

# Lenten Devotional

NASSAU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
*Princeton, New Jersey*

2020

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*Amplified Bible (AMP)*

*Common English Bible (CEB)*

*King James Version (KJV)*

*The Message Remix, by Eugene Peterson (The Message)*

*New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE)*

*New English Translation (NET)*

*New International Version (NIV)*

*New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*

*New King James Version (NKJV)*

*J. B. Phillips New Testament (Phillips)*

*Revised Standard Version (RSV)*

The Vanderbilt Divinity Library offers an excellent online daily lectionary.  
[lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu)

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## Preface

The Season of Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, is a time to walk with Christ on his journey to the cross. This Devotional contains a scripture reference and a meditation for each day of Lent, written by a host of Nassau Church members and friends.

The scriptures are from various translations and paraphrases of the Bible, and are chosen from the Common Lectionary, which is a list of scripture readings assigned for worship to each day of the year. A complete list of lectionary texts for Lent can be found beginning on page 49.

Each author has written a personal reflection on verses they chose from the daily lectionary. You will find a short biography of each author, listed alphabetically, beginning on page 52.

You are invited to use the Devotional as a resource for individual, group, or family devotion. In addition to this printed copy, it is available electronically in several ways:

Website: <http://nassauchurch.org/worship1/daily-devotional/>

Daily Email: <http://nassauchurch.org/newsfromnassau/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nassauchurch/>

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We will experience this journey together, even as we worship silently by ourselves, day by day, step by step. Please join us!

Grace and Peace,

The Lenten Devotional Team  
Nassau Presbyterian Church  
Lent 2020

## Ash Wednesday, February 26

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (vv. 17-18 NIV)

Thomsen Lord

**T**his verse shows that religion and the worship of God is not valid if it is done with selfishness and/or spite. Sometimes people fast just to gain attention for doing it. But you also must not be worshiping the Lord in secret. When it comes to worshiping and fasting, you need to find a moderate position.

*Dear God, please forgive me for not fasting and worshiping holy or without spite. Guide me in fasting and keep me grateful for the Lord our God and help me find a good solution for problems. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.*

## Thursday, February 27

### Romans 1:1-7

Through [Jesus Christ our Lord] we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (vv. 5-6 NIV)

Bill Wakefield

**P**aul's letter says that we have received grace and apostleship from God. At Nassau I feel the grace of God in our sanctuary when I hear the choir sing a descant, when I hear the words "marked as Christ's own forever" as part of baptism or when we all wait and take the bread and cup together as "the people of God." We all exercise our apostleship in different ways. The members of the Mission and Outreach Committee witness it directly and through observation with the many organizations we support. We see it: in the thankful faces of those to whom we provide food through ArmInArm; in the words of Trenton Children's Chorus (TCC) alumni who were able to attend college through TCCs training and support; in the lives improved for our international mission partners. We are His apostles.

*Loving God, thank you for shedding your grace upon us and help us to be your apostles in our daily lives. Amen.*

## Friday, February 28

### Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions . (v. 1 NRSV)

Jim Anderson

**I**'ve read that the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) contain over 200 rules as to what believers should do or not do. Of course, we Christians do not follow many of them having to do with religious practices. However, I find the negative focus of this psalm insufficient. We humans are obviously the dominant species on earth. We have a major influence on how God's world evolves and continues. I think what we should focus on is how we can help make the world be closer to the way Jesus and God would like it to be.

*O God, we pray that you will inspire us and motivate us to live such that we, and all of your creatures, may live the lives that You want us to live. Amen.*

## Saturday, February 29

### Matthew 18:1-7

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them. (v. 2 KJV)

Cynthia Lynn Miller

**C**onjuring up images of Jesus surrounded by children and swaddling at least one on his lap – à la paintings of Christ Blessing the Little Children by various painters in history (such as Nicholaes Maes, Jacob Andries Beschey, and Jacob Willemsz de Wet the Elder) -- I am reminded of the absolute, unadulterated love abounding from Jesus for these children and vice versa. Of the love surrounding the pastoral scenes that must have presented whenever Jesus stepped into a village or, even, along his journey. There is nothing like the love of a child, and, to take that a step further, whenever we look at our children – whether healthy or hurt, playing or studiously completing homework, eating dinner or just doing absolutely nothing but being a child, we are reminded that God's love – Jesus's love – comes to us through a child's eyes. Jesus embraced the tallest to the smallest, and we want to ensure to remember our own time as children...those paintings of Jesus with children and sheep in the garden, of His loving eyes looking at us, telling each of us that we are the most special person in the world to Him. And, on this Leap Day – that in itself is a special day in four-year increments – we need to feel His love more than ever.

*O God, and to Your Son, Jesus Christ, please help us to remember the giving love of children, and please help us to remember that unconditional love comes from You. Amen.*



## First Sunday, March 1

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. (3:6 NIV)

Jade Hage

**I** study Genesis with my high school students. To them, Eve's choice is easy. Obviously it's better to know more. God is just being selfish.

What about us? How would we counsel Eve in her decision? Living in a town shaded by the halls of celebrated institutions of learning, where every purse, pocket, and palm holds a phone with endless intelligence, where you're hard-pressed to find a neighbor without an alphabet of letters after their name, we might push Eve out of the way and reach for the fruit ourselves.

But knowledge is not what Eve was after. "The fruit was...desirable for gaining wisdom," and that's what persuaded her. Over and over God's word teaches that wisdom is a gift. But Eve's choice, maybe our choice too, mistakes knowledge for wisdom. We think if we know more we will be better equipped to face the world, better able to discern truth and know what is right.

All that knowledge of good and evil is overwhelming, though. The cacophony of voices bidding to share their truth or chip in their two cents distracts from the "still small voice". The Psalmist writes "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." No apple, no matter how juicy it looks, or how many camera lenses it has, can satisfy our desire for wisdom. For that we have to go straight to the source.

*Lord God, you created us and our curiosity too. When you knit together our flesh and bones, you wove a longing for wisdom in our hearts as well. Help us to know you. Grant us the wisdom we need to make sense of the infinite knowledge that fills our world. Amen.*

## Monday, March 2

### Psalm 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit. (vv. 1-2 NRSV)

Many are the torments of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart. (vv. 10-11 NRSV)

Karen Barrows

**I** confess, I had to research the meaning of this Psalm online—forgive me. Whew, I feel better already. See, that’s the healing power of confession.

All kidding aside, the cycle of confession, forgiveness and rejoicing in God’s love is at the heart of our spiritual practice. The Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness, followed by a Response of Praise when we sing to glorify God, is built into every service at Nassau Church.

Self-examination and honestly admitting our faults through prayer opens the door to God’s mercy and renews our spirit. Remember, Jesus himself was the ultimate model of forgiveness. When God forgives us, it then frees us to forgive ourselves, to see how we could do better, and to forgive others and see the value and humanity in every person. The grace bestowed by God is cause for rejoicing and song indeed!

*Dear Lord, we have damaged our precious planet, and we fail to love our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us. Open our eyes to the injustices surrounding us and show us how we can live closer to Jesus’s example. Thank you for your steadfast love and mercy as we pray in Christ’s name. Amen.*

## Tuesday, March 3

### Psalm 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit (vv. 1-2 NRSV)

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you. (v. 8 NRSV)

Barbara Broad

**O**ver the last century I have admitted to many transgressions, but I have also experienced the joy of forgiveness as expressed in Psalm 32.

The whole point of living is not to try to hide our sins, but to know God's eye is always upon us and will forgive us.

We are always connected, protected and surrounded by the Lord's steadfast love!

*Thank you Lord for the assurance of your promise to instruct, teach and counsel the way I should live. Amen*

## Wednesday, March 4

### Psalm 32

Many are the torments of the wicked  
 but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.  
 (v. 10 NRSV)

God affirmers find themselves loved every time they tum around.  
 (v. 10 The Message)

Nancy Prince

**I** write this meditation in November anticipating the beginning of Lent in March. I like the reality that this period of observance is supported by Sunday worship services, thoughtful personal study, liturgical practices, and small group study participation. Lent is nearly free from commercial promotion. I appreciate the small group study experience. The small group becomes an opportunity for me to widen my circle of friends and to become known in a more complete way.

I cherish being able to be part of this faith community. I am reminded of the song, “Jesus, we are here. We are here for you.” I feel abundant gratitude that I am able to come to church to worship God, to learn about the life and ministry of Jesus and to feel the saving love that nourishes my spirituality. I feel so grateful for the steadfast love and interest that surrounds me every time I come into this beloved sacred and spiritual space.

*Most loving God, thank you for your awesome and abundant unconditional love. Help us to do your will and show your love to all whom we meet each and every day. Amen.*

## Thursday, March 5

### Isaiah 51:1-3

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn,  
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you;  
for he was but one when I called him,  
but I blessed him and made him many.

For the LORD will comfort Zion;  
he will comfort all her waste places,  
and will make her wilderness like Eden,  
her desert like the garden of the LORD;  
joy and gladness will be found in her,  
thanksgiving and the voice of song. (vv. 1-3 NRSV)

Trevor Thornton

If you want things to be right in the world, listen up!

Look to the pillars of the faith.

Look to Jesus; he was just one man, but he changed history.

God will make things right one day;

all those dry spots in your lawn will be as green as Eden,  
all your grumpy neighbors will sing happy songs.

**I**t strikes me that we were all hewn from different stones of faith. Me from my mother, and her from my grandfather. Each of us has a long line of stepping stones leading back to Christ. When you take a close look at those stones, at their blemishes and cracks, I hope you will find comfort in their imperfections. Abraham's lies about Sarah being his sister did not prevent God from forming a nation from their offspring. Perhaps our own personal or societal sins will not prevent God from righting wrongs through us, in kind.

As we prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter, let us consider Jesus, the Cornerstone of our spiritual house. What wasted places would he comfort in our communities? What would he see in our world that would set his heart on fire or cause him to weep?

*Let us reflect your heart in this world, Jesus. Amen.*

## Friday, March 6

### Micah 7:18-20

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and unswerving loyalty to Abraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors from the days of old. (vv. 18-20 NRSV)

Mark Herr

**M**eet Micah. Micah the Morashtite. Minor prophet, scold, denouncer of Israelites, kings and cities, a real biblical destruction kind of guy – he’s looking at you, Jerusalem and Samaria – the guy you get stuck talking to at parties and you want to gnaw your ankle off to get away from.

The “I will make Samaria a heap of rubble” Micah. The “Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble” Micah. The “I am planning a disaster against the people” Micah. That guy. That Micah.

But just when you’re getting ready to duck the brimstone; when you’re clearing customs for Sheol, Micah throws you a curve: “Delights in showing clemency?” Where did that “disaster” go? “Compassion?” In the heaps of rubble of Samaria and Jerusalem? “Pardoning iniquity?” For the same people “who tear the flesh off my people”? Stop the presses. What’s this all about?

Micah has just delivered the salvation mulligan. On this day in Lent, Micah shouts to us that as bad as our iniquities are, as much as we deserve to be denounced and damned, God has compassion for us. He loves us like he loved Jacob and Abraham. He loves us so much that has sent his only begotten Son to die and rise for us, to tread our sins under foot and cast them away.

Micah, come back. All is forgiven.

*Almighty God, our God in ages past, our hope in years to come, walk with us this Lenten season. Strengthen us as we ponder our frailties, embolden us as we contemplate Gethsemane and Golgotha. Enrapture us as we discover Easter salvation. Amen.*

## Saturday, March 7

### Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from? (v. 1 NIV)

Natalie Shelpuk

**O**ne of the many magnificent moments in Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah" is one of the quietest. Waiting for God while in hiding on Mount Horeb, Elijah is longing for death...and he hasn't even faced the wild winds, quaking earth, and fierce fire coming next. Mendelssohn uses Psalm 121:1 to show a shift in Elijah's mindset. A trio of angels encourage him: "Lift thine eyes, O lift thine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh help."

It's hard to look up when the weight of our own world contorts the body in unrelenting pain. It's hard to look up when life experiences are littered more with sadness than lifted with gladness. It's hard to look up when our thoughts are buried under litanies of horror streamed 24/7. While wandering among these and other mountains of darkness and disappointment with head down, we can convince ourselves that God has forgotten us.

God hasn't. Lift your eyes, lift your head, roll your shoulders back, lift your chest, stack your spine, and align your hips, your knees, your ankles. Then, look UP. Physically aligning the body and actually looking up opens the body and invites wonder. With eyes aloft and body ready to move, we are positioned to take God's next step for us and reach for the promised help and support. All by just looking up.

*Dear Lord, help us shift our frame of mind and be willing to lift up our eyes. Be present with us through the smile of a stranger, the caress of a soft breeze, or an unexpected melody. Help us be still enough to know from where our help comes. Amen.*

## Second Sunday, March 8

### Genesis 12:1-4a

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."

(v. 1 NRSV)

David Mulford

**G**od called Abram and his wife, Sarai, to leave the familiar and venture forth to a great task which God had for them to do, and they responded.

The call of God to individuals and groups appears often in both the Old and New Testaments. God calls and God's people respond in a leap of faith. We often speak of a call to a particular vocation: a call to establish some program to meet a special need, a call to speak out in protest when we discover lies being spread and the rights of some of God's creatures being violated.

But never forget the call that should come to us every day to embody the love of God in all that we do and say. These acts are never done to earn God's love, for God already loves us. Rather they are done as expressions of gratitude for that love. The prophet Micah's words should serve as a road map for our daily journey. "What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." What specifically is God calling you to do today?

*Here I am, Lord, one of your children sustained by your love and open to your guidance. Help me to respond by the words I speak and the actions I take. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



## Monday, March 9

Psalm 128

Numbers 21:4-9

Hebrews 3:1-6

The LORD bless you from Zion.

May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem

all the days of your life. (Psalm 128:5 NRSV)

Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live. (Numbers 21:9 NRSV)

Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and pride that belong to hope. (Hebrews 3:6 NRSV)

Claire Mulry

**D**aily, serpents nip at our heels as we walk through our world. We are often frustrated, fearful and angry at God as we trudge our paths. How can we be led here and not feel abandoned as we face the challenges at work, on the news, and around the world? Why are we called to walk with and in faith yet witness deceit and evil all around us? Today's Bible verses remind us, we are blessed, the prosperity of Jerusalem is our inheritance. God protects us and steels us against the serpents if we trust God. All we must do is hold fast, trust, and live in hope.

*Lord, help us to live in confidence and hope as you protect us as we walk each and every day. Amen.*

## Tuesday, March 10

### Romans 4:6-13

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (v. 13 NIV)

Benjamin Yeh

**A**ll my life I've been trained to work diligently, to be well prepared, to strive for things worthy of achieving. But, the achievement of something worthy has been usually soon disillusioned, creating yet a new void to be filled in. The bar has been set higher and higher, but not necessarily promises happiness or satisfaction. Deep down, I know this drive implies fear — fear to lag behind, fear to miss something, fear to go against the law — you know, the law of cause and effect.

God's grace, on the other hand, has been so against gravity! A free gift for doing nothing but faith? And for a sinner like me? It took me tremendous courage to believe that! Like the meditation before the Zip-Line: Do I just jump and believe these suspicious gears would carry me through to the other point? Really?

But, oh yeah, only when I released my fear and embraced the faith did I experience the ecstasy of zipping through the blue sky — the freedom, the redemption and the forever one-ness with God!

*Dear God, please grant me enough patience to endure, enough craziness to dream, and enough simplicity to have faith. Amen.*

## Wednesday, March 11

John 7:53-8:11

And when they heard what he said, they were convicted by their own consciences and went out, one by one, beginning with the eldest until they had all gone. (v. 9a Phillips)

“Where are they all – did no one condemn you?” And she said, “No one, sir.” “Neither do I condemn you,” said Jesus to her. “Go home and do not sin again.” (vv. 10b -11 Phillips)

Keith Mertz

**F**ollowing Palm Sunday, Jesus is teaching in the Temple. A group of Scribes and Pharisees attempt to entrap Him. The scholars ask if they should carry out a stoning as prescribed in the Law. If Jesus supports the stoning, he will lose admiration from the commoners in the crowd. If he opposes carrying out the Law, he will be condemned by the religious scholars.

Jesus refuses to condemn the woman, forces the accusers to dissipate on their own, and raises some deep philosophical issues of justice and judgement: if only sinless persons can enforce the law, then how can a society enforce its common laws and morals?

Lenten practice encourages us to think about our lives and our sin, our thoughts and actions that separate us from God. Self-examination, self-awareness is an important discipline through which Christians hone their conscience to guide our attempts to “not sin again”. However, we should not wallow in the darker aspects of this discipline, instead we should practice in the knowledge that Jesus does not condemn us.

Jesus is risen and his Easter gives us the freedom to be human, to sin and not be condemned, to learn from our mistakes and to grow into the persons God wants us to be.

*God, send the Holy Spirit to inform and inspire my conscience and to guide me to the full life you have given me. Help me show the love of Jesus to all around me. Amen.*

## Thursday, March 12

Psalm 95  
Colossians 1:15-23

Let us come before Him with thanks. (Psalm 95:2 CEB)

The Son is the image of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15 CEB)

David Boyd

**O**n Saturday, March 14, Princeton celebrates “Pi Day” (3.14), the birthday of Albert Einstein – the discoverer of Relativity, the articulator of the “Space-Time Continuum”, and the explainer of the Force of Gravity: Mass distorts the Space-Time Continuum, and distortion of the Space-Time Continuum sets mass in motion. The Force of Gravity extends throughout the universe, travels at the speed of light, acts on every particle in proportion to its mass, and is totally unimpeded and unthwarted. It connects everything.

Let us love each other, because love is from God ... God is love!”

(1 John 4:7-8 CEB)

Just so, God – the Force and Total Embodiment of Love – extends throughout the universe, pervasively and immutably touching every sentient being, binding us all together in proportion to our capacity to give and to receive Love. That powerful bond of Love manifests itself as ministry to our fellow beings. The Image of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Let that Image show forth love and service until that ministry, finally, shapes in our brain and heart.

*We are grateful for all that we have been given, awed by the legacy entrusted to us, and humbled by our responsibility to be stewards of that legacy. We are mindful that, just as Jesus was the Son of the invisible God, we are all children of that same God. We rejoice that God is Love, and that, in the image of God, all beings are interconnected by the bond of love. Amen.*

## Friday, March 13

### Exodus 16:9-21

“I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. (vv. 12-15 NRSV)

Henry Behnke

**G**od hears our prayers and answers them, perhaps not in the manner we expect. Certainly God knew the Israelites would need food during their journey in the wilderness. Why did they have to ask for so basic a need? Was God providing additional demonstrations of power and might or simply helping the Israelites to further develop their faith in a God that would ultimately lead them to the Promised Land? It is worth noting God commanded that the Israelites collect no more than necessary for one day’s needs and any surplus collected spoiled! Possibly an early lesson about sustainability and that needs are far less than wants!

*Dear Lord, help us to know what we truly need to ask for in prayer. Show us the difference between our wants and needs and remind us to pray for the needs of those all around us with far less than we already have. Amen.*

## Saturday, March 14

### Ephesians 2:11-22

For Christ is our peace ... and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. (v. 14 NRSV)

Jonathan Shenk

**J**esus, as he walked the earth, was a barrier breaker, a wall dismantler. He spoke to the harmful futility of the barriers we erect between us and God and between one another. A wall can be anything that prevents us from being at peace with one another. It can be a wall of misunderstanding, a wall of arrogance, or a wall of isolation and fear.

Jesus embodied God's first and final word, that no barrier can prevent us from finding our welcome and our peace in God. God has declared a cessation of all hostilities. It is up to us to embody that word through our lives and actions, and to pray alongside St. Francis of Assisi, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

Yes, Christ has broken down the dividing wall, the hostility between us. And yet the bricks are lying all around us, and the enemies of God's peace abound. It might seem like a good idea to gather the bricks together and rebuild the walls anew. However, God is not in the wall-building business; God is in the wall-dismantling business. As Martin Luther King, Jr. aptly stated, "Love is the only force capable of turning an enemy into a friend."

*God of love and transformation, fuel the fire in our souls so that we might claim a world where the dividing wall of hostility between us has been forever dismantled, and live in the power of love triumphant. Amen.*

## Third Sunday, March 15

### Romans 5:1-11

And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

(v. 5 NRSV)

Holley Barreto

Am I a vessel,  
     a cup,  
         a vehicle  
             solely for the Lord?

One to be filled  
     to the brim  
         with God's  
             goodness and fullness and holiness?

Is the whole of  
     my life,  
         my being,  
             me

To receive  
     those blessings which  
         God  
             graciously pours into me?

What is the purpose of a vessel that only holds?  
 The meaning of a cup that does not allow others to drink from it?  
 The good of a vehicle whose contents are hoarded?

Love streams  
     peace cascades  
         hope floods

Into me  
     and through me and  
         out of me.

Filled to the brim with the Lord, yes.  
 And overflowing.

*Gracious God, thank you for your gifts of love, hope, peace. Help me to share those gifts abundantly with those around me. Amen.*

## Monday, March 16

### 2 John 1:1-13

Now, dear friends, I am requesting that we love each other. It's not as though I'm writing a new command to you, but it's one we have had from the beginning. (v. 5 CEB)

Kim Kleasen

**T**he elder, in speaking these words, is seeking to unify the congregation around a foundation of faith – the reminder that we live according to the command to love each other. Further, the elder reminds the congregants' that this is not a new command, but is the one that has existed from the beginning. This reminder, while elegant in its simplicity, requires a reminder or a repetition for us, just as the elder reminded the faithful centuries ago. Loving each other requires that we form a daily practice of loving each other in the footsteps of Jesus. Simple, yet challenging. Our daily lives overflow with distractions that keep us from living into this command, and those distractions are unlikely to disappear. Therefore, it becomes our challenge to form a daily practice, one that will serve to support each of us to live into this command. Our opportunity today is to reflect and pray on and then form a daily practice that will keep each of us centered on living into the command to love each other. Prayer, song, art, meditation, walks with God, Bible reading and reflection – all are examples of practices that, when done daily and with intention to the Spirit can support our journey to love each other. Our individual practices are also part of our corporate, faith community at Nassau Church. Sharing your practice with others, seeking support from others and learning from others how they live into this command will not only strengthen your faith, but will strengthen our whole community. This week, begin to form or rededicate yourself to a daily practice, work to love each other and come to worship next Sunday with the joy and resolve that, together, we are building a better world in the image of God and Jesus Christ.

*Dear God, I do so desire to love others in the manner of Jesus. I seek to translate my desire into my daily practice of <name your practice here> and ask your guidance as I work to create the world that you have envisioned. Amen.*



## Tuesday, March 17

### 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. (v. 1 NIV)

Jay Dunn

**I**n the 1850s the life of a crewman aboard an American clipper ship was miserable. Men were required to work long hours for little pay or, frequently, no pay at all. They were malnourished and severely flogged if they didn't measure up. During storms sails had to be re-set, a chore that required the men to climb rope ladders and walk along beams while the vessel was swaying in the wind and rough sea. Fatal accidents were common.

Yet two of the men who owned these vessels regarded themselves as very devout Presbyterians and bitterly denounced slavery in the American South as un-Christian. It apparently never occurred to them that they were fostering inhumane activities that were as bad as or worse than those of the plantation masters.

As a nation and as a faith, we are descended from these people. It is our duty as Christians, as it was theirs, to seek to remedy social injustice where it exists. But we will probably fail if we insist that others reform while we turn a blind eye to our own shortcomings.

*Father, help us to live in a clean spiritual house first before we go forth to insist on your will elsewhere. Amen.*

## Wednesday, March 18

### Jeremiah 2:4-13

This is what the LORD says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. They did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and ravines, a land of drought and utter darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?’”  
(vv. 5-6 NIV)

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and they have dug their own cisterns, these broken cisterns cannot hold water.” (v. 13 NIV)

Val Mathews

**J**eremiah, in his enthusiastic rant, assumes to speak for the Jewish people’s God during the time when Babylon replaced Assyria as dominant power; many Jews from the northern kingdom of Israel were still in exile. To make matters worse, Judah, the southern kingdom, suffered under a series of “bad kings” until King Josiah came to power.

Jeremiah complained that the people were motivated by foolish hearts that believed that “worthless things” (idols) and “broken water containers” were more desirable than Yahweh, “the spring of living water”.

Perhaps we should not be surprised that the people who heard Jeremiah were stressed, stressed from a combination of a foreign power controlling their northern kingdom and their own incompetent rulers. The movement toward idol worship is more a symptom of the problem.

The problem is foolish hearts that believe in something that has no substance.

*Lord, in midst of all the noise, grant us abilities to hear and understand your messages and then grant us courage to act responsibly and in faith. Amen.*

## Thursday, March 19

### Ephesians 4:25-32

Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted. (v. 30 The Message)

Lois Foley

**L**ife is all about relationships, some closer and more profound than others. The thing about life, though, is that it is ever-changing and sometimes those relationships that we hold the most dear, evolve into something unexpected or even end altogether. A constant, someone who touches our lives on a regular basis and becomes the focal point of our world, can be taken from us suddenly and we feel lost. So it has been for me since the shocking death of my husband at age 62 on August 20, 2019, following a six-month battle with acute myeloid leukemia. The loss of this relationship has caused me profound grief, heartbreak and loneliness. Many family members and friends have lovingly surrounded myself and my children, and for that I am eternally grateful. Even so, life is forever changed for us.

In reading the Ephesians passage, this verse touched my heart. What a realization to understand that God suffers true grief constantly when we separate ourselves from the intimate relationship he is open to and desires to experience with all. How often do we fail to value such a wonderful gift in our busy, self-absorbed lives - placing relationships with others, our careers, and yes, our phones, above God? We take our relationship with Him for granted, we all do it. We get so tied up in our own selves that we fail to realize that we are neglecting the most important relationship that we will ever have. A love freely given, unconditional and unwavering.

Maintaining our connection with the One who will never have a change of heart, will never move away, never leave us and will never die should take precedence in all of our lives. If you've lost it, find it. If you've never had it, seek it. He's waiting with open arms.

*Lord, thank you for your never ending love. Help us to accept it, to recognize the relationship offered by you and to hold it in place of importance in our lives. Amen*

## Friday, March 20

### Ephesians 5: 1–9

Walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ... For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) (vv. 2, 8-9 NIV)

Debbie Tegarden

**I**magine a sunny late-summer market-day in first-century Ephesus. As I stroll along the aisles of luscious, fragrant fruits, I give thanks freely to God for His bounty and generosity, His unfathomable grace. I carry a basket and I will buy pears for tonight's meal. My little marketing list is unexpectedly stern, assuming some rigid dietary restrictions. I tick off items:

- No impurity [check]
- No idolatry [check]
- No obscenity [check]
- No levity [sigh]

From the market stalls, the ripening pears smell heavenly. I have traveled from a dark place into this dappled light; may I pick up a pear to feel its flesh and test its firmness?

I discover I have a companion. She is my faith—my elusive friend, my vestigial twin. Her basket is already full! She takes my hand and we head toward home singing. There will be a feast tonight. We will throw open our doors and windows, and the fragrance will bring everyone to the table.

*Dear, patient, and beautiful Jesus, please make me ever grateful for your love that rushes through these shadowy corridors in my heart, and for the joy of throwing open doors to light and sustenance. You, Christ, are the fruit whose beauty outshines our shame and fills each basket with what is good and right and true. There will be feasting tonight, because Christ, the fragrant sacrifice, has come to our table. Amen.*

## Saturday, March 21

### Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
     he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
 He restoreth my soul:  
     he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness  
     for his name's sake.  
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
     I will fear no evil:  
     for thou art with me;  
     thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
 Thou preparest a table before me  
     in the presence of mine enemies:  
     thou anointest my head with oil;  
     my cup runneth over.  
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
     all the days of my life:  
     and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (KJV)

Lina Genovesi

**R**eliance on the Lord is fundamental to our Christian beliefs. The Lord will guide us through the hard times, and will give us the strength and courage that we need to face the trials and tribulations of human living. Because of our reliance on Him, a promise is made to us that that goodness and mercy will be bestowed upon us.

This verse tests our ability to believe and to surrender to the will of the Lord as He knows best what is good for us and He will guide to take the right actions and make the right decisions to get through the hard times.

*Dear Lord, give me the strength to surrender to Your will as You know what is best for me and that all will turn out as it should be. Amen.*

## Fourth Sunday, March 22

### Psalm 23

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
 I will fear no evil:  
 for thou art with me;  
 thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (v. 4 KJV)

Marsha Smith

**T**he 23rd Psalm is the most familiar, most memorized and most illustrated of all the Psalms. I am always reminded of this Psalm when I visit Grasmere Valley in the English Lake District. Each spring flocks of sheep and newborn lambs fill the green fields along the lakeside. But when clouds roll into the valley the sunlit scene is quickly changed to a landscape in shadow.

While darkness is correctly understood as the absence of light, the presence of light is necessary for a shadow to appear. A shadow forms when any object comes between the light source and the observer. The shadow is not that object but the result of the object's presence, and the shadow disappears with the passage of the object. The light then reappears.

As we walk our journey of faith, shadows cross our paths -  
 The **SHADOW** of doubt...  
 The **SHADOW** of failure...  
 The **SHADOW** of illness...  
 The **SHADOW** of loss...  
 The **SHADOW** of...  
 The **SHADOW** of...

These shadows also cause anxiety and fear. Our ancestors experienced great fear when the moon blocked the sun and cast its shadow upon the earth during a solar eclipse. With our modern understanding we do not fear this daytime darkness, but marvel at the celestial motions of sun, moon and earth. The Psalmist likewise expresses his confidence in the nearness of light in shadowed times - "I will fear no evil for thou art with me"

*Lord of Light, when shadows cross our paths remind us that the light of your presence is always with us. Amen*

## Monday, March 23

### Acts 9:1-20

Instantly, flakes fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. After eating, he regained his strength. (vv. 18-19 CEB)

Anne Thomsen Lord

**W**hen my husband was a graduate student, he'd often get so involved in his work, he'd realize it was the middle of the afternoon, and he hadn't eaten lunch. He'd come home on edge and be visibly annoyed by the delay his hunger caused. He eventually learned that putting off eating causes more harm than good. Years later, he still doesn't pack a lunch, but he keeps a stash of almonds in his bag.

After Saul's eyes were opened, he had loftier goals than writing a great dissertation. Yet, before he can establish churches and preach to the world, Saul must eat. Despite being filled with the Holy Spirit, his belly remained empty.

No matter how important we think what we're doing is, we must remember to pause and take care of our basic needs: eat, drink, sleep. Regain your strength.

*Dear God, thank you for giving us bodies and minds that can accomplish so much. Guide us in mindful care of our physical selves so we may serve you and our world the best we can. Amen.*

## Tuesday, March 24

### Colossians 1:9-14

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. (v. 11 RSV 1952 – my childhood Bible)

Penn Bowditch

**R**aised a Christian by two loving, trusting parents in a small town, I learned from myriad mistakes, bruises, stitches, arguments, and discovery. In church and at home, I was taught that if I worked hard, was honest, and placed my trust in God, I could succeed and accomplish anything – “May you be strengthened with all power.”

My grandmother lived in Vermont, and because I loved to ski, I spent a great deal of time with her. Grandma B also believed that hard work led to success. Moreover, she believed that only by helping and loving humanity could you experience God, through His powerful love. This same verse in Gramma’s Bible (1901) reads “Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power.”

I have learned the importance of resilience, honesty, community and diversity by trusting in Jesus Christ. It is imperative to remember who really has the “power.”

*Dear God, please rest your gentle hand on all people of this precious earth that You alone have created. Help us express Your Love through acceptance, understanding and a desire to work together. Amen.*



## Wednesday, March 25

### Isaiah 60:17-22

The sun will no more be your light by day,  
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory. (v. 19 NIV)

Rachel & Sarah Berliner

**H**ow bright are the sun and the moon? The sun lights up the whole world during the day and the moon lights up the land during the night. This verse says God is brighter than the sun and the moon. In His bright light, His provisions are endless: light, strength, love, peace, shelter, resources, protection, guidance and much more. This makes His light the greatest light of all, and that means the greatest light of all is His glory, which becomes our glory. God share His light with us and it is our job as children of the Lord to share it with people and in the world around us however we can. This is what Jesus did.

What is an example of this? Not too long ago, one of us got pushed off the monkey bars at school and was left with piercing pain in her arm. Not fun! Where was God? How did His light shine greater than the sun and the moon? Where was His glory? He was there the whole time. First, there was no delay in getting into the orthopedic office to see the specialist. Second, the most kind and skilled doctor and nurse treated the arm. Third, the arm was found not broken, but a bone bruise. It was hard to write, tie shoes, carry a backpack, etc. for a short time but there were plenty of friends to help.

God's light came through!

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your strength and your light.  
Help us to spread your love throughout the world, like Jesus. Amen.*

## Thursday, March 26

### Psalm 130

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the LORD  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning. (vv. 5-6 NRSV)

Josie Brothers

**S**unrises have always provided me with a sense of safety and hope. They are inevitable.

Each day, they offer us a new beginning with bright, dazzling colors. In my lifetime, I have viewed some of the most beautiful sunrises while flying on a plane. There is something so serene, so spectacular, about being surrounded and engulfed by clouds of red and purple rays. I think of each sunrise as a reminder of God's endless love. God's promise is forever and He brings us new life each and every morning.

There are times, however, when I overlook God's promise. I want a tangible and strong sign that God is with me and my prayers are being fulfilled. Still, it is important to remember that God is patient. While our souls long for our prayers to be answered, God shows He has a plan with every morning He forms and with every sunrise He paints.

*Heavenly Father, may you fill our hearts every morning with the brightest colors of love, joy, and purpose in this world. Amen.*

## Friday, March 27

### Psalm 130

O Israel, hope in the LORD!

For with the LORD there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.

It is he who will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities. (vv. 7-8 NRSV)

Julia Hill

**E**ntering high school and continuing it this year, I realized I had to hope a lot and trust a lot that everything would work out. And so much of that hope was put into our Lord God, because I knew he had the power to keep things in line for me to have a smooth sailing sophomore year. Not only does God's steadfast love and trust apply to academics, but also in life generally. We have so many iniquities that we sometimes doubt that God will ever redeem us. But we have to remember that he loves us and that that is what will save us in the end. This idea that no matter what happens during our day, our week, our month, or even our year, God will always be there for us, to redeem and forgive!

*Lord God, thank you for always having the willingness to forgive us when we act in sinful ways and disobey your commandments! We love you, Lord and we are so proud and honored to be called children of God! Thank you for showing us steadfast love and forgiveness this year and all years to come! Amen.*

## Saturday, March 28

Luke 24:44-53

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (vv. 45-47 NRSV)

Jim Moorhead

**S**ometime in third or fourth grade, my teacher told the class, more as rebuke than encouragement, that we should read the Bible. God expected us to do so, she warned. Her scolding illustrated how religion slipped into public education in my small southern Ohio town in the late 1950s. Feeling under orders, I later opened a hefty King James Bible and placed it on my lap. Slogging through the Old Testament, I found myself alternately fascinated, puzzled, and scared. I needed someone to open my mind to understand the scriptures. But that necessity is not limited to elementary school children; it is shared by all of us at every stage of life. As we read scripture, we experience a cascade of emotions. Sometimes we are spellbound and inspired, but often we are unsure what it all means for our lives. And yes, even adults are sometimes frightened, for we know that we cannot fully live up to the commands we encounter in the Bible. It is when we see and hear the Risen Christ, with his message of repentance and forgiveness proclaimed to all, that our minds are truly opened to understand the scriptures.

*Holy God, by the power of your Spirit may the Risen Christ open to us the scriptures that we may find therein the liberating word of your grace. Amen.*

## Fifth Sunday, March 29

John 11:1-45

The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” Jesus answered “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of the world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” – vv. 8-10 (NRSV)

Frances Katrishen

**J**esus is going to Judea to raise Lazarus, for God’s glory, and for Jesus to be glorified through it (John 11: 4). The disciples are afraid. They only see the danger of their present situation and in the future. Jesus, instead, was focused on serving God and his friend Lazarus. Often, I am afraid like the disciples and I can only see great darkness in our world. My fears subside, however, when I focus on God or serving others.

Recently I focus on God by following the Celtic spiritual practice of communicating with God in nature. I often walk near the end of daylight on wooded paths. In one prayer, I focus on the light of God. Even after sunset, when the direct light of the sun is not visible, I notice brilliant light reflected on clouds, on leaves or water. Then, I feel confident on my path, with God guiding me, even when there is darkness in many places around me.

This biblical passage reminds me that God’s light and glory were in Jesus. It is also reflected in each of us when, instead of focusing on our fears, we walk in the light on God’s path.

*Send out your light, send out your truth, to be my guide. Amen.*

(This is the prayer I say when I walk, adapted from Psalm 43:3.)

## Monday, March 30

Acts 20:7-12

A youth named Eutychus, who was sitting on the window-ledge, grew more and more sleepy as Paul went on talking. (v. 9 NEB)

Jack Smiley

### *On Falling Asleep in Church*

**P**oor Eutychus! His only claim to fame was that he fell asleep in church. We are sorry for him, that he fell asleep and fell to the ground outside. But more so, we feel sadness for the treasures he may have missed. What he missed was the possibility of a divine touch upon his heart and mind and soul. He missed the very special happening of hearing God speak to him words of hope and courage and confidence and comfort and peace. He missed the chance of something new happening to him, something which would give him a new vision, a new vitality, a new insight, a new direction for his life. Most of all, when he fell asleep, he missed the sense of God's presence, which comes to a person in a marvelous way in worship.

And that's what we miss also if we fall asleep in God's presence. We are kin to Eutychus when we permit our worship to become sterile and automatic, when we go through the motions of worship, saying the right words, praying the right prayers, singing the right hymns - all that without putting ourselves into a personal encounter with our God. And so, when we fall asleep to God's presence we do not find our true self, which is so easy for us to lose in this hectic world.

So in our Lenten worship, we open ourselves for God's graceful presence, which will guarantee God's power and peace and love for our life.

But, poor Eutychus! He missed it all because he fell asleep in church.

*Our gracious God, as we worship through our Lenten season, may we stay focused and not miss your presence and loving touch: and may there be love in our hearts and peace in the world. Amen.*

## Tuesday, March 31

### Psalm 143

Make haste to answer me, O LORD!

My spirit fails!

Hide not thy face from me,

lest I be like those that go down to the Pit.

Let me hear in the morning of thy steadfast love,

for in thee I put my trust. (vv. 7-8 RSV)

Susan Smiley

**A**fter reading this psalm the first time, I did not know if I could apply it to my own life. I have no personal enemy that threatens my life to such an extent that I would impose upon God for immediate intervention with such importunity. After a second reading, and by thinking of any enemy to God as an enemy of mine, it became immediately relevant. Like many, I feel threatened by the imminent danger of climate change. Enemies to God's creation are those who would stand in the way of implementing solutions, and ourselves if we are not willing to make necessary changes. So, like the psalmist, I too am moved to beseech God to act quickly.

This psalmist would have God destroy those who threaten him, but we have the new covenant through Jesus to prepare us for solutions that would, with love and good spirit, change the hearts and minds of a generation heading for the precipice. But without a clear path to follow I fear that an overwhelming sense of doom and futility will drag me into a pit of despondency and inaction. So, I throw up my hands to an all-knowing God for guidance. I want to join in the effort to save the planet, but if it is true that time is running out, there is no time for counter-productive strategies. During Lent I will maintain the psalmist's urgent call with faith in the righteousness of God and hopes that S(He) will work through me and set me on an effective course.

*Dear Lord, may I have the presence of mind to hear your call, and if it comes as soon as the morning - I will be ready. Amen.*

## Wednesday, April 1

### Psalm 143

In the morning let me hear of your mercy,  
for in you I trust.  
Show me the path I should walk,  
for I entrust my life to you.  
Rescue me, LORD, from my foes,  
for I seek rescue in you.  
Teach me to do your will,  
for you are my God.  
May your kind spirit guide me  
on ground that is level. (vv. 8-10 NABRE)

Rob Duffy

**T**he psalm is telling me to place my trust in the Lord, asking God to lead me wherever God sees fit. I have to be honest, this is extremely challenging for me. As a type-A personality, saying that I enjoy controlling all aspects of my life is an understatement. Despite this, there are many times when it's clear that my fate is not in my hands. It is at these times I'm most uncomfortable and worry. Will I get that new job? Will I need to move far away? Can I list all potential outcomes?

It's comforting to know I'm not the only one, for the psalmist says in verse 7, "Hasten to answer me, LORD; for my spirit fails me. Do not hide your face from me, lest I become like those descending to the pit."

Despite feeling helpless in these situations, I have gained a lot from them; sometimes a completely different outcome or sometimes better insight and wisdom.

*Lord, teach me to trust you fully and allow me to be comfortable with the plan you have for my life. Amen.*



## Thursday, April 2

### Psalm 31:9-16

But I trust in you, LORD;  
I say, "You are my God." (v. 14 NIV)

Monisha Pulimood

**E**very time I read a lament psalm I am struck by the lack of inhibition with which the psalmist pours out his despair to God. He does not hold back on expressing his feelings of persecution, grief, guilt, or brokenness. In Psalm 31, rather than continuing to wallow in his misery, the psalmist turns to God with complete trust, and submits his troubles into God's hands. To him God is not a distant entity watching from the highest heavens, in front of whom he has to show strength and confidence. On the contrary, God is a very present figure, in whose "unfailing love" the psalmist can trust wholeheartedly. He claims God as his own, in a very personal way.

Our society places great emphasis on individual success and being the victor on one's chosen battlefield, whether it is the sports arena or the classroom or the boardroom or a health crisis. Depending on anyone else, even God, is seen as a sign of weakness. Yet as Christians we are called to "not conform to the pattern of this world" (Romans 12:2). When we are faced with problems, do we have the courage to implicitly trust God like the psalmist did? Can we let go of our need to control the process and the outcomes, but instead claim God's unfailing love, and hand our "times" over to God? Can we let go and let God?

*Dear God, thank You for the reminder that like the psalmist we too can trust you and your unfailing love. Help us to let go of our need to be in control and to hand over our worries to you. Amen.*

## Friday, April 3

### Psalm 31:9-16

Make Your face shine upon Your servant;  
Save me in Your loving kindness. (v. 16 AMP)

Karen Berliner

**I**n the 31st Psalm, David pours out his heart in extreme distress to God. His enemies have a bloodthirsty mission to destroy and kill him. He's surrounded by terror and forgotten by all, even his neighbors. His body and spirit are wasted. He calls out to God. Yet, he doesn't ask God to shine upon him; he tells God to shine upon him; he tells God to save him. God does just that.

In verse 5, David writes, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit..." As our Lord gave his life on the cross, Luke 23:45 records "he [Jesus] said, crying out in a loud voice, 'Father into Your hands I commit My spirit!'" Jesus is surrounded by terror and forgotten by all, even Peter. Was it this Psalm that Jesus used as an anchor to tell God to save him? Was this a functional piece of the resurrection?

God's face. God's loving-kindness. David defeated his enemies. Jesus resurrected. Let's meditate on these scriptures and tell God to shine His face upon us and tell God to save us in His loving kindness, no matter the situation. It seems God likes that kind of demand. And, let's do it for others too.

*Almighty God, thank you for your holy scripture which refreshes our spirits, brings us closer to You and guides us in our daily life. Amen.*

## Saturday, April 4

### Lamentations 3:55-66

You came near when I called you and you said “do not fear.” (v. 57 NIV)

Holly Hardaway

**F**ear can be paralyzing. We have all felt it at some time or another. As a student in class when we were called on for an answer we did not know. As a child fearing the discipline of a parent. As an employee called in to meet with the boss. As a servant of God trying to just get through every day but being wrought with a fear or an anxiety so deep that it seems impossible to do anything and that just getting out of the bed seems like moving a boulder.

But, we are reminded, that God is near. God hears. God knows what we are going through each and every day, and is here to hold us and go before us, if only we would just let God be God, and remember to trust. If we truly give God the control and stop trying to take on every task (and worry) of each day ourselves, we could soar through each moment, without fear or worry.

God has already promised this to us. When we rest in God’s trust, there is no fear.

*God, we thank you for casting out all fear. Come into my life more today, and take control. Help me to remember today and every day, to trust you and to not be afraid. Amen.*

## Palm Sunday, April 5

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;  
You are my God, I will extol you. (v. 28 NRSV)

Elem Eley

**O**ccasionally a composer chooses to write a song for me. Months ago, such an offer came unexpectedly, with no request for text preference, musical style, or other stipulation. When he emailed me a preview of “my song,” the gifted composer included the full text and files of the so-far-composed music. Usually when I look at a new song, I see/hear it as the hybridized form that it is (not simply words set to a tune, not just music carrying text), but since the poem was written out in the body of Jerry’s email, I read it first: “Thankfulness” by George Herbert.

As I contemplated the substantive, somewhat complex words and thoughts of Thankfulness, it dawned on me that we have no more powerful tool against the discouragement and frustrations – even the anger – that we all sometimes experience, than the ever-present opportunity to express gratitude to the Lord for blessings enjoyed, faith embraced, hopes held, and love shared. This operative choice of gratitude is a powerful reality that reminds us of God’s omnipotence, even in our own lives.

During these days of reflecting on God’s immense love tangibly expressed in the life, suffering, and sacrifice of Jesus, we find ultimate reason to be thankful, to express gratitude in our lives.

*O Lord, thank you that our grateful responses to your grace are themselves gifts to us. You are our God, and not we ourselves. Amen.*

## Monday, April 6

### Hebrews 9:11-15

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. (vv. 13-15 NIV)

Liz Beasley

**T**hat God allowed his beloved son to die to establish the new covenant has always troubled me. In our time, in our church, we don't burn offerings in worship, and the idea of sacrificial killing is repugnant.

Prolicide, the killing of one's own children, is particularly heinous. It is more than God demanded of Abraham. When Abraham showed his willingness to offer his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering to the Lord, God produced a ram to slaughter instead.

As we approach Good Friday, I struggle to understand why God chose this way to forge a new relationship with his people. As a mother and a grandmother, I would offer my own life before sacrificing my children or grandchildren to any purpose. But perhaps that's the clue. In sacrificing Jesus, who was God on earth, the Lord saved us sinners from death. In sacrificing Jesus, God was saving his mortal children from the consequences of our own sin.

*Dear Lord, thank you for the new covenant, and for the sacrifice of Jesus that made it possible. Help us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You now and always. Amen.*

## Tuesday, April 7

### Isaiah 49:1-7

[God said] to me, "You are my servant,  
 Israel, in whom I show my glory!"  
 But I said, "I have wearied myself in vain.  
 I have used up my strength for nothing." (vv. 3-4 CEB)

Larry Alphs

**T**oday's lectionary readings have the common theme of some troubled person (even Jesus shortly before his death) wrestling with God...reviewing their life's work and assessing whether it adds up to anything. For many of us, as the decades roll on, this calculation becomes ever more urgent.

This has been a troubling year for me...my family...my nation...my world. Struck by a blinding stroke, a daughter's accident; experiencing a nation and world where truth, justice, simple kindness towards one another, even climate, seem to be in retreat. Our language has become ever coarser. Terrible violence becomes more commonplace. It is easy to despair and wonder "Where are we going?" "Are we wearying ourselves in vain?"

Today's passages remind us that we are not alone when we ask these questions. God's people have grappled with them across the ages. Yet, throughout this millennial-long discourse, we hear a common Easter refrain. "The weakness of God is stronger than human strength." "The Lord who is faithful...the holy one of Israel...has chosen us to be a light to the nations so that, through us, the LORD'S salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

*Lord, hear us when we call. Pick us up when we fall. Help us today to see your light and be guided to eternal hope. Amen.*

## Wednesday, April 8

### Isaiah 50:4-9a

The LORD God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he awakens –  
awakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught. (v. 4 NRSV)

Celia Tazelaar

**T**hose in positions of authority must shepherd their speech with great care. How often has a careless word from a teacher caused lasting damage to an impressionable student? Or a parent, offering “constructive criticism” to a son or daughter, inflicted a wound that never heals? Each of us has been given the power of speech to be used for harm or for good. When we follow Jesus’s way, the way of the suffering servant portrayed in this passage of Isaiah, we can draw on words of comfort and encouragement from a deep well of empathy and caring.

Listening is as important as speaking, sometimes even more important. The servant in Isaiah is able to teach because he has been given the ears of a student. When we ourselves have suffered a loss or a setback, we are better equipped to offer words of support to someone else going through the same experience. As Christians and as human beings, we are in this thing together. Let us help one another with kind words and encouraging sentences during this season of Lent and throughout each year.

*Lord Jesus, may my words always encourage and console the people around me, so that together we may be strengthened by your eternal love. Amen.*

## Maundy Thursday, April 9

John 13:1–17, 31b–35

“I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.” (vv. 34–35 CEB)

Roz Anderson Flood

### One Commandment

Humanity will always conjure its harrowing wilderness,  
 ancient trees with branches of lies and myths,  
 tangled vines of conspiracies, pet theories  
 and paranoia. Why do we anticipate  
 unhappy endings? Why do  
 betrayal and bitterness  
 keep us enthralled?  
 We know the  
 villain lurks.  
 Expecting  
 crime,  
 disaster

Our souls  
 are parched and thirsty.  
 Salvation gushes through our veins  
 with the simple command to Love one another:  
 Gentle bidding as elegant as a sip of wine from a cup.

*Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the healing balm of love you pour over us. We are eternally blessed by the simple commandment to love one another so all will know we are your disciples. Amen.*



## Good Friday, April 10

### Hebrews 4: 14-16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (v. 16 NKJV)

Ned Walthall

*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Psalm 22:1 NKJV)

**T**hat sounded about right for the world we are living in. But I chose Hebrews instead. I am a photographer: I photograph nature, specifically birds, specifically herons. Nature as we conceive of it is dying before our eyes, and no one cares, not in the sense that he or she is actually willing to undertake the kinds of sacrifices that are likely necessary to save it. Those who sincerely think climate models are wrong and advocate for the continued reliance on fossil fuels needn't worry. Nothing is going to change, with the exception of climate, catastrophically so, should they prove wrong. But right or wrong, no one is going to turn their lives upside down. Even Thoreau moved back to town.

So, my first impulse is always to wonder why God has left us alone to make such a mess of things. But human agency is entirely contingent on having the freedom to mess things up. And that's what I love about those words from the King James, "hold fast to our confession" (Hebrews 4:14 NKJV). Hold fast. Don't flinch from the idea that it's we, not God, who has forsaken nature. It's God's grace that gives us strength to acknowledge our own culpability and then to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*, grace that might actually stimulate us to save our planet. And the children, who will otherwise have to deal with our failure to do so.

*Heavenly Father, who created all things, help us find the strength and will to become better stewards of that creation. Amen.*

## Holy Saturday, April 11

### Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16

Since you are my rock and my fortress,  
for the sake of your name lead and guide me. (v. 3 NIV)

Agnes Olah

**I** am a music lover, although I had no chance to learn to play any musical instrument. I love to sing, although my voice is not special. I enjoy very much the Psalms in the Bible because to me Psalms are music and songs and poems and prayers. Poetry written to praise God.

The first part of verse 3 is a statement of faith. When we get God's presence in our daily life, when we get God's plan in our head, and God's promises in our heart, our faith is strong. But there are times when worry, stress, fear, guilt, resentment, and loneliness shake our faith. Then it is time to remember that God is our rock, fortress and helping hand.

The last part of verse 3 reminds me of the song "Lead me, guide me, all the way." When the Wise Men traveled, they didn't have a map to guide them. God gave them a guiding light - a star - and that star led them to Jesus. That star is still shining till today. When we follow that star, God will lead us straight to Jesus the same way he led the Wise Men. During the season of Lent, we are about to take a journey with Jesus. We may learn again or for the first time, how to love, forgive, believe, suffer, share, be merciful, trust, and pray.

*Father, lead us, guide us, teach us - the travelers - on our journey to live faithfully on the Earth and to live with you in Heaven, forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Easter Sunday, April 12

### Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

This is the LORD'S gate;  
 those who are righteous enter through it.  
 I thank you because you answered me,  
 because you were my saving help.  
 The stone rejected by the builders  
 is now the main foundation stone!  
 This has happened because of the LORD;  
 it is astounding in our sight!  
 This is the day the LORD acted;  
 we will rejoice and celebrate in it! (vv. 20-24 CEB)

Rebekah Sterlacci

**M**y mind immediately went to one of my favorite songs when I reflected on this excerpt from Psalms.

#### **Heavy (By Birdtalker)**

If your face is down, take a look around.  
 Do your fingers move? Do your lungs inflate?  
 Are you tired, are you weary of the hidden hate you've been holding?  
 Hey, did you lose that love or have you never had it?  
 Are you feeling sad 'cause you did a bad thing?  
 Leave what's heavy, what's heavy behind.  
 Are you feeling fearful, brother?  
 Are you feeling fearful, sister?  
 The only way to lose that fearful feeling  
 Replace it with love that's healing.

*Listen online: <https://youtu.be/OdrSSRYgfVh>*

Even at our weakest, loneliest moments we can hand over the pain and worry and fear and sorrow that we carry to God. The Lord is our saving help. Leave what's heavy behind. This is the day. Let's rejoice and celebrate.

*God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for answering us even when we are at our worst. Thank you for your saving grace that takes our heaviness away. Amen.*



## DAILY LECTIONARY READINGS: LENT 2020

**Wednesday, February 26:** Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 *or* Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**Thursday, February 27:** Psalm 51; Jonah 3:1-10; Romans 1:1-7

**Friday, February 28:** Psalm 51; Jonah 4:1-11; Romans 1:8-17

**Saturday, February 29:** Psalm 51; Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 18:1-7

**Sunday, March 1:** Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11

**Monday, March 2:** Psalm 32; 1 Kings 19:1-8; Hebrews 2:10-18

**Tuesday, March 3:** Psalm 32; Genesis 4:1-16; Hebrews 4:14-5:10

**Wednesday, March 4:** Psalm 32; Exodus 34:1-9, 27-28; Matthew 18:10-14

**Thursday, March 5:** Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:3-7

**Friday, March 6:** Psalm 121; Micah 7:18-20; Romans 3:21-31

**Saturday, March 7:** Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:4-8; Luke 7:1-10

**Sunday, March 8:** Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 *or* Matthew 17:1-9

**Monday, March 9:** Psalm 128; Numbers 21:4-9; Hebrews 3:1-6

**Tuesday, March 10:** Psalm 128; Isaiah 65:17-25; Romans 4:6-13

**Wednesday, March 11:** Psalm 128; Ezekiel 36:22-32; John 7:53-8:11

**Thursday, March 12:** Psalm 95; Exodus 16:1-8; Colossians 1:15-23

**Friday, March 13:** Psalm 95; Exodus 16:9-21; Ephesians 2:11-22

**Saturday, March 14:** Psalm 95; Exodus 16:27-35; John 4:1-6

**Sunday, March 15:** Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

**Monday, March 16:** Psalm 81; Genesis 24:1-27; 2 John 1:1-13

**Tuesday, March 17:** Psalm 81; Genesis 29:1-14; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

**Wednesday, March 18:** Psalm 81; Jeremiah 2:4-13; John 7:14-31, 37-39

**Thursday, March 19:** Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:10-21; Ephesians 4:25-32

**Friday, March 20:** Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:22-31; Ephesians 5:1-9

**Saturday, March 21:** Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:32-34; John 1:1-9

**Sunday, March 22:** 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

**Monday, March 23:** Psalm 146; Isaiah 59:9-10; Acts 9:1-20

**Tuesday, March 24:** Psalm 146; Isaiah 42:14-21; Colossians 1:9-14

**Wednesday, March 25:** Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 45 or Psalm 40:5-10; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38

**Thursday, March 26:** Psalm 130; Ezekiel 1:1-3, 2:8-3:3; Revelation 10:1-11

**Friday, March 27:** Psalm 130; Ezekiel 33:10-16; Revelation 11:15-19

**Saturday, March 28:** Psalm 130; Ezekiel 36:8-15; Luke 24:44-53

**Sunday, March 29:** Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

**Monday, March 30:** Psalm 143; 1 Kings 17:17-24; Acts 20:7-12

**Tuesday, March 31:** Psalm 143; 2 Kings 4:18-37; Ephesians 2:1-10

**Wednesday, April 1:** Psalm 143; Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41; Matthew 22:23-33

**Thursday, April 2:** Psalm 31:9-16; 1 Samuel 16:11-13; Philippians 1:1-11

**Friday, April 3:** Psalm 31:9-16; Job 13:13-19; Philippians 1:21-30

**Saturday, April 4:** Psalm 31:9-16; Lamentations 3:55-66; Mark 10:32-34

**Palm Sunday, April 5:** Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11

**Monday, April 6:** Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11; Hebrews 9:11-15; John 12:1-11

**Tuesday, April 7:** Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 12:20-36

**Wednesday, April 8:** Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70; Hebrews 12:1-3; John 13:21-32

**Maundy Thursday, April 9:** Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

**Good Friday, April 10:** Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25 *or* Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

**Saturday, April 11:** Job 14:1-14 *or* Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24; Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16; 1 Peter 4:1-8; Matthew 27:57-66 *or* John 19:38-42

**Easter Sunday, April 12:** Acts 10:34-43 *or* Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4 *or* Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 *or* Matthew 28:1-10

**ALPHS, LARRY**

(Meditation on April 7)

Larry is grandfather to three (almost four) beautiful children who delight him from afar. He lives in Princeton where he works in a small pharmaceutical company to develop better treatments for the mentally disabled.

**ANDERSON, JIM**

(Meditation on February 28)

Jim and Sally moved here in October 1998 and live at Stonebridge. They both have sixty years of church choir singing and both grew up in northern New Jersey. Together they sang in church choirs for sixty years. Jim has sung with the Nassau Adult Choir. Jim spent his career as a lawyer in Connecticut. They retired to Vermont and then to Florida. They are happy both with Stonebridge and with Nassau Church.

**ANDERSON FLOOD, ROZ**

(Meditation on April 9)

Roz is a ruling elder and a member of the Worship and Arts Committee and the Adult Choir. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Paul Robeson House of Princeton and looks forward to working on the partnership

with the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. She is relieved to have escaped Wall Street to work for Princeton University by day and to write poetry by night.

**BARRETO, HOLLEY**

(Meditation on March 15)

Holley is a former social worker and current cooking instructor and home baker. She has attended Nassau with her family since 2016, is currently a ruling elder, and is active with the Adult Education Committee, Children and Family Ministries, and the Christmas cookie baking crew. If you need her, you can probably find her covered with flour in the kitchen.

**BARROWS, KAREN**

(Meditation on March 2)

Karen resides in Hamilton, but her spiritual home is at Nassau. A graphic designer by trade, she enjoys photographing at church events, especially Vacation Bible School. She is blessed to be part of the thought-provoking fellowship during the Sacred Art of Photography small group and currently serves as a deacon.



**BEASLEY, LIZ**

(Meditation on April 6)

Liz joined Nassau in 2007 when she moved to Princeton from Davis, CA. She has served as an elder and on the Membership and Adult Education Committees at Nassau, and was ordained as a deacon in November 2019. Liz married Kimball Beasley in the sanctuary in 2010, and retired from Rutgers University in 2019.

**BEHNKE, HENRY**

(Meditation on March 13)

Henry is married to Marie and they are the proud parents of three grown sons and have one grandson. All are Rutgers University graduates; they hope the grandson will consider attending as well. Henry and Marie have been members for 15 years and serve as ushers, Marie has also served two terms as a deacon. Henry is an engineer and consults for solar energy and technology companies to assist with business development activities.

**BERLINER, KAREN**

(Meditation on April 3)

Karen is the wife of Jeff and mother to daughters, Rachel and Sarah. She and her family have been at Nassau for over eight years, transplanted from

New York City. She's living the dream here in Princeton!

**BERLINER, RACHEL & SARAH**

(Meditation on March 25)

Rachel is a sixth grader, and loves to sing, dance, act, play basketball, run and listen to God's word. Rachel loves participating in church activities with her friends at Nassau. Her favorites include Fellowship, Chancel Drama, and the Christmas Pageant.

Sarah is a fifth grader, and loves to sing, play sports, act, and read the Bible. Some of her favorite activities at church with her Nassau friends include: Choir, Chancel Drama, and the Christmas Pageant.

**BOWDITCH, PENN**

(Meditation on March 24)

Penn grew up in Connecticut and played guitar, soccer and lacrosse. As a graduate student at Villanova, he met his wife, Maria, while coaching lacrosse at Haverford College. He is blessed with three amazing grown children. For 48 years, Penn has worked at both public and independent schools, including Blair Academy. As school counselor at Randolph High School, he specializes in college placement.

**BOYD, DAVID**

(Meditation on March 12)

David and Juanell have been members of Nassau for just over 20 years, where David has been active in the Men's Friday Morning Breakfast and Bible Study, has also served on the Session, and is a regular Sunday morning usher. He has been teaching ESL Conversations at the Princeton Public Library for over thirteen years. He is a retired scientist (33 years) with Corning Glass in Corning, New York. He and Juanell are originally from the Pittsburgh area, and they have two adult sons.

**BROAD, BARBARA PRENTICE**

3/3/1920 - 12/15/2019

(Meditation on March 3)

Barbara was a resident of Princeton for over 60 years. She was a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church, sang in the choir, and served as a deacon and elder. She was active with the Wellesley Antique Show, the Bryn Mawr-Wellesley Book sale and served on the national board of Young Audiences. She was a long-time member of the Present Day Club where she enjoyed bridge and other activities, and of Pretty Brook Country Club, where she played tennis until

she was 90. Barbara would have turned 100 on March 3, the day of her lectionary meditation. The Lenten Devotional Team thanks Rosanne Jacks and Elaine Barger for their assistance in transcribing Barbara's thoughts for us to include here.

**BROTHERS, JOSIE**

(Meditation on March 26)

Josie is a senior at Princeton High School and a member of Nassau. She is a deacon, assists with the younger church choirs and church school, and is involved in Cantorei choir and fellowship. At Princeton High School, Josie enjoys singing in PHS choirs and with her a cappella group, The Cat's Meow.

**DUFFY, ROBERT**

(Meditation on April 1)

Rob has been a life-long resident of the area, yet only recently found a home at Nassau. As a first-year resident at Cooper Hospital, he spends most of his time in the wards of the hospital, yet when he can attend, he enjoys the rejuvenating peace that church provides.

**DUNN, JAY**

(Meditation on March 17)

Jay is a retired sportswriter who spent 45 years at The Trentonian. He continues to publish a weekly column during the baseball season.

**ELEY, ELEM**

(Meditation on April 5)

Elem and his wife, Miriam, have been Nassau members since 1997. In addition to singing as bass soloist/section leader in the Adult Choir, Elem is professor of voice at Westminster Choir College and an active performer.

**FOLEY LOIS**

(Meditation on March 19)

Lois has been a member of Nassau since March 2018. She is a Family Law Paralegal in New Brunswick, spending free time with children Meghan, Rachel, Bryan, and Adam.

**GENOVESI, LINA**

(Meditation on March 21)

Lina has been a member of Nassau since April 2019. She is an intellectual property attorney with a law firm in Greenwich Connecticut. She spends her free time working on her memoir of growing up in Beirut, Lebanon.

**HAGE JADE,**

(Meditation on March 1)

Jade has been attending Nassau for the past three years, and is grateful to have enjoyed her first anniversary as a member. Hailing from Monterey, CA, Jade moved to Princeton to start her career teaching high school English. On Sunday mornings you can find her in the choir loft singing with the soprano section.

**HARDAWAY, HOLLY**

(Meditation on April 4)

Holly is an occupational therapist who has been a Nassau member since 1988. She and her wife, Claire, are very thankful for their Nassau church family.

**HERR MARK**

(Meditation on March 6)

Mark has been a member of Nassau since 1986. The son, grandson, and great-grandson of ministers, he works on Wall Street after several other misspent careers in journalism, politics, and the law. With that record, he really needs the salvation mulligan.

**HILL, JULIA**

(Meditation on March 27)

A sophomore at Princeton High School, Julia loves Nassau and is very involved in activities here. When she's not at school or church, you can find her in her room belting songs from her favorite musicals, *Hamilton* and *In The Heights!*

**KATRISHEN, FRANCES**

(Meditation on March 29)

Frances is a deacon and sings in the adult choir. She is part of the deacon's group prayer ministry. She is the wife of Nicos Scordis and mother of Camille. She is a retired international business analyst and professor. She began a seminary degree in 2018 but is taking a break until Camille goes to college. She is matriculated in the General Seminary in New York where she will earn a Master in Arts with a concentration in Spirituality.

**KLEASEN, KIM**

(Meditation on March 16)

Kim finds Nassau to be a central place in her life. You can always find Kim in the choir loft, living out one of her daily practices – her love for and gift of music brings focus, beauty and connectedness to her life and

hopefully to those she is with every day.

**LORD, ANNE THOMSEN**

(Meditation on March 23)

Anne is a deacon and elder. Her family has been attending Nassau for ten years. Anne and Errol have four children (Thomsen, 12; Vinnie, 9; Lee, 7; Ned, 7). She always has snacks.

**LORD, THOMSEN**

(Meditation on February 27)

I am Thomsen Lord (12) and I study at John Witherspoon Middle School here in Princeton, NJ. I play soccer and like to run. I was born in Scottsdale, Arizona, and in some ways my heart still resides there. Our family spent a year in Freiburg, Germany and that was the greatest experience I have experienced in my life. Still, the church has been very influential. I have been at the church since 2010 and go every Sunday for worship. The church's Youth activities have really shaped me and changed me into a different and more full person. From choir to fellowship, being at Nassau always warms my heart and cleanses my spirit.

**MATHEWS, VAL**

(Meditation on March 18)

Val began his first career in early days of electronic warfare, designing control systems to sink the Russian navy. In subsequent careers, he enjoyed designing and managing complex industrial and defense projects. He worked in Russia and lived with a family. He retired twice, and enjoys Nassau Men's Breakfast and has key roles in two non-profits.

**MERTZ, KEITH**

(Meditation on March 11)

A member since 2000, Keith is husband to Mary Ann and father to four grown-ups: Cory (in Denver), Jeff (in Lambertville), Elyse (in Raritan), and Nick (in Franklin/Montgomery). He travels frequently on business yet can't imagine life without singing in the choir – singing is his innate worship expression. Keith and sometimes succeeds in demonstrating God's love: the light shining through the darkness.

**MILLER, CYNTHIA LYNN**

(Meditation on February 29)

Cynthia has attended the Presbyterian Church ever since young – from her years growing up in and as a member of the Village Presbyterian Church in Northbrook, IL, to her

membership at Nassau. Cynthia is a child at heart – everything is of interest, and she embraces this all fully. She works in international market research and loves history, travel, reading and writing.

**MOORHEAD, JIM**

(Meditation on March 28)

Jim is an ordained Presbyterian minister who taught at Princeton Seminary for several decades before his retirement in 2017. His area of expertise is the history of American Christianity. He and his family have been part of the Nassau church family since 1984.

**MULFORD, DAVID**

(Meditation on March 8)

David is a retired minister who served Presbyterian churches in New York, New Jersey and Florida. Residents of Stonebridge since 2006, he and his wife, Nancy, find inspiration and challenge as part of the Nassau Church community.

**MULRY, CLAIRE**

(Meditation on March 9)

Claire has attended Nassau since 2001 and joined in 2004. Claire lives with her wife, Holly, & their dog Hap in Franklin Park, New Jersey. She is grateful to the staff and congregation of

Nassau for their work for justice.

**OLAH, AGNES**

(Meditation on April 11)

Agnes, a retired bank executive, lives in Somerset. She, her grandchildren, and their parents, have been part of the Nassau Church community since 2012. Agnes enjoys assisting with children's activities at Nassau and leading the greeting cards and handcrafts projects that help fund Nassau's mission partners.

**PRINCE, NANCY**

(Meditation on March 4)

Nancy has been a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church since 2003. She sings in the Adult Choir, volunteers in the church office and serves on the Advisory Board of the Paul Robeson House. She feels grateful to have experienced many of life's rich opportunities with her daughter, Jennifer, and her husband, David. She lives at Stonebridge in Skillman.

**PULIMOOD, MONISHA**

(Meditation on April 2)

Monisha, her husband, Mani, and their older son, Nikhil, have been worshipping at Nassau since they moved to the area in 2004; their younger son, Philip, was born, baptized, and raised

in this church. They have each been blessed through their involvement in the church in various capacities over the years.

**SHELPUK, NATALIE**

(Meditation on March 7)

Natalie works with individuals and organizations as a coach and trainer to design and deliver learning experiences that enhance performance, improve communication, drive growth, and enable greater work satisfaction. She began her career as a musician and journalist.

**SHENK, JONATHAN**

(Meditation on March 14)

Jonathan, a former pastor, is the owner of Greenleaf Painters, a local painting company. In addition to his business involvement he is a certified spiritual director and an advocate for transforming the criminal justice system. He lives in Princeton Junction with his wife, Cynthia Yoder. Their son, Gabriel, is a recent Rutgers graduate.

**SMILEY, JACK**

(Meditation on March 30)

Jack is a Presbyterian minister, comfortably retired. He graduated from Princeton

Theological Seminary in 1952. At Nassau he has led small group Bible studies and now participates in the Candidates Committee and book club.

**SMILEY, SUSAN**

(Meditation on March 31)

Susan followed her parents to Princeton in 2014. Then she followed them to Nassau, and became a deacon in 2019. One of her goals is to be a better steward of the plant world and, until further notice from on high, she aims to help others learn how to set up compost systems at home.

**SMITH, MARSHA**

(Meditation on March 22)

Marsha has been a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church since March 1988.

**STERLACCI, REBEKAH**

(Meditation on April 12)

Rebekah is the District Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts for Piscataway Township Public Schools and the Artistic Director of the Piscataway Choral Collective. Rebekah and her husband Jason (and almost six-year-old Jonas!) have been a part of Nassau for eight years. At Nassau, Rebekah is chair of the Worship and Arts Committee and assists with the Christmas Pageant. In

Rebekah's free time she loves cooking vegan food, drinking espresso, and curating Spotify playlists.

**TAZELAAR, CELIA**

(Meditation on April 8)

Celia is a deacon, and has been active in Small Groups and Children's Ministries over her past eight years of membership at Nassau. She is busy working in the community as a Realtor, and volunteering as vice-chair of the Princeton Historic Preservation Commission. She is mother to Julia, Sophia, and Clara. When Celia isn't attending to all the above, she enjoys spending time in Princeton and at the Jersey Shore with her husband, Eric.

**TEGARDEN, DEBBIE**

(Meditation on March 20)

Debbie has lived most of her life in Princeton, and attended schools, college, and grad school here. She's worked over 30 years as an editor at Princeton University Press.

**THORNTON, TREVOR**

(Meditation on March 5)

Trevor moved with his partner, Thomas VanWart, from Kansas City to the Kingston area in the fall of 2018. Trevor teaches piano at the New School for Music Study and accompanies

at the Princeton Boychoir and at Rutgers University. He and Thomas live in Kingston with their corgi, Luna.

immensely enjoys Nassau Church and the Princeton community.

**WAKEFIELD, BILL**

(Meditation on February 27)

Bill, a ruling elder currently serving on session, serves as a member of the Mission and Outreach Committee, chair of the Immigration Committee, a member of the Mass Incarceration Task Force, and a member of the Property Committee.

**WALTHALL, NED**

(Meditation on April 10)

Ned has been a member of Nassau Church since 1987. He is currently an MFA candidate in photography at the Institute of Art and Design at New England College. His popular small group, The Sacred Art of Photography, has been running at Nassau for several years.

**YEH, BENJAMIN**

(Meditation on March 10)

Benjamin and his wife Emily have been members of Nassau since 2014, when they moved from Taiwan to Princeton, with two children (Jonathan, 21; Symphony, 11). A first-generation Christian and US immigrant, a Harvard MBA, and a business executive in the telecom industry, Benjamin



# EVALUATION FORM

Return to Nassau Presbyterian Church (address on reverse)  
or email: [office@nassauchurch.org](mailto:office@nassauchurch.org)

**What did you appreciate about participating in the Lenten Devotions this year?**

**What could be improved?**

**If you are interested in being contacted when we start looking for writers for next year, let us know how to get in touch:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_



NASSAU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Attn: Lauren Yeh (Lenten Devotions)