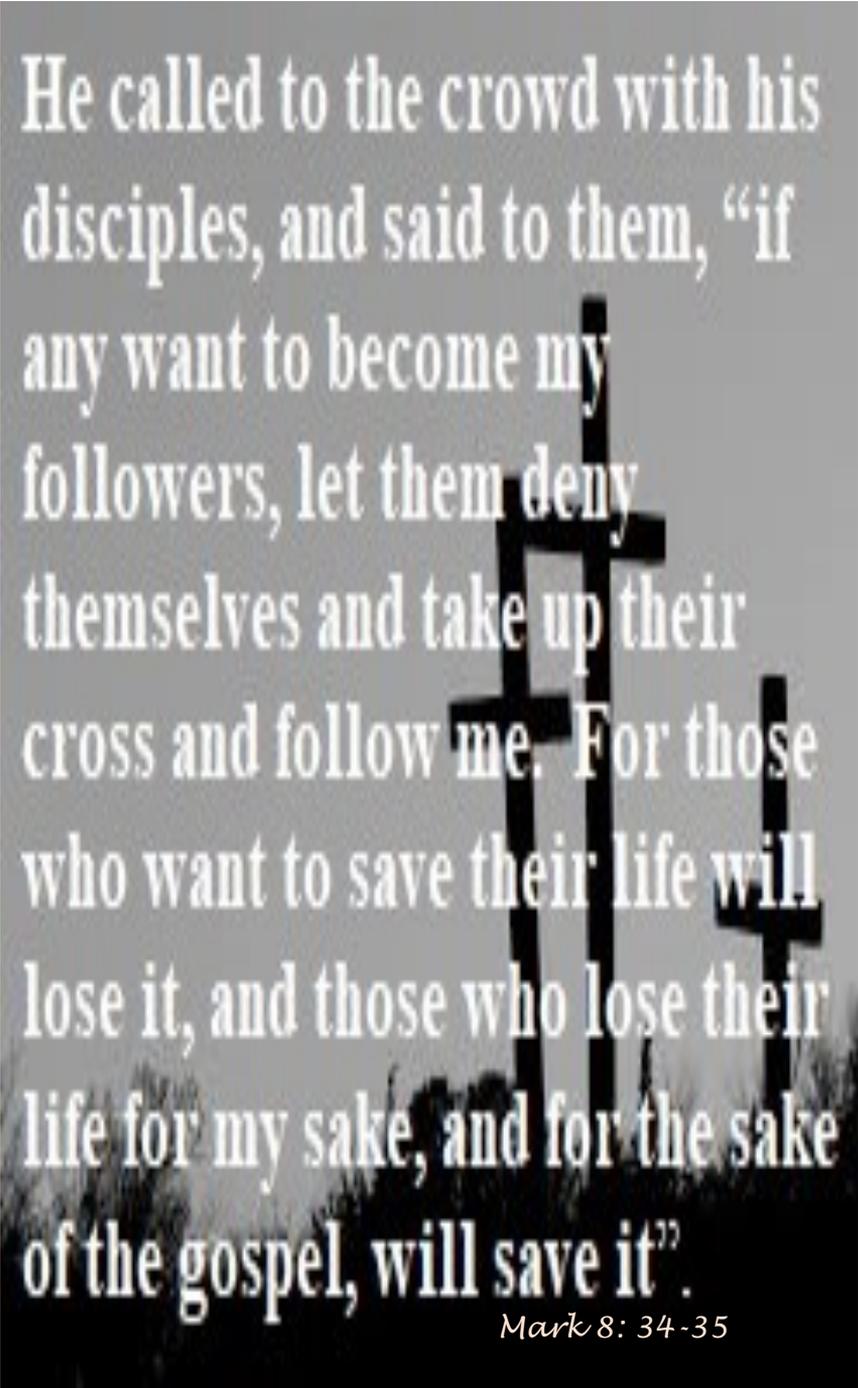


2018 Lenten Devotional Booklet

First Presbyterian Church Southold



He called to the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it”.

Mark 8: 34-35

The Lenten Journey

As we begin our Lenten Journeys, we need to prepare ourselves for a journey that will hopefully bring us new and fresh outlooks on our faith formation, how we direct our focus on Christ, and our focus on our everyday living in a Christian relationship with God.

Lent is not a time of “giving up,” it is a time of giving something of ourselves to spread the Gospel good news of the Kingdom of God and God’s love for all mankind.

Although this devotional booklet leads us to meditation and prayer, it can also prompt us to act out our faith with deeds of compassion, providing help for people in need.

Read the prayers out loud. They are calls to action and love. They encapsulate Christ’s love and message of hope. Let the booklet be your friend and support during Lent. May your journeys bring you renewed Faith, Hope, and Fulfillment.

Today's Date: February 14th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 58 : 1-12

Devotion: God is very clearly talking about the two ways we can live in the world. We can follow religious customs and go back out in the world to serve our own interests. We can fast, but go out and oppress our workers, quarrel with others, or strike with a wicked fist.

OR

We can fast and then go feed the hungry, clothe the naked, bring the homeless poor into our house, let the oppressed go free, loosen the bonds of injustice.

Living a life true to God requires ACTION, not in religious practice, but in our commitment to serving others. This is where God's people will find life. Our hearts must change first, then our thoughts, which then leads to this kind of action. God will help us. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Step out to help others and God will guide you. "Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer."

Prayer: Dear God: Let your light break forth like the dawn through me. Guide me continually so that I can serve you in the world with real action, helping others with real need. Help me to cultivate an open heart each and every day through my prayers with you.

Karen Lee

Today's Date: February 15th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 25: 1-10

Devotion: From childhood, we're told to be independent, to fend for ourselves, to stand on our own two feet. But really, we can gain so much when we turn to others, when we shed some of our independence and instead, allow others to help us.

Traveling with God is no different. David—and we—cannot succeed on our own. Depending on God and trusting in his wisdom means with certainty that we *will* come to know the way. No matter our transgressions or the conflict that surrounds us, belief in God, patience, steadfast love, and faithfulness will lead directly to the path God wants us to follow.

Prayer: Dear Lord, teach me, remind me to trust in your ways. Help me have faith to know that no matter the trial I face or how it came about, your wisdom will show me the path. Always.

Sarah Edwards

Today's Date: February 16th

Today's Scripture: Daniel 9:1-14

Devotion: Daniel turns to God and confesses that he, as well as all of mankind, have sinned by not following the guidance and the laws that were set down by the Lord for all of us. We have not paid enough attention to His word and the words of His prophets. How often we forget how great God is and how valuable His teachings are. (If we would only “stop to smell the coffee,” as we say in our modern vernacular.) Well, all this is important information, and if we need to pay more attention to the word of our Lord, then so be it: **JUST DO IT!** God continues to love us, even though we are sinners. God continues to provide us with the guidance we need to make His world ours and our world His. And we must ask for His forgiveness and mercy on our lives, so that we may continue with His work here on earth.

Prayer: Lord, we have sinned so badly, that it's a wonder that You still find it in your heart to forgive. But You do. Every time. How can we ever thank You for this? Please help us know Your love and provide us with Your guidance so that we may continue to improve ourselves and our communities every day. We promise to follow Your lead, to become more like You, and to think of others before ourselves. With Your help Lord, we know we can do it. Thank you. Amen.

Jim Baker

Today's Date: February 17th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 32

Devotion: The Joy of Forgiveness. "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my Sin...Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you. Forgiveness is something that God offers to human beings and to the world. Forgiveness is not something that we create or sustain on our own Why is it so hard to believe that God's love really is unconditional? That when we stumble and neglect to do things we should, we can pray about it and ask to be forgiven. So often we hang on to so much stuff that weighs us down, distancing us from God. Maybe we had harsh words with someone close to us or are worried about one of the kids, or forgot to call a friend who is ill. We go about the business of our days, but are not able to give our all. We are not fully engaged. Then, we take some time to pray and let go of the guilt we've been carrying, asking God to help us be more loving. What a difference!

"Those who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength"

Thank you God!

Prayer: Dear God, throughout my life, doubt comes, but so does the grace of believing. Your forgiving love saves me and disturbs me. By your mercy, make me merciful. By your forgiveness, help me to forgive. Through your loving acceptance of my stumbling, help me to be more loving to others. Amen.

Caryll Batterman

Today's Date: February 18th

Today's Scripture: Colossians 1: 11-14

Devotion: I have inherited from the Father the power to endure everything in life with patience and understanding. This fact was made possible by God giving His kingdom to His beloved son, Jesus Christ, so Christ could be the forgiveness of sin and create a better life for all to follow.

Prayer: Our Father, give to me and others the faith, strength, and courage to be a true believer of Jesus Christ. May I have the power and desire to feed the hungry, shelter the needy, give hope to the despairing and belief to the doubters. Let me have a true feeling in mind and body to be a forgiver of sin and to make a better life for all. Amen.

Charlie Lauer

Today's Date: February 19th

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 2: 1-10

Grace Alone

Every promise we can make,
Every prayer and step of faith,
Every difference we will make,
Is only by his grace
Every mountain we will climb,
Every ray of hope we shine,
Every blessing left behind,
Is only by his grace.

Grace alone, which God supplies,
Strength unknown he will provide,
Christ in us our Cornerstone
We will go forth in grace alone.*

**Sing the Faith Hymnal*

Prayer: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God which will never let you go, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us today and every day as we go out into the world to serve. Amen.

Unknown

Today's Date: February 20th

Today's Scripture: Job 5: 8-27

Devotion: In my early twenties, just out of college, my life did not have much direction; there was no clear expected next step. I did not have much time for God. I had done my religious “duty” in my youth, attended church, confirmation, and religious instruction. Over a three-year span my father died, the relationship I was in grew abusive, my mother died, and I moved back home. My life was turned upside down. I may not have made time for God, but God found me in my time of need. God’s saving grace was in the welcoming laughter at a self-help group, scripture, a minister’s words of compassion, the caring hearts of family and friends. I resumed my journey of faith, this time seeking God’s direction for my life, and am still on that journey today.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to feel and know your presence with us, especially when we face life’s trials. Thank you for the gift of Your saving grace available to all, not because we earn it or can ever deserve it, but because You first love us. Amen.

Ann Romeo

Today's Date: February 21st

Today's Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

Devotion: Temptation of Jesus. We live in a world where temptation of the body, soul, and mind are plentiful. The societal emphasis placed on materiality, status, and comfort that so successfully permeates our daily lives serves to entice each and every one of us; much like the devil endeavored to tempt Jesus. Having fasted forty day and forty nights, the devil attempted to exploit the extreme state of hunger Jesus felt, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." Despite his physical discomfort, Jesus reminded all of us, "One does not live by bread alone." Failing to tempt Jesus on his first attempt, the devil cunningly aimed to manipulate Jesus' trust in God. On the pinnacle of the temple, the devil said to Jesus, "If you are the son of God, throw yourself down." Demonstrating unyielding faith, Jesus reminded us all that the word of God is supreme and shall not be put to the test. The devil, unsuccessful in his attempts to tempt Jesus through the body and soul, sought to exploit Jesus' mind. Appealing to our human sense of self-worth and desire to be viewed as important and powerful, the devil brought the world before Jesus and said, "All of these I will give to you, if you will fall down and worship me." Confident in his faith, Jesus replied, "Worship the Lord your God and serve only him," reminding us that through the Word and glory of God shall we achieve everlasting fulfillment. Let us be reminded that Jesus said in Matthew 15:11, "It is not what goes into a man, but what comes from within that defines him."

Prayer: Dear Lord, we are eternally thankful for all you have bestowed on us. We are especially grateful for the health and happiness of our families and friends. Father, realizing that temptation is not the product of our physical surroundings, but a construct of our own desires, please instill in us the wisdom and strength to make the right decisions, placing your Word first in our lives. We pray that through your example, we will possess adequate direction to thwart temptation, assuring we do not succumb to the Devil's will. Amen.

Charles Barkley

Today's Date: February 22nd

Today's Scripture: Psalm 22: 23-31

Devotion: Be prayerful in every moment. Our prayers can come from any place, at any time. Our prayers are required of us and are the very least we can do to honor Him. They can start from a place of thanks and be a prayer of gratitude because everything comes through Him. They can come from a place of joy and be a happy Amen. They can come from a place of pain, thankful for His comfort. They can come from awe at His power in our lives. Pray for guidance and patience because He knows best what we need. Pray for those we know and those we don't who are in pain or need. Pray for humility and understanding so we can be humble servants. When we pray, we acknowledge the immensity of His sacrifice that changed the world and made our lives possible. Through our prayers, we can learn to be better disciples. We honor Him when we pray.

Prayer of Praise and Trust: Let all the people praise our God, let all the people sing their praises, giving thanks for the generosity of our Generous God, who shows loving compassion and care to all people who are sorrowing, suffering distress or deprivation. We offer our praises to our God, because of God's faithfulness in listening and acting. In reverent praise and awe, we praise our Lord God with hearts and minds filled with joyful trust, because you have never left us bereft of comfort and help when we needed it. We praise you for the many signs in the past of God's presence with your people; we thank you God, for all the daily signs we see that God always comes to people looking for God; and we ask your blessings on future generations who will also learn of your listening ear; your strong arm that protects vulnerable people; and your loving heart that inspires trust. We offer our praises to God, because of God's faithfulness in listening and acting. May God always be praised! Amen.

Patty Shuford

Today's Date: February 23rd

Today's Scripture: Romans 4: 1-12

DEVOTION: The desire to be significant and admirable in the eyes of our family, friends, and peers is as strong today as it was during the time of Abraham. Performances of venerable acts serve to enhance our appearance and standing among man, and any awards, praise or compensation received is rightly due us. In other words, we have earned what it is we have received. As the Apostle Paul stated, "Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due." The Apostle Paul goes on to state, "For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God." While good works may earn us righteousness in the eyes of man, as Abraham discovered this form of righteousness is not only short-lived, but is of little importance to the Lord. True righteousness is not earned, but rather is a gift granted to us through our faith in and by the grace of God. According to the Apostle Paul, "But to the one whom without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness." Therefore, it is of weighty importance that we appreciate that God's love is not attainable through good works, but rather is abundantly available through faith in Christ. As Jesus said to the Apostle Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Prayer: Dear Father, thank you for consistently being beside me as I walk through life. Thank you for allowing me to see the good in others and the ability to conduct good works for my community. While important, Father, I understand righteousness can only be achieved through faith in You. I humbly ask that You continue to strengthen my faith, for without it I have nothing. Guide me through the darkness and open my eyes to Your light. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Faith Finne

Today's Date: February 24th

Today's Scripture: Mark 8: 27-30

Devotion: This passage from Mark establishes a transitional point in Jesus' ministry. After all the miracles, all the sermons, all he has done to impress upon his disciples that he is the Messiah, his efforts continue to fall on deaf ears. And then, after healing the eyes of a blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus stops them and asks two crucial questions: "Who do people say that I am?" and then, "But, who do YOU say that I am?" They all do rather well with their responses to the first question, but when it comes to the second, only Peter responds fervently, crying out: "You are the Messiah!" Yes, it took time, but Peter finally "got it!" I don't know about you, but I'm one who often struggles to come up with the right answer, particularly to questions like that. I believe Peter may well have had the same problem, and yet at that moment, with perfect timing he blurted it out. That mustard seed of faith planted in his heart finally bore fruit!

Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, I confess that my faith journey has been one filled with many questions, not all of them answered when I want them answered. Yet I know that, by your grace, if I'm patient and I continue to seek your response through prayer, like with Peter, it will ultimately come. And I will ever give you thanks for that! Amen.

Gordon Moore

Today's Date: March 25th

Today's Scripture: Mark 8:31-38

Devotion: Jesus looks ahead. I remember a few years back, here at First Presbyterian, a Sunday school teacher having some guilt about a class she did during Lent. This group of children was made up of young ones. She was afraid that she had left out some pretty important details of the resurrection because she just did not have the heart, after so many great lessons about Jesus, to tell the class that he would be killed, let alone crucified. Today is the second Sunday of Lent. Jesus was able to look ahead. He knew he would endure some great suffering, that he would be rejected and killed. We should reflect on what might possibly be ahead for ourselves. Take the time out to “think,” to “contemplate,” to “understand” our journey through this season of Lent. Have we done the traditional fasting or giving up something? If not, do it today. Make someone else's day a little lighter. A phone call, a visit, a simple act of kindness. We all suffer or hurt at some point. A little “light” shined on someone's day goes a long way.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I thank you for my family, I thank you for my church family. I thank you for lighting the way for me. Giving me the ability to see clear, to contemplate what's ahead and to try to understand all that is around me. For answering all the little prayers I say on a daily basis. The ones that get me through. Amen.

Janet Dickerson

Today's Date: February 26th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 105: 1-11; 27-45

Devotion: Because our Christian faith is centered on Jesus Christ, his life, his death, and his resurrection, we often forget about pre-Christian times of the Old Testament. We also forget that Jesus was a Jew whose ancestors went back to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. The story of how God chose the Israelites as his chosen people and sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt to the Promised Land forms a rich history of life before Christ. It is important that we see this continuity between the Old and New Testaments even though they are very different in form and content. The Psalms have provided us with a beautiful bridge between the ancient stories, and have anticipated the coming of Christ.

Prayer: O Lord, help us to know the long history of our faith and the people who God sent to prepare us for the coming of Christ on earth. Amen.

John Ross

Today's Date: February 27th

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 11: 1-3, 13-19

Devotion: The Meaning of Faith. In this section of the Book of Hebrews, the writer illustrates faith by giving examples of all the famous heroes of the Hebrew Scriptures, beginning with Abraham through Moses and David and others who lived and acted out their faith in hopeful belief and fidelity. In the writer's mind, faith is not just a noun but in a sense a verb—a living action-oriented way of life that we would do well to emulate. They will know we are Christians by our love and our faith.

Prayer: Gracious God: We thank you for all the gifts you give us. We thank you for the grace that allows us and presses us not to just say I believe but to act out our beliefs in deeds of love and compassion to all your children in need. Amen.

Bill Thompson

Today's Date: February 28th

Today's Scripture: Jeremiah 30: 17-22

Devotion: Restoration of God's People. In the Old Testament, God's chosen people continually ignored the original covenant they made with Him without immediate death or destruction. Seeing God's patience with His people reminds us that God is patient and merciful. This should give us hope in our own struggles with living well for God. When we fail Him, He is patient with us, healing us to bring about the best in us.

Prayer: Dear God, teach us to live with Your laws as you wrote them on our hearts. Remind us of the healing power of Your eternal love for us. Amen.

Bonnie Hoffner

Today's Date: March 1st

Today's Scripture: 1st Peter 2: 1-10

Devotion: A Living Stone. It is a bit of a light speed summary of faith—a summary to people who believed—get rid of the bad stuff in you, long with all your heart for the good stuff of God, understand that Jesus is the way even though he was rejected in the world and if you don't get that you will stumble, understand how you are meant to live now that God has called you, and there is a whole community out there that by believing this you become a part of. And yet again, within this summary there are three two-word images that could simply anchor any people at any time. Christ as a living stone—a vital, living, solid mass to hold in your hand and take with you in times of trouble—what simple words. The magnificent light—again, two words that express so much. And a chosen people—a community of people, just like our Peter reminds us on Sunday mornings.

Prayer: Dear God, when moments of pressure come to us in this new season, may we find the strength we need in the words of Peter—living stone, marvelous light and God's people. Certainly puts things into perspective. Amen.

Janice Claudio

Today's Date: March 2nd

Today's Scripture: Psalm 19

Devotion: Night, where the universal language of the soul conveys knowledge. Day, where the residue of dreams is swept away and the Word is spoken. The Heavens run out to infinity. The sun, our sun, fuses 620 million metric tons of hydrogen per second, releasing enormous amounts of energy, enough to light the face of a daffodil from 93 million miles away. God's handiwork, glorious! The law of the Lord is perfect, converting, reviving the souls. The do-si-do of human habitation. By your grace we have life on earth. May we ever strive to be the best we can be, and remain your humble servant.

Prayer: May my word be true, my heart be a vessel for your love, my being a channel for your will. My Lord God Almighty, now and forever. Amen.

Lynn Washburn

Today's Date: March 3rd

Today's Scripture: Mark 9: 2-8

Devotion: The Transfiguration. How would Peter, James and John describe this unusual event that occurred on the mountaintop? What do you do with a story like this? It seems the purpose of the Transfiguration was that Jesus' "Inner Circle" could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was. They saw him in all his Glory although they could not fully comprehend it. They were afraid. But it gave them reassurance of hearing of his coming death. Who wouldn't be fearful to see your friend suddenly floating above you robed in white and in a dazzling light? Then a voice commands from the heavens, "This is my Son, the beloved. Listen to him." Ok, you got my attention, I'm listening. What if Jesus had appeared in his transfigured Glory from the beginning? Would more of the people have believed in him then? Would they still have crucified him? Maybe they would have just listened and followed him. God gave him human form to walk among us, and those that dared to believe him did. I think they believed in part because he was more relatable. Jesus was humbled by taking human form and walking with us. He laid his Glory aside for us. He was the ultimate sacrifice, and this is truly the love of God.

Prayer: Dear Lord, give me the strength to believe in you. Help me to feel your love through the small happenings and miracles of each day. Show me how to walk in Jesus' light. Thank you for all your gifts of love. Amen.

Melissa Hyatt

Today's Date: March 4th

Today's Scripture: 1st Corinthians 1: 18-25

Devotion: The gospels are like a poem that captures the love of God and the power of Jesus Christ. They are not a logical explanation of earthly events for scholars to analyze, nor a guide to superstitious happenings. Many people in the early church of Paul misinterpreted the story of Christ and his role as the Son of God. They often looked at him as a mystic, a magician, or a sorcerer. Today, we still are trying to analyze and define Christ in human terms. With advanced methods of modern research, we have also tried to treat the gospels as historical documents. In Corinthians, this letter of Paul to his congregation in Corinth, he stresses the need for faith in Christ crucified and risen, and for the wisdom of God to supercede the wisdom of man.

Prayer: O Lord, give us the insight and strength to have faith in God's wisdom and the power of Christ in a skeptical world where our egos and presumed intelligence often cloud our vision. Help us to view God's beautiful world with clarity and the love provided by Jesus Christ. Amen.

John Ross

Today's Date: March 5th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 84

Devotion: As a musician, I have spent a lot of practice time in church sanctuaries over the years—many hours, many churches, mostly alone. Stepping into an empty sanctuary is like entering a place of peace and comfort. The uplifted prayers of the past surround you and cradle you in their arms. I have never been uneasy—even as shadows collect in the corners. I am sad when other obligations force me to leave. How truly lovely is the dwelling place of the Lord; How happy are those of us who find our refuge there!

Prayer: O Lord, God of hosts, help us to find solace in your holy temple. Even as You shelter the sparrow and the swallow, bestow favor on those who trust in You. Amen.

Lois Ross

Today's Date: March 6th

Today's Scripture: 2nd Chronicles 29: 1-16

Devotion: Cleansing of the Temple. Temple worship was central to the people of Israel. King David started the process. His son Solomon headed up and finished the construction of the original Temple. After Solomon died, succeeding generations carried out evil practices in the Temple and were unfaithful to God. Because of this unfaithfulness, the Kingdom was torn apart by foreigners and the Temple was destroyed. Later, King Zedekiah called for a cleansing of the Temple and a change in the relationship of the people of Israel with God. This change (repentance) restored God and the Temple as a focus in the lives of the Israelites.

Prayer: Forgiving God, help us to re-covenant with you as we cleanse our lives and turn to you in repentance. Grant us a path to a relationship with you which focuses on our loving you with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. And our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

Bill Thompson

Today's Date: March 7th

Today's Scripture: Mark 11:15-19

Devotion: It's tempting to read the story of Jesus cleaning the Temple as a simple and focused criticism of those who were conducting commercial activity in the Temple. While these people were clearly in the wrong, we do ourselves and the gospel message a disservice if we employ an overly literal reading of Christ's judgment: we mustn't forget that it's possible for corruption to take many different forms. In this time of Lent, we should reflect on how we allow our actions and those of others to pervert the Good News, to corrupt individual churches, and to defile our bodies, minds and hearts.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, pour your cleaning grace over me. Free me from my own agenda, my own predispositions and my own prejudices. Open my heart and my mind to your will. Help uncover my True Self at the core of my being. Replace the fear in my heart with love. Bring your cleansing spirit of light to the world. Amen.

Greg Doroski

Today's Date: March 8th

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 9: 23-28

Devotion: I forget where I first learned an explanation for what Christ accomplished on the Cross. It was the breakout of the word "Atonement." Christ achieved "At-One-Ment" over the separation between God and humanity. And then my Anne Lamott kicked in, and I started asking questions. Lots of questions. (Are you surprised?) All of the questions are worthy of their asking, and they deserve to be pursued energetically. But at the end of the day, I believe that Jesus took with him to the Cross everything that separates us from God: suffering, evil, abuse, addiction, neglect, violence, fear and death, just to name a few. At the moment that Jesus "gave up his spirit," all of that imploded into God's love, and was vindicated three days later by his resurrection. If I can live every moment of every day with just a sliver of what that means, then I may be on the right path. Some days are better than others. But the good moments are when I see some of those signs of our separation, and remember to live into the larger truth that Christ "appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin" and the inertia of that moment continues to influence all of creation.

Prayer: Gracious God, keep me from being overwhelmed by darkness in the world, and lead me in the path of light. Help me to realize that because of your free gift of salvation in Christ, I am free to live into the new life that you have made possible. In this season of anticipation of rebirth, lead me to see the priceless gift of sacrificial love given freely. Amen.

Peter Kelley

Today's Date: March 9th

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 1: 3-14

Devotion: The apostle Paul wrote the passage above to the church at Ephesus, and for us as well, in order to remind us that we and our church (*First Presbyterian Church of Southold*) owe all our blessings to God. This is a pronouncement of God's goodness to us and that he is worthy of our praise. God has given us "every spiritual blessing." Blessings such as forgiveness of our sins, redemption, glorification, adoption and a place in heaven. And each time these blessings are mentioned, Paul shows us that it is through Christ and because of Christ that we are so richly blessed. Why did God bless us with these spiritual blessings? So we can bring praise to the glory of God. We did nothing to earn or deserve these blessings, yet we have been granted redemption through Christ's blood, our sins have been forgiven and we have been given God's grace. How can we not, in all humbleness, lift His name in praise?

♪ Our God is an awesome God, he reigns

From heaven above with wisdom, power and love

Our God is an awesome God ♪

"Awesome God" by Rich Mullins

Prayer: Heavenly and gracious God, we recognize how abundantly you have blessed us, and we humbly thank you. Help us to remember that in everything we do, every chance we get, to bring praise to your glorious name. Amen.

Sue Ketcham

Today's Date: March 10th

Today's Scripture: John 3: 1-13

Devotion: This scripture could be possibly called "Nicodemus and Jesus debate." They surely talk past each other.

Nicodemus (Pharisee)

Jesus (Messiah)

Born of the flesh

Born of the Spirit

Darkness

Light

Teacher of Israel

Divine Teacher

Jesus' exposition of Truth in John's Gospel urges us to re-examine our relationship with God through repenting (life changing) and focusing not on earthy things, but let the wind (Spirit) take us to places undreamed of. I was once rather aggressively asked, "Are you born again?" Long ago, I said nothing. Now I would say, "Born of the Spirit!!"

Prayer: Loving God, on our Lenten journeys help us to look for the Light, feel the breath of your Spirit and live out Christ's Truth in our lives each day. Amen.

Bill Thompson

Today's date: March 11th

Today's Scripture: John 3:14-21

Devotion:

The second of the great Johannine keywords which we meet in the Gospel of John is the word light. This word light occurs no fewer than 21 times. Jesus, as John says here, is the light of men. The function of John the Baptist was to point men toward the light which was Christ. Twice Jesus calls himself the light of the world. This light can be in men so they can become children of the light. "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven."

O.D. Lingo

Today's Date: March 12th

Today's Scripture: Exodus 15: 22-27

Devotion: How wonderful is the taste of sweet water! Even more wonderful is God's sweet love. With a simple act of love, God sweetened the bitter water that Moses' people first came upon. He then led them to an oasis with twelve sweet water springs. By having the people first trust and obey Him, God showed them the power of His love by the miracle at the first spring. Then by leading the people to the oasis, God demonstrated how great His love is. God will take care of His people abundantly when they trust Him and obey His teachings.

Prayer: Dear Lord, when we find ourselves at the edge of a bitter spring, unable to get the sustenance we dearly need, and with seemingly no place to turn, please help us remember that when we are thirsty, we need only to turn to You, and remember Your teachings, and trust in You that Your abundant sweet water lies just ahead. Thank You for Your sweet love. Amen.

Jim Baker

Today's Date: March 13th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 107: 1-16

Devotion: Psalm 107 is a Psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance of many troubles...four troubles which are highlighted: desert wastes, darkness and gloom, sickness from sinful ways, and stormy seas. In all cases, the psalmist cries out (prays) to the Lord, and the Lord in his steadfast love saves them. We may not face these kind of troubles, but the message is clear... Take your troubles to the Lord in prayer. O give thanks to the Lord for His steadfast love endures forever.

Prayer: Steadfast Lord, help us to remember that your mercy, forgiveness, and healing are freely given to us even when we think we are not worthy. Let our prayers break through the noise of our worldly problems and help us focus on praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings you bestow on us. Amen.

Bill Thompson

Today's Date: March 14th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51: 1-12

Devotion: Apparently, Psalm 51 is known as the Sinner's Prayer. This prayer is personal, and individual, almost lonely. There are pleas for God's mercy and lovingkindness, not just crying out for forgiveness for a single act of sin, but for complete cleansing from the awful horror of the polluted state of our soul. I believe that music plays an important part in worship as well as personal reflection, and in the development of our spiritual well-being. Maybe we become able, through music, to be a little nearer to expressing the inexpressible. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." It occurs to me that the attitude of this Psalm needs to be the starting point for all of us when repenting our sinfulness and embracing our Savior, or in the ongoing walk of discipleship. Would our worship experience, as individuals and congregations be more meaningful if we assumed the posture of contrition, at least emotionally?

Prayer: Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy when we falter, when we fail, in our weakness, in our betrayal. Lord, have mercy on us, your children. Amen.

Jay Batterman

Today's Date: March 15th

Today's Scripture: John 8: 12-20

Devotion: When Jesus proclaims himself the light of the world, he is immediately taken to task by the Pharisees. The Pharisees are continually trying to catch Jesus out, to trip him up with legal pedanticism. Fortunately, being an incredible Torah scholar, Jesus always confounds them. The Pharisees attacked his form of declaration, completely missing the fact that he was revealing himself as the son of God. They still don't get it when they ask, "Where is your father?" We can learn from the error of the Pharisees' ways. Being quick to judge not only holds the distinct possibility that we are acting without having all the information, but also the likelihood of arriving at an erroneous conclusion. Jesus says that even if he does judge, both he and the Father are doing the judging. I am not in that league, so I will continue to try to be slow to judge others, considering all the information I have and being aware that there is information that I may never have. Everyone deserves to be heard and have their merit appreciated.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the tremendous gift of free will that allows me to grow and learn about myself and the world around me. Help me to be understanding of others and to keep from being quick to judge them. Help me to find you in everyone I meet. Amen.

Mike Mraz

Today's Date: March 16th

Today's Scripture: Hebrew 4: 14 5-4

Devotion: Reading this passage, I look back on when I joined the church. Confessing my faith by answering the question, "Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" At that time, I did not truly recognize the impact that would have on my life and is still having. How comforting this scripture is to let us know we can not only go to Jesus, but we can **BOLDLY** go. Jesus, having been human, was tested and understands the struggles we face. He hears us, and gives us mercy and the courage to acknowledge our weaknesses. He helps us to accept his grace, understanding that he is the great high priest and that in his likeness we are to show this same grace and love to others. To be willing to sacrifice and share, to praise his name, and watch for him in everything we do.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for giving us the amazing gift of your Son, without whom we would not know forgiveness. Let us always remember what it means to be human, and that we can and should turn to you with confidence, knowing you will grant us mercy. In turn, grant us the courage to live our lives without the fear of stumbling, but with the knowledge that we will be picked up, dusted off and sent anew to be your servant. Amen.

Jan Falkowski

Today's Date: March 17th

Today's Scripture: John 12: 1-8

Devotion: Happy St. Patrick's Day! St. Patrick was said to have heard God speak to him about returning to Ireland to preach the gospel. So he did. One man heard one voice and brought salvation to many. Joyce Meyers speaks about the moment when Mary broke the alabaster box of fragrant oil over Jesus body, and as the oil drips down, she wipes his feet with her hair. The disciples were indignant over this act knowing the oil was worth a whole year's wages. But Mary may have heard one voice from the Father to sacrifice the oil in preparation for Jesus's death. When God speaks to us about performing an act of love and sacrifice, the act doesn't seem like an unlikely thing to do, because the voice of God comes to us from the heart. When we allow ourselves to become aligned with the purposes of God, through a daily surrender in prayer, our hearts are filled with joy and peace in the moments of love and sacrifice.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Your grace in moments of surrender make difficult times in life seem easy. Remind me always to spend time in your presence every day, even if only in quiet solitude in heart-to-heart communion with you. Amen.

Kathleen Goggins Nickles

Today's Date: March 18th

Today's Scripture: John 12:20-26

Devotion: By this passage, Jesus reveals to His followers that He knows His time on earth is nearing an end. He wants to make sure His followers know that like Him, they too must end their earthly lives in order to gain the eternal life. Jesus wants us to use His life on earth as our example; whatever He does, we should do. Wherever He goes, we should go. By following Him, we serve Him and by so doing, God will honor us both in our earthly and our eternal lives.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, we know that your Grace is freely given to us, and for that we are forever thankful. But we also know that by following your life's example, we will gain so much more and our community will also thrive. We pray that we will be able to find the strength to live as you would have us live, and we pray that we will be able to help our fellow man to enrich their lives as well. In your name we pray. Amen.

Jim Baker

Today's Date: March 19th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 43: 8-13

Devotional Prayer

Lord let us keep you in focus as our God and our savior, and do not let us become distracted by all of the competing factors in our lives. We strike a difficult balance as we strive for success and prosperity in our personal and professional lives. But let us not be consumed by these pursuits. For it is as we follow the example set by your son, Jesus Christ, that we Christians find true nourishment. Also grant us the humility and understanding to always remember that others may follow different paths in life. While the Lord is our only true God, we respect and listen to those who follow other gods or no God. Amen.

Stewart Ross

Today's Date: March 20th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 44: 1-8

Devotion: An existential crisis is a time when you question life's meaning and purpose, and for people of faith it includes the question, "Does God know I exist?" It even extends to the question, "Does God exist?" Despite being the people of the Covenant, Israel suffered existential crisis on a regular basis. Fact is, we all do from time to time. It's a normal part of life and faith. When they had been overrun and taken captive into the enemy territory of Babylon, Israel suffered one of its greatest existential crises. "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137) Isaiah comes along with a dream of restoration and a reminder of God's blessing and promise. "Who has announced from old the things to come? Let them tell us what is to be." God holds all of history, holds each one of us as beloved children; because, after all, in Christ we have been grafted onto the tree, the mighty cedar in Jacob's garden. In times of worry, in crises of faith, remember that God holds each of us, all creation, knows us by name, and by virtue of God's steadfast love and blessing, never lets go.

Prayer: Almighty God, grant that I might see a vision of your eternal safe holding presence for myself, my fellow human beings, your children all over the world, indeed all of creation. Let me enter this day more complete in the awareness of your presence in all of history, with the people of the Covenant, and with the Church today. In Christ I pray. Amen.

Peter Kelley

Today's Date: March 21st

Today's Scripture: Haggi 2:1-9

Devotion: The Future Glory of the Temple. This passage from the book of Haggi is a reminder to the people who are waiting for the Lord to restore the original temple built by King Solomon and to restore their prosperity. But the Lord will only act in his own good time and after he has ravaged the land and the sea. The new world will be better than the old.

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive us for our impatience in seeking fulfillment of what we perceive to be your promises. We will bide our time until you deign to act. We thank you for all you do for us. Amen.

Herb Adler

Today's Date: March 22nd

Today's Scripture: Psalm 118:19-29

Devotion: This Psalm is a good reminder to follow God's will and path to be the person God created us to be. The world is a beautiful place full of good and wonderful things. Stay away from negative people and from bad temptations. Be thankful that God shows us the way to a good life. God is love, and his love is forever and endless. We carry that love to others to heal our world.

Prayer: Thank you God for leading us to a good life filled with love.

Heather Cusack

Today's Date: March 23rd

Today's Scripture: Jeremiah 33: 1-5

Devotion: “Why is God punishing me?” “What did I do to deserve this?” No, God does not inflict punishment, but He does understand suffering. Just as He reminded Jeremiah that he should call upon Him in prayer, so too does Jesus remind us that He is the way, that we should fear not for He is with us. He told Jeremiah He would bring healing and recovery to Israel. Jesus brings us salvation through his suffering, death, and resurrection. With these promises, how can we not feel comforted? How can we not find peace? It is there for the asking.

Prayer: Let this prayer, Jesus, be a call to You for your presence. Let me be like a child enclosed in Your arms with murmurs of love in my ears and kisses of healing on my wounds. May I always remember that in only a second of silence I can find you. Let me remember the cross. Amen.

Marguerite Schondebare

Today's Date: March 24th

Today's Date: Mark 10: 45-52

Devotional: Why Bartimaeus? He was only one of many beggars. Blindness was considered God's curse for sin but refuted by Jesus' healing Bartimaeus and by His stating, "Go, your faith has healed you." FAITH! Reliance, loyalty, or complete trust in GOD! Nowhere was my faith more tested than on Mission Trips to Haiti, especially when our vehicle's brakes malfunctioned. I, a new Christian, had complete faith in God's protection. Just as my faith gave me peace descending that mountain, your faith in a God who protects you can give you His peace too.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help us to have the faith of a Bartimaeus. Help us to remember that with God, all things are possible.

Doris Bernstein

Today's Date: March 25

Today's Scripture: Mark 11: 1-11

Devotion: Most parades today feature bombastic bands, fabulous floats and all kinds of people waving signs and shouting to the multitudes along the way.

Jesus, in his own way, turns that Palm Sunday parade upside down. It's only him, on a donkey, with a few tag along disciples. In its simplicity it shouts Hosanna. And despite the unpretentious nature of the parade, the

people shout hosanna-----at least on that day.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you, be part of your parade, in good times and bad. Grant us a sense of your presence that will help us to not just celebrate Easter dawn , but will compassionately be with us as we experience the solemnity and pain of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. May this Holy Week bring

to us the shining example of your sacrificial love and the love of God for all people. Amen.

Bill Thompson

Today's Date: March 26th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 43: 1-5

Devotion: To be servant to God is the highest ideal of those who follow the Lord Jesus and who call ourselves Christians. "Servant" was the position assumed by the Son of God throughout His life. Jesus showed through acts like washing of the disciples' feet that He was servant to all, and above all to God the Father. Isaiah, in this passage, directly foretells the coming of the Messiah by describing how God the Father might describe His son, for whose coming the world was awaiting.

Prayer: Lord, let me be your servant and, emulating your son, give the courage to demonstrate the strength of my conviction with humility and with a quiet, peaceful voice. And to think of others above myself. Amen.

Tony Nish

Today's Date: March 27th

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 49: 1-7

Devotion: The Servant's Mission. God calls Jesus from the beginning, before he was born, and made him his servant. With strong words from Jesus's mouth like a sharp sword, God gives Jesus as a light to the nations, where kings and princes shall see and prostrate themselves because the holy one of Israel was chosen.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to understand your guiding words to be the light for those around us in our community, and to be the positive change in the world that we want to see. Amen.

Fred Lee

Today's Date: March 28th

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 12: 1-3

Devotion: Following Jesus's example of modest and humble service is not an easy task. Every morning I read from a devotional. I ask God to help me to go out into my day and be an example of Jesus. Most days I fall short! I go to work and forget what I started out to do because of the business of the day. Often I am reminded by one of my students, who will call out with great compassion and enthusiasm. Although she is only six years old, her peers hear her loud and clear when she says things like, "Hey, Jesus wouldn't like that, we need to be nice to our friends and help them!" Such an innocent but powerful message from a child of God. For me it brings me back to what I intended to do for that day, which was to be an example and servant of Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Loving God, we thank you that Christ Jesus came among us as a servant. Help us today to humbly serve others in his name. Amen.

Valerie Gatz

Today's Date: March 29th

Today's Scripture: John 13: 1-17

Devotion: A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. This world isn't new to troubled times. All through the Bible we see people needing people, and yet they are blind to that fact. They don't listen, they don't see or give a smile, touch a hand, or offer a hug. These things are so very, very important. Jesus came for us to follow and learn his way. Jesus washed the disciples' feet, he set an example, he was their teacher, their master, their Lord. He told them they should wash one another's feet. We are not only to be served, but to serve one another as a sign of love and respect. The master is no higher than the servant.

Prayer: Dear God, we praise you and thank you for life and all the wonderful blessings: your love, peace, and your son the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Annette Ray

Today's Date: March 30th

Today's Scripture: Psalm 22: 1-19

Devotion: During World War II, Janusz Korczak ran an orphanage for Jewish children. He had dedicated his life to children's welfare, and treating them with respect as whole persons. When the Nazis created the Warsaw Ghetto, his orphanage was moved there and though he wasn't forced to move there with them, he refused to leave the children behind. Despite the lack of food and widespread misery in the Ghetto, Janusz fought constantly for resources to help the children any way he could. Despite the Ghetto's horrible conditions, Janusz fought so the children could maintain some semblance of normalcy. Many resistance groups offered Janusz a way out of the Ghetto, but he turned them down every time. On August 5, 1942, German soldiers came for the 192 orphans to take them to the infamous Treblinka extermination camp. Janusz, determined to soothe the children's fears and keep their spirits up, calmly told them to pack their belongings. He marched forward holding the hand of a child in each of his hands, followed by the rest of the children dressed in their finest clothes. When they were almost at their destination, an SS Officer recognized Janusz and offered him one final chance to save himself, but once again Janusz refused to leave the children, until the very end. Janusz sacrificed his own life to comfort and soothe the children. His kindness and humanity created a beacon of light in a time of cruel darkness.

Prayer: Dear God, grant me a reverent silence in the face of injustice to your children. As the painful refrain of suffering echoes across the surface of our lives, teach me to turn to you with my cries, and simply wait, and be. In the name of the Crucified Christ, amen.

Peter Kelley

Today's Date: March 31st

Today's Scripture: Job 14: 1-14

Devotion: The chains of the human condition in which we find ourselves bound from birth, illustrated in the poem we find in Job, “few of days and full of trouble,” are broken in the life and death of Christ. And while we understand these words in our heads, in our hearts we sometimes struggle with pain, fear and doubt. This struggle must have been especially true for the disciples on a day like this, when our savior was dead in the grave. In this and in other times of absence, let us follow the Marys and wait expectantly for the risen Christ to meet us.

Prayer: Love is always stronger than death, and unto that love you have now returned.

I order you, O Sleeper, to awake! I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell.

Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you.

Together we form only one person and we cannot be separated! (From An Ancient Homily on Holy Saturday, Easter Eve, in Richard Rohr's *Immortal Diamond*)

Greg Doroski

Today's date: April 1st

Today's Scripture: John 20: 1-18

Devotion: As Mary approaches the tomb where Jesus was laid, it is dark, both outside and inside the tomb, and also in her heart. She is weeping, despairing, and adding to this, when she gets there, she sees that the tomb has been opened. After seeing Jesus suffer and die on the cross, this sight is overwhelming—as we all know when we are at our lowest and we see something unexpected, we process more by instinct than intellect. Mary doesn't realize that Jesus' body hasn't been stolen. What do you see when your heart is full of sorrow and despair? Do you see the empty tomb and jump to the conclusion that might not be the correct one? Mary is so overwhelmed by a dark cloud of grief that she doesn't recognize Jesus when he comes to her to ask why she is weeping; who is she seeking? It is then and there that she sees the resurrected Jesus. Despair and sorrow turn to hope and joy. Out of the darkness comes light. Each of us in one way or another can identify with Mary's sorrow, and somewhere in the darkness we have felt, or seen, or heard Jesus call our name, reminding us that we are not alone. Following Jesus takes us ever closer to God, to new life and to exactly where we are supposed to be.

Prayer: Resurrected Lord, be my light, my hope and my salvation. Your sacrificial love always brings me hope and joy. Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you for the victory and power in your name. Jesus was raised from the grave, paving the way for us to have new life with you. Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. May we reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. Amen.

Caroline and Doug MacArthur

Lenten Hymn

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days



Lord, who throughout these forty days
for us didst fast and pray, Teach us
with Thee to mourn our sins, and close
by Thee to stay.



And through these days of penitence,
and through Thy Passiontide, yea,
evermore in life and death, O Lord,
with us abide.



Abide with us, that so, this life of
suffering over past, an Easter of
unending joy we may attain at last.



Lenten Worship Opportunities

‡ Ash Wednesday—February 14th—7:30 pm

‡ Palm Sunday—March 25th—10:00 am

‡ Maundy Thursday—March 29th—7:30 pm

‡ Good Friday—March 30th—12:30 pm

‡ Good Friday—March 30th—7:30 pm

‡ Easter Dawn Service—April 1st—Founders
Landing

‡ Easter Service—April 1st—10:00 am

Visit our website at www.fpcsouthold.org, or call or stop by the church office, to pick up a schedule for the Greenport Ecumenical Ministries Lenten services and soup luncheons, to be held on Wednesdays at 11:00 am, beginning February 28th.

“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing, but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.”

— [N.T. Wright](#)

He is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed!

