we are here in his creation. However, the issue arises when we forget HIM. We forget who gives us exactly what we need. Jesus wants us to remember him first and do not forget that he is the ultimate provider. While on earth, we are focus on eternal STUFF. This means we need to walk closer to God, every day. Focus on prayer and thank him for our many blessings. Eternal possessions will never fade, break or crumble for his kingdom in heaven will last forever.

Thank God daily for what he has given you. Thank him for being your constant companion and provider. Thank him for the reminders he sends you to follow him...for God is the RIGHT STUFF which will lead to eternal life.

Let us Pray: Dear Lord, I thank you for your holy kingdom. Remind me that my treasure lies with you. Amen

Melanie Sopher

Tuesday February 23, 2021

Lamentations 3:25

“The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.” (NRSV)

Do you find it difficult to wait? I do. I confess to being often impatient. It’s a difficult problem to overcome. But I’m working on it. And the truth is, sometimes the necessity of waiting on something causes me to have a deeper appreciation for what I have been waiting for. As we move through the days of Lent, we are waiting for something. Among other things, we are waiting for Lent to come to an end so that we can celebrate Easter! If you are a person who gives something up for Lent, perhaps you are waiting for that day when you can enjoy that thing again. But perhaps the thing we, as Christians, are most waiting for is that time when our hope is fulfilled.

In fact, the New International Version renders today’s text: *“The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him...”* Biblical hope is not just wishing for something to be true; it is looking forward to the fulfillment of that which is already true in promise, already assured, because it is God who backs the promise. So we can wait confidently.

Prayer—Gracious God, give us patience as we wait, knowing that you are true to your word. May this Lenten season be an opportunity for us to demonstrate our trust in you. Help us to know you better and to claim the promise that the one who seeks you will find you.

Submitted by Brad Call

Wednesday February 24, 2021

Isaiah 30:18

For those of you who have had children, did you ever have a particularly obstinate child? He or she was strong willed—you couldn't tell them anything, and they would rarely ever listen to your advice! That describes the children of Israel in the text leading up to our key verse for today. God was not pleased with God's children. They had become spiritually heart-hearted and hard-headed!

How much we are like them! How often we can be God's obstinate children! I have experienced the struggles of dealing with an obstinate child, but I have hesitated to examine my own strong-willed tendency in my relationship with the Lord!

Lent affords me (and you) the opportunity to reflect upon that relationship, including:

How obedient am I?

From whom do I seek direction for life?

Am I becoming hard-hearted, because I have been hard-hearted?

It's not enough for us to admit that we can be obstinate. We have to own up to what we are being obstinate about, and turn back to God—repent. So, listen to Isaiah's comforting words,

“Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;
therefore he will rise up to show you compassion.

For the LORD is a God of justice.

Blessed are all who wait for him!” (Isaiah 30:18)

To each one of us his children, God says, “I'll be ready when you are.”

Dear Lord, we long for your rest and quietness and strength. We thank you for your grace when we are nothing more than stubborn children who want our own way. Teach us to be obedient as we follow you. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Written by Dan Loomis

Thursday February 25, 2021

Psalms 27: 14

Wait on the Lord; be strong, and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Wait....How hard it is for us to do. Be patient, wait till it is time, don't hurry ahead!

We are all waiting for this pandemic to be over. Waiting for our lives to return to some resemblance of normal. Waiting for what God has planned for us. But God tell us to wait. He, who sees the future, knows when the time is right to do what is asked of us He knows our needs. He says? Be strong, take heart, just wait on me." He wants us to learn to lean on Him, to learn patience and keep a strong attitude toward tomorrow. Be ready to do His will but don't get ahead of God. Wait on Him!

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, please grant us the patience to wait, the strength to be strong in our faith while we wait and the ability to take heart and be cheerful and loving as we live in this world. You know what is best for us since you see way beyond our limited ability. Help us to trust you and to seek your guidance and timing in all that we do. Help us to Wait. Amen

Cyndy Holzbach

Friday February 26, 2021

Matthew 6: 16-18

Jesus told his disciples not to draw attention to themselves by being hypocritical and doing such things as fasting outwardly to gain respect and admiration from others, but to do spiritual things that will look inwardly. Such things would be praying and fasting alone and in silence.

God knows what you do in secret and will reward you spiritually, not publically. The ones who openly try to win the praise of others will have already received another form of reward from our God.

Prayer:

Lord, we realize that all good things come from you. Thank you for being so gracious and sharing your gifts with us. Teach us how to fast correctly and reverently for all that you have given us. May we learn to be more like you every day. In Jesus' name we pray Amen.

Godfrey Holzbach

Saturday February 27, 2021

Isaiah 40: 31

*but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

Life can be so much easier when you believe and walk with God. He gives you your energy by doing work for others and never tiring. He is always with you.

God,

Give me the strength to walk with you daily.

Amen

Dave Cox

Monday March 1, 2021

Psalms 33: 20-22

*We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us,
O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.*

As with most Psalms, this is a confession and a petition for our faith and our commitment. *He is our help and our shield*; God is our provider and protector above all, and as such the ending will be victory. *In him our hearts rejoice*; the heart is the center of the human spirit. It's where we get emotions, thoughts, motivation, courage and action. Through our faith, we can seek him minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, because of his *unfailing love*.

Lord, I thank you for your unfailing love, for the words spoken through you, for my family and for my church. I am waiting in hope and I trust in your holy name.

Amen

Suzanne Komaromy

Tuesday March 2, 2021

Psalms 130: 5-6

“I wait eagerly for the Lord’s help and in his work, I trust. I wait for the Lord more eagerly than watchmen wait for the dawn.”

Recently our son and daughter’s families added a new kitten to their household. They, each, already had pet dogs, Marley and Jack. As the new pets, “Mable” and “Pumpkin” explored their new surroundings, the dogs watched and waited. The kittens ran around, played with the dogs tails, bopped them in the nose and sometimes took a nap at their side. The dogs waited patiently not sure of their place in the family, anymore. I’m sure that Marley and Jack were wondering if their households would ever be the same. But as the weeks went by they realized that their patience paid off. The kittens had established a routine and posed no threat to anyone. The dogs discovered that the wait was worth it. Things returned to normal, somewhat, and they had each made a new fiend.

Just as the watchman waited until dawn, when all was safe, we need to be patient and wait for the Lord’s guidance.

Dear Father, we thank you for your patience that you have for us. As we wait for your direction, we often want things to happen on our time instead of yours. Let us be reminded that you are the master of all and that your way is not always our way. Help us experience true faith and belief that we need to wait for you to lead the way. Let us feel your presence and trust that you are with us always. Amen

Cheryl Eichel

Wednesday March 3, 2021

Micah 7:7

How appropriate verses Micah 7: 1-6 apply to today. We have all felt “hopeless” or maybe the helpless feeling of the current pandemic in our lives and how it affects everything we do- or cannot do with the end still uncertain and months or years away. How about our country’s leaders being disrespectful to others and using power to obtain/change whatever can provide them more power. Average American citizens choose side’s o virtually every topic imaginable and are unwilling to sit down and discuss with the other side. Dishonesty, misinformation, lack of trust and friends turning on each other.

Humans cannot solve our problems on our own. We need God for direction, confidence and love. All these things he has promised us and much more. We are lucky that our Lord is very patient and always listening. Our God is waiting for us to ask for his leadership and guidance.

Heavenly Father, please forgive us for the time we spend complaining about the world today. Re-energize us to use our time, talents and prayers to help provide solutions-not add to the problems. Amen

Doug Sopher

Thursday March 4, 2021

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.

A simple word for our lives, and somehow this verse still speaks to some of our biggest fears and weaknesses. “Joyful in hope” implies we are in a period of waiting and anticipation. Our world thrives on immediacy, yet we are to be joyful in waiting. Being patient in affliction is also at odds with the way we want to ease our pain, to get to the other side, or to simply abandon what causes our suffering. God knows things aren’t necessarily joyous as we suffer, but a positive spirit grows through remaining faithful in prayer!

As we continue to develop our relationship with God, we come to understand that the best is yet to come, and wait with joy. We also know that by continuing to work and not folding during our most trying times, we are often rewarded with a final outcome greater than we could have imagined. Faithfulness in prayer can help us remain not only strong, but joyful in periods of waiting, and also keep us patient through our struggles so we don’t miss the blessing on the other side of our pain.

All knowing, all powerful, and ever-present God, help us to continue to seek you through prayer and through our walk together as a community. Help us to remember your promises and stay in communication with you, so that we may stay patient through hard times and remain joyful at what is to come. We pray that you would also use us as a tool to provide encouragement to others, and that we may be a reflection of your life and love through Jesus. Amen.

Tyler Rippel

Friday March 5, 2021

Hosea 12:6

God is kind, loving and faithful. He has given us the rules we need to live a full, fruitful life for him. He gives to us, making it so easy to be His follower. How do we treat His gifts to us? Do we follow in His footsteps or do we take His unconditional love for granted? Do we ease up in our daily lives? We go to church; we think we are living our lives as He wants us to. Are we doing it our way, instead of His? One thing we have the assurance of our God. Even when we stray from the path He is always there, willing to take us back into the fold, never questioning, always forgiving. When we think about the life He wants us to live, following His guidance is the only way to live a life fulfilled, and it is NOT HARD TO DO!!

Dear Heavenly Father, behold us, your children. We know you are always with us, willing to lead us, take care of us, and mold us. You are quite clear on what is expected of us. Help us to be aware of how we are following you. Bless us as we continue on our journey, knowing that you are waiting on our arrival.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Lucy Ricklic

Saturday March 6, 2021

Matthew 6:33

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

It can be very easy in our life to allow worry, fear and anxiety to creep into our thoughts; however we can win the battle of these by focusing on God and His truths. God has promised in His word to even take care of the needs of the birds and the bees therefore He will always provide all that we need in our lives. He knows how many hairs we have on our heads, and knows us better than we know ourselves. In times when my thoughts tend to wonder to things out of my control is when I have to reprogram my thinking. By turning to worship and focusing on the many wondrous things that God has done and provided in my life, I am able to lay the fear, anxiety and worry at the foot of the cross. Our Father is always good, gracious and perfect, we are precious to Him and He will always provide for us and make a way where there seems to be no way.

Father God we come to you in thanksgiving and praise for all the mighty and wonderful ways that you are. You are our fortress and our firm foundation. Your words are true and never changing may we always find refuge in you Lord God. Please guide us through each day and help us to always be the light even in times of uncertainty.

Sandy Loos

Monday March 8, 2021

1 Peter 5: 6-7

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.” NIV

Don’t Worry be Humble! We like to think we can take care of ourselves. It is the human mindset. As we make our plans our humanness can cause us to worry. These verses tell us that when we humble ourselves before God, when we trust in God, there is no reason for us to worry. We need to remember we are children of God! He is in charge! God loves us and as children of God we know that no matter the circumstance:

GOD WORKS ALL THINGS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL WHO LOVE HIM

It has been a trying year unlike any I have lived through, but I trust that this time of uncertainty will move us closer to him. I look around and see all the good things going on in the name of Jesus and I know the children of God are shining bright during this dark time.

PRAYER:

God, I know you are mighty and just. I believe in your word and thank you for providing for me and taking my worry. I pray for a spirit of humility. Help me to know that I am not the reason for my own success, happiness, and blessings. Keep me humble when I talk to others. I want others to see a reflection of you, not a reflection of me. Amen.

Mel and John Lyons

Tuesday March 9, 2021

Galatians 5:5

For through the Spirit by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

In the whole Galatian Chapter 5 scripture, Pauls' passage to the Gentile Galatian churches involved the Law of circumcision. The Jewish religion was preaching a different gospel; righteousness was obtained by living under the Law, in this case, all males being circumcised. But Paul was preaching under the new Gospel according to Christ: we are justified by our faith in Christ Jesus, and not by the Law, not by our works on earth. But by faith, we eagerly await through the Spirit (given to us through Christ) the righteousness we hope. For in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is our faith expressing ourselves through Love. The Spirit of Jesus Christ works through us people of faith, empowering us to live lives which our acceptable in God's sight.

Prayer: Oh Lord, let your Holy Spirit work through us in this present age, here on your earth. Let us have the hope that our COMPLETE righteousness will come when Christ comes to take us from this early world into eternity in God's world.

Susan Arnold

Wednesday March 10, 2021

Jeremiah 29: 12

“In those days when you pray, I will listen.”

The Lord exiled the people from Jerusalem to Babylon for about 70 years yet He never gave up on them and He did not want them to give up either. He told them to proceed with their lives, build homes and plant gardens and live and multiply. Strive for peace and pray to the Lord. In other words He is saying make the best of your situation. Don't let the phony ones trick you they are not from Me. I will come and I have wonderful plans for you, no not be tricked. The Lord is with them and listening to them all. He will not forsake them or us.

Lord, thank you for all you have done for us and continue to do. I know you are always with us and I am so thankful for that. I also know things are done according to your time not mine. We are a very blessed people because of you, Thank You.

Amen

Mike Stephens

Thursday March 11, 2021

James 5:11

James continues to urge his oppressed Christian readers to remain faithful to the Flock of God. He calls on persecuted believers to trust Him in their suffering as they wait for the day of the Lord. He appealed to them to be shepherds of the flock and take care of it willingly as God would want you to and not unwillingly.

The goal of worldliness is to avoid suffering. It's the quest to get everything you want in life, no matter what it costs, no matter who it hurts. Do your work not for mere pay but for the desire to serve God. Do not rule over the flock that has been put in your care, be the example to the Flock.

In the same way the younger men must submit themselves to the older men, you must put on the apron of humility to serve one another. In the Bible it says that God resists the proud and shows favor to the humble. Leave all your worries with him because he cares for you!

Be alert in your faith because all believers are going through the same thing. After you have suffered long enough God will call all eternal glory in union with Christ. To be the Power FOREVER Amen.

Jeff Fahner

Friday March 12, 2021

Psalms 62:5

“Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him”

This verse is from a Psalm written by David at a low point in his life. Theologians believe it may have been during his son’s rebellion. David knew who he needed to go to for help. He cried out to the God of hope in whom he had learned to trust. Knowing that God was in control allowed him to wait patiently and confidently, (I’m sure this very belief is what is helping many people get through our current pandemic.)

Hope is listed in Corinthians, along with faith and love, as one of the greatest of human qualities. Sometimes we use the word hope to mean just “wishful thinking” but my Bible concordance has a long column of references to the hope we can find in Jesus. This includes the greatest hope we all have of one day spending eternity in heaven. Knowing the risen Lord, gives us the confident hope of our own resurrection. As we prepare to celebrate Easter, may we rest in the assurance (not wishful thinking) that those of us who know Jesus as our Savior can say “Because Jesus lives, we to shall live!”

Dear God of Hope, we praise and thank you for that in your great love, you made it possible for us to have hope in the promise of eternal life. May others see hope in us and want it, too. Give us a passion for the hearts and lives of others. Amen.

Janice Yager

Saturday March 13, 2021

Psalm 25: 4-5

*⁴ Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.*

*⁵ Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.*

It is a part of our human nature for each of us to seek our own path and to make all of our own plans. The problem is that we often do not see the whole picture of reality in front of us and therefore we can ultimately make poor decisions. Even David does this to some horrible consequences. However, here David asks God to teach him and to show him the way. He is seeking to put his faith and hope in the God who created him for David believes in a God who is loving, all knowing and forgiving. We believe in this same God and we should be challenged today to read these verses aloud so that we could commit them to our hearts. Let us ask our God to teach us so that we might truly be changed this day.

Lord, we come to you today seeking to know your path for how we live our lives. We know that we won't be perfect however, with your blessing and with open ears, eyes, minds and hearts; we hope your Spirit would be our guide and teacher this day. AMEN

Johnna Keck

Monday March 15, 2021

At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

~Mark 1:12-15

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

~Acts 3:19

Do you believe this?

~John 11:26

Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth:

Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart: I will glorify your name forever.

~Psalm 86:11-12

Jesus calls us to repent and believe. Repentance requires realization, response, and recognition relying on the power of God. Belief requires acceptance, understanding, and FAITH. What good is faith without action? (James 2:14-26) Jesus went into the desert and responded through faith to Satan's temptations. His actions to overcome can help us face temptation without sinning and call upon him for strength as our Helper.

Gracious Lord, You are the Loving Provider, Merciful Creator, Eternal Sovereign, Faithful Father, Holy Guide, Impartial Preserver, and Just Savior, You are Infinite, Incomprehensible, Omnipotent while Omnipresent, Immutable, and Accessible. I humbly turn to you to repent and be made new. I seek your strength to walk in the way the truth and the life (John 14:6). Shape me to be a vessel to share the Good News that brings light and life to all (John 1:4) making and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In your Good and Omniscient Name I pray, Amen.

*Jensen, R. (2002). *Praying the Attributes of God*. Kregel Publications.

Shawna Hinkle

Tuesday March 16, 2021

Matthew 4 1-11: Temptation of Jesus

Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit after being baptized by John and the Spirit leads him into the desert to be tempted by Satan. Jesus has been in the desert for 40 days without food when Satan comes and tempts him in three ways; 1) Turn the stones into bread, 2) Jump off the highest cliff so the angels can catch him and keep him unharmed and 3) Satan offers him a kingdom if Jesus will worship Satan.

Jesus says do not put God to the test even after Jesus has certainly been tested and tempted. Even in his physically weakened state, Jesus is clear and steadfast in his faith and commitment to God. I am so humbled and in awe when I read these verses. Jesus is inspirational. He offers clarity for our journey of faith.

Prayer: Lord please give us the strength and support to choose in accordance to your will and spirit. Help us to try our very best to resist temptation and to look at your son Jesus as our inspiration and our guide. Amen

Chris Sand-Ashley

Wednesday March 17, 2021

Philippians 3: 10-11

I want to know Christ-yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Our goal as a Christian is to know Christ and then to be like him. We need to know him, REALLY KNOW him; not just the historical facts, but personally and intimately. How do we accomplish this? Love him. Follow him, pray with him and be obedient. Through Christ, through the power of his resurrection and through the sharing of his suffering our lives will be shaped for his purpose and one day we too will be raised from death to life.

Gracious and heavenly Father, we are grateful for having Christ in our lives and for being able to share his story with others. Continue to guide us in our quest to become closer to Christ, his suffering and power of the resurrection with true faith and belief.

Amen.

Susan Bair

Thursday March 18, 2021

John 10:10

“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”

The “thief” (or the false teachers or prophets) seeks to twist Christ’s teachings, telling us what we want to hear, instead of the truth. They hope to destroy our faith in Christ, to not believe in Christ and the sacrifices he made for us.

BUT Jesus is the light who gives us a rich, full, satisfying life forever. Starting right now, we can accept Christ and His Word. Jesus loves us and forgives us and will guide us. All we need to do is receive him and accept his precious gift to us. He has already paid the price!

PRAYER

Help us, oh Lord, to listen and hear your Word—the true Word—so that we can live our lives forever as you have taught us. Forgive us when we go astray.

AMEN

Linda DiDonato

Friday March 19, 2021

John 16:33

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on Earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

In our lives we will go through many trials; sickness, tragedy and natural disasters. As Christians we are able to walk through it all with peace and purpose. The life that God calls us to is wonderful because Jesus has overcome the world. Being a Christian does not guarantee an easy life. In fact, Jesus told us that following him can lead to persecution. We will forever have reassurance that our lives will never endure the pain and suffering as our Savior went through for all of us. We need to remember a simple saying "There is always light at the end of the tunnel!"

Prayer-

Our Heavenly Father, you have provided us with these wonderful words of comfort and peace. I pray that in all the trials and tribulations of life, which seem to be mounting with each passing day that our hearts and minds rest in Jesus so that his peace will carry us all through life's many difficulties. Your praise and glory in Jesus name we pray.

Amen

Ashley Hutchison

Saturday March 20, 2021

Zephaniah 3:17

“The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.” (NIV)

What comforting words these are that remind us that God is with us in battle, as a Mighty Warrior. Has this past year seem like we have all been in a battle? The year “2020” has surely had its share of fears, heartaches and tension. I know that I have worried about my health and that of my family and friends. I have felt the loss of so many lives to this pandemic, and the pain of those that have suffered with the effects of the virus on their health. I long for better times!

We have the reassurance that God will walk with us through the tough times. We may need to remind ourselves that we are not alone. That our Mighty Warrior is in this battle with us. In this may we find our comfort and our strength.

Prayer - Thank you God for never leaving us. Help us to rely on you and find peace and rest. Amen

Submitted by Sue Call

Monday March 22, 2021

John 3:14-18

During Lent, we take the time to reflect on God's plan, his purpose in our life, and the hope he has for us. Hope is a tricky word. Is it a dream? A promise? A maybe-maybe not?

This passage from John refers to Numbers. The people of Israel were attacked by poisonous snakes, as a result of their own disobedience. The people went to Moses for help, and Moses consulted with God. God instructed Moses to make an image of a snake and mount it on a pole. Anyone who looked at the snake was cured from their bite, and lived.

Looking at a snake on a stick to protect you from poisonous snake bites? That takes faith. That takes hope. This past year we have had many challenges no one would have predicted. Our only hope is to place trust in something beyond ourselves. God.

We are to look beyond ourselves to find hope during this dark season. How can you look beyond yourself to protect our friends and neighbors and bring our community out of this darkness?

God's gift of his only son was hope- hope for God's people. Jesus was not sent to condemn. He was sent as a beacon of hope. Let us all be this beacon of hope in the darkness.

Rose Tipka

Tuesday March 23, 2021

Micah 5: 4-5A

“And he will stand to lead his flock with the Lord’s strength, in the majesty of the Lord his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world. And he will be the source of our peace.”

A very short while ago I read an article reporting the results of a poll done on depression in the midst of the COVID pandemic. It stated that the greatest percentage of those who were not depressed were Christians! And I thought but of course! Because Jesus- our leader- is the source of our peace.

Remember Paul’s words? “We may stumble, but we don’t stay down, we don’t stay down, we may mourn for a time, but we do not remain discouraged.” Because Jesus is the source of our peace. And His Holy Spirit is our resident Lord, our friend, advocate, counselor, encourager, defender- source of peace.

If Jesus is your Lord, He is leading you in the majesty of God’s strength to a place within that this craziness can not disturb. Because as Micah said, He is from eternity past, and will lead His flock to eternity future with Him.

He is the source of our peace today!

Shalom

Karen Chaney

Wednesday March 24, 2021

Joel 2: 1-2

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all you live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come (NIV)

Scholars believe Joel was writing several hundred years before the birth of Christ. His visions of future events are among the most descriptive in the Old Testament- rivaling only, and frankly conflicting, the stories later recorded in the New Testament book of Revelation.

Joel's foretelling the coming of 'The Day of The Lord' stands in contrast to one of my earliest recollections as a neophyte in our congregation; the first hymn I ever recall singing from the hymnal, Ramona Wallace at the organ. Written in 1896 by H. Ernest Nichol; *We've A Story To Tell To The Nations* (UMC#596), you might remember, is an upbeat tune – and especially the refrain:

*For the darkness shall turn to dawn-ing
And the dawn-ing to noon-day bright;
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of love and light.*

Today's reading reminds us that there are differing accounts within the Holy Scriptures, and that we are a people of faith, not certainty. We are a people who trust in God's Will to advance his kingdom here, as it is in heaven.

Illuminate your way, Oh Heavenly Creator,

To see not what we want to see, but to trust in Your loving kindness.

Free us, Our Redeemer,

To experience Your mercy, pardon, and grace.

Order our lives, Oh Great Sustainer,

For a belief in faith and mystery when we face uncertainty and conflict.

In Jesus name, Amen

Brian Hanner

Thursday March 25 2021

Psalm 28: 6-7

David wrote a prayer of great trust and love to God. Joyful praise and unwavering confidence of being heard by God is expressed in these verses. God has heard our urgent prayers for compassion and comfort. The Lord is a shield/protector over us. We have no fear because in his great mercy, he has given us a new birth and a living hope for the resurrection. We trust in his care and in his blessings. And we sing of his unfailing love. God is ever-present to help and guide us in our lives.

Dear God, We thank you for hearing our prayers, supplying strength and protecting us when we are overwhelmed. We joyfully praise you and thank you for your many blessings! Amen.

Mike and Joan Johnson

Friday March 26, 2021

James 5:11

James was referencing Job of his faithfulness to God through great suffering. Job was an example who remained faithful to God. Have you endured great suffering? Where did you turn?

We should trust the Lord to provide, to be the judge and to lift us up in his time. Not our time.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for reminding us of your truth when suffering becomes long and difficult to bear, that you are gracious, full of compassion and is merciful to those in Christ. Help me Lord to come to you when I am suffering.
In Jesus's name, amen

Jenn Newburn

Saturday March 27, 2021

Proverbs 11:25

“An anxious heart dispirits a man and a kind word fills him with joy.”

Proverbs was taught by older religious “LEADERS” before the written language was developed. The form was devised so that the information could be passed down to the younger men through easy memorization. The information contained information or instructions and guidelines on how to run a functioning society.

Now you know the “how” and “why” of the beautiful form we are familiar with, let’s answer, “how” does this relate to Lent? Some people deprive themselves of something and when doing so they remind themselves of the great sacrifice Jesus did to die that our sins may be forgiven.

Go back to anxious heart. List all the things that give you an anxious heart. You might start with COVID 19. Now list all the things that give you joy. The list may longer or shorter. Hopefully it will longer and give you something to add, a prayer, a note, a phone call, a twinkle in the eye.

Dear God, Help me to reach out to others, help me bring joy. Thank you for all the members of our church who are already doing these things. Amen

Gracie Murphy

Monday March 29, 2021

Zechariah 9:9

“Rejoice greatly and Shout for the king is coming!”

Can you imagine the joy felt when those words were written, knowing that soon the righteous, gentle, and humble king would come to save us all? Soon is a relative word, as Zechariah wrote this about 500 years before Jesus was expected. But Zechariah meant these words as encouragement and something to look forward to. I imagine much the way we anticipate Heaven.

When this glorious event finally did take place, the people indeed “Rejoiced greatly and shouted”. In fact they lined the road and threw down palm branches for their king to ride through on the donkey. The people were so filled with hope and expectation that they could not keep silent.

Think about the last time an event moved you so completely. Without hope for the future, what is there to look forward too?

Father, Thank you for giving us hope for the future. And help us to keep our eyes focused on you and your word. We are grateful for the blessings you have already given us and ask for comfort and healing for those that need it.

In Jesus name Amen.

Denise Cochenour

Tuesday March 30, 2021

Luke 19: 28-30

Imagine being one of the two disciples to accompany Jesus on his trip to Jerusalem as King and what must have been going through their minds. Now, imagine being sent by Jesus to go into Bethphage and Bethany in search of a colt that had never been ridden and having to answer for why they needed it. The fears they must have felt as they attempted to untie a colt that didn't belong to them and yet, Jesus' confidence in their mission must have calmed their nerves. What concerns do you currently have that you need to lay in the hands of the Lord?

This was it- Jesus was making his triumphant entrance as King and they were by his side. Where else would you rather be?

Almighty God, we are thankful for all the ways in which you soothe our nerves and calm our souls in our everyday worries. We pray that we will always be able to put aside our pride and place our concerns in your hands. Help us to charge ahead each day, armed with your belief in us to tackle the challenges of the day and to continue your work. Amen.

Andy Zimmerman

Wednesday March 31 2021

Luke 19: 41-44

The words “he wept” in this passage remind me how much Jesus hurt for us. God does not want to see any of his people not receive salvation, yet accepting it is still our choice. As a father, I think of how I want the best for my daughter and how much pain it would cause me to see her make mistakes while pulling away from me. God’s love for us is so much deeper, deeper than we can ever understand, and thus so much deeper must be his pain when we walk away from him. His love and grace are unending, though there will come a day when it will be too late for us, his children, to accept him. Reading this passage now I am lifted up knowing how much our Lord and Savior loves us. At the same time, I am encouraged to not put off my life long pursuit to draw nearer to him, while cleaving those things from my life that pull me away from him.

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for your unending love and grace. I am so very grateful for your perfect gift to us, the sacrifice of your Son. Lord, I struggle every day against the sin that is my imperfect will. Lord, please grant me the strength daily to deny myself, so that I might draw nearer to you each day. I know that the daily struggles that I encounter in this life are temporary, your plan for me is infinitely better than my own and that through you Son you have offered me the gift of eternal life. In your Son’s precious and heavenly name. Amen.

Jason Corder

Thursday April 1, 2021

1 Corinthians 6:14

‘And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.’

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul is telling Christians that our bodies were not meant for sexual sin or immorality. God made our bodies to be united into one body of marriage. Just because we can, does not mean that we should. Some Christians believed that they could use or do to their bodies whatever they desired. Paul is disputing this and saying that our bodies exist for a higher purpose. Keeping our bodies clean from sexual sin is just as important as following other commandments. Our Heavenly Father will call us home to his Kingdom one day and he will raise our bodies as well. Death is not the end for our bodies. Paul is asking us, if our bodies are indeed meant for a higher purpose, wouldn't we want them to be pure and clean from sexual sin?

Heavenly Father, we thank you for opening our eyes to what it means to keep our bodies pure and clean. Lord help us to always refrain from sexual immorality so that our bodies will be welcomed into your Kingdom. Amen

Janel Bevan

Friday April 2, 2021

Mark 12:29-31

We all know that when Jesus says “Love your neighbor as yourself,” he is not referring to just the people who live closest to us, but to all people. Why, then, is it so hard for us to truly love our neighbors? Why is it easier to dismiss our neighbor’s voice when they ask for justice or equality? When you love someone, you don’t always agree with them. There will be times of misunderstanding, or of opposing views. These times should not negate the love that we have for one another, but rather should give us the opportunity to learn, reflect, and grow. When we love our neighbor, we want good things for them. We want them to be happy, to be safe, and to be well cared for. Let us remember that we are all neighbors, and that we need to be loving toward each other.

God who loves us all, help us to remember the love that you show for all of us every day. Help us to love each other as you love us. Thank you for allowing us the chance to learn from one another as we continually learn from you. Amen.

Kristi Prucha

Saturday April 3, 2021

Isaiah 26:4

“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord Himself is Rock Eternal.”

These are words that we must repeat to ourselves daily, especially now when we are truly living day to day unsure of what tomorrow will look like. This is how we strive to live in our classrooms. With so much uncertainty it can be stressful just to get through the day, what is the answer? Treat every day like it was their last day. What does this mean to me? We cannot control what happens around us but we can control how we react. Every day when I walk into my classroom I ‘try’ to remind myself “What if this was their last day?” Greet our children with “I am so glad that you are here!” Fill their day with singing, learning, fun and joy. Speak to them in a manner that if today was our last day, they would go home feeling valued, loved and knowing that Jesus lives in their heart. Trust in the Lord that he puts myself and my wonderful teaching staff here together with your children for a reason. Trust everyday that we are fulfilling HIS purpose.

We can use this in other aspects of our lives, and the way we interact with ourselves and others. What if Today was Our Last Day? The verse continues on to remind us that HE will come again to reign HIS judgments. When we put our trust in the Lord we also LIVE with HIM in our hearts. Reflect what that may look like in your own heart and in your own lives.

Dear Heavenly Father, please remember us to put our trust in you. When we have doubts about tomorrow or even doubts about today let give us the power to know that YOU have a plan for us that we are living it. Help us remember that we have control over how we REACT to those things we cannot control,

In your name we pray. AMEN

Jessica Halter

WORSHIP TIMES

9:00 am Modern Worship

11:00 am Traditional Worship

Rev. Brandon Keck, Pastor

Jessica Halter, Director of Creative Fish

Jeff Fahner, Director of Maintenance

Godfrey Holzbach, Worship Coordinator

Suzanne Komaromy, Financial Secretary

Sandy Loos, Administrative Assistant

Kristi Prucha, Organist, Children's Choir Director

Tyler Rippel, Director of Modern Worship & Technology

John Rummel, Maintenance

Janel Bevan, Assistant Custodian

Mike Stephens, Senior Custodian