

Lenten Devotional

— LENT 2022 —





Name:

Date:

What is Lent?

Lent is the 40 days that precede Easter (excluding the Sundays). In the Christian Scriptures, the number 40 relates to the period spent in the ark by Noah, the period spent by Israel seeking the Promised Land after the Exodus, and the amount of time Jesus was in the wilderness after His baptism and prior to the beginning of his ministry. For us, the season of Lent is an invitation to 40 days of renewal ("lent" is a form of the Old English *lencten*, meaning "spring-time") and 40 days to prepare ourselves to take in the Good News of Easter through deeper disciplines of prayer, fasting, and sacrifice.

Lent begins on what is called "Ash Wednesday." Part of the tradition of Ash Wednesday is to receive a mark of ashes on your forehead. Receiving the ashes reminds us that God's love is triumphant over sin and death, and that God remains "in communion" with us, that in Christ, our mortality is overcome.

Another important tradition in Lent is to sacrifice or give up something for the 40 days. For example, some people will give up television, others will give up eating meat, some will give up beer or coffee, others may give up gossiping. This year, as you commit to a sacrifice, I encourage you to also commit to one another in ministry. Add something to your next forty days as we journey together towards the cross, to help build the Kingdom of God where you are now.

MyLenten sacrifice is:

MyLenten commitment is:

Life of Christ

— LENT 2022 —

EVENTS

Join Us This Spring!

Wed. Feb. 17 – Ash Wednesday

- † 12:15 p.m. – Come & Go
Ashes and Prayer
- † 5 p.m. – Mission Committee
Fundraising Dinner
- † 6:15 p.m. – Ash Wed. Service

Thur. Mar. 3 - Lent Bible Study

- 12:15-12:45 p.m., through Apr. 14

Sun. April 10 – Palm Sunday

Thur. Apr. 14 – Holy Thursday

- † 6:00 p.m. – Living Last Supper

Fri. Apr. 15 – Good Friday

Sun. Apr. 17 – Easter

For
additional
events and
details,
scan this
QR code



March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Words From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

If you are reading these Lenten devotionals, I assume that you are looking for something meaningful in these weeks leading up to Easter. Maybe you are trying out some new spiritual habits for the first time. Perhaps this is the rhythm that guides you during Lent each year. Maybe someone put this in your hands and suggested that you read it. For all of us, my hope is the same—that we would encounter Jesus in the readings, reflections, and prayers, and that through those encounters, we would be shaped by Christ. May we be like Jeremiah, who heard from the Lord and spoke to Israel, “like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand.”

These devotionals are an offering from many in our church community. Their different perspectives and styles help us hear the gospel in different ways, and they enrich our faith journey. It is good to follow Jesus in the company of others! I hope that you will join us in worship on Sundays as we give attention to the transformational stories of Jesus, culminating in the triumph of Easter. May the Lord bless you!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Molly Simpson

molly.simpson@fumc-killeen.org

Table Of Contents

Words from the Pastor.....	5
Day 1: Wednesday, Mar. 2, 2022.....	8
Day 2: Thursday, Mar. 3, 2022.....	9
Day 3: Friday, Mar. 4, 2022.....	10
Day 4: Saturday, Mar. 5, 2022.....	11
Day 5: Sunday, Mar. 6 2022.....	12
Day 6: Monday, Mar. 7, 2022.....	13
Day 7: Tuesday, Mar. 8, 2022.....	14
Day 8: Wednesday, Mar. 9, 2022.....	15
Day 9: Thursday, Mar. 10, 2022.....	16
Day 10: Friday, Mar. 11, 2022.....	17
Day 11: Saturday, Mar. 12, 2022.....	18
Day 12: Sunday, Mar. 13, 2022.....	19
Day 13: Monday, Mar. 14, 2022.....	20
Day 14: Tuesday, Mar. 15, 2022	21
Day 15: Wednesday, Mar. 16, 2022.....	22
Day 16: Thursday, Mar. 17, 2022.....	23
Day 17: Friday, Mar. 18, 2022.....	24
Day 18: Saturday, Mar. 19, 2022.....	25
Day 19: Sunday, Mar. 20, 2022.....	26
Day 20: Monday, Mar. 21, 2022.....	27
Day 21: Tuesday, Mar. 22, 2022.....	28
Day 22: Wednesday, Mar. 23, 2022.....	29
Day 23: Thursday, Mar. 24, 2022.....	30
Day 24: Friday, Mar. 25, 2022.....	31
Day 25: Saturday, Mar. 26, 2022.....	32
Day 26: Sunday, Mar. 27, 2022.....	33
Day 27: Monday, Mar. 28, 2022.....	34

Day 28: Tuesday, Mar. 29, 2022.....	35
Day 29: Wednesday, Mar. 30, 2022.....	36
Day 30: Thursday, Mar. 31, 2022.....	37
Day 31: Friday, April 1, 2022.....	38
Day 32: Saturday, April 2, 2022.....	39
Day 33: Sunday, April 3, 2022.....	40
Day 34: Monday, April 4, 2022.....	41
Day 35: Tuesday, April 5, 2022.....	42
Day 36: Wednesday, April 6, 2022.....	43
Day 37: Thursday, April 7, 2022.....	44
Day 38: Friday, April 8, 2022.....	45
Day 39: Saturday, April 9, 2022.....	46
Day 40: Sunday, April 10, 2022.....	47
Day 41: Monday, April 11, 2022.....	48
Day 42: Tuesday, April 12, 2022.....	49
Day 43: Wednesday, April 13, 2022.....	50
Day 44: Thursday, April 14, 2022.....	51
Day 45: Friday, April 15, 2022.....	52
Day 46: Saturday, April 16, 2022.....	53
Acknowledgements.....	56

Day 1: Wednesday, March 2, 2022

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled
and do not be afraid."
- John 14:27*

On August 21, 2021, I took a fall at 2 a.m. which left me unconscious, followed by a lengthy concussion.

My husband heard the noise. He stated that it sounded like a train wreck, as I had accidentally stepped on a piece of exercise equipment. He first thought I had died, but was able to wake me. At that point, he took me to the ER. On the way, I was asking, "What happened, did we have an accident?"

God was with me when I fell and through my recovery. I am thankful for God being by my side and thankful for my husband being there to get me the medical care I needed.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, Thank you for your assurance that you will always be with us. Amen.

Contributed by Patricia Vassaur

Day 2: Thursday, March 3, 2022

"Behold the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as King and deal wisely..." - Jeremiah 23:5a

Jeremiah, the prophet, is proclaiming the days are coming when Christ will come from the line of David. He will be called a righteous Branch because He will sprout up from the stump of David's fallen dynasty.

Looking on to the next few verses, Jeremiah says, "a King will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In His days, Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 5b-6).

Jeremiah was called by God to urge the people of Judah to return to God, as they had turned their backs on Him. Jeremiah didn't bring good news to the people; he brought a message of doom and gloom.

If Jeremiah were to come back today, would we be willing to listen to his words, or would we decide to turn him off because we don't want someone telling us what we shouldn't be doing?

During this Lenten season, let us all honestly review where our commitment is to God and see if we are truly being a disciple of Christ. This is an important time of reflection.

May we all ask God to let us know what we need to do to follow Christ more closely.

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, fill us up and cover us in Your Holy Spirit. Convince us what your ways are so that we will be prepared for Christ when He comes. In His precious name we pray. Amen.

Contributed by Jean Gautier

Day 3: Friday, March 4, 2022

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." - Galatians 2:19-20

I was born and raised in East Texas. Pine trees and pickup trucks, farmland and football, oil fields and old cowboys. It was a fine place to grow up. I was shaped by that place and those people. I'm thankful for what I received. It wasn't perfect, but what place is? My experiences in East Texas imparted to me an understanding of myself, the people I belonged to, and a way of being in the world, or outlook on life.

But as I grew older and lived other places, I learned that everyone is not the same. As part of First Killeen, I taught a Sunday School class where I was the only person native to Texas.

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, we learn of another group of people who experienced different worlds coming together. The Christian fellowships in Galatia were composed of Jews and Gentiles, religiously and ethnically Jewish Christ-believers, and Gentiles—people of different ethnic backgrounds—who received Jesus as Lord. This raised questions: who belongs in the fellowship? Should Gentiles be circumcised? Should they observe kosher laws, like the Jews? Can we eat together?

How does Paul answer? Gentiles do not need to be circumcised. They don't have to keep kosher. Jews and Gentiles can share table fellowship. What brings a person into Christian community is faith. We belong to God and to one another through our common trust in Jesus. Paul tells us that when we trust in Christ we die to our old self and old ways. We die to our old communities. We're welcomed into the church. Jesus gives us a new identity, makes us part of a new people, and invites us to live a new way.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I love where I'm from. But I'm more thankful for where I live now, as a citizen in God's kingdom, as a beloved child of God, as one in whom Christ dwells and delights. Amen.

Contributed by Ben Simpson

Day 4: Saturday, March 5, 2022

"If God doesn't build the house, the builders only build shacks. If God doesn't guard the city, the night watchman might as well nap. It's useless to rise early and go to bed late, and work your worried fingers to the bone. Don't you know he enjoys giving rest to those he loves?" - Psalm 127:1-2

This passage originally meant to me: mitigate your anxiety by trusting God. You know, turn it over to God and get some rest. Twenty years later in my life, I thought that what this passage really meant was be sure and integrate God into your activities. To do otherwise is to invite failure.

To give a little context about my current life situation, I am nearing the big 70. Throughout these years of mine, I have failed repeatedly to consider the Will of the Lord. I have sought forgiveness and repented as necessary, and it has required doing that more than once. I tell you all this to explain that I understand how hard it is to do what I am about to suggest.

So, upon the occasion of composing this devotional, I have discerned a more succinct refinement to these verses. I believe this passage suggests that you fully submit yourself to the will of the Lord.

Submission means two things to me:

1. Get your thinking straight: on all your prayers (what do I seek), on all of your plans (is God's Will considered), on all of your activities (am I living as an example reflecting a loving Christ).
2. And, then, take serious time to actively listen, frequently, for God's guidance. Implement His guidance, as best you can, doing the parts you can do, and leaving the rest to Him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I submit my will to You. I forsake my agenda and my plans for Yours. Please help me to discern and implement Your will for me. Amen.

Contributed by Wyatt Stafford

Day 5: Sunday, March 6, 2022

*"Every time I think of you...I thank God."
- 1 Corinthians 1:4, The Message*

I'm a firm believer in "It takes a village..." For me, this phrase is not exclusive to raising kids; it takes a village to walk through life. Whatever you call your support system, it's good to remember to lift them up in prayer and thank God for their presence in your life. Church is a good place to help build a village. Getting plugged into a group or ministry at church is a good way to help build others' village. Wherever you find your village or support, remember them in your prayers and rejoice!

I am thankful for the church support staff. I am thankful and rejoice that God has placed individuals in my path to help build my village. Today reader, I'm thankful for you, God is good!

Prayer

God of love and grace, thank You for blessing my life with people that support and nurture me. I am forever grateful to be able to come just as I am, in every season of life. Lord, help us to remember we are never alone, You are always with us. Amen.

Contributed by Brandy Boudreaux

Day 6: Monday, March 7, 2022

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." - John 1:4-5

I read this on Facebook (written by Holley Mullins and posted February 9, 2022) and wanted to share it with all of you.

Tonight, I walked in from the store with my arms full with a brand new candle in my bag. As I struggled to get it all on the counter, one bag dropped, and I heard the glass break. My brand-new candle was ruined as the glass shattered. Frustrated, I was ready to throw the whole thing away. My husband refused to let me do so. "It will still light; it will still serve its purpose," he stated. Immediately, I began to argue back.... "But it's broken and ugly and glass is everywhere. It's just not the same."

I walked away and when I came back, he had placed the candle on the counter and lit the wick.

My heart immediately was drawn to the light. How often do we do this in our own lives or with others? Things don't turn out the way we want them to. Plans fail. Dreams shatter. Goals hit the floor. People break our hearts. And we are ready to throw the whole dang thing in the trash. Even though it can still light.... still shine.... still bring the fragrance of goodness. It just may not be pretty or in the package that we wanted or imagined.

Tonight, may we all be reminded that even in the brokenness and cutting edge of life, there is still goodness and purpose and light. We simply must be willing to not throw it all away and allow the redemption to take place. There are times that our story will simply speak a little louder and impact even more people when we are willing to allow the broken places of our life and story to shine for others to see and understand.

Prayer

Lord, help us when things don't turn out the way we want them to. Remind us that even in the brokenness and cutting edge of life, that there is still goodness and purpose and light and that You are with us guiding us and at times caring us through all. Amen.

Contributed by Laura Winckel

Day 7: Tuesday, March 8, 2022

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" - John 14:6

"What is the truth?" retorted Pilate - John 18:38

Do you remember the movie *A Few Good Men*? It came out in 1992 starring Tom Cruise as a JAG lawyer going after Jack Nicholson who played a big wig General. Tom Cruise's character demanded the truth, and Jack Nicholson's character said, "You can't handle the truth!"

In the book of John, the 18th chapter starting around the 28th verse, Jesus is brought before Pilate, who served under the Roman Emperor. As Pilate continued to question Jesus of his "crimes," Pilate finally says, "What is the truth?" This question should really stand out to you as a believer. The TRUTH was standing right in front of him. Pilate was actually having a conversation with Christ the TRUTH. How ironic that he wanted to know the truth, yet he missed it completely or chose not to see it.

How many times has the TRUTH been standing right in front of you? Have you missed it or ignored it because you were too busy or did not like what it said? During Pilate's questioning of Jesus, God gave Pilate many chances to see the TRUTH right in front of him. Pilate even figured a way out by washing his hands of the whole thing. So he may have realized something but chose to follow the crowd's demands. He chose to follow the world and not the TRUTH.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do not deny what is standing right in front of you. Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. He is the TRUTH. So as believers yes, we can handle the TRUTH.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Please forgive us when the TRUTH is right in front of us, and we miss it or ignore it. Keep our hearts and minds open only to You and give us the strength so we do not cave to this world's demands. In Jesus' Holy name we pray, Amen.

Contributed by Laura Dungan

Day 8: Wednesday, March 9, 2022

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."
- Philippians 3:20-21

There is no place like home! It is a great feeling to walk into your home after a long trip away or even after a long day at work. Home is where you feel secure, comfortable, and loved and brings familiarity to you. I have always enjoyed my visits back to Delaware to see my parents and other family members. There are many fond memories going to a place that you spent many years growing up with people that you loved. My visit this past September was good but not as enjoyable without my parents there. Today, March 9, is seven years since my dad went to heaven, and this July 21st will be five years since my mom joined him. My brother and sister are still in the family home, but there was an emptiness without my parents.

Yet we are not truly home. God is preparing a home in heaven especially for you, and when you arrive there, you'll think, "I'm finally home!" You will be reunited with your cherished loved ones. It will feel more like home than anywhere on Earth. I am anticipating seeing my parents once again and rejoicing with them. Because they are both in Heaven, I feel a little bit of heaven in me every time I think of them and remember our wonderful times together.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for preparing a home for us with You and Jesus in heaven. Thank You also for always being with us through good and sad times. I could very much feel Your love surround and comfort me when my parents went to join You. Amen.

Contributed by Louise Bachman

Day 9: Thursday, March 10, 2022

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror. My soul also is struck with terror, while you, O Lord—how long? Turn, O Lord, save my life; deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- Psalm 6:1-4

Just saying “I’m sorry” is hard. Those two little words always want to bring along a friend. “I’m sorry, but” is the most common and often the most damaging. We are afraid of the ramifications of our wrongdoing and seek to dampen our own guilt.

In Psalm 6, David is calling out to God to forgive him for his sins, but he is able to do so with complete faith that he will be forgiven. There are times in our lives when we are angry with God, when we stray away from his teaching due to challenges we face in our mortal lives. We struggle to understand why something happened to us, or more importantly, why we may have done something to someone else. We are often afraid to ask for forgiveness for our transgression and our doubts, and thus stay away from God and Jesus, avoiding the difficult task of asking for forgiveness. Yet, if we just change one simple word, our apology can carry away the full weight of our guilt.

Instead of saying, “I’m sorry, but” we should say, “I’m sorry because of your steadfast love and forgiveness.” We should always remember God’s love and be willing and able to unburden ourselves to him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we confess before you our sinfulness, our brokenness, and our need to experience your abundant mercy. Help us, each day, to come before you and say “I’m sorry.” In Jesus’s name we pray. Amen.

Contributed by Scott Hequembourg

Day 10: Friday, March 11, 2022

*"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow,
for tomorrow will worry about itself.
Each day has enough trouble of its own."
- Matthew 6:34*

2021 has tested me mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We began the year with our house flooding and then losing power and water for nearly a week due to the ice storm that impacted so much of Texas. As I returned to work, we struggled with stable childcare, changing facilities three times in six months. We struggled with health issues—our youngest had constant ear infections after starting daycare as well as RSV, pneumonia, and hand foot mouth disease. We lived in fear of Covid-19 and had to quarantine four times throughout the year from possible exposure. I experienced two miscarriages, only to find out we were expecting again when Covid-19 actually found us, followed abruptly by a broken leg. We struggled financially, and our family was pushed to a breaking point.

Everyone says He never gives you more than you can handle, but I worried constantly, my faith faltered, and I questioned why us? I knew our story was not unique; so many families in our community, our country, and across the globe continue to have similar struggles as the pandemic drags on. I can't say how or when it happened, but eventually He touched my heart and reminded me of my church family. The moment I made a prayer request things began to get better. I was able to feel the sense of calm again knowing that He had us and would continue to carry us through these trying times. I began to take life one day at a time and stopped worrying as much about tomorrow. I don't know what the message or lesson He had for us in all of this, if any, but I do know that HE is in control and has the most beautiful plan for ALL of us.

"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

Contributed by Kimberly Hammond

Day 11: Saturday, March 12, 2022

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone... For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the member of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 12-13

Working with youth is fun (and sometimes challenging), as you get to see teenagers that are completely different get along and be friends here. Thinking on it, if some of these youth went to the same school, they would be in different classes, clubs, groups, etc., and I do not know if they would know each other at all if they didn't have church in common. That is the beauty in youth ministry; these youth find good friends in people they might not have known otherwise as the Spirit brings them together.

We see that in the whole church body. We are all in different stages of life, careers, have different skills and gifts, and all of that is brought together by the Spirit to create an amazing community that welcomes all and serves those in need. What a beautiful sight!

Prayer

Lord, thank You for bringing this community together and helping us find friends that we might not have known. May Your Spirit continue to bring us together and may our different gifts continue to serve Killeen. Thank You for making us all different! Amen.

Contributed by Christina Reeves

Day 12: Sunday, March 13, 2022

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourself, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others." - Philippians 2:3-4 NIV

Becky Smith's "To Don't" List

My husband Rusty is a great list maker. I find his "To Do" lists all over the house. He writes down what is needed at the store or things that are required to be done. This keeps him focused and organized. I am neither focused nor organized, but I did come up with my own list of things I need to be mindful of as I go about each day, trying to be a better person. Here is Becky's "To Don't " List:

- Don't be a jerk
- Don't forget that your husband is your best friend
- Don't assume that you'll always have your sisters
- Don't lose sight that you have three amazing sons
- Don't hold a grudge
- Don't gripe
- Don't take your friends for granted
- Don't sit when you can move
- Don't blow off opportunities to do the right things
- Don't forget who you are and whose you are

This "To Don't" List takes intentional effort on my part, and many factors can negatively affect the outcome (driving anywhere in Killeen or Interstate 35, giving in to my self-indulgence, feeling of depression). However, with God's help, working on the items on my list are worthy of my best efforts.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your constant presence in my life as I work daily to be more like You in my heart and my actions. Amen.

Contributed by Becky Smith

Day 13: Monday, March 14, 2022

*"Let not your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God; believe also in me."
- John 14:1*

On April 19, 2020, I had spent three hours on my cell phone posting my students' weekly grades. I felt a sensation of water running down my right side. I could not move my right hand. I called 911, and the first responders came. They said, "Let's go to the hospital to check you out.." My blood pressure was 212 over 111. After tests in the emergency room, the doctor said it was a high blood pressure induced ministroke. I was admitted for an MRI and CT Scans. The nurses settled my in the room and left. I WAS ALONE! I prayed to Jesus Christ to help me and give me strength. Immediately the hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" came to my mind, then the verse above. I prayed more and felt an unbelievable, overwhelming peace. I knew Jesus was my comforter.

Prayer

*May you always know that Jesus Christ
is with you any time and any day. Amen.*

Contributed by Michelle Taylor Holmes

Day 14: Tuesday, March 15, 2022

"Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you." - Psalm 9:10

Today's focus is on trust. By definition, trust is a "firm belief in the character, strength or truth of someone or something." It is a confident hope in something or someone. So, the question to ask is, "Where do you place your hope and trust?" David tells us that our hope should be placed in God, who will never forsake us. It is often difficult to trust God when we are faced with trials we do not understand or when we are stretched beyond what we think we can bear. However, it is during those hard times that we need to seek and trust God.

Psalm 28:7 reminds us that God is our strength and shield, and He is worthy of our trust at all times. If we seek Him, He will not forsake us. We must cling to His promise, knowing God uses words, people, and situations for our spiritual growth as He transforms our hearts and minds to draw us closer to Him. True transformation through heartfelt trust brings restoration, sanctification, and genuine peace. Will you place your trust in the One who can be trusted, the One who will never forsake you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come to You today acknowledging your holiness and humbly seeking to know and trust You, for You are trustworthy. We thank You for loving us and guiding us to a deeper understanding of who You are through the trials and triumphs in our lives. We ask for strength to overcome challenges gracefully and continued guidance and wisdom through all situations in our lives. Amen.

Contributed by Kathy Ruiz

Day 15: Wednesday, March 16, 2022

*"Keep your lives free from the love of money,
and be content with what you have;
for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'"
- Hebrews 13:5*

"Me and Jesus, we got a good thing going. Me and Jesus, we got it all worked out."

My Lord gave me this song on 11 January 2021 when I was infected with COVID-19. Even though I could barely respond to speak, this was put on my heart and proved to me that Jesus was with me at all times. He sent people to provide and help me during this time of need. His love shone through all the kind hearts who answered the call to drive me to the hospital, follow-up appointments, get groceries, prepare and deliver food. What a glorious God we serve!

Prayer

I know without a doubt all my needs are supplied through the precious love of Jesus. I give Him all glory and praise for answered prayers through the hands of this body of Christ. Amen.

Contributed by Ruth Hirschmann

Day 16: Thursday, March 17, 2022

"Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times." -Romans 12:12

While reading an article from the Opinion page of the Killeen Daily Herald, I got my inspiration for this devotional. The author spoke of the joy she often gets from happenings in her life that were unexpected. While searching for answers to one thing, she found joy and hope in something she was not even thinking about. These answers come from God, our Heavenly Father.

During this pandemic, we sometimes feel like there is no end in sight, and this difficult way of life has become the "new normal." God hears our prayers and walks beside us every step along the way. God's timing is not always our timing, but God is omnipresent and He knows our every need. With God as our guide, we must remember to "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer."

In a recent sermon Pastor Molly told us to remember that we will always be loved by family and friends, but that we will never be loved by a greater love than our Heavenly Father bestows upon each of us every minute of every day from now into eternity. God loves us so much that He sacrificed His only son Jesus for us. Jesus' suffering and death guarantee our salvation, no matter what life brings. We are never alone, and our sins are forgiven if only we trust in the One True God.

There is no way we can ever thank God for all the gifts He has given to us, but we can spend time this Lenten season in gratitude for His blessings and take time out of our busy lives to share our faith with others that they, too, might feel God's love when times are hard and life is confusing. Remember to always "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer."

Prayer

Gracious God, We thank You and praise You for the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Teach us to follow in His footsteps all our lives that we may spend eternity in Heaven with You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Contributed by Alice Schlessiger

Day 17: Friday, March 18, 2022

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ." - Philippians 4:6-7

This is my favorite verse in the Bible. Just reading it brings me a peace beyond understanding. There is one word in this verse that I believe is the most important - and that is the word "everything." Sometimes I hesitate to pray about something because I think it is too unimportant, too trivial for God. But then I remember this verse and realize that God wants to hear from us in every situation and that nothing is too trivial for God. After all, He is in the details!

These last couple of years have been tough on everyone. I changed jobs this time last year. I now work with people I've only met in a Teams meeting. I supervise contractors I've only met once in person. I must deal with a "client" with whom meetings are contentious. It has been a challenge. Many days I wonder why I'm doing what I'm doing! But many days I remember this verse, and those days are quite different. Those days are filled with a peace that passes my understanding, and I thank God for that.

I need to remember this verse every day! We should all remember that God wants to hear from us in all situations and give us that wonderful peace that passes all understanding.

Prayer

Our most gracious God, thank You for listening to our prayers and petitions and granting us Your wonderful peace. Amen.

Contributed by Anne Hoel

Day 18: Saturday, March 19, 2022

*"Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you." -
Deuteronomy 31:8*

Over the past two years, so many things have made life feel lonely. Through pandemic quarantines, storms and power outages, moves, deployments and job changes, it's much too easy to get isolated. When those walls begin to creep in on you, the world outside can seem dim at times.

Yet at that same time, bright lights shine through the darkness. Healthcare workers and teachers who work so hard to take care of our families, members of our community who gathered around to help those without power or with water damage, and new friends and neighbors we get to know along the way.

In our first five years with the Army, we had moved only within Texas and Oklahoma - not too far from home since Matt and I are from the North Dallas area. Then, after a crazy 2020, we suddenly needed to move to Georgia! I've been so blessed to remain working remotely (like we all have probably done with video chats from home by this point!) this past year and a half, and even when Matt went to South Korea last year I still had such a wonderful church community from afar, as well as new friends and neighbors met at our new home at Fort Stewart.

We have loved this new home and area so much, but it definitely gets lonely at times, especially when I'm by myself at home. The quiet closes in around me making things seem still, and small, and alone. Through those dark nights though, from when I was a child, through adulthood, moves, deployments, and life's unceasing insanity, I am reminded again and again that I am never alone. God is always there, and his spirit speaks in wonderful words through people and this beautiful world around me.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for all the times when I have people and comfortable situations, but also thank You for the times when I am alone. Help me listen and see that You are always here beside me, no matter the circumstances. Remind me in still, small whispers, and big realizations of Your presence and everlasting love. Amen.

Contributed by Hannah Hoffman

Day 19: Sunday, March 20, 2022

*"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart."
- Hebrews 4:12*

As I searched for an appropriate scripture to use this year, Hebrews 4:12 convinced me during this tumultuous year of Covid, political upheaval, insurrection, rivalry, anger, frustration and division, even among us at FUMC.

Have I contributed to the anxiety and controversies in responding to Facebook postings? Have I discounted another person because of their beliefs and ideologies? Has my heart been in the right place as I mentally criticized those who looked or acted differently, expressed their views that contradicted mine? Have my words and actions been sharper than a "two-edged sword" and completely ignored God's Word?

Richard Rohr in his book *Falling Upward* says that as an elder, I should "look for the things we all share in common and find happiness in likeness. Creating dramas on (Facebook or Twitter) is useless and controversial. And, if I talk too much or too loudly, my maturity is lacking. Too many words are not needed by true elders." Daily life now demands prayer and discernment more than thoughtless responses toward either the conservative or liberal end of the spectrum.

I accept and am humbled that I have been blessed by God my entire life and "to whom much is given, much is required/expected" (Luke 12:45B). Gratitude overflows as I try to give back all that I possibly can and to adhere to the quote by Elizabeth Seton who said "to live simply so that others can simply live." My actions, words, thoughts and prayer all need to be directed by the Word, and I will hopefully become a true elder in His eyes.

Prayer

Father God, Thank You for the Word which can direct my actions, thoughts, and prayers if only I take the time to read and follow. Direct me in this last quarter of my life to be all that I can be in honoring You and becoming the person You have always wanted me to be. In Your Blessed Name I pray, Amen.

Contributed by Rebecca Caldwell

Day 20: Monday, March 21, 2022

“Love thy neighbors as you would love yourselves” – Matthew 5:43

Lunch with Neighbors started on the third Thursday of January 2009. Because of damage to vehicles when church members attended evening activities, the decision was made to prepare hot meals or soup for the many homeless and hungry citizens in Killeen. Laurel Blair and Peg Fleet coordinated this effort as lunch was served each Thursday adjacent to the sanctuary. We prayed for their safety, offered communion monthly, and shared a devotion with them. Laurel Blair and Peg Fleet were the driving force behind this program. It demanded a lot of time to contact volunteers to support our feeding efforts. After we moved to our new church, we needed an indoor facility. Laurel found Moss Rose, a recreation facility in Killeen.

FUMC has supported Lunch with Neighbors for thirteen years. We now depend on organizations within the Church. Groups that sponsor Neighbors are the United Methodist Men, Church Staff, United Methodist Women (Anna, Abigail and Mary Ruth Circles), and Sunday school classes: New Dimensions, Navigators and Wesley. Glenn Morrison has been exceptionally active with Killeen citizens who have cooked Saturday breakfast once a month. During the pandemic, he coordinated the delivery of sack lunches to the needy.

Lunch with Neighbors is more than food; twice a year we give out health kits. Gideon bibles are available along with Upper Room devotionals. Betty Meadows also knitted 100 hats and scarves and 80 mittens to pass out for cold weather. She handed them out at Neighbors, the Food Bank, and Soup Kitchen.

We must recognize a “healthy” handful of people who are there every Thursday to serve and clean up after each meal. Their love, full commitment, and unselfish contributions have been exceptional. We love you, folks! Lunch with Neighbors is not a requirement. It’s part of First United Methodist Church and it’s just what we do! God bless all of you!

Prayer

Our heavenly Father: As Your Son emphasized, we are all God’s children. When others need a hand up, we can serve with a smile and gladly share our riches to lighten their load! Amen.

Contributed by Darrel Charlton

Day 21: Tuesday, March 22, 2022

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" - John 14:6

Is it just me or does everything seem so confusing these days? What's up is down, what's right is wrong, left is right.....you know the drill. What is most concerning to me is that our children are growing up in all of this. What are we to do?

Well, it's really quite simple, We focus our attention on the Lord. We increase our efforts on our mission of "making disciples," and on stewardship.

Jesus says "I am The way, The truth, and The life." Sounds like a great path to me, even though I stumble along it at times - and HE still loves me!

I say we set our GPS squarely on the Lord and ask Him to continue to guide and direct us and to open our hearts and help those in need.

Ready, set, go!

Prayer

Lord, we give thanks for Your love and for the path You have laid out before us. Continue to guide and direct us as we renew our efforts to focus on You and to reach out to others along the way. In Christ Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Contributed by Glenn Morrison

Day 22: Wednesday, March 23, 2022

"The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you, in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." - Zephaniah 3:17

I love these verses. It reminds us that our God is mighty and a warrior, and he delights in us. What a wonderful way to spend this Lenten season, remembering that God loves us so much! He doesn't have to. He could leave us as we are. Instead of forsaking us, He rejoices in us. How is that even possible that God could love us that much? I can't even fathom it. He could meet us as we are and punish us because we truly deserve it. Yet, this Mighty Warrior, in His love and forgiveness, delights in us with singing and joy. He gave us His Perfect Son, His beautiful Son who took all of our sins and redeemed them at the Cross and Resurrection. I can never do enough to repay Him. The good news is, I don't have to. He meets me right where I am and calls me His. What an amazing gift! This season, remember how much you are loved by the King of Kings and rejoice with singing because He loves you so very much!

Prayer

Father, Thank You for loving us more than our human brains can comprehend. Thank You for rejoicing over us when we certainly don't deserve it. Please remind us daily how we are to remain focused on You. Remind me, Lord, to sing and rejoice in Your love, kindness and forgiveness. Remind me, Lord, to know how mighty You are and that You have already won the battle on Resurrection Day! I love You, Lord! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Contributed by Kerry Perez

Day 23: Thursday, March 24, 2022

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." - Psalm 51:1-2

While washing dishes one day, I learned this lesson: the longer you leave dishes in the sink to be washed, the harder it is to remove the food scraps on the dishes and pots. One has to use "stronger elbow grease" to work on the dishes, pots and so forth.

Such as it is with the virtue of forgiveness. The earlier we recognize that there is discord in our relationship with others, the easier it is to "make things right" and ask for forgiveness. It also calls for humility on our part to be the first one to make that first step in reconciliation.

It is now at the season of Lent that we dig deeper into our faith journey on this matter as Christ gave us the example.

I am reminded of a friend who was to have surgery and called on me to pray for her upcoming surgical procedure. She was concerned that her mother was not in right relationship with her, and if the surgery had problems, she wanted to be sure she forgave her mother, unconditionally. She said that one lesson she learned earlier in Sunday school was that while we are on this planet Earth, we have to forgive others so the Lord will forgive us when we die and come before His presence.

So, let us not delay to forgive others while there is time to do so. Let us be humble enough to forgive.

Prayer

Lord, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Give me the humility Lord to make the first step to forgive others while there is time to do so. In Christ's blessed name, I pray, Amen.

Contributed by Monina "Nina" C. Fowler

Day 24: Friday, March 25, 2022

"And Abraham said, 'My son God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.'" - Genesis 22:2-14

A year ago, I had a serious dilemma with housing. I relocated to Central Texas for work and with the intent of buying a home. I knew God would lead me to the right house, just as he had done with previous moves. During this move, I was in a hotel for six months and did not find a place to buy. However, God led me to the right house to rent.

After being in the house for over a year, the owner decided to sell the house "as is," making minimum repairs, and started showing the house to potential buyers. I had a short period to find another place. To compound the situation, there was a housing shortage in Central Texas for rentals and houses for sale.

I knew the rental house was right for me, but I was not sure if it was only for a season or to purchase. Long story short, after looking at various houses for purchase, I felt God kept leading me back to my rental house, so decided to purchase it.

During that experience, I was reminded first, God will always make way when there seems to be no other way. Second, God asked Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, to a mountain in the land of Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering. After preparing the place for the burnt offer, Isaac asked his father where was the lamb for the offering? Abraham told Isaac, "God will provide for the lamb." And God provided a ram at just the right time.

I am telling you these things because no matter what dilemmas or obstacles you encounter in life or how impossible a situation may appear, remember God is faithful and will provide.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You so much for being faithful and providing for all of our needs. Amen.

Contributed by Gloria Duck

Day 25: Saturday, March 26, 2022

*"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.' The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress." - Psalm 46:10-11*

Mid all the traffic of the ways
Turmoils without, within
Make in my heart a quiet place
And come and dwell within.

A little shrine of quietness
All sacred to thyself
Where thou shalt all my soul possess
And I may find myself.

A little shelter from life's stress
Where I may lay me prone
And bare my soul in loneliness
And know as I am known.

A little place of mystic grace
Of self and sin swept bare
Where I may look upon thy face
And talk with thee in prayer.

Source: *The Methodist Hymnal* # 298
Publication Date: 1966
Songwriter: John Oxenham

Prayer

Father God, during this Lenten season and throughout this year, quiet my mind so that I may hear Your voice and be filled with Your spirit. The multitude of distractions inside my home and outside my door are overwhelming, they fill the void but steal time away from you. Sever me from my busyness so Your Spirit might bind me to You. Lord, thank You for being a shelter from life's stresses and for muting the noise and the chaos. Amen.

Contributed by Jeanette Brown-Johnson

Day 26: Sunday, March 27, 2022

*"Do you like honey? Don't eat too much, or it will make you sick!"
- Proverbs 25:16*

Children of all ages struggle with being satisfied. Commercials are things that make us want more of something. Most of the time we give in to the commercials. Proverbs reminds us to be satisfied with what we have and only buy what we need. So be satisfied with what you have so you don't get financially sick.

P.S. Mom & Dad - I really "need" a Playstation 5!

Prayer

Dear God, Thank You for always providing ways to satisfy our needs. Help us to better decide what is truly a need and what is a want. Amen.

Contributed by Jameson McClish

Day 27: Monday, March 28, 2022

*"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord."
- Psalm 150:6*

Each year I've written a devotion I've tried to pick this date, March 28. It is my father's birthday. He would have been 86 today. He passed away on January 2 of this year - on my birthday.

My dad suffered for several years with COPD. He had been a smoker, and, although he quit several years ago, the damage was done. He didn't complain about his situation. He didn't get angry at God. In fact, as he became less mobile, he spent more time reading his Bible.

As I watched my father take his last breaths in this world, I thought of the breath of God that gave life to everything and everyone. God spoke the universe into existence (Genesis 1:1). He breathed life into Adam when He made man in His image (Genesis 2:7). God's breath gives mankind understanding (Job 32:8).

While some might think my birthday is now a sad occasion as the anniversary of my father's death, I see it as a day to remember when my dad stopped struggling to breathe in this life and took a deep, joyful breath as he saw Jesus face to face.

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, we thank You for Your breath of life. As long as we have breath in this world, may we worship You and sing Your praises. Amen.

Contributed by Stacie Carrico

Day 28: Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Do You Believe in Angels?

"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" - Hebrews 1:14

Today, March 29, is my baby sister's 68th birthday. Twenty-five years ago this Memorial Day she was severely injured in an automobile accident. She was in a coma for nine days, spent three months in the hospital, and another two months in rehab. While she was pinned in her car waiting for emergency personnel to get there, she heard two voices. She says she couldn't open her eyes, but the voices kept repeating, "Be calm, you're going to be all right." The EMTs arrived, and she was flown by helicopter to Breckenridge Hospital in Austin. She suffered broken bones, a punctured lung, and a serious brain injury. While she was in the hospital, her husband received an unsigned letter, asking about her condition and telling him she would be healed.

She recently recalled this experience: "You remember how they shaved off all my hair and drilled holes in my skull. I still can't straighten my right arm out. I've forgotten what it's like to feel normal. I DO know God was with me and held my hand all the way. I'm a walking miracle. And I truly believe God saved me for a purpose." My sister also claims with certainty that the voices and people who wrote the letter were God's angels ministering to her and her husband.

Over the years, my sister has counseled and prayed with many clients at Salvation Army, baked and cooked countless goodies for friends and family who suffer from health problems, and used her beautiful voice to sing praises to God.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for helping, healing, and giving us hope during difficult times. Help us to show Your love to other people who need our help. Amen.

Contributed by Mike Hoel

Day 29: Wednesday, March 30, 2022

"So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!"
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

The title of this devotion is BUTTERFLY WINGS, and it's a true story of struggles and achieving goals through them.

One day a small opening appeared on a cocoon, and a man sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the tiny little hole. Then it appeared to stop making any progress. It appeared it had gotten as far as it could and could go no further. So the man decided to help the butterfly and took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remainder of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly, fully expecting that its wings would grow and expand to send it on its way. But nothing happened. The butterfly was never able to fly. What the man hoped was a kindness to help a struggling butterfly, in fact, hurt it the most. The struggle that was required of the butterfly to emerge from the cocoon through the tiny opening was God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been.

We could never fly.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, I hope that I can look at the struggles in my own life and know that in the long run, with Your help, they will make me a stronger person and advocate for You in this world. Amen.

Contributed by Marty Portmann

Day 30: Thursday, March 31, 2022

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
I know that full well. - Psalm 139:13-14
& Luke 2:8-20 - Please read Shepherds visit*

In our mail delivery came an unexpected gift. The tiny box inside had a note attached; which read, "crack me open". It was a small quail egg, which had another note inside, like that of a fortune cookie that read Happy Easter Grandma & Grandpa -Love, Megan & Randy. Immediately, I shared this Easter greeting with my husband and said, "I believe we got Mom and Dad's Easter gift and they must have been sent ours." He nodded in agreement, "but what a clever little gift".

I then sent a text message to our daughter, Megan, that our gift must have been addressed to my parents, by mistake. Then, my phone suddenly rang with Megan proclaiming, "No, that was intended for you, don't you understand the message?" We were totally dumbfounded, in disbelief, not expecting the expected... we were becoming grandparents and my parents would be first time great-grandparents!

On a Monday morning, early this Fall, we received details that our tiny granddaughter was to be induced for delivery much earlier than expected. Due to COVID restrictions, no visitors were allowed in the hospital, so we patiently awaited the good news of discharge for Mommy and baby to go home. Five days later we made an hour long drive, with jubilant expectation, to visit our Elizabeth for the first time. Our anticipation might be compared to that of the shepherds and wise men who set out to follow that bright shining star, revealing the Messiah.

Come look at this precious child: tiny fingers, tiny toes, skin as soft as rose petals and surrounded by God's peaceful presence. Momma is glowing with radiant beauty through God's glorious touch.

Prayer

We give praise to God Almighty. Only He can orchestrate the miracle of human creation; knit together in His image. Heavenly Father, Jesus the Son, Your Holy Spirit is among us. All honor and glory are yours, now and forevermore. Amen.

Contributed by Lisa Kure

Day 31: Friday, April 1, 2022

*"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*

For many years April 1st has always been a day that brought back some memories I didn't particularly care for. It was the day I landed in Viet Nam. I had just gotten married the previous June, had a good paying job, was going to college, and had my life planned out. I sure didn't need the Army messing all my plans up. But the draft board had other plans for me. Little did I know that God also had a better plan.

After coming home from Viet Nam and finishing my enlistment as an instructor at Fort Rucker, Alabama, I returned to the University of Kentucky to finish my degree. While in Viet Nam I worked on and fell in love with helicopters. So while at the University I decided to go into the ROTC Program and receive my commission as an officer in the Army so I could become a pilot. After a short tour at Fort Ord, California, I was able to accomplish my goal of attending flight school and becoming a pilot. Being in God's plan led me through a great career and many assignments throughout the world. So that April day so many years before turned out far better than I could have ever imagined.

Fast forward to the next April 1st, which is a great memory for me because I was able to walk my youngest daughter, Deana, down the aisle at church to get married. Because of this April day we had had many other great memories as we have welcomed two more grandchildren to the Honchul family. I continue to pray that God will have other great plans for me as I continue to serve His will for my life.

So, what the world meant for me to think as bad about "April Fool's" day has really turned into a "happy" day for me.

Prayer

Dear Lord I thank you that you have always had a better plan than I have and you continue to guide me through this life. Amen.

Contributed by Dean Honchul

Day 32: Saturday, April 2, 2022

*"Start children off on the way they should go,
and even when they are old they will not turn from it." - Proverbs 22:6*

In the old days, families attended church together then gathered at their mother's or grandmother's house for Sunday dinner. Worshipping together and sharing a meal together created a bond with the generations that kept families close. They knew their ancestry through stories and remembrances shared as they visited. There was security in these dinners. These children knew who they were because they knew where they came from. They knew what was expected of them because of the role models they lived with or visited frequently.

Growing up and until Mother passed away, she expected us to go to church together and spend the afternoon at her house, eating dinner and being together. She and Daddy eventually moved out to the small community of Topsey. We attended the small Methodist church there and continued with our Sunday dinners. It was a gentle "command attendance." We loved it! After dinner, the kids would spend the afternoon outside. They had a little over 100 acres to roam with sling shots and BB guns, killing grasshoppers and pretending to be cowboys and cowgirls. We adults would play cards or dominoes, and we were a rowdy bunch!

I have tried to keep up this tradition in my family. We can't meet every Sunday because of work schedules; however, when both grandsons are off on the same Sunday, we get together at my house for "Sunday dinner." For all of us, it's not about the food. It's about being together for a little while and sharing our lives, our stories, and our concerns with each other. Sometimes, because of schedules, we have our Sunday dinner on a week night or Saturday evening. It is important to all of us to pray and stay in touch. It is my hope that families will once again gather for worship and "Sunday dinner," no matter what day of the week it is.

Prayer

Dear Lord, Help families recognize the importance of instilling worship and family gatherings in Your name as a central part of their lives. We want our children to know where they came from so they can know who they are and what they can become. Amen.

Contributed by Phyllis Wheeler

Day 33: Sunday, April 3, 2022

"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable..." - 1 Corinthians 12:21-22

I am in my 75th year of living. I am not sure where the years went, but it happened along with the loss of good eyesight, hearing, mobility, and the list goes on. My body is weak, and my mind comes and goes. I often feel I am of little use to anyone.

I remember a story I read about President Ronald Reagan. In 1981 he spent several weeks in the hospital recovering from injuries from a shooting. Although he was the nation's chief executive, his hospitalization had minimal impact on the daily lives of Americans.

On the other hand, garbage collectors went on a three-week strike in a major city, leaving the city in a mess, causing a significant health hazard for the citizens, and bringing the city to a near halt. Which of these had more impact on the functioning of our nation? And in the body of Christ, the seemingly insignificant members are often the most urgently needed.

FUMC-Killeen needs people who will volunteer. Every job is essential, and you will always have a crucial part to play in the Kingdom of God, regardless of your age. Your skills, talents, and knowledge are needed. Let God be your pilot. Get into gear, get out of your recliner, and get moving!

Prayer

Gracious God, thank You for the opportunity to serve You. You know our weaknesses and our desires to build Your Kingdom. Teach us how short our lives are and to become wiser in our service to others. Amen.

Contributed by Bev Tuggle

Day 34: Monday, April 3, 2022

We are aware of the parable of Jesus and his disciples feeding the multitude (about four thousand) with seven loaves of bread and a few fish. He also gave sight to a blind man near Bethsaida. Enroute to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples:

"Who do men say I am?" They replied, "John the Baptist - some say Elijah, and others say a prophet." "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ." Jesus then warned them all: "Do not tell anyone who I am!"
- Mark 8:27-30

A few days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John to Mount Tabor for prayer without interruption. As darkness surrounded them, Peter saw Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus. Jesus' clothing had turned bright white and His face glowed. Peter, afraid and confused; suggested shelters be built for each of them! A cloud then appeared above them and God said, "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him." Suddenly Jesus and Peter were alone. As they walked off Mount Tabor, Jesus commanded the disciples "to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead."

When Jesus prayed and talked to Elijah and Moses, God shed light on the scene validating His presence to all of them. There are times when we witness events that appear divine and godlike. There is one experience I would like to share.

In June 2021, our grandson Matthew and his wife Jessica were married in Bethel United Church built 1797 in downtown Charleston SC. The sides of the church were covered with stained-glass windows with a choir loft over the entry to the sanctuary. The sound of the organ and the sun shining through the windows created an unbelievable setting as the bridesmaids and groomsmen entered. As Matthew and Jessica recited their vows and exchanged rings, their eyes glistened, and their faces glowed. God was present that day and blessed this marriage and future of this young couple.

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father: As we move through our lives, give us the wisdom to recognize Your presence and meet Your expectations. Amen.

Contributed by Darrel Charlton

Day 35: Tuesday, April 5, 2022

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." - Psalm 46:10

He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. - Psalm 146:6

Don and I like to travel, and we have been blessed to be able to travel to many beautiful places. In each place I am in awe of God's creation. From the mountains to the sea there is so much beauty. Currently I sit on a cruise ship watching the sun rise over the massive ocean He has created. I sit here to just "be still" in God's presence. He is my creator. He is my Father. He is my holy and awesome God. He is to be exalted among nations. He is the maker of heaven, earth, sea and everything in them.



Here it is easy to "be still" and feel God's presence, but at home in my everyday life, I tend to get so busy that I miss seeing and feeling Him around me. I know I need to "be still" more and give thanks every day to our God that remains faithful forever. One way I do that is to set a prayer time in the evening. It helps me stop, think over my day and give God the glory and thanks for all He has given us. I encourage you to "be still" in His presence and see the beauty all around us.

Prayer

Father God, the maker of heaven and earth, thank You for all Your creations and the beauty all around us. Thank You for Your most precious gift, Jesus. Help us to slow down and "be still." Amen.

Contributed by Lisa Marshburn

Day 36: Wednesday, April 6, 2022

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his holy name." - Psalm 100:4*

Music has always been important to me, especially music in church.

Question – is there a difference between praise and worship?

To praise is to sing or to confess or to be thankful for God's blessings and tell of his love to others.

To worship is to bow down before and give honor and respect for God.

Worship comes from your heart to God.

Music has been the instrument that God has used to bring me closer to him. It centers my worship. The next time you sing your favorite hymn I hope that it will center your heart as we praise and worship God together.

Prayer

Lord, we lift our voices to give you praise and worship. Let the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and redeemer. Amen.

Contributed by Debra Friddle

Day 37: Thursday, April 7, 2022

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Psalm 23:1

Faith is a powerful thing! With faith, I can accomplish anything. It brightens my day as I watch a beautiful morning sunrise or an awesome brilliant sunset because they remind me that God is always with us. We have an awesome God. Sometimes it takes a while to realize how God is working in our life.

A month before my husband found out he had stage 4 bladder cancer, I bought a quilting machine. If I had known this, I would not have purchased that machine. But in the months and year ahead, that machine was my anchor. During my husband's treatments I began quilting for other people. They became my friends. After my husband passed, my quilt customers would come to drop off or pick up their quilts. Their visits lifted my spirits so much. My faith grew stronger during this time, and I realized that God knew what I needed before I did!

The power of prayer is so strong. When you have several people praying for you, you can actually feel it. I experienced this so many times during my son's illness. It is hard to explain faith, but I know it gets me through my hardest days and brings me so much joy in my happiest days.

Recently, a friend asked me how I have kept my faith. Honestly, I don't know how to answer that. I just know that I thank God every day for all He has given me. My faith carries me through.

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank you for giving us faith to trust in You. Thank You for knowing our needs before we do. Lord, we pray that You will continue to bless us every day. In Jesus's name we pray, Amen.

Contributed by Marge Dicus

Day 38: Friday, April 8, 2022

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them all in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." - Matthew 28:19-20

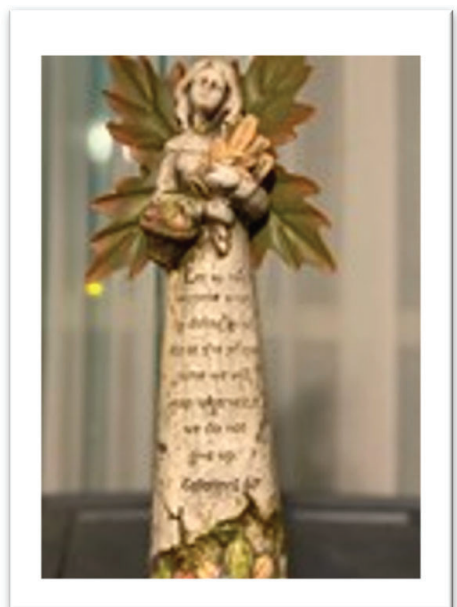
The Lenten season reminds us of our commitment to the service of others, which we have observed now for many years. It really all started on a shopping trip to H-E-B. We just happened to be going down a seasonal aisle, and an Angel just jumped into our basket. We call her the "Harvest Angel" because of the way she is dressed and for the message she brought us. She was clothed in harvest colors and inscribed with Galatians 6:9. She has guided our paths through some exceedingly rough times and has somehow given us the strength to stay the course. We have been led to complete one of the most important missions Jesus has given all of us.

The way this is interpreted can best be related through the words of Matthew 28:19-20. How does this affect our daily lives? We are taught to apply these scriptures to the way we live our lives. It is our belief that it is about setting a proper example by creating habits in our children and grandchildren that consistently reflect these teachings. What habits are best to reinforce? In my recollection, we need to pray, read, and interpret scripture, attend worship, and praise God, serve others, and most of all, love without limits. These are the habits that will truly put us all on the path to becoming disciples of Jesus.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for always loving us through all that we have endured, give us the strength to keep working to always do good unto others and never quit, help guide us to set a proper example for our children by instilling in them these Godly habits, walk with us on our path of discipleship, and give us peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Contributed by Rich and Barb Rinehart



Day 39: Saturday, April 9, 2022

"Whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has in store for us." - Romans 8:18

Recently I read the book *You'll Get Through This* by Max Lucado. After the past two years of these turbulent times it seemed like a perfect book, and it was. I thought I would share some of my own thoughts on how to get through this, whatever your "this" is.

As a person of faith, you committed your life to a higher purpose. In this fast-paced, digitized world, we can get so wrapped up in the fads and crises of the moment that we forget the big picture. We trusted God enough to surrender our lives to Him; we can trust enough to remember that, "all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23, NKJV).

God has promised not to desert us. This promise should give us the courage to build something better. Demonstrate your faith by taking action. Join a small ministry or study group. Volunteer for a construction project. Support disaster relief. Put your faith to work. Reach out to those who are worse off than we are. Rather than holding on more tightly to what we have, let's commit to using our time, money, and energy to help others. There is more to life than ourselves.

Prayer and scripture study are even more important than they are in good times. More than ever, we need to stay connected to God through prayer. Surround yourself with people who are both faithful and positive. Sharing life's struggles with others helps us deal with them. Counting your blessings and re-focusing on your purpose and commitments in life will help you keep your faith in turbulent and difficult times. Nurturing your spirit, soul, and body and surrounding yourself with positive, faithful people will strengthen you to remain faithful and to grow in your faith.

Next time you have a bad news day, remember the Good News. It will help you keep the faith in these turbulent times.

Prayer

Lord, please help us all through these turbulent times, through the bad news days as well as the good days. Amen.

Contributed by Laura Winckel

Day 40: Sunday, April 10, 2022

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9

Early one morning, a vehicle destroyed a brick mailbox in my neighborhood. The homeowners decided to rebuild using some of the old bricks plus new materials leaving the unused masonry in the yard. But as we all know, only materials in the dumpster get hauled away. Thus, the bricks sit, week after week, and the image of the new mailbox is distorted by the remnants of the old.

This reminds me of our lives. Our old way of living full of sin, problems, and hurts gets broken by the forgiveness of our sins through Jesus. A new life is built with Him as its base.

For God to work freely in our lives, however, we must give Him all our sins, our hurts, our pain, all of us. We must throw the broken pieces of our lives into His living sea of forgetfulness, allowing Him to rebuild our lives, filling the broken parts with His love and peace. But we cannot leave our old bricks sitting on the ground. When we make a conscious effort to relinquish old hurts and sins to God's dumpster, He will remove them. The newly build life in Jesus is all that remains. But like those bricks, our sins and hurts cannot march themselves to the trash. They must be intentionally moved. If we harbor old grudges, secret unconfessed sins, old anger over perceived hurts, we must make the first step to remove them. Give them to God knowing that He will forgive, thus clearing the way to a new and better relationship with Him.

Just think how much better our life could be if we did not have to move around all the debris from our past! And the mowing would get much easier as well!

Prayer

Lord, Search us and help us remove the debris that keeps us from living the life You planned for us. Give us the peace to know that our sins are forgiven and all the debris from our old life has been swept away. Amen.

Contributed by Susan Frisch

Day 41: Monday, April 11, 2022

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" - Matthew 25:40

Some weeks ago, as the weather turned colder, my wife and I decided to dine at a local Mexican restaurant. The meal was terrific, and as we left for home, I took a different direction from our usual route (which is not my nature). We went two blocks, and as we passed a cross street, we noticed a person rummaging through a garbage can in front of a residence. The person, wearing several layers of clothing, appeared to be homeless. The scene was familiar, and we don't usually give it a second thought, but, for some reason, this seemed different. I turned back.

I drove up alongside this bundle of clothing disguised as a person and saw the face of a woman looking back at me. I asked her if she might need help. She replied testily, "The owner gave me permission to look through the things that they were throwing away to see if there was something I could use." I replied, "We don't question what you are doing. We thought we might help in some way."

My wife had pushed money into my hand, and I gave it to the woman. Her following reaction was unexpected. She exploded into tears. My wife began to cry. The wind, which was causing my eyes to water, stopped. And for a moment, there was a new presence in our midst, which I believe was the Holy Spirit. And then, it was gone.

The woman said, "God bless you!" and we returned the blessing.

We went our separate ways. I don't know if what happened at that moment changed anything in our lives, but I believe it did.

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for Your Son, sacrificed on the Cross to atone for our sins and the lessons He gave us while on this earth, and the power of God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to move us beyond who we are. Amen.

Contributed by Mike Tuggle

Day 42: Tuesday, April 12, 2022

*"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached
in all the world as a witness to all the nations,
and then the end will come."
- Matthew 24:14*

A large majority of people only "find God" in the second half of their life. Many are too busy living in this world, building careers and gathering material things. So it is a great consolation when individuals finally accept Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, the Messiah! I have always been upset when I see many people only turn to God at the last possible moment. I had to pray about this anger and ask God to forgive my resentment. It is not up to me! God knows everyone's heart and their situation.

A seed is often planted and watered until the right time.

It is a blessing that our God is compassionate, loving, merciful and forgiving. His intention is salvation for all.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your grace. We are all sinners and unworthy. We are thankful that You desire that all should be saved and have everlasting life. Amen.

Contributed by Donna Stafford (Gilbert)

Day 43: Wednesday, April 13, 2022

Most of us see Jesus as gentle and loving because that is what is presented in most of what we read in the Bible. But consider this story which is also shared in Mark 11:15-17 and Luke 19:45-46.

"Then Jesus went into the temple and threw out all those who were selling and buying there. He pushed over the tables used for currency exchange and the chairs of those who sold doves. He said to them, 'It's written, My house will be called a house of prayer. But you've made it a hideout for crooks.'" - Matthew 21:12-13

When the Passover Feast, celebrated each spring by the Jews, was about to take place, Jesus traveled up to Jerusalem. He found the Temple teeming with people selling cattle and sheep and doves. The loan sharks were also there in full strength.

Jesus put together a whip out of strips of leather and chased them out of the Temple, stampeding the sheep and cattle, upending the tables of the loan sharks, spilling coins left and right. He told the dove merchants, "Get your things out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a shopping mall!" (John 2:13-17).

I meditated upon what we should take from it. I don't believe God made sure we read about it four times just to let us know that Jesus did have a temper and could be upset. Maybe we were being reminded that we should care about what happens in our churches and do our part to make sure everything brings Him the glory and honor He so richly deserves.

Prayer

Father God, we want to take a few minutes this day which You have granted us to say thanks for the blessing of Your Word. Please motivate us to read and re-read the Holy Bible so that we can continue to gain insight while moving closer to You and more closely emulating Your Son. Please remind us to participate in the life of our church and to pray for its leaders regularly. Please assist us in effectively praying for what matters to You and in our efforts to accomplish Your will as we are able. We pray this day in Jesus' name as our loving Lord and Savior. Amen.

Contributed by Lynn McCormick-Hauze

Day 44: Thursday, April 14, 2022

"When it was evening, he came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, 'Surely, not I?' He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.'" - Mark 14:17-21

I am certain most of us know what betrayal feels like. At some point in our life, we might have been betrayed or we were the betrayer. A friend promises to keep a secret but posts it to social media. A partner or spouse admits to an affair. A co-worker spreads gossip about you to make you look bad to peers. A family member divulges to others an issue you spoke to them in confidence.

Betrayal cuts deep and the pain can be visible. Betrayal is unexpected and attacks you in the most vulnerable place—in your heart. You feel violated; you feel like a fool. The word "betrayed" kicks us in the gut, brings us back down to earth, down to the reality of human relationships and how they can be abused or destroyed when trust is broken. Betrayal reminds us that we have been both victim and victimizer. Sad but true, there is a little Judas in all of us.

Maybe that's why this story, when you slow down and let the words hit you, turns your stomach. Even though Jesus knew his betrayer, He still invites and breaks bread with him. Judas ate, too. Jesus still makes a place at the table for us as well. Judas didn't know the whole story as we do. Judas didn't have faith that Jesus was the Messiah. He did not have the loyalty, fidelity, and trust in Jesus. Let our story not end in betrayal of The One who gave His life for us.

Prayer

Dear Lord, we can relate to the betrayal which You experienced that night because, in our own ways, we have felt that too. Lord we ask for Your forgiveness for straying, for betraying, the trust that You have given to us. We thank You for Your grace and mercy and ask for Your forgiveness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Contributed by Colleen Smith-Fey

Day 45: Friday, April 15, 2022

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct your paths." - Proverbs 3:5-6

The last two years have been anxious and fearful as we have been locked down by the pandemic. Many of us do not know what to believe because there are different messages being given to us. We are told to wear masks, not wear masks, take vaccine shots - booster shots - distance from others - close the church doors - business doors - schools - and more. How can we cope?

We must trust in God and believe that He knows what He is doing. It may not seem like He is protecting us or keeping us from harm, but He has our welfare at heart. Thank Him for all He has done for us and our family. Thank Him for being there for us in times of trouble. Ask for His help to get through our fears and be comfortable that He will always be with us. His time is not always our time. "In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Therefore, I decided not to live in fear. I trust God knows what He is doing. We have to make choices with His help for ourselves. Go to God in prayer and ask for His help. Admit that you don't know everything. You want to do your best for Him. Go to church and be with like-minded people. Study the Bible and find that there's always something new you can learn.

It is hard to trust sometimes because of the world we live in. That's where prayer and learning more can help us stay calm and realize that God is with us in all things. "Do not be afraid: do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Prayer

Dear Lord, Be with us as we go forward and know that He is with us. We thank Him for all His many blessings and know that He will help us live without fear. May God bless us all. Amen.

Contributed by Susan Fauver

Day 46: Saturday, April 16, 2022

Words Worth Praying

Read Psalm 22

Sometimes we feel stuck. We are overwhelmed with feelings or circumstances. We aren't sure what lies ahead. The Psalms are my go-to when I'm not sure how to pray. The words seem to echo the range of feelings that I experience. Some are celebration and high praise to God, "for great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever" (Ps 117). We also find cries of a broken heart, vulnerable prayers for help, and laments, "I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. I am weary with my crying" (Ps 69).

Jesus knew these scriptures and surely prayed them throughout his life. You probably recognize the first verse of Psalm 22 as words that Jesus cries from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Reading through the rest of the verses, there are many things that Jesus endured in his trial and crucifixion--scorn, mocking, encircled by "bulls," poured out like water, bones out of joint, thirst, clothing divided by casting lots, and the agony of suffering. Psalm 22 does not end here, just as Good Friday and Holy Saturday are not the end of the story.

The cross is both torture and triumph, darkness and deliverance. In the dust of death, Jesus is defeating evil, restoring life. Psalm 22 ends with prophetic promise in verses 23-31, pointing to the eternal victory that Jesus has won. "Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it." He has done it!

Prayer

May the Psalms both teach us and lead us, giving words to our prayers and life to our souls. Thank you for the unimaginable gift of life you have given to us, Jesus. Amen.

Contributed by Molly Simpson

Notes

Then He set about His work,
That God sent Him to do;
He took our punishment on Himself;
He made us clean and new.

He could have saved Himself,
Calling angels from above,
But He chose to pay our price for sin;
He paid it out of love.

Our Lord died on Good Friday,
But the cross did not destroy
His resurrection on Easter morn
That fills our hearts with joy.

Now we know our earthly death,
Like His, is just a rest.
We'll be forever with Him
In heaven, where life is best.

So we live our lives for Jesus,
Think of Him in all we do.
Thank you Savior; Thank you Lord.
Help us love like you! .

- By Joanna Fuchs





Acknowledgements

We would like to thank:

All members who contributed their devotionals to this booklet

Joe Friddle for the cover artwork

Phyllis Wheeler & Lisa Kure for coordinating and editing

Marty Portmann for devotional proofreading

Hannah Hoffman for booklet layout and publication

Pastor Molly Simpson for supporting this effort

We hope this booklet will be spiritually uplifting during this time of Lent. Please share the devotions in this booklet with others. All devotions are also available on our website at www.fumckilleen.com, and you can signup for the daily emails online, or find more church info through the QR code below. No copyright laws applied.



First United Methodist Church of Killeen
3501 E. Elms Road
Killeen, TX 76542
254-634-6363
www.fumckilleen.com