

Lenten Devotional



NASSAU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Princeton, New Jersey

MARCH 2 - APRIL 17, 2022

Contributors
Members and Friends
Nassau Presbyterian Church

Project Manager

Karen Barrows

Project Sponsor

Adult Education Committee

Final Copy Editor

Carol Wehrheim

Staff

Corrie Berg

Layout

Sarah Finbow
Lauren Yeh

Scripture quotations are from the following texts:

*Common English Bible (CEB), King James Version (KJV or NKJV),
New International Version (NIV), New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).*

The Vanderbilt Divinity Library offers an excellent online daily
lectionary.

lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu

Preface

Welcome to the season of Lent, the 40 days before Easter (excluding Sundays, because Sundays are always celebrated as the Resurrection of our Lord), beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday.

The Lenten Devotional team, led by Deacon Karen Barrows, is delighted to present a new edition of daily devotions written by the children, youth and adults of our congregation and the wider community. We are especially delighted to welcome writers from the Witherspoon Street and Westminster Presbyterian churches, our local sister congregations.

We will be sustained and guided on this journey by the words of scripture and the reflections of the people of God. Come join the journey and marvel in the goodness of our Lord and the beauty of our community.

Corrie Berg
Nassau Presbyterian Church
Lent 2022

Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey.
Psalm 119:105

Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Psalm 51:1-17

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit (Psalm 51:10–12 NRSV).

Frances Slade

I used to be a Lutheran, and I loved the sung liturgy. Each week, the congregation sang a setting of this prayer. When I pray, I frequently use a prayer that I know by heart. I pray it slowly, phrase by phrase. Sometimes word by word. This is one of those prayers, and it is inextricably bound to the music for me.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.” This is a great way to start the day. The image that comes to my mind is swimming in the clear mountain lake where I spent many summers. My heart needs to be cleansed of resentments, fears, and unloving thoughts. With this first phrase, I feel them begin to wash away.

“and put a new and right spirit within me.” I know what a “right spirit” is for me. If I take the time to pray for it, my days are noticeably better.

“Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.” I don’t believe God does the casting away. I do that all by myself. The holy spirit is there when I am ready and open to returning.

“Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.” I know the joy of salvation when, with God’s grace, I let down the barriers I put between me and other people. I know the joy of salvation when I am able to live in the moment.

I learned this in the King James translation. There, the final phrase is

“uphold me with thy free spirit.” That’s what I pray. I write this at the anniversary of my husband’s death. Since that horrible time, I have been upheld by God’s grace through 20 rich and wonderful years.

I will close with the prayer in the King James Version, which is closest to my heart. I wanted to sing it for you, but my voice is rusty. My thanks to Elem Eley, who has recorded it. Please pray with us.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Amen.

Listen on YouTube: <https://.youtu.be/QCVR9hplE0k>

Frances Slade is the Artistic Director Emeritus of Princeton Pro Musica, former music director at All Saints Church, Princeton, and former member of the choral faculty at Rutgers University. Since her retirement in 2012, she has spent her time dancing, learning Spanish, traveling, and playing the piano. She joined Nassau Church in 2007, and has especially enjoyed playing in the bell choir and participating in small groups. Her partner is Rainer Muser.

...

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Acts 7:30-34 & Exodus 5:10-23

“I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt” (Acts 7:34 NRSV).

Then Moses turned again to the LORD and said, “O LORD, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? Since I first came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated this people, and you have done nothing at all to deliver your people” (Exodus 5:22-23 NRSV).

Karen S. Brown

I have this recurring pattern in my life. I embark on some altruistic venture certain that I am answering God's call, only to get bogged down somewhere in the messy middle with no evidence of positive impact in sight and no sign of the call I was so certain of. When I look back, I just see the hanging threads of dreams that went awry somewhere between anticipation and fruition. And so I have always envied Moses his burning bush. He received verbal instruction. The first steps of a roadmap, a vision of the result. He **knew** he was doing what he had been told to do, and why.

But did it help? Not according to these verses in Exodus: "Then Moses turned again to the LORD and said, "O LORD, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? Since I first came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated this people, and you have done nothing at all to deliver your people" (Exodus 5:22–23).

Moses followed his instructions, but instead of freeing the Israelites his actions actually **increased** their suffering. He, too, hit the messy middle. And he reacted the same way I do—with questioning, uncertainty, and self-doubt. These verses remind me that I, like Moses, am human. Uncertainty, questioning, self-doubt—these are normal human emotions in the messy middle, no matter how clear the call. Like Moses in the messy middle, I have no way of knowing how or when God will weave all my floundering into the intended goal. But Moses also learned—and I must remember that even in the messy middle, I am where I am supposed to be. And God stands there with me, whether I can see that or not.

Dearest Lord, open our eyes and ears. Help us to see you, hear you, and feel your presence even when we are in that messy middle. Thank you for never abandoning us, despite our doubts and floundering. We pray this in the name of your son, Christ Jesus. Amen.

Karen Brown is a clinical pharmacologist in the biotech. She and her family have attended Nassau for over 20 years, and Karen is currently active with the Mission and Outreach Committee, Bending the Moral Arc Courageous Conversations initiative, and mission partner Villages in Partnership. She and husband James Takasugi divide their time between Princeton and Boston, where Karen works, and are grateful to Zoom for enabling this lifestyle.

Friday March 4, 2022

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Those who love me, I will deliver;

I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me, I will answer them;

I will be with them in trouble,

I will rescue and honor them.

With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation” (Psalm 91:14-16 NRSV).

Julia Hill

Verses 14-16 are very comforting to read, especially during the times we are currently living in. Words like “rescue” and phrases like “I will be with them in times of trouble” are very soothing to read during the pandemic when we are all feeling grief in some way, either from losing a family member, dear friend, or spouse to the virus or from other causes. It brings comfort to our hearts knowing that God is here, even when silent. And that he will save us from destruction and be present in uncertain and scary times. Speaking of these times, these verses are very relevant to my life as I am currently going through the college application process and “waiting to hear back” period. As you can imagine, this is a very nerve-wracking time, strangely more the waiting than actually completing the application. However, combined with deep breathing, patience and faith, and the strong belief that God will rescue me from my fears, I am getting through it. God is ever-present. Keep that in mind. You may think you’re alone; however, with a silent but present God, nobody is really alone. Instead we always have a light and a shepherd in life. For that, thanks be to God!

Father, thank you for being ever-present in our lives. We know that when we act, you are there. When we pray, you are listening and working to make it a reality. In this ongoing period of Covid-19 and Omicron, we look to you for strength, hope and

light and you always provide for us. Thank you for teaching us to trust your ways and that with you, our feet will never slip. In your name we proclaim, Amen!

Julia Hill is a senior at Princeton High School. She serves on the Children and Families Ministries Committee. She's been at Nassau Church with her family since 2013. She enjoys being active in church life from chancel dramas to choir to youth fellowship. In college, she wants a BA in Theatre Arts. When not at school or church, doing productions or checking applications, she reads or has dance parties in her room.

...

Saturday March 5, 2022

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

...a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4-5

NRSV).

Michele Minter

We've all experienced "COVID time"—the weird way in which days and weeks blur together as we operate from the monotony of home. I have missed Sunday morning worship; Thanksgiving with family members; and gathering for weddings, school graduations and funerals. All these events and milestones gave rhythm to my pre-pandemic life. Even the hassle of commuting to work gave structure to my day. How many experiences I once took for granted! Time used to seem more like something to manage than something to cherish, but the pandemic taught me to appreciate every moment.

In the past, when I read this lovely passage from Ecclesiastes, I had al-

ways focused on its sense of balance. Now, in the second year of COVID, I notice its attention to time. There is a time for everything. For each of life's experiences, there is a right time. God offers us time as a gift. How will we use it?

We have all experienced disruption in the rhythm of our lives. May we never again take our time together for granted.

Eternal God who orders our lives, teach us to cherish each moment and use them all with wisdom. Amen.

Michele Minter worships at the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church, works for Princeton University, and lives in Plainsboro with her husband, Jeff Yuan.

...

First Sunday in Lent, March 6, 2022

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

So now I bring the first fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me. You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 26:10 NRSV).

Marshall McKnight

Thanks to the great preaching at Nassau Presbyterian Church, each day at some point I am reminded that this is a moment for worshiping God. It might be as the day begins with a devotional message, the first spiritual fruit of the day. Perhaps at bedtime with the realization that I had forgotten that each moment of that week, not just that hour in church on Sunday, is a time to worship God.

In the day's bustle, commuting to work, errands to run, the punch lists to cross off, the assignments to complete, once again, for maybe the fourth or fifth day in a row, I have forgotten that God is with me. I should be treating this moment with the reverence and humility as if I were bowing down before the Lord my God. Your God. Our God.

For me, it is a greater challenge than trying to remember that Jeopardy! question that is right on the tip of my tongue, buried in a synapse that I know should be there somewhere. This is not a fact that I can just Google and get all the background information I could possibly want from Wikipedia.

Truthfully, it's more than just the first fruit. It is every moment of each day that we have a gift to celebrate. How can I remember this the whole day through? A helpful memory crutch could be my mother's smile as she came into my childhood bedroom to implore me to "rise and shine."

Gracious God, help us to remember you are with us every moment of this day and every day of the week. Please remind us to treat each person we meet with the gratitude, patience, and kindness you show us when we forget you. We give thanks for the first fruit and the last fruit you provide. Help us to pass on your love for us each day as if we were bowing down to worship you. Amen.

Marshall McKnight is a child of God and a worshipping member of Nassau Church where he serves as a deacon and as a member of the Mass Incarceration Task Force. He also serves as a mentor through the Mercer County-based nonprofit Life-Ties. He works for the State of New Jersey.

...

Monday March 7, 2022

1 John 2:1-6

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John 2:1-2 NKJV).

Pam Wakefield

Now in my 80s, I cherish John's reaching out to us as his "little children". His words sound simple and comforting and yet, of course, so challenging: whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in that person. In a perfect world we'd all choose to keep his word and do the right thing rather than the wrong even when no one is watching and even when the consequences cause pain and loss. I've lived for a long time and I've struggled and struggle still with knowing God's word and still failing to keep it. I understand guilt and regret. I've watched the people I love struggle with walking the walk, falling off the path and working to regain their footing. Each Sunday we confess what we have done, and ... what we have left undone.

And, through it all – through it all – John's words remain constant and clear, we have an advocate with the Father. *Believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Thanks be to God!*

Heavenly Father, hold our hands through these uncertain times and give us strength, patience, compassion, endurance, a shared love and a measure of joy as we walk this path with you. Amen.

Pam Wakefield is a deacon, an elder, an ex-Princeton University psychology research staffer, and a lover and supporter of the Princeton Public Library. She is also a grateful wife, grateful friend and grateful part of a large family defined by respect, love and shared joy.

...

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

2 Peter 2:4-21

It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them (2 Peter 2:21 NIV).

Larry Alphs

These are hard words and today's Lenten reading takes us on a hard spiritual journey. The Bible is replete with stories of the Lord making covenants with God's people, their acceptance, followed by repeated failures to keep these covenants. Having just read Gibbons' formidable *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, it is abundantly clear that this was not just a problem of the Hebrews. Christians throughout the centuries have quickly fallen painfully short of God's will for a righteous life. To the present day, Christians manipulate the gospel in the most disturbing and unholy ways.

Our journey must move these covenantal words from stone, papyrus, and the printed page to our hearts. In this new covenantal relationship, our lives become a letter read by all who know us.

Let us then share this living expression of the way of righteousness with our neighbors, whoever they be...the person a few pews down... the Afghan family whom we have just invited into our community... our neighbors wherever they be. May we follow the words of Zechariah and invite them to "sit under our vines and fig trees" (Zechariah 3:10) in these Covid-19 times and build a better world together...the Kingdom of God.

Lord, show us the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep us as the apple of your eye; hide us in the shadow of your wings. Amen. (Based on Psalm 17:7-8)

Listen on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Oz2PtcU6SxM>

On Sundays, when not on Covid-19 retreat, **Larry Alphs** usually finds himself among the Nassau Presbyterian balcony worshipers. On weekdays he works from his home office with colleagues who are thousands of miles away. On Saturdays he can be found on his bike or in his garden.

...

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Job 1:1-22

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised.”

In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing (Job 1:20–22 NIV).

Laura Carter

Einstein famously disliked portions of quantum theory based on his deep intuition that God wouldn’t have designed a system that incorporated so much unexplained randomness. He wrote to his friend Max Born, “I am convinced that God does not throw dice.” In this difficult story from the Book of Job, God is indeed described as playing a game and Job is the unfortunate game piece, with all of the normal rules thrown out the window.

When things don’t go the way we expect, when we’re disappointed, when we’re overwhelmed, we (hopefully metaphorically) tear out our hair and rend our garments and cry. It can feel like the rules of the universe have been suspended and Satan is playing with us. We hate random chance and so we often look for someone to blame here on Earth or we ask God, “Why?”

Then we have to figure out what to do next.

To me the beauty of this story is that it doesn't entertain the "why," or does so only with a story that leaves Job without a useful path to improve his circumstances. A search for a scapegoat is irrelevant and distracting. These verses go straight to the answer of what to do next. When we have finished mourning for our lost expectations, we can come to God and say, "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

For the world right now there will be a time to analyze and reflect, to make a plan for avoiding pain in the future, to understand exactly what went wrong. Maybe our woes aren't random and the answer to "why" will be useful. Maybe research into theology and science will provide deterministic answers to inform our next steps. But in the moment of our deep personal distress, when we need to get ourselves up and going, God is there with the answer, not of "why," but "what." What can we do next? Do not despair. Love God and your neighbor. May the name of the Lord be praised.

Dear God, please help me at all times and in all places to remember your many blessings. May your name be praised. Amen.

Laura Carter lives in Princeton with her husband Percy and four children, Harry, Isabelle, Sam and Caleb. A middle school teacher by training, she currently home schools her 6th and 8th graders and teaches 5th grade Church School at Nassau Church. This devotional was written by Laura, based on conversations and team writing with her son Sam.

...

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Philippians 3:2-12

I want to know Christ —yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death (Philippians 3:10 NIV).

Thomas Quinlan

Like Paul, I want to know Christ. But I'm not keen to participate "in his sufferings". Abandoned by friends? Betrayed? Getting whipped? Being crucified? No thanks.

But this list leaves off the worst. In his last words, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Hmmm? How could God ever forsake Jesus? From one end of the Bible to the other, there are countless references to God's love. Similarly, God's mercy knows no limits. But, then, at the bitter end, God disowns Jesus. I don't think so.

Then it occurred to me. Jesus **felt** forsaken by God. Dying a slow and painful death, he could not **feel** God's love.

I know the feeling. The polite term is "negative life events". Mine came, one after another. In this season of suffering, I've often wondered, "Where has God's love gone? Has God forsaken me?"

As I'm still in the darkness, I hunger for light. The kindness of friends. A mild day in January.

Then I remember the rest of Jesus' story. He's cut down from the cross, bathed, wrapped with herbs, and then laid in the tomb.

Jesus rose from the dead. All of my Christian life, I've heard about it. Although I've celebrated many Easters, his resurrection always seemed a vague abstraction. Until now. Could Jesus' one positive life event be an antidote for my series of negative life events?

O, Lord, remind me that you love me, even when I can't feel your presence. Let your resurrection shine in my life. Amen.

As a cognitive psychologist, **Tom Quinlan** studies how our minds process reading and writing. He spends his days writing about literacy, whether in books or grant proposals, and lives in Princeton.

...

Friday, March 11, 2022

Psalm 27

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD,
be strong and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD (Psalm 27:13, 14 NRSV)!

Claire M. Mulry

The day starts, we pick up the phone, open the paper or inbox, turn on the television, radio or podcast, and are immediately assaulted by noise, drama, crises and swept into a raging current of fear, worry and discord. It is understandable that we lose hope and faith, or is it? Why do we choose fear over faith? We are called to see and be “the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living”, but do we heed that call? Are our hearts staid and sure? Do we trust and wait for the Lord? Do we believe we can see the goodness of the Lord, every day? Any day? Perhaps start today. “Be strong and let your hearts take courage,” believe, “wait for the LORD”. See the goodness, today, every day. See it, be it, wait for the Lord.

Lord, grant us courage and the faith to see your goodness in the world each day. Fill us with patience and hope as we wait. Amen.

Claire Mulry has been a member of Nassau Church since 2004. She lives with her wife Holly Hardaway and both are occupational therapists and are thankful for their Nassau Church family.

...

Saturday, March 12, 2022

Psalm 27

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

If my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will take me up (Psalm 27:1, IO NRSV).

Marcia Wood

The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible titles this psalm “Triumphant Song of Confidence”. The Lord is called a stronghold against evildoers, adversaries, foes, war and armies. Yawn. This is not a song that appeals to me. I’m not looking for a fight—or for protection. I prefer shepherds and green pastures. But as I am turning the page, I am struck by verse 10: “If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up.”

That stops me in my tracks. This just got personal. Other translations begin this verse with “When” or “Though” (so it sounds basically inevitable). Suddenly I feel vulnerable. My father and mother have left me, decades since. I am an orphan. My husband has left me, a year ago. I am a widow. The only people who loved me unconditionally have forsaken me. Can I really trust that the Lord will “take me up”? I will need more than one phrase from Psalm 27 to convince me. Where can I claim that consolation?

Ah, here are the directions, in verse 4: “I will find it if I dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, and if I inquire in his temple.”

Nassau Presbyterian Church is the house of the Lord. I can inquire there. I can dwell there in a community of forsaken souls. When we join together in worship, the Lord is with us. We inquire together and the Lord leads us in learning. We lean on each other and we are consoled. No wonder they call it a sanctuary. I am safe here.

Heavenly Father/Mother, you bless us with your protection and consolation. Thank you for the gift of a temple where we worship and inquire. Take care of us. Show us how to take care of each other. Amen.

Marcia Wood and her late husband Warren joined the newly formed Nassau Presbyterian Church in 1975 and raised their children Lauren and Josh in this remarkable community of believers. She looks forward to being crowned a 50-year member in 2025.

...

Second Sunday of Lent, March 13, 2022

Psalm 27

I remain confident of this:

I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD;

be strong and take heart

and wait for the LORD (Psalm 27:13-14 NIV).

Elizabeth Beasley

These past two years have been challenging for all of us as we faced the Covid-19 pandemic, extreme weather crises, and a polarized, acrimonious political climate. We look to the Lord for strength and salvation, and are impatient for relief.

But we have agency in this life, and a God who expects us to be his hands and feet in the world. While we take our petitions to the Lord, we can be doing his will and showing his love in our own lives to improve the well-being of others, our society, and the planet.

There are many ways to make a difference, for example:

* Nassau Church deacons keep in regular contact with elderly and bereaved congregants as they struggle with isolation and loss;

- * Church school teachers educate our children in the Christian faith;
- * Volunteers and donors for our mission partners fight extreme poverty in Malawi, provide educational opportunities to young people in Myanmar, and engage in reciprocal ministries with our partner churches, Westminster and Witherspoon Street Presbyterian.

By taking action, however small, we tend to feel more hopeful, less helpless, and are better able to bide with patience on the larger issues we must bring to God. I am grateful for a church that provides opportunities to make our faith not just a Sunday morning gathering but a central organizing force in our lives.

Dear Lord, help us to serve your will in this world, and to trust in your love and protection through these perilous times. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Liz Beasley joined Nassau Church in 2007 and has served on the membership and adult education committees and as a ruling elder. She married Kim Beasley in the sanctuary in 2010, and retired from Rutgers University in 2019. In retirement, she volunteers with Villages in Partnership, serves as a deacon, takes fiction-writing classes, co-chairs the activities committee for the Present Day Club, and visits her grandchildren as often as possible. Life is good.

...

Monday, March 14, 2022

Psalm 105:1-42

Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Seek the LORD and his strength;

seek his presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works he has done (Psalm 105:3b-5b NRSV).

Kathie Sakenfeld

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing....” When life is going well, it is easy for me to forget that I need God’s strength. I forget to “seek God’s presence continually.” But when the sea billows roll for me, for any of us, then perhaps we recall afresh that “Our help is in the name of the LORD.”

An earth-shaking diagnosis, a decline in physical ability, responsibility as caregiver for a loved one whose memory is fading, deciding for hospice, a dear child on a wrong path, isolation that sucks our spirit dry, efforts for justice showing no results, anxiety or despair over the state of the nation, world, or planet—in such moments we remember to seek God’s strength.

But the psalmist asks me not just to seek but also to rejoice. How can I take that harder (at least for me) step? With the psalmist I look back to “remember the wonderful works God has done” for me and for so many others. Recalling how God’s strength has carried me in the past leads me toward joy and helps me to trust more deeply that God will carry me now.

Many years ago, a Nassau Church confirmation class chose a “class hymn,” which Noel introduced to the larger congregation in a hymn sing. It has become my “go to” prayer as I seek God’s strength, and I share the first verse here:

Jesus draw me ever nearer as I labor through the storm. You have brought me to this passage and I’ll follow though I’m worn. May this journey bring a blessing. May I rise on wings of faith, and

at the end of my heart's testing, with your likeness let me wake.
Amen.

Kathie Sakenfeld has participated in the life of Nassau Church since 1970. She is a retired Old Testament professor (Princeton Seminary) and ordained clergywoman in the PCUSA. She enjoys walking, birds, new recipes, and mystery fiction.

...

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it (1 Corinthians 10:12-13 NRSV).

John Parker

In this passage from Paul's letter to the quarrelsome Christians at Corinth, he cautions the followers of Jesus to be strong in the face of temptation. Paul has just convincingly used stories from Exodus and Numbers to demonstrate how God judged the Israelites harshly for their transgressions in the desert. But in this passage Paul also says that God is faithful and will not give us more than we can handle (with God's help). I don't know about you, but at my age and stage of life most of my sins are those of omission, not commission. In the familiar words of the Prayer of Confession, they are not "the things we have done" but more "those things we have left undone." I have weathered this pandemic in relative comfort while others around me have borne the costs. I have not done enough to challenge unjust power structures that benefit people like me while oppressing others. And to be honest, sometimes I feel like we will never be able to right these wrongs. This does not absolve us from trying, however, and there I feel my unworthiness. What Paul does not say here (although he does in many other places) is that Jesus' sacrifice has already given us forgiveness for our transgressions so that we may have a right

relationship with God. And without this mercy who could stand?

Dear Lord, we live in trying times and often feel we have failed the daily test of being a good Christian. Help us to know your love and forgiveness through the righteous sacrifice of your son Jesus, and to understand that when our strength is not enough, Jesus' strength is more than enough. And empower us every day to build your perfect kingdom here on earth. Amen.

John Parker is a writer by trade and lives and works in Princeton. At Nassau Church, he has served as a ruling elder and a deacon and teaches third and fourth grade church school.

...

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Luke 13:22-31

Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:22–24 NRSV).

Anne Kuhn

Luke chapter 13 recounts Jesus' travels with his disciples as he heals the sick and teaches the growing crowds about God's kingdom. In villages and synagogues, with every parable, Jesus challenges the status quo. He turns societal norms upside down and upsets the established order for the powerful, the educated, the wealthy, and the common folk alike. Many of them yearn for something beyond their current reality, a new and better world in which righteousness, humility and mercy prevail.

In Luke 13:23, I am imagining the seeker in the crowd just beginning to understand how very different this kingdom of God might be and realizing that Jesus is exhorting her to make dramatic changes, to give up comfortable systems, habits, and beliefs. The seeker wonders, "Just how

much change is really necessary? And what are my odds of getting into God's kingdom?"

Jesus responds by challenging the crowd to examine their hearts and their actions with the parable of the householder. Many acquaintances will eat, drink, and socialize with the householder with the expectation that, when night falls, they will be allowed inside the house to stay. The householder knows what is on their hearts, and only the pure of heart are allowed to enter.

I ask myself, "What is in my heart and what am I willing to change and give up, to pass through the narrow door?"

Create in me a clean heart, O God. Give me the courage to give up comfortable but destructive systems, habits, and beliefs so that I may live a fuller life of faith in you. Amen.

Anne Kuhn joined Nassau Church in 2008 along with her husband Jeff and two children, Paul and Sara (now grown and living in Ohio and Washington State). Her faith journey is both challenged and sustained through diverse worship experiences, deepening relationships and the fellowship of believers at Nassau Church and beyond. Anne is a ruling elder and a member of the Human Resources Committee and the Mass Incarceration Task Force.

...

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Psalm 63:1-8

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips
when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy (Psalm 63:5-7 NRSV).

Caleb Carter

I think the psalm means that David is happy with God, and that he is not afraid of the dark because God will carry him, even though back then, being afraid of the dark was logical because there were a load of things in the dark that could be dangerous. The other parts of the passage suggest that David feels safe because of God, like a chick feels safe under its mother's wings, knowing that its mother will protect it. It also says that because he does not have to be afraid, he is singing for joy, and when this was written, singing for joy in the "watches of the night," when anything could happen to him, would have been very brave, as there were actually dangerous wild animals roaming around that could pose a serious threat to him and could hear someone singing. The passage also has a load of figurative language, from singing being called "joyful lips" to calling the nighttime "the watches of the night," to comparing protection to being under someone's wings. I like this psalm's image of God as protecting people, as it reminds us that God loves us and wants us to be happy. In the pandemic it feels like there are dangers all around us and we need God watching over us and protecting us. Even in dangerous times we can sing for joy to God.

God, help us to sing for joy as you watch over us. Amen.

Caleb Carter is eleven years old and is homeschooled in sixth grade. He lives in Princeton with his parents, Laura and Percy, and his three siblings, Harry, Isabelle and Sam.

...

Friday, March 18, 2022

Psalm 63:1-8

...for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me (Psalm 63:7–8 NRSV).

Dave Kerschner

I don't know about you, but I mostly find myself turning to God in prayer in times of trouble. Although I try to offer a daily prayer of thanks, my most intense praying happens when I am in need, and I am asking God to do something for me.

Until I was 30, the something I wanted God to “do” usually concerned a difficulty in my life, and I prayed for the outcome I desired. That all changed when tragedy struck; I remember I was mad at God. I couldn't understand how an all-powerful being could allow such an unfair tragedy to strike. After all, wasn't God in charge of all outcomes?

I prayed about my anger and came to a different understanding of God. I grew to believe God was not in the business of changing the laws of nature for my benefit. I came to understand that God created a wonderful universe, but one with rules and order that worked mostly for good (but sometimes for bad). The marvel of the laws of physics that permit airplanes to fly are the same laws that result in a plane crashing when it loses power.

Since then, I have stopped praying for outcomes. Instead, when I talk to God about my problems, I ask for the wisdom to make the best choices to deal with them, and the strength to accept the outcome if it is different than my wish. Since that has been my credo, I have come to understand that God always answers my prayers. I know that I fly in the shadow of God's wings every day, and that God's right hand is always there to uphold me.

Dear God, heavenly Mother and Father, thank you for always being there for me, and allowing me to fly in the shadow of your wings. Thank you for always answering my prayers, and for constantly holding me up, especially in those times that are difficult for me to bear. Amen.

Dave Kerschner has been a member of Nassau Church for 25 years. It's been Dave's privilege to serve as chair of the Finance Committee for several years. He is the proud father of Kevin and Scott, doting grandpa of Francisco, and grateful husband of Sharyn. Often you find Sharyn and Dave ushering on Sunday morning. Now semi-retired, Dave and Sharyn split their time between New Jersey and Florida and enjoy traveling whenever they can.

...

Saturday March 19, 2022

Luke 6:43-45

“The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45 NRSV).

Cynthia Lynn Miller

I am writing this meditation in Lake Bluff, Illinois, visiting my parents, and it is January, one of the notoriously coldest months of the year in Chicago. I grew up in Northbrook and am well-versed in all things snow and ice. I embrace single digits and negative temperatures, and, true to form, it is snowy, icy, and about six degrees Fahrenheit. The sun is glistening on new-fallen snow, and Luke's verses about good trees and good people put me immediately in mind of snowflakes. Not just one (as the familiar emoji might have us believe) but all snowflakes. When the sun shines and heightens the magnificence of these crystals, I remember how unique each snowflake is. Each crystal is not only differentiated from another but also has its own personal path to the ground. Each flake

travels through a unique set of clouds, with alternate temperatures and various levels of moisture. And, as the famous children's science experiment with charcoal and ammonia might represent, these crystals all grow with their own special "personalities". Absolutely astounding when you think about it...when you think about how many unique, special flakes comprise a snowman, an igloo, or even the smallest snowball in the smallest hands. God had made us unique in our own way, and, like the snowflakes, we must embrace that gift. We cannot force a path we are not prone to tread. We need to walk our own path, take our own journey and, like the snowflake, grow and mature in our own, special, wonderful way.

God, how wonderful you are, to have made us in your image but to have made all of us unique and wonderful. We are truly grateful for these gifts you have given us to explore our inner snowflake. We are especially grateful to embrace such wonderfulness, beauty and magnificence and to forge a path that is all our own. Amen.

Cynthia Miller lives in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. She works in international market research and is a novelist and article writer in her spare time. She grew up Presbyterian and has been a member of Nassau Church since 1997. She thoroughly enjoys contributing to the Adult Education Committee and the Lenten devotionals.

...

Third Sunday of Lent, March 20, 2022

Psalm 63:1-8

O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water (Psalm 63:1 NRSV).

Jim McCloskey

When King David wrote this psalm, he was in the Judean desert with a tiny band of supporters fearfully fleeing from his son Absalom, who had turned the people of Israel against him; and was leading a revolt hell-bent on killing his father so that he could assume the throne. At that moment David felt the absence of God; but, as we see in later verses, his faith returned as he confidently asked God to save him from Absalom's treachery.

Who among us in our life's journey of faith has not had periods of time when we felt abandoned by God and even wondered if God really exists? I know I have. If you've felt the absence of God in your life, you're in good company. In 50 years of private correspondence with her spiritual advisors that was published in 2007, Mother Teresa, up to her neck in ceaseless poverty and disease for all those years, wrote of her never-ending spiritual despair and darkness, convinced that God had abandoned her. She confided in these letters that her cheerfulness was a "cloak" that covered her longing for the presence of the absent Christ.

But we are not to despair. Hope springs eternal. Didn't someone say, "Seek and you shall find"? If we, like David, earnestly seek the Lord, our faith can once again come to life and even deepen. And when that happens, however it happens, we can move mountains. Even though Mother Teresa may not have realized it because she was so overwhelmed with the misery of the streets of Calcutta, I believe it was God who enabled her ministry, from a small early seed, to grow and multiply worldwide, beyond anyone's expectations. Christ was there all the time, but maybe

she didn't know it.

Gracious and merciful God, we humbly come before you with a faith sometimes tattered, but always longing for and seeking your presence in our lives. Thanks be to you, O God, for all that is, was, or ever will be. Amen.

Upon graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1983 with a Master of Divinity degree, **Jim McCloskey**, at the age of 41, founded Centurion Ministries. Centurion is a non-profit organization dedicated to freeing falsely imprisoned men and women serving life or death sentences nation-wide for the crimes of others. He joined Nassau Church in the mid-1990s.

...

Monday, March 21, 2022

Psalm 39

Show me, LORD, my life's end
and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.
You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
the span of my years is as nothing before you.
Everyone is but a breath,
even those who seem secure (Psalm 39:4–6 NIV).

Ned Walthall



© 2021 ned walthall

Call this series of photographs “The Kitchen Light Experiments.” You can try this at home. Light on an April morning—at 8:10:06 a.m. to be precise—pours through a window in our kitchen. It is a tricky angle, and so it is only there for a while and only during certain times of the year. It’s a mini-Stonehenge, that corner. Put an onion on a cutting board there, and if it is bathed in shadow and light in this way, at 8:10:26 a.m., you know its April 17. Time to plant.

But there is a paradox here. We could say this is an example of a still life. But there is nothing still about it, is there? Look at the shadows to the left and right and behind the onion. John Berger once wrote that “a photograph, whilst recording what has been seen, always and by its nature refers to what is not seen.” We don’t see the shadows move, yet that is precisely what the photograph refers to: that in a half hour or so, the onion will be in the dark.

Read again Psalm 39:4–6 above. You don’t need a pandemic to know this. Simply observe the movement of light in your kitchen on an April morning.

Show me, LORD, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. Amen.

Ned Walthall (www.nedwalthall.com) is a photographer based in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. He received his MFA from the Institute of Art and Design at New England College (formerly the New Hampshire Institute of Art). His work has been shown throughout the United States and abroad. He and his partner, Mari Walthall, are currently at work on a photo book entitled *Covid & Faith* (www.covidandfaith.org) in which they explore in some depth the ways in which the Covid-19 pandemic has transformed individuals’ spiritual practice and beliefs.

...

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

Psalm 39

I said, "I will guard my ways,
Lest I sin with my tongue;
I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,
While the wicked are before me."
I was mute with silence,
I held my peace *even* from good;
And my sorrow was stirred up.
My heart was hot within me;
While I was musing, the fire burned.

Then I spoke with my tongue:
"LORD, make me to know my end,
And what is the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I *am*" (Psalm 39:1-4 NKJV).

Patty Thel

Every morning during the last few waning bites of breakfast and sips of tea, I scroll Facebook to catch the latest witty comment, joke, family picture, video or news-clip. I tell myself not to be angry with people who won't get vaccinated, or people steeped in a gun culture, or, well, you know. I fume and write in the comment box and then hit delete. My face burns. My "enemies" smile cheerily from pictures with their grandchildren from a sunny clime or favorite restaurant. And in another post, they flash an also graphically sunny meme with not so sunny messages. Comments from their friends below confirm their views on people from another tribe who are "evil".

But back to the face burn. Psalm 39 addresses this directly. The psalmist fumes with exasperation while in the midst of his enemies, and is so angry that he must "guard his ways". The chasms are too wide, the wounds too deep, the views too different. His enemies are in his midst. A muzzle is the only solution. He holds his peace, even from "good."

Words will not suffice to provide remedy or bring justice. He is called to silence.

Then the Spirit takes hold. Life's frailty and brevity are laid before the psalmist. It is a clarion call to look beyond the ephemeral glossy Internet images and see the broken human condition and be called to God's redemption. As a friend of mine once said, "the ground is level at the foot of the cross."

Dear God, we pray today for the broken heart, the broken marriage, the battered ego, the sin sick, the exhausted and the exasperated—even, and especially, in the lives of people with whom we disagree. Lead us in the beauty of silence. Bring us, in this Season of Lent, to unity with the suffering Christ who died for us. Remind us of our fleeting existence and frailty here on Earth, and of the glorious redemption, resurrection, and new life to come. Holy Spirit, in the silence, breathe on me. Amen.

Patty Thel is a choral conductor who led the Trenton Children's Chorus for ten years, and the Westminster Conservatory Children's Choir for 25 years. She also formerly taught at Princeton Day School. She lives in Princeton Junction with her husband Steve and is the mother of Betsy, Tommy and Joe Thel, who all grew up in Nassau Church. Patty has served as deacon, elder, Sunday School teacher and on the staff at Nassau Church for a year as interim children's choir director.

...

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Luke 13:18-21

Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.” Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into flour until it worked all through the dough” (Luke 13:18–21 NIV).

Val Mathews

In this reading, Luke writes that Jesus offered two positive, simple, clearly understood analogies to the kingdom of God: a tiny mustard seed that succeeded and grew into a useful tree and coarse yeast that became edible and healthy.

Jesus experienced many reality checks of opposition from “Big Brother” Roman government, from demons, from powerful religious leaders, from public misinterpretation of his messages and, yes, from his own team of disciples. Yet, like tiny mustard seeds and the yeast, Jesus’ influence grew as he focused on healing, which definitely impressed the public, and preaching a peaceful and positive kingdom of God.

Over the centuries, acceptance and reinforcement of this message has positively influenced generations of people.

Please help each of us to accept that in our own lives, we have privileges and opportunities to work and succeed and “do well” in spite of life’s complications and setbacks, including two years of stubborn Covid-19 infections. Amen.

Val Mathews has enjoyed several challenging, interesting, and just fun careers in early Cold War weapons technology, Information Tech, International Telecommunications and Business, including traveling and working in southern Russia. He retired twice and is now on the executive committee of a board of a non-profit military high school. Val especially enjoys Nassau’s Men’s Breakfast Group. His wife Martha is in the adult choir. Their three successful children and six grandchildren are their most prized accomplishments.

Thursday, March 24, 2022

Psalm 32

The one whose wrongdoing is forgiven, whose sin is covered over, is truly happy
(Psalm 32:1 CEB)!

Vinnie Lord

I think this means that if you ask, you will receive. Like a couple of days ago I stole some root beer from my brother Ned's glass. I got in trouble and I couldn't have any more root beer that day. If I would have asked though, I probably would have gotten a sip from Ned's glass anyway. Plus I wouldn't have been punished and I would have gotten more root beer. But I was forgiven; and the next day I got a root beer. I was truly happy.

Dear God, thank you for always forgiving our sins when we make mistakes. We will continue to ask for forgiveness and try our best not to make that same mistake again. Amen.

Vinnie Lord is a fifth grader at Riverside School in Princeton. In her spare time she enjoys many sports, playing on her new PS4, and baking. She also plays travel soccer and baseball for Princeton's local teams.

...

Friday, March 25, 2022

Psalm 32

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin (Psalm 32:5 KJV).

Janet Anderson

Weary upon my knees, as winter's cold
sinks through my bones, I bare my soul to you.
My sins and my iniquities are told;
I sink in shame, recalling them anew.

But I will speak, confessing to you, Lord,
my manifold transgressions, and reveal
the sin that pierces sharper than a sword,
strikes harder than the stones on which I kneel.

Forgive me, Lord. You know, far more than I,
my sinful nature, sorrow of my heart,
and yet you heed my fearful, mournful cry
of deep contrition, torn from every part --

for deeper still your merciful embrace,
your dear forgiveness and your saving grace.

**May God grant that as we see our unworthiness we also see his
boundless forgiveness. Amen.**

Janet Anderson has lived and worked in Princeton for several decades. Among other things she is a writer, reviewer, and poet.

...

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Psalm 32

You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance,
...but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him (Psalm 32:7, IO NIV).

Holly Hardaway

In the Gospel selection for this day, Luke 15, we read of the parable of the lost sheep and lost coin. Both emphasize the joy in heaven over one who is lost and then found. I am reminded of how lost many of us feel both as children and as adults yet how God seeks us out and provides our hope.

I became a true believer in March 1979. My church youth group at that time had a youth pastor who composed musicals as we delved into scripture, and we fed him scriptural lyrics he put into songs. We sang the songs in our groovy 1970s costumes in the sanctuary of the church on Youth Sunday. We wrote about this shepherd who had lost one sheep and left the 99 to look for the one lost sheep. God taught me at an early age of God's care for each one of us. The music embedded the scripture on my heart.

The psalmist of Psalm 32 sums this up and more in writing that God provides a hiding place and protection. I am reminded of Corrie Ten Boom who helped many Jewish people escape from the Nazis during the holocaust in World War II by hiding people in her home. She and her family believed they were following the will of God. They were sent to a concentration camp but Corrie survived and after her ordeal dedicated her life to showing that Jesus' love is greater than the deepest pit into which humankind can find itself.

The song, *You Are My Hiding Place*, reminds me of the hope in Corrie's story and in the scripture describing God as our hiding place and

our hope.

Listen on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/uUx2WcC9JKo>

God, thank you for hope. Thank you for looking for us. Thank you for finding each and every one of us. Use us to help lead all people to your loving, protective almighty arms. Amen.

Holly Hardaway has been a member at Nassau Church since 1988. She lives with her wife Claire Mulry and both are occupational therapists and are thankful for their Nassau Church family.

...

Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 27, 2022

Joshua 5:9-12

The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year (Joshua 5:12 NRSV).

Anne Thomsen Lord

When I experienced labor for the first time, I remember being in the middle of a contraction and thinking: “This does not feel good. This is worse than running.” Astute observation, 2010 Anne.

For me, the hardest part of childbirth was not the pain. The hardest part was not knowing how long the waves of pain were going to last. There was no plotted course or timed practice. I could not see the finish line.

Sometimes all we want is the end. When the manna stops for the wandering Israelites, a chapter ends. The end can be a gift.

Dear God, help us find comfort in the unknowns. Amen.

Anne Thomsen Lord is a deacon, ruling elder, and mother of four. She lifeguards early in the morning at the Princeton YMCA and studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. She continues to prefer running over childbirth.

...

Monday, March 28, 2022

Leviticus 23:26-41

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Now, the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you: you shall deny yourselves and present the LORD's offering by fire; and you shall do no work during that entire day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God (Leviticus 23:26–28 NRSV).

John F. Kelsey, III

The Day of Atonement, known as Yom Kippur, is considered the holiest day of the year in Judaism. It is marked by fasting and prayers of repentance during a daylong service in the synagogue.

The Lord is giving Moses a command, not a suggestion, even going so far as to say that anyone who does any work or who does not fast or pray during that entire day, “such a one I will destroy from the midst of the people (Leviticus 23:30).

This seems pretty cut and dried. We don't know the extent to which this command was followed back in the day, but a 2012 Pew Research reports that about half of the Jews in the United States say they fasted for all (40%) or part (13%) of Yom Kippur.

Christians do not have a single day of atonement, of repentance. Yet we sin every day because, for instance, we are all prideful. But it is not just doing “sinful acts” that breaks God's law; it is wanting to be in charge of our own lives. It is refusing to trust God for our security, and trying instead to build our own. However, we do ask forgiveness for our sins in our daily prayers and confessions. For me, I believe that in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Dear Lord, help us to understand that we need to let go and let God and ask the Lord for forgiveness every day. Amen.

John Kelsey and his wife Pam are blessed to have had Nassau Church as their spiritual home since 1974 when they moved to Princeton. Their children were raised and married in this church, and their daughter Lisa (and Bob) Pisano and their three kids are very active at Nassau. John is a frequent greeter these days at the 9:15 service, and the family usually sits in the fourth pew stage left.

...

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Revelation 19:9-10

Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But [an angel] said, “Don’t do that! I am a servant just like you and your brothers and sisters who hold firmly to the witness of Jesus. Worship God! The witness of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy!” (Revelation 19:10 CEB)

Elena Barreto

Angels. God’s messengers. We have all heard stories about them. Gabriel is perhaps the most well-known. Of course, angels aren’t really the focus of the Bible. Sure, they tell people news from God that changes their lives, and they get credit for that. Kind of. Angels always seem to be inhuman and almost larger than life. However, I think that this verse is proof that angels aren’t as strange as they first seem. The angel says, “I am a servant just like you and your brothers and sisters.” It turns out that angels are like us in one important way. They are God’s servants, much like all of us. Like angels, we too can spread God’s word, and they worship God. The angels are devoted to God. And even to us. After all, we are God’s creation, and so are they.

Dear God, please help us to recognize the angels among us in our everyday lives. Help us to love them and love each other as you love us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Elena Barreto is in seventh grade at Princeton Middle School. She loves to read, especially fantasy books, and she loves to listen to Broadway and movie music. She is in the middle school choir at Nassau.

...

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Luke 9:10-17

On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida (Luke 9:10 NRSV).

Nancy Prince

When I read this verse from the Bible, my thoughts took me to Israel, where I traveled with a group from Nassau Church in the spring of 2015. It was a time of wonderful fellowship and extensive exploration of the physical creation of this part of the world. In reading this verse I could appreciate the activity of walking and being in conversation with fellow travelers. I was curious whether my footsteps were covering the footsteps of the disciples. No doubt the disciples stopped to greet people along the way, listening carefully and speaking with them, showing interest and being helpful to them. They had heard the words of Jesus' teaching and they had benefitted from his example of how he related to each person.

Then Jesus provided a very special opportunity for his disciples to report back from their visiting with persons they had engaged with. He took them to a city called Bethsaida. When they reached this place of retreat, perhaps Jesus directed his disciples to sit in a circle, inviting each one to take his turn sharing about his experience and listening to others.

This retreat would have been the perfect preparation for the next event, where a crowd came to be with Jesus and his disciples.

**Gracious and loving God, who listens to us, help us to listen.
Help us care for the needs of other persons as we work to care for
the needs of ourselves. Amen.**

Nancy Prince has been a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church since 2003 and sings in the adult choir. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Paul Robeson House of Princeton. Nancy lives at Stonebridge in Skillman.

...

Thursday, March 31, 2022

Isaiah 43:1-7

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street (Isaiah 43:1-2 NRSV).

Christianne Bessières Lane

Your Call

O Lord, my soul quakes
My thoughts quiver.
I see nothing.
Calm my spirit.
Settle my thinking
So I hear only you.

O Lord, doubt and dread whirl.
A flurry of fear declares I must fail.

Yet, O Lord, deep inside I know...

You knit my being together.
O Lord, you called even me by name.

When I see without eyes,
You reveal my path.
When I listen to your silence,
You guide my thoughts.
When I breathe you within,
O Lord, I trust your call.

YouTube: https://youtu.be/4h9I_mCuq5U

O Lord, thank you for your abiding presence, even when we forget. Thank you for calling us by name and for giving us gifts to use for your glory. We pray for grace when we fear using those gifts in answer to your call. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Christianne Bessières Lane is a mom, wife, and musician. She with her flutist husband John has been a member of Nassau Church since 2003. She sang in the choir for several years before the gifts of her two children. Now that her children are in school, she hopes to use her gifts to create more music to serve God and beautify the world.

...

Friday, April 1, 2022

Psalm 126

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced (Psalm 126:1–3 NRSV).

Gordon Thomas

The rebirth of flowers in spring is a visible sign that the Lord has done great things for us.



Lord, let us sing for joy. Amen.

Gordon Thomas is an emeritus professor of physics and a Small Group photographer, who has joyfully climbed mountains, happily taught physics, and sung for joy with preschoolers for many years.

Saturday, April 2, 2022

Psalm 126

Let those who plant with tears
reap the harvest with joyful shouts (Psalm 126:5 CEB).

Nico Barreto

This psalm is a joyful one, about good coming from bad. We see a similar theme in the Beatitudes, with verses about the last becoming first and the poor becoming rich. But why God decides that those who have less power should have more is not touched on very much. Is it because God wants you to suffer? Is it because God wants to let everyone have a turn at being powerful? Or is it something else entirely? This passage could bring some clarity. In Psalm 126, people plant with tears, but those tears turn into shouts of joy because of the harvest. God saw those tears and let them water the crops to produce a bountiful harvest. When sadness and tragedy come into your life, God will find a way to turn it into something great.

Dear God, thank you for when life is hard, turning our sadness into joy. Amen.

Nico Barreto is a sixth grader at Princeton Middle School. He enjoys reading and likes cats more than dogs. He is in the middle school choir at Nassau.

...

Fifth Sunday in Lent, April 3, 2022

Philippians 3:4b-14

...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13b-14 NRSV).

David Mulford

In his warm and powerful letter to the church at Philippi, Paul gives thanks for a gift he had received from the church. He then goes on to encourage the Philippians to be true to the faith and to keep “pressing on.”

This particular passage in the letter speaks to me with words both of encouragement and challenge: words which remind me of God’s everlasting love embodied in Christ which is mine for the taking, and then a challenge to keep on moving.

Having served in pastoral ministry for 38 years and having been blessed with more years of retirement than I ever dreamed possible, I find myself still pressing on in my understanding of the challenges of the faith, and experiencing “aha” moments when truths, long eluded, suddenly open up.

One of my firm convictions is that the Christian faith is not a destination, but a journey. I know, in this life, I will never arrive. I will never have it “all figured out.” But my hope is that I will still have the strength to keep pressing on.

O Lord, keep me from the illusion that I have arrived as far as my faith and my actions are concerned. Rather, remind me, each day, to keep pressing on. In Jesus name, amen.

David Mulford 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.

...

Monday, April 4, 2022

Psalm 20

The LORD answer you in the day of trouble!
The name of the God of Jacob protect you!
May he send you help from the sanctuary,
and give you support from Zion.

Give victory to the king, O LORD; answer us when we call (Psalm 20:1–2, 9 NRSV).

Agnes Olah

I like to read my Bible with a pencil in my hand and underline what is most important to me. The first word I underlined this time was *trouble*. God gave us thousands of promises in the Bible, but he has not promised us problem-free life. Yes, we have lots of troubles in our lives. Many of them are created by us. For example, sometimes we set unrealistic expectations. But every crisis can bring us closer to God. In the time of troubles our prayers are much deeper.

Here is God's first promise that I underlined: the Lord will *answer* you. But we have to pray first. I believe that every prayer is answered. The answer is either yes (if agrees with God's plan), no (if not beneficial for us), or later (if we are not ready yet). Are we always listening and waiting patiently for God's response to our prayers?

The second promise is: God will *protect you*. There is no need to focus on protecting ourselves. God will protect us, defend us. Who will safeguard us better than God? My house is not protected by ADT, but by God.

God may *send you help*. He is very creative in sending help. Most of the time we would prefer if the circumstances would be changed. But many times, instead of changing circumstances, God changes us. He gives us a new perspective, a new hope, a new dream.

Finally, he will give you *support*. God knows very well that we can get weak, tired, sad and we need encouragement, strength and wisdom. We have to remember that when God guides, God provides.

O Lord, answer us when we call. We are asking you in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Agnes Olah, a retired bank executive, lives in Somerset and has been part of the Nassau Church community for the past ten years. Agnes enjoys assisting in various children's activities at Nassau. She also participates in the church mouse program and leads the greeting cards and crafts projects that help fund Nassau's mission partners.

...

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

1 John 2:18-28

Who is the liar? Isn't it the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This person is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22 CEB).

Jay Dunn

Jesus' message to us can be expressed in a few short words: Love God and love one another. That love must be constant and unconditional. Jesus told Peter he should forgive his transgressors as many times as there were transgressions. In the parable of the good Samaritan Jesus makes it clear that our love should not be limited to persons from our own culture or our own faith.

None of us is a strong enough Christian to adhere to these principles universally. But we must acknowledge them and seek to live our lives accordingly. To do otherwise would make us into the antichrist that John warns us about.

There are countless people in our midst who call themselves Christian but advocate a different set of principles. They rarely mention Christ's admonition to feed the hungry and cloth the naked, let alone take the trouble to practice it. Instead they emphasize a different set of values, often related to subjects that Christ never mentioned in his ministry. They demand that everyone follow their teachings and those who do not are to be rejected and even reviled. They practice hatred and insist that

they're doing it in the name of Christ.

Is this the antichrist to which John referred?

I don't have the answer to that question, but I believe if we wish to be the body of Christ within our community we must place our emphasis on the values that Christ emphasized and ignore the claims of others, even others who insist they are Christian.

However, and I think this is equally important, when we reject those values we should not reject the people who are expressing them. After all, our Savior taught us to love everyone.

Father, help us to remember and practice the principles taught to us by your son, Jesus Christ. Help us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves and help us to do that every day. Amen.

Jay Dunn is a semi-retired sports writer. During the baseball season his column appears on Thursdays in *The Trentonian*.

...

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Psalm 20

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed one;
God answers his anointed one from his heavenly sanctuary,
answering with mighty acts of salvation achieved by his strong hand.
Some people trust in chariots, others in horses;
but we praise the LORD's name.
They will collapse and fall,
but we will stand up straight and strong.

LORD, save the king!
Let him answer us when we cry out! (Psalm 20:6–9 CEB)

Madeline Tramontana

If I am in trouble, I can pray to God for help. If we feel frustrated, sad, or overwhelmed by things in our lives, we can always pray and talk to God to look for help and support. God is always there to help and guide us in the way we should go. When I was sad after losing my Pop Pop, I prayed to God to help support me and my family. Praying helped me feel better and gave me hope that my family and I would find a smile again. When I pray in church I pray for everyone in our community and I hope that God hears my prayers and helps everyone around me.

Dear God, thank you for giving us food and water. Thank you for giving us a home with friends and family. Thank you for everything you do for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Maddie Tramontana is in the fourth grade at Toll Gate Grammar School in Pennington. She likes to play field hockey, paint, and spend time with friends and family. She sings in Choir 345, has fun with Club 345, and loves when she gets to help with the younger choirs at Nassau Church.

...

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Psalm 31:9-16

Have mercy on me, LORD,
because I'm depressed.

Shine your face on your servant;
save me by your faithful love (Psalm 31:9, 16 CEB).

Marie Shock

While the psalmist pleaded with the Lord to help him through depression, sadness, gossiping and terror, we know that Jesus is facing similar battles with his enemies who seek to discredit his work and put him to death.

As we confront our own health, work and family challenges, may we remember to ask for guidance through prayer and seek comfort without blame for our troubles. As Jesus experienced human challenges and suffering, may we remember not to rage against him when we are suffering. May we feel his love and light shine upon us and bring comfort during times of distress.

Help us Lord, to find comfort, solace and peace in your loving hands as we weather our own times of illness, sadness, and unrest. Amen.

Marie Shock is enjoying serving as a deacon and seeing her young twin grandchildren. She is retired from private school administration, and enjoys bridge, tennis, long walks and reading.

...

Friday, April 8, 2022

Hebrew 2:10-18

For this reason [Jesus] had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrews 2:17–18 NIV).

Benjamin Yeh

At the age of 13, I was dying of leukemia. Only through the unyielding efforts of my parents and doctors, and miracles, I survived.

Although that was more than 40 years ago, back in Taiwan, I still remember vividly the ordeals of medical treatments and the arduous recovery process. The cycles of chemotherapy and radiation treatment sometimes deprived me of the last drops of energy, leaving me fearful and depressed. During that time, I read a lot and I happened to read a small piece of Pasternak's verses, in Chinese translation, that has comforted me tremendously since. I clung to these words especially when I was in deep agony:

*For whom in this world is all this breadth,
So much agony and such power?
Are there so many souls and lives in this universe —
So many settlements, and rivers and groves?*

*Yet three days such as this shall pass
And they shall thrust me into such a void
That during this brief interval of time
I shall attain my full stature, awaiting for Resurrection.*

Back then I was not a Christian and did not know the verse was about Jesus Christ. But “Three days such as this shall pass” gave me tremen-

dous hope and re-charged me again and again to carry on.

A decade later, when I became the first Christian of my family in Taiwan, I realized that God sent those words to my rescue, long before I recognized him.

God's love, inexplicable.

Dear Lord, thank you for humbling yourself, being flesh and blood like us. You suffered as we did, thus were able to feel and help us when we are in distress. You're our stronghold and savior and we will trust you forever. Amen.

Benjamin Yeh and his wife Emily have been members of Nassau Church since 2014, when they moved from Taiwan to Princeton. He is currently a ruling elder and serves on the Human Resources Committee. Emily serves on the Children and Family Ministries Committee. They have two children, Jonathan and Symphony.

...

Saturday, April 9, 2022

Luke 22:1-13

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed (Luke 22:7 NRSV).

Lynne Pfarrer Seidel

Luke 22:1-6

Judas Iscariot, with Satan perched on his shoulder,
makes a deal with the temple officers
to betray Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Luke 22:7-13

The day before Passover,
when a lamb for the Passover meal had to be slaughtered,

Jesus directs the disciples to the preordained place where they, like a family, would have the Passover meal.

**Agnus Dei, qui tolis pecatta mundi,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Miserere nobis
Pray for us.
Agnus Dei, qui tolis pecatta mundi,
Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
Dona nobis pacem
Give us peace. Amen.**

A member of Nassau Church since 1976, **Lynne Seidel** lives with her feisty cat, Mimi, in an active adult community in Pennington. She loves words and people.

...

Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022

Philippians 2:5-11

Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:

When he found himself in the form of a human,

he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5, 7b, 8 CEB).

Kim Kleasen

On this Palm Sunday, we sing and shout songs of praise as Jesus enters Jerusalem. Imagine the scene, Jesus humbling himself, riding a young donkey—an animal of the common people—down dusty roads, Jesus being hailed by the throng as king without the usual trappings of a king and Jesus taking that ride knowing what was to come. In Jesus, we see the son of God, always humbling himself and living out God's will for his life. From his joyous welcome to Jerusalem through the events of the days to come after that entrance, Jesus was humble and served God.

Jesus Christ is a living example for each of us, a simple example yet one so very difficult for us to emulate. Our quest to imitate Christ is one that requires constant prayer and attention throughout our life's journey. Yet, our quest is never achieved. But when we fall short, we are always forgiven by God and in that forgiveness, we find another chance. Our humbleness, our search to imitate Christ, is elusive for we are often drawn to "show off." Putting our knowledge, our connections, our resources, our whatever on display and missing the important question: In this situation, how can I best be like Jesus and live out God's desire for my life?

Loving and gracious God, today we rejoice for Jesus. We are amazed by his life of humble service to live out your purpose for him. As we watch his entrance to Jerusalem, we gasp at the honor you gave him and the amazing things he did with the life you gave to him. May we strive to live our lives to your purpose and in humble service to you. In Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Kim Kleasen is a ruling elder, currently serving on Session and on the Forward in Faith Together Working Group. She is a long-time member of the adult choir, a flutist and sees the creativity each of us possesses as a pathway to deepening faith and purpose. She completed a course of study in spiritual direction at General Theological Seminary during the pandemic, where she focused on the arts as a pathway to faithfulness.

...

Monday, April 11, 2022

John 12:1-11

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair (John 12:3 NRSV).

Cynthia Ritter Parker

Some years ago I served on the worship team for a Synod event. We felt called to offer a footwashing in our closing service. A beloved presbytery leader shared with me how much they hated this idea, the vulnerability of offering someone your stinky feet. When the moment came, that presbyter came to my station. As I poured warm water over the feet, dried them with a towel, and offered a pair of clean white socks, the intimacy drew us closer to each other.

Within a year that beloved presbyter died unexpectedly. As I study Mary's anointing of Jesus in this passage, I am feeling that in that worshipful footwashing, I anointed that beloved child of God for death and into a fresh new resurrected life.

Lord, help us to be more vulnerable and open to unexpected experiences of your Spirit. Amen.

Cynthia Ritter Parker is Elder/Deacon John Parker's spouse and adventure partner. She is the mother of Sarah, Christian, and Will, and a retired PC(USA) pastor.

...

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

Isaiah 49:1-7

This is what the LORD says—
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—
to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,
to the servant of rulers:
“Kings will see you and stand up,
princes will see and bow down,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.” (Isaiah 49:7 NIV)

Lina Genovesi

The servant is the prophet of God called by God to restore the nation to God. Who is the servant in Isaiah 49?

The servant is each of one us being reminded of our duty to God as the servants of Jesus Christ to restore the world to its intended state and to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

How can this be accomplished?

This poem also lays out a plan for the restoration of Israel. In our modern context, we will be empowered by God to “restore the land and reassign its desolate inheritances” so that the people will neither “hunger nor thirst” (Isaiah 49:10). The servant of God is called to have compassion to guide the people “beside springs of water” (v. 10).

Given our circumstances, the mandate of God is a tall order but the Lord promises to help us by “turning all my mountains into roads and my highways will be raised up” (v.11). God promises us that the people will respond and “they will come from afar” (v. 12).

In this Season of Lent, we are called to remember the love of God through Jesus Christ. We are called to spread God’s love into the world by showing compassion to others less privileged than us so that their suffering is alleviated.

To sustain us in what we are called to do and give us faith, there is a promise in this poem to each one of us that “Kings will see us and stand

up, princes will see us and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen us” (v. 7b).

Thank you, Lord, for reminding us of our mission and give us the faith, strength and fortitude to carry out this mission. Your servant in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lina Genovesi has been a member of Nassau Church for over three years. In her day job, she is an attorney and is involved in pharmaceutical litigation. In her spare time, she is a budding photographer and fiction writer. She resides in Princeton with her family and her two cats.

...

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

Hebrews 12:1-3

...looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith...(Hebrews 12:2a NRSV).

Bailey Mitra

Jesus.

The ultimate example and role model,
he taught us how to be more than we imagined,
to make our own paths,
to push through and to break down boundaries.

You.

A unique person,
Nobody exactly alike.
You continue to try,
to work, just as our Savior did.

Us.

Through thick and thin,
we keep at work,
we get what we need to done,
and then we do it again.
Day after day, we do what we can,
and try even more.

Yet,

sometimes we fall short,
and that's okay too.
When we do fall short,
we waste not a second.
Instead we get back to work,
a force with which to be reckoned.

Jesus.

The ultimate example and role model,
the reason that you can pave your own path,
the way we were taught to push through, just like he did.

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us the Bible in which we learn your ways. Thank you for allowing us to take the reins and create our own future, yet still have you at our side. In your name we pray. Amen.

Bailey Mitra is a seventh grader at Montgomery Upper Middle School. He enjoys spending his free time playing on his xbox and playing sports. He has a younger sister named Reagan whom he loves to spend time with.

...

Maundy Thursday, April 14, 2022

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

“You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you (John 13:13–15 NRSV).

Lois Foley

When I was a child, my father managed a small, locally owned fuel company. In my early teen years, after working there for more than 25 years, he was wrongfully accused of stealing and was fired. He was devastated. Months later and following a full investigation, he was exonerated and received an apology— but was never offered his job back. The insinuation of his involvement and the resultant humiliation would follow him through the rest of his career. At the end of his life, in late stage dementia, he would frequently cry out, “I didn’t do it; I’m honest.” Only his children heartbreakingly knew to what he referred.

Each year as we enter Holy Week, I remember my Dad’s story. It magnifies my awe of the innocence and divine sacrifice of Jesus, who fully understood the burden and weight of the world’s sins that would soon be upon him. How sad he must have been to see the darkness that surrounded a once-perfect creation as he walked from a supper to a garden, a “trial” and to his death. Gratefully, the love of Christ was able to see light beyond the darkness of sin and to find a beauty and purpose in all of us. May we move beyond our current challenges constantly seeking that same beauty, in each other and the greater world, as was so clearly seen by our Teacher and Lord that holy weekend.

God, thank you for loving us and believing in us. Keep our eyes open to the lessons of love taught through your amazing wisdom and example each day of our lives. Amen.

Lois Foley has been a member of Nassau since March 2018. She enjoys leading the *GriefEncounters* program with her friend, Marcia Wood, and is currently church mouse to two of Nassau's college students. Lois is a family law paralegal to a New Brunswick firm and enjoys distance walking when weather permits. She is a proud mom to grown children Meghan, Rachel (husband Adam) and Bryan.

...

Good Friday, April 15, 2022

Hebrews 10:16-25

“This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days says the Lord.

I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds,”

he also adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

...and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith... (Hebrews 10:16, 21a–22a NRSV).

Denyse Leslie

We have a new covenant. Not just new, but better due to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. As my “Bajun” grandmother would say, “Once and done.”

We just must believe and live each day in belief, without wavering, keeping our eyes on the example of the life of Christ and remember that we need one another. The highest priest opened the curtain and invited us into the presence of God. We can approach his presence with confidence through prayer and meditation. This is our inheritance. We are complete. Something happened. We are promised that transformation, that good peace.

I recently had eye surgery. My old lenses weren't working any more. I had fears coupled by faith in the cataract surgery and the surgeon. Fears

came from learning of bad experiences others had. But each day after the surgery, and from each eye, I experienced better and better sight, such that two months post-surgery I experience better sight than I have ever had before. I reach for reading glasses no longer needed and laugh. That is what this new covenant means to me. It encourages me to be part of a faith family and a fellowship, and to gather as best I can in this pandemic, with all of you to share this good news.

I remind myself daily to remain open and willing and honest and let myself be guided by the law of the spirit and the life of Christ to help another.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Teach me how to order my days that I may say the right word in the right way, lest I betray the spirit of peace. Keep watch with me over the days of my life, that with enthusiasm I may be in such possession of myself that each day I may offer to thee the full, unhampered use of me as an instrument of thy peace. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Howard Thurman

Denyse Leslie is a child of God, blest to believe in Jesus and his sacrifice, to be able to enter with confidence into God's presence in prayer and meditation. She is a long-time member of Witherspoon Street Church, currently serving as a ruling elder. She is a member of the WSPC-NPC Joint Partnership and one of four founders of the Bending the Moral Arc Courageous Conversations program, which is finding a life within and beyond our two congregations and the PC(USA).

...

Holy Saturday, April 16, 2022

John 19:38-42

Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen (John 19:40a NIV).

Mark Herr

Holy Week is threaded with cowardice. Caiaphas and the Pharisees want Jesus dead, but don't want to be blamed. In stealth, they subcontract the job.

Judas leads an armed band to a remote garden in the dead of night, so no one sees his betrayal. Because he is frightened, Peter three times denies the man with whom he has preached for three years.

Pilate, the bureaucrat, afraid to make the call, passes the buck to the crowd who, safe in numbers, calls to crucify Christ.

Which gets us to unexpected bravery from two who have the most to lose, wealthy Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

The Gospels aren't kind to the wealthy. The rich young man Jesus tells to sell everything? He runs away. There's the rich man suffering in hell. Who can forget that it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to go to heaven?

Yet two wealthy men, who "feared the Jewish leaders" (John 19:38) and "visited Jesus at night" (v. 39), risk all to ask Pilate for the body. Fearful, faithful, Joseph and Nicodemus act bravely. Two whose servants do everything for them become servants, preparing Jesus for burial.

Maybe we need these two because only they can afford 75 pounds of myrrh and a new tomb, but I think not. John's lesson is that faith alone gives you courage to follow Christ. Faith alone lets all of us pass through the needle's eye.

God of grace and God of glory, grant us the courage of a Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus when we too often are no braver than Caiaphas, Pilate, Judas, and Peter. Instead of being part of

a mob that calls out, “Crucify him!” grant us the wisdom to recognize our flaws and the courage to accept the gift of grace you extend us lest we miss your kingdom’s goal. Amen.

Mark Herr is marking his 40th year worshipping at Nassau and 36 years as a member. He and his wife Rachel were married at Nassau Church, their five children were baptized at Nassau, and his son was buried at Nassau. He daily asks God to grant him the courage for the facing of this hour.

...

Easter Sunday, April 12, 2022

Luke 24:1-12

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen” Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them (Luke 24: 5b, 10–11 NRSV).

Roz Anderson Flood

He is risen,

a new Word, a new world
formed by the supple lips of women.
Velvet vowels lifting to the heavens
like spectral swans above frozen lakes.

In liminal precincts, a woman
saw God in a gardener,
spiritual sisters conversed with
archangels among winding-cloth,
in otherworldly wonder.

No one listened or believed

For centuries silenced, banned
from witness and jury box -
innocent women condemned
unable to defend, bearing
heavy legacy of first Truth.

Ascendant, our Savior bids us
listen to unexpected evangelists -
to their shattering song
to their silence

He is Risen
Indeed

Dearest Lord, teach us to recognize, heed and protect your unexpected messengers who come to deliver your word. In the blessed name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Roz Anderson Flood currently serves on the Board of Deacons. She sits on the Worship and Arts Committee and the WSPC-NPC Joint Partnership Committee. She also sings second alto in the adult choir. Her latest poetry project is a chapbook manuscript, documenting her family history from slavery to the present.

...