

Lenten Devotional



Entry of Christ into Jerusalem
Wilhelm Morgner (1891-1917)

NASSAU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Princeton, New Jersey

FEBRUARY 22 - MARCH 12, 2023 (1 OF 3)

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*Common English Bible (CEB), King James Version (KJV or NKJV),
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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 Presbyterian Church.

We will be sustained, guided, and blessed 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 2023

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

Lenten Devotions 2023

February 22 - March 12: Mailed February 15

March 13 - March 26: Mailed March 6

March 27 - April 9: Mailed March 20

Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Joel 2:1-2; 3:12-17

Rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Joel 2:13 (NRSV)

We have seen it too many times: after a mass shooting, public figures piously announce that they are sending their thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families. The prophet Joel knew exactly what to call these hollow gestures: rending our clothing. Only the surface is touched.

But sometimes your heart should be breaking. “Rend your hearts and not your clothing,” Joel instructs us. The Ukraine and Syria are being destroyed by war. Migrants sleep on the street in El Paso because immigration centers are too full. Food pantries in Trenton run out of supplies. Our hearts need to be breaking in order to break us out of our comfortable habits and untouched consciences.

Today we observe Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Over the forty days of Lent, God calls us to recognize our complicity in the world’s suffering as we travel with Jesus toward the cross. Often Lent is seen as a time for giving up something. Instead of that kind of symbolic gesture, consider committing to something—an action that risks vulnerability and responsibility, that requires a change of heart. What might that be for you?

Gracious and merciful God, turn our hearts toward you. Break through our complacency and teach us to embody your steadfast love in the world. Amen.

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

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Thursday, February 23, 2023

Jonah 3:1-10

And Jonah said... “forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” So the people of Nineveh believed in God...and the king caused it to be proclaimed...“But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.”

Jonah 3:4, 5a, 7a, 8 (KJV)

There’s nothing miraculous about the swift conversion of the Ninevites. You—I—and all God’s children know when we are hell-bent on a path to destruction. We realize full well the looming consequences of both our good and our evil. And sometimes, all it takes is a stranger’s mirror—like when the restaurant waitress finally remarks, “Well, don’t you think you’ve had quite enough, Chubbs?” Boom! She’s pulled the trigger. Yes, it is that obvious. Time to nix desserts and hit the gym.

Nineveh’s king and subjects were already suffering under their culture of evil. Was it divisive hate? Obsessive greed? A loveless lack of human compassion? We’re not told. But I already have a pretty good idea of my own evils. Daily I bear the burden of their destruction. And Lent provides me the time to stare knowingly into that mirror. Yes, it’s that obvious. No—‘tis not time to bemoan and breast beat and all those popular Lenten misconceptions. But time to pull the trigger of change. Here’s my opportunity to clear my vision, to pluck the mote from my own eye, and stride into the joy that Christ keeps teasing me with every time I follow some piece of his message. Nineveh’s king was a sharp leader, ready to take wise counsel and seize on it with both hands. Hope I can lead myself that well. After all, I have a much wiser counselor than he did.

Sweet Lord, shine the mirror of your own gracious light into our souls. Help us each to see ourselves as we are today; point us toward that more abundant, blessed path that you ever offer; and

give us the courage to joyfully journey towards it with Christ at our side. Amen.

Bart Jackson sings lustily—now once again live—in Nassau choir; pontificates ceaselessly at the Men’s Breakfast Zoom; and gratefully enjoys chats with the many warm and intriguing friends the Jacksons have made during their 17 years at Nassau. He is the founder of the Prometheus Social Enterprise Awards, CEO of Prometheus Publishing, host of The Art of the CEO radio show, and best known as the husband of the lovely Lorraine Jackson.

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Friday February 24, 2023

Psalm 51

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God,
you will not despise.

Psalm 51:17 (NRSV)

Your heart is not whole.

That’s because this world is not the way it’s meant to be. The sadness we feel at death and suffering should break our hearts a little bit every time. Today, let’s take some time to embrace our scattered pieces and give God a little space to work.

I am a person who likes to lay out what my “perfect day” would be. Maybe you aren’t quite as detail oriented as I am, but all of us spend much of our lives striving to fill our homes with comfort, our lives with fun and family, and our days with productivity and projects. We distract ourselves so much with the ideal of being happy, of being whole, we forget that this isn’t the end.

This world is not the destination.

Your heart is not whole.

We are broken people in a broken world with broken hearts. So it’s okay if you find yourself left searching for something more in the life we live every day. Take some time. Reflect on the gaps that are in your

heart. These cracks are scary, especially when you realize that nothing on this earth can repair all the hurt and harm which is daily heard, seen and felt. But in the words of the band U2: “A heart that is broken is a heart that is open.”

God accepts our broken hearts, and he is the only one who can truly bring our pieces back together.

Today, I invite you to trust David’s hope:
a broken and contrite heart, O God,
you will not despise.

Thank you, Lord, for taking us as we are. Help us to see our brokenness as a chance for you to create something stronger and more beautiful. The greater our fall, the greater the room for your love. The greater the darkness, the brighter your light shines. Because of you, we are free from the endless struggle to gain happiness in worldly things, and can find joy in the most difficult places. Amen.

Adeline Edwards is a sophomore at The Wilberforce School. In addition to being an avid runner, she is participating in theater and swimming this season. Adeline has practically grown up at Nassau Church, and hopes to continue doing so. She enjoys seeing all of your lovely faces in and out of the sanctuary.

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Saturday, February 25, 2023

Psalm 51

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Psalm 51:12 (NRSVUE)

I am tired, O Lord. I am tired of Covid, of masks, of vaccinations and all the controversy surrounding them, of new variants, of fear and isolation, of disease and death. I am tired of tilting with windmills—trying to fight hatred, prejudice, injustice, poverty, global warming, all the ills of modern world that have no simple solutions. I am tired of a culture

that values charisma over intelligence, where objective truth has given way to whatever words are repeated most frequently, most loudly, where our human leaders never fail to let us down. How glad I am that you are Lord over all these things, that creation nestles in your hand, and that none of our human failings will overthrow your plans. How glad that I can rest my tiredness on your capable shoulders, and be renewed, and find the energy to continue to fight the good fight. How grateful I am that all I need to do is ask, and you will find a way to restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Eternal God who orders our lives, teach us to cherish each moment and use them all with wisdom. Amen.

Dearest Lord, thank you for calling us by name to your work in the world, for granting us your strength when we cannot find our own, and for invigorating us with the promise of salvation. Amen.

Karen Brown is a clinical pharmacologist working at an immune-oncology biotech startup in Boston. She and her husband James Takasugi have been members at Nassau since 1995. She lives in Lawrenceville with James and their two cats, Spooky and Cato, except when she needs to be in Boston for work

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First Sunday in Lent, February 26, 2023

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

God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.

Genesis 3:5 (NRSV)

Wanting to be like God is the first sin described in the Bible. That is the basic meaning of the sin of pride, and it's no accident that pride leads the list of the Seven Deadly Sins.

The serpent tempts Eve by persuading her that God is not telling the truth, and that she will have all knowledge if she eats the apple. It is so human to want to be superior. This human desire to have the inside

scoop may explain the success of conspiracy theories.

This urge pushes people away from each other like nothing else. It hurts the sinner like nothing else. I know, because I have experienced firsthand the destructive power of pride.

When I was growing up, I got a lot of praise for doing well in school. I was proud of it. I craved the recognition of being best, but I was very lonely. I always felt like an outsider. I was a chubby nerd.

In college, I felt attractive for the first time—I even had a boyfriend. I had a classmate who was very intelligent but mousy. I wanted to keep as much distance from her as possible, which was difficult because people tended to confuse me with her. I was obsessed with being better than she was, and the obsession began to eat me from the inside. I remember my mind going around in circles, digging deeper and deeper into misery. I wanted her to disappear, but, instead, it was my life that was shrinking.

Gradually, I realized that I'm not better or worse than other people. As Christians, we acknowledge that we are all sinners. We all fall short of what we can be, but we keep trying. I consider it a blessing to be on this spiritual journey with all of you.

God, help us to love each other. Remove the barriers we erect. Help us to recognize our common humanity. Dissolve the differences we perceive. Amen.

Frances Slade is the Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus of Princeton Pro Musica. She was a choral director at Rutgers University and Music Director at All Saints Church in Princeton. Today, after a career in music, she is finding great personal and artistic fulfillment in playing the piano. She loves English country dancing and contra dancing. A native of Atlanta, she has lived in New Jersey since the late 70s. She has been a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church since 2007. She enjoys life with her partner Rainer Muser.

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Monday, February 27, 2023

Psalm 32

Thou art my hiding place;
thou shalt preserve me from trouble;
thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32:7 (KJV)

Thou art my shelter, thou my hiding place
When I from sorrow, pain, and hatred flee.
To thee I come, with tears upon my face,
to seek protection now on bended knee.

From torment that infests my every nerve,
from sleepless nights and never-ending days
now gather in and lovingly preserve
my being, thus set free for endless praise.

I lift my voice, delivered from despair,
in hymns of love and blessing, freedom's song,
surrounded by thy never-ending care,
thy mercy, thy defense, and comfort strong,
in thankfulness acknowledging thy grace:
thou art my shelter, thou my hiding place.

**May the Almighty One be my source of safety and of mercy, now
and forever. Amen.**

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

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Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Also, let's hold on to the confession since we have a great high priest who passed through the heavens, who is Jesus, God's Son, because we don't have a high priest who can't sympathize with our weaknesses but instead one who was tempted in every way that we are, except without sin.

Hebrews 4:14-15 (CEB)

As we confess our sins each week in silence, we understand that Jesus lived a human life and was tempted in the same ways. His mercy and forgiveness come from a place of understanding. We recognize his kinship and appreciate that his loving presence will lift us up from despair and lead us to strive to be a better friend, an understanding colleague, a gentler sibling or a kinder spouse. Whatever transgressions we seek to be forgiven and improved, we know that Jesus will be listening.

Let us pray that we understand the true meaning of confession and bare our souls in truth, so as to be forgiven.

Marie Shock has enjoyed deacon service, card making led by Agnes Olaf, teaching Sunday School and especially enjoys meeting fellow parishioners in Small Groups and hearing the talented speakers in Adult Education. She is retired from private school administration, enjoys spending time with her twin, toddler grandchildren, playing bridge, long walks and reading.

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Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Matthew 18:10-14

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?”

Matthew 18:12 (NIV)

Jesus conveys a powerful message in telling the parable of the wandering sheep: no matter how deep and how lost we are in the pitfall of sin, the Lord will go to great lengths to find us, bring us home, and rejoice. The essence of the passage lies in verse 12. Jesus’ other parables (such as the parable of the prodigal son) and his death, where he bore the brunt of our sin, underscores the message of God’s deliverance. Understanding God’s grace is crucial, and Matthew 18:12 captures it excellently.

Losing and finding is imminent in daily life: people fret when they lose something— electronics, wallets, keycards, and other possessions, and we are relieved when we recover them. However, the epitome of the parable has much deeper meaning in the Bible with regards to losing and finding, said epitome being the hymn “Amazing Grace.” The songwriter John Newton conveys his life through the lyrics. He was a slave trader, a “wretch,” until he was saved by God’s grace. He is now one of the most well-known clerics and abolitionists in history who, as written in the song, “once was lost but now found.”

Loving Father,
Thank you for finding us and saving us from sin.
Thank you for surrounding us with songs of deliverance.
We repent when we lose our way,
and we rejoice when we have been found.
We pray in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Andrew Dai has been a part of Nassau Presbyterian Church for a long time. He is 14 years old and attends Princeton Day School.

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Psalm 121:1-7

God will not let your foot be moved;
God keeps you and will not slumber.

Psalm 121:3 (NRSV)

I opened my Bible to prepare this devotion, turned to Psalm 121 and discovered “always remember!!” handwritten in the left margin next to verse 3. Yet as I face the challenges walking through this world each day, I forget. Each day, frustration, powerlessness, resignation that I may never see God’s kingdom on earth floods in. How do I, or we, rekindle the gift of God within us? How do we claim our power, remember that God has us? How do we remember to share Christ’s love and not sow division? How do we work daily for justice? We have been given this charge and must do so together. We have been given the tools. Why do we forget? Let’s start today, remind each other, and hold each other accountable. We have nothing to fear, God will keep us and not slumber.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of power and love. We are grateful that you are our steadfast help and strength that never rests. Help us to always remember we have all we need to do your work in this world. Rekindle in us a daily faith and power to work for justice and lead with love. In your name we pray. Amen.

Claire M. Mulry has worshiped at Nassau Presbyterian Church since 2001. She is a Bronx, New York raised citizen, wife, grauntie, aunt, friend, sister, occupational therapist, teacher, New York Mets, New York Giants & Rutgers women’s basketball fan. She lives a blessed life with her wife Holly Hardaway, dog Hap, and an ever-growing number of family and friends. She is grateful to God, Nassau Church and her Bending the Moral Arc sisters and brothers for their fellowship, love and patience as we grow in love and towards justice.

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Friday, March 3, 2023

Psalm 121

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth...
the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.
Psalm 121:2 and 8 (NIV)

When my son died, we read the Psalm 121 at his memorial service.

I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?

When I was diagnosed with cancer, I put Psalm 121 in my Psalms power rotation.

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

As the ignorance of youth gave way to too familiar knowledge of vulnerability, I began to read Psalm 121 nightly.

The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;

Timothy Keller writes, “The Psalms is about how to throw ourselves fully upon God in faith.”

I don’t know about you, but I need to throw myself at, before, and upon the God who knit us together in our mothers’ wombs, the God who is on the job 24–7–365.

He will not let your foot slip; He who watches over you will not slumber;

The God who knows our thoughts before we speak them, who knows when we sit or rise, who hems us in behind and above—the God who sent his only Begotten Son to redeem us—doesn’t take the day off, knock off early, or sleep in. We matter that much to him. That God.

The LORD will keep you from all evil;

It is a new day. I need the Lord as much as I did yesterday, and as I will tomorrow.

The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Thanks be to God!

Almighty God, It is another day ending in “y”. I repeat my Ground Hog Day Prayer: Forgive us. Do not forsake us. Protect us. Save us. Keep the sun from striking us by day and the moon by night. Keep us from all evil, keep our lives, from this time on and for evermore. Amen.

Mark Herr has been a member of Nassau for 37 years.

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Saturday, March 4, 2023

Luke 7:1-10

When Jesus heard these words, he was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following him and said, “I tell you, even in Israel I haven’t found faith like this.”

Luke 7:9 (CEB)

In most healing stories in the New Testament, the main figures are the person who is healed and Jesus. Not so in this one. The centurion, who is never seen, is front and center. This man is a Roman soldier, representing the empire oppressing the Jews. Still, this centurion has heard of Jesus and his healing powers. He also has the support of the Jewish leaders because he “loves our people and he built our synagogue for us.” I wonder how he became so involved with, kind, and generous to the Jewish community and how he heard about Jesus.

Ordinarily a Jewish rabbi, like Jesus, would not enter the home of a gentile, but here the Jewish leaders urge him to go there. The centurion, knowing this restriction, tells Jesus not to come, but to heal with a word,

a command, just as he commands those under him.

The centurion and Jesus never meet. The servant is healed and the centurion sends word for Jesus not to come. Jesus heals the centurion's servant with a word, based on the faith of a gentile soldier of an oppressive regime. Here is a standard against which to measure our own faith and that of our community during these Lenten days.

God of all peoples, open our eyes to the faithful around us and our hearts to your word for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Carol Wehrheim is the clerk of session and appreciates the many opportunities to tell Bible stories to God's children of all ages. She collects hats, works jigsaw puzzles, and reads mysteries.

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Sunday, March 5, 2023

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"....So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

Genesis 12:1, 4a (NRSV)

Not long ago, I thought I heard God telling me that I would soon be entering the best time of my life. That was great news, since I was pushing 60 at the time.

But then some horrendous things befell me. My health failed, with one major illness after another. And two of my dearest people died, a sister and my son.

Instead of showered with blessings like Abram, I felt like Job, overwhelmed by afflictions.

Did I hear God wrongly? Perhaps God was warning me about entering the worst time in life.

But then I realized. Friends had lavished me with kindness; I had grown closer to my nieces and nephews, and to my daughter-in-law; and I now lived with the woman I love.

And a single medical procedure could drive both illnesses into remission.

Hmmm, maybe this *is* the best time of my life.

Lord, grant me the patience and perseverance—even the wisdom—to look past my afflictions, to better see your blessings. Amen.

A cognitive psychologist, **Thomas Quinlan** studies how digital technologies influence our thinking, by processing written language in new ways. He lives in Hamilton.

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Monday, March 6, 2023

Hebrews 3:1-6

For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. “Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house,” bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Hebrews 3:4–6 (NIV)

God’s house. Builder of everything. God is the architect of the world. God is in every corner and nook of the planet. There isn’t anywhere we can go that God won’t be. That might be scary or unsettling to read. However, I choose to think about it like that because if God is everywhere I will never be alone. Additionally, because God is everywhere and God’s love for us is never ending, we should be steadfast in our faithfulness, like Moses, and praise God eternally in return. I know for me, as I start preparing for college in the fall, being faithful and trusting God’s plan for my life and the next four years is especially important and comforting. It’s comforting because I know I am going to be fine because God has my back. Like Philippians 4:13 (NRSV) says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” This applies to any and all things from starting a new job to starting college. However the relationship between us and God is two sided. If we are indeed steadfast in our

faithfulness and we hold firmly in hope and confidence that God will always be there for us, it will come through on God's end. If we do all that, God will see our devotion and commitment of love for God. And in return, the Creator will reward us by fulfilling our lives with riches of continued compassion and love because of our service to and for others. Those things are what God cares about the most in this world. We learn that by reading God's teachings in the Bible. We see his service and love for his disciples. He pays it forward to others instead of asking for something in return, aside from continued love and care to others from those who follow. Through Moses in this passage, we see that a simple act like being faithful can reward you in ways that will not only make your life better and meaningful, but also improve you as a person. A life of faithfulness and service to others not only benefits each of us but also our relationship with our Heavenly Father. For that, I rejoice!

God of faithfulness, we thank you for constantly showing us that service to others and random acts of kindness are what really matter for they are what make people's lives better. May kindness ripple out into the wider society, and make the world at peace with itself and therefore make society a gentler place. It is with steadfast hope and faithfulness that I pray. Amen.

Julia Hill graduated from Princeton High School in June 2022 and is taking a gap year prior to starting at Drew University this fall. During this year, she is working in the library at Johnson Park and Littlebrook Elementary Schools. She's very involved in life at Nassau from chancel dramas to singing soprano in Adult Choir. When she isn't working or at church, you can find her in her room having dance parties.

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Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Romans 4:6-13

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!

Romans 4:9-10 (NIV)

This is great writing. In the scripture you have just read Paul establishes three facts, then uses them to make his point. He accomplishes all that in two brief biblical verses.

His facts are (1) that Abraham was blessed by God, (2) that Abraham was righteous and (3) that Abraham was circumcised. Then he poses the question: Which came first?

The answer is emphatic. God's blessing always comes first. There are no pre-conditions to God's love. Abraham led a righteous life because he was a man of faith—not because he believed a righteous life was necessary in order to obtain God's favor.

God loves us so much that he sent his Son into the world. The Son loved us so much he died for us. Now, as he continues to spread that love he tells us he is the vine and we are the branches. A righteous Christian understands that metaphor and seeks to be a productive branch in the service of the God who loves him or her.

Father, help us to remember each day that what we do to any other human being, we do also to you. May we never lose sight of the fact that you have commanded us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Amen.

Jay Dunn is a semi-retired sports writer. His baseball column appears on Thursdays in *The Trentonian*.

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Wednesday, March 8, 2023

John 7:53-8:11

They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, “Whoever hasn’t sinned should throw the first stone.”

John 8:7 (CEB)

We remember times when we felt like we were singled out and punished when we were not the only ones behaving badly. Everyone makes mistakes, and Jesus is trying to teach everyone that certain people can’t be chosen to be punished when no one is perfect. We like this lesson.

Dear God, Please forgive us when we make mistakes and know that we always love you. Amen.

Lee and Ned Lord are nine years old. They are Anne and Errol’s kids and Thom and Vinnie’s little brothers. They like sports.

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Thursday, March 9, 2023

Colossians 1:15-23

And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

Colossians 1:21–23 (NRSV)

Lent is the estrangement; it is the underground spring of exile and isolation that creeps silently through our lives. We frame the story of Lent as a forty-day immersion in the desert of our mind’s estrangement and our heart’s hostility to God and the promise of his new creation. We reluctantly submit to a quarantine from lights and music and leavened feasts shared with loved ones, as we prepare to dare to confront the dark-

ness—all the anger, fears, and hungers that infect us and with which we contaminate others. And like the Israelites who fled into the desert, we cannot help looking backwards in the vain hope of retracing our erring, circling footsteps.

Lent is that quarantine space we must pass through before we can embrace the wholeness and glory we have wondrously received. Christ passed through this desert, hungering and grieving as deeply as any one of us ever could, and Christ emerged as the firstborn of the dead, the visible assurance of glory, inheritance, and love. For in him all the fullness of God has burst open the doors of his dwelling space, and through our obedience to his gospel we are invited home.

Dear God in Christ, lift us out of the maze of the Lenten wilderness. Lead us into the light of the Son whose gospel is the beginning, the way, and the glorious redeeming path to our broken hearts' joy. And make us mindful of all your people and your creation, helping us to bring each precious world out of danger and into the bright tents of your promise. Amen.

Debbie Tegarden lives in Princeton with her dear husband. She heads home rejoicing and lifting up the love of God, the source of all courage and hope.

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Friday, March 10, 2023

Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision”....For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Ephesians 2:11a, 14–16 (NIV)

These verses resonate with what is going right now in the world and highlights the strife between factions and countries across the ideological divide. The Jews versus the Gentiles are an archetype for Russia versus Ukraine, Israel versus Palestine, Muslims versus Christians, Hindu versus Muslims, etc. Depending where one stands, the factions label one another as either “the uncircumcised” or “the circumcised.” The faction that is labeled as the outsider is cast out by the faction that labels itself as the insider with the insider having the upper hand in deciding on the definition of humanity.

Only through our belief in God, any two groups whether they are “uncircumcised” or “circumcised” can come together under the umbrella of one humanity. And only then peace can be made and the insiders can let the outsiders come under the tent.

In turning points of history, charismatic leaders have appeared who understood that their mission was to bring together divided factions. To this day, provide us with the pillars of wisdom necessary to enable us to make peace with our worst opponents and they try to promulgate the concepts of peace, justice and racial equality.

More importantly, through the power of God and the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ on the cross, we were all brought together as one humanity as the Body of Christ.

God, only you can cause the warring factions to resolve their differences and reconcile so that we can achieve a semblance of peace. God, I pray to you to grant them the wisdom to realize the benefit in coming together under the umbrella of one humanity so that the pain and suffering their strife is causing can end. Amen.

Lina Genovesi has been a member of Nassau Church for over five years. She is a part of the Mission and Outreach Committee and is active with Churches for Middle East Peace, whose mission is to advocate for peace and justice in the Middle East. She is a Commissioner with the Civil Rights Commission in Princeton. She is currently a practicing attorney with a law firm in New Jersey and resides in Princeton with her husband and two cats.

Saturday, March 11, 2023

John 4:1-6

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

John 4:4-6 (niv)

In this passage, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, which marked land given to Joseph by his father Jacob. Jesus is passing through Samaria with his disciples, who have gone ahead to purchase food. It is noon, and Jesus is alone and rests against the well. When the woman arrives, Jesus asks her to draw some water for him. In the conversation that follows, Jesus shows her that she is known by God, and he offers her the water of life: “whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst” (v. 13). Through the testimony of this one woman many Samaritans hear the message of Jesus and become believers.

In Jesus' time there was no love lost between Jews and Samaritans, although they believed in the same God and shared many scriptures. Today, Jacob's well is outside the city of Nablus in the Palestinian West Bank, so a Jew travelling there might still feel estranged from the locals. As Christians, how often do we condemn others who believe differently than we do, even other followers of Christ? And do we take the time to know them, as Jesus does in his encounter with the Samaritan woman? The woman offers Jesus water, but Jesus offers her a chance at a new life. What might we be able to learn from those who are different from us if we would only take the time to get to know them instead of judging them?

Lord Jesus, help us to know others as you knew the woman at the well. Help us to truly see those who are different from us and to

make them feel understood. Most of all, please help us to offer them the love of God, just as you did.

John Parker is a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church, a well from which he draws strength.

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Sunday, March 12, 2023

Romans 5:1-11

We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame because God's love has poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 5:3–5 (NIV)

Grief and mourning come to mind when we suffer the loss of a loved one whose life has been intertwined with our own, leaving us inalterably changed. In such a circumstance, we hope for our pain to end. We hope to find any semblance of ourselves that is recognizable. We hope to find a new normal. Many unfortunate circumstances in our lives, though, can cause mourning. In a world ruled by excessive social media and beaming selfies, it is far more comfortable to keep scrolling than to face grief head-on from the loss of our health, financial insecurities, the end of a valued friendship or the disappearance of our independence as we age. God is not found by scrolling. However profound your suffering, however long your perseverance loss after loss, God is as near as your own heart.

The building of character is a lifelong project and the strength needed to move through the dark times can only be found when we recognize the depth of God's love as our foundation, and stand strong on it. God is where hope can be found. Hope, always.

Gracious God, thank you for helping us to understand that it is not loss and suffering that will ever define us, even during the darkest of times. Your love is the greatest strength in our life and we are grateful for the endless hope it grants to us. Amen.

Lois Foley has been a member of Nassau Church since joining with her beloved husband Patrick in 2018, prior to his death the following year. She has been a part of grief support group leadership for eight years at Kingston Presbyterian Church (Grief-Share), and since 2021 has facilitated *GriefEncounters* at Nassau. She enjoys her correspondence with college students in Nassau's Church Mouse Program. Lois is a family law paralegal with a New Brunswick firm. She loves distance walking and spending time with family and friends.

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Monday, March 13, 2023

Genesis 24:1-7

Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples.

Genesis 20:1 (NRSV)



As we journey to new places in our lives, let us open our eyes to beauty, such as that of the highest mountains in our country's Northeast, and the needs of the world around us.

Help us to walk and never tire. Help us to continue our journey to serve and never fall. Amen.

Gordon Thomas has been a member of Nassau Church since 1986. He has served as a deacon and is presently active as a pre-K church-school teacher and member of a group trying to bend the moral arc of justice with the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. Gordon is also an emeritus professor of physics at NJIT and author of numerous physics articles and inventions. He is currently one of the leaders of a tri-state hiking club.

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Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Psalm 81

Sing for joy to God our strength;
shout aloud to the God of Jacob!
Begin the music, strike the timbrel,
play the melodious harp and lyre.

Psalm 81:1–2 (NIV)

My favorite and most often read part of the Bible is the letters of Apostle Paul from the New Testament, and from the Old Testament, the Psalms in connection with the books of Samuel who told us the story of David. David, the shepherd who became a king, and wrote many of the Psalms.

Sing for joy. Probably most of us would like to experience joy on a daily basis, but we are not sure how to get there. Singing may be one way, or playing a music instrument, if we know how, or listening to music. But any of these noises should be connected to God.

I worked in New York City for 22 years and I walked 25 minutes from the train station to my office. While walking, I usually prepared myself for the upcoming difficult day and I often hummed “Amazing Grace”. Many times, walking strangers near me picked up the melody and hummed with me.

God is our strength. This is the strength that we need when joy and trouble run in our life side by side. And they run together almost al-

ways. Therefore, we have to remember: God is good; God is in charge; God never changes; God is love; God is the source of joy and source of strength.

Rejoice in the Lord always, sing a song, play music. Music is a gift of God, just like the wild flowers, the singing birds, the snow flakes, the colors of the sunset or the Milky Way.

Dear Father, no matter what we are going through, help us to find joy. Help us to “be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” as Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12:12. Amen.

Agnes Olah, retired bank executive, lives in Somerset and has been part of Nassau Church for the past 11 years. Agnes enjoys assisting in various children's activities at Nassau: Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Christmas Pageant and craft projects. She also participates in the Church Mouse program and leads the greeting cards and crafts projects that help fund Nassau's mission partners.

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Wednesday, March 15, 2023

John 7:14-31, 37-39

About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. The Jews were astonished at it, saying, “How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?” Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him. Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?” The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?”

John 7:14–20 (NRSV)

I wasn't sure I would be able to write a devotional. It sounded pretty serious. When I read the scripture verses for today, I was interested in the John chapter because it mentioned teaching, and I want to be a teacher.

Even though Jesus wasn't taught in a school the way we think about (or the way people back then thought about it), he was still really smart. He saw things with a different perspective, and sometimes that made people angry. They were so mad that some wanted to arrest him, and some wanted to kill him. They weren't expecting someone like him (a guy born in a manger!) to tell them what God thought about things.

What I thought about after reading this is that first of all, you should never underestimate a person who hasn't had the same education that you do. They can still have wisdom from God. The weird thing is, sometimes people are sharing things that are important to God, but we think they're crazy! We don't see them as someone God might use, but they are. Who do you think God speaks through on days like today? Would you follow someone like Jesus nowadays?

God, help us to be good listeners for your words, and that we would take them seriously even if they come from an unexpected person or place. Amen.

Samuel Carter is a sixth grader at Princeton Middle School. He is a son to Heath and Thais; brother to Isaiah, James, and Bree. He loves Marvel, Italian food, reading, and writing. When Sam grows up he wants to be a third grade teacher.

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Thursday, March 16, 2023

Psalm 23

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life.

Psalm 23:4 and 6 (NKJV)

When did you enter the valley of the shadow of death? Or when did you realize you were there? When we look around us, we see death everywhere. This month I lost a friend suddenly and nearly lost my brother last summer. My parents are 92 and my mother-in-law is 100. Our congregation loses a saint almost every week. The news announces death everywhere: on city streets, interstate highways, burning houses, robberies, Ukraine, Africa, China, in every place and situation and right next door. Fear is all-encompassing. There is a mugger in every alley, a rapist in every Uber, a bully in every classroom, younger associates are angling for our job, we'll never have enough money to retire. The shadow of death, the terror by night, the pestilence in the darkness, the destruction at noonday, the pressure mounts, the fear mounts, life grows darker and more depressing.

Even when we have God in our lives, every day is not good, merciful, joyous, just. But we experience mercy and goodness when we breathe the green pasture air, drink from the still waters, smell the roses, hug someone, love an enemy, do an act of kindness, see the good and honor the Holy Spirit in everyone, especially those not like us. When you take the time, make the time, then you can feel God's grace, the grace of God's rod and staff; you can feel God holding you. Yahweh's hand is strong, gentle, and comforting. God's goodness and mercy is for you.

Lord, I long for your goodness and mercy. Help me to make time to breathe, drink, smell, hug, act, see, honor and love your creation—all of it. Help me feel your grace; help me live your grace; give me the power, wisdom, and strength to be your grace for my family and friends and those who are not like me. Amen.

Keith Mertz is a Nassau Church member and chorister since 2000. He and his wife Mary Ann have four grown children: Cory, Jeff, Nick, and Elyse, and a Border Collie named Lucy. Keith's education in physics and engineering led to his current work as a business developer/project manager for Lockheed Martin. He enjoys being outdoors hiking, camping, landscaping, and gardening. Keith is a life-long Presbyterian sojourner, seeking to understand God's word and to show God's grace.

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Friday, March 17, 2023

Ephesians 5:1-9

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of the light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

Ephesians 5:8 (NRSV)

Growing up years and years ago it was a time when our social media was a party line telephone, a Philco radio and a 10-inch black and white television. We listened to funny shows on the radio and shows like “Howdy Doody” and cowboy movies were our entertainment broadcasted on three television channels! Life for children was “good and right and true” with no indecent media to influence innocent minds.

Today with mass social media there are so many ways that children are able to be influenced by suggestive media blogs. We may never return to the innocent years when radio and television shows were child-friendly. However, with the Lord on our side, we are the light to guide those who are influenced, out of the darkness toward the light of a good, right and true life.

Dear Lord, as I live through the darkness of this world, I long to reflect on the light of your love. I pray that you bring me into the light of your saving grace. Please help me to walk in spirit and truth so that I may be used as a light to share your love, grace, and healing with others. In your name I pray. Amen.

Shirley A. Satterfield is a lifelong member of Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church. She is a deacon, advisor of the Junior Usher Ministry, and member of the Chancel and Verse Speaking Choirs. She remembers when, during the 1950s, the First Presbyterian Church (Nassau Presbyterian Church), Second Presbyterian Church (St. Andrews) and Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church worshiped together during the summer months. She joined members of Nassau and Witherspoon Street Churches to celebrate a wonderful 250 years of Presbyterians in Princeton and is proud to say that she gave the celebration name: “Partners in Faith”.

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Saturday, March 18, 2023

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths
of righteousness for his name's sake.

Psalm 23:1 and 3 (KJV)

Humans want to go it alone until we can't and we cry out for help because there are no "still waters" left in our lives. Especially so inside our minds which sometimes feel like "the valley of the shadow of death".

Often people turn to prayer only when things are going badly. Me, me...I, I. Sometimes when I walk Alba (my Great Pyrénées) and I don't keep up with her, she stops, and in her instinctive shepherd way she looks at me dead on, tilts her head to say, "Come on, lady, follow me now!" I draw the simple parallel to God who is always with us and points out the right path for us, but we think we have what we need until one day we don't—BOOM!

In Psalm 23, God is the shepherd, but we are all expected to be God's shepherds to others and you and I also need shepherding. We can relate to roles as a friend, a teacher, a co-worker, a parent, a student, a neighbor or coach where we must grab an opportunity to guide someone needing directions to get on a good path in life.

Conversely, let's identify our own shepherds who show us what is "enough" in our lives and the choices needed to follow the roads to righteousness so that our souls are at peace with God and that we are restored by his word, not the world's. That's all we truly need, but we are such a stubborn bunch.

Gentle Lord, please enable us to herd those needing reassurance of your message and those who think they don't need you. May you also, please, send your messengers in many ways and forms

to herd ourselves into your pasture to be fed your Word. Awaken all our senses to recognize your Word as you speak to us in so many ways throughout our lives. Thank you for allowing us to try to get it right over and over. Amen.

Anne-Renee Rice-Soumeillant, raised as a Presbyterian, is currently a deacon at Nassau Church. She grew up in North Carolina and is a graduate of UNC–Chapel Hill. She also lived, worked and attended college/culinary school in France and has lived in New Jersey for 25 years, primarily working as chef in one capacity or another. Anne-Renee is grateful to the Nassau Church family for nurturing her family's faith journey. She is always seeking greater understanding of God's message.

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Sunday, March 19, 2023

John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither this man nor his parents who sinned; he was born blind so that the works of God might be revealed in him."

John 9:1-3 (NRSV)

How do Christ and God see us? How does the outward appearance of someone describe who he or she truly is inside or the reality of his or her past or present? As a child, my mother spent time in an iron lung due to polio, but through hard work, she became an excellent athlete, and was eventually selected to the U.S. National Field Hockey and Lacrosse teams as a high school athlete. How many times do we judge someone due to outward appearance, only to find out that our initial judgment was totally wrong?

As educators, my wife Maria and I worked at five independent schools, and we often go back for reunions. Our former students are now older than we were as their teachers. So often the alums that are truly making a difference in the world are not the ones you would have thought. It's so easy to make assumptions about others based on athleticism, skin color, clothing, assumed gender, home address, or college attended.

Are we as individuals, and as a church, willing to attempt to see what our Lord sees in others in our neighborhood, country, and throughout the world? Furthermore, are we willing to support, protect, and cherish others, especially those less like ourselves?

Dear Lord, open my eyes to see and my heart to understand, so that my actions embrace your teachings. Help me to be a follower of our Lord Jesus through my thoughts and actions towards others, especially those of a different race, nationality, gender, educational background, or religion. Amen.

James “Penn” Bowditch, Jr., recently retired due to Covid after 49 years in independent and public education. He was a high school history teacher, guidance and college counselor, school administrator, plus lacrosse and soccer coach. Penn’s wife Maria taught French at Blair Academy, where their family lived for 28 years. They have three young adults, one very cherished two-year-old granddaughter, and a hyper-active Bernese Mountain dog.

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Monday, March 20, 2023

Acts 9:1-20

Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” “I am Jesus, whom you are harassing,” came the reply. “Now get up and enter the city. You will be told what you must do.”

Acts 9:5–6 (CEB)

Saul seems to have all the luck. He is granted an audience with the Risen Christ and receives a direct answer to his question.

This fall, I began interning as a hospital chaplain. I have sat with many patients and their loved ones who have a lot of questions for God. Along with their questions, they crave a certainty that no one can give them. Should treatment be continued? Is it time to leave home? Is this the end?

Confidently knowing what to do next is a gift that cannot be undervalued. Saul is blessed with specific orders on his future. Yet, these instructions arrive without being asked. Saul’s encounter reminds us that direction from God can be found when we are asking other questions.

Dear God, Help us feel your presence when we find ourselves burdened with difficult decisions. Come, Holy Spirit. Quickly come. Amen.

Anne Thomsen Lord is a deacon, ruling elder, and mother of four school-aged kids. She lifeguards early in the morning at the YMCA and is in her final semester at Princeton Theological Seminary. She welcomes prayer as she awaits what will come next.

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Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Psalm 146

Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.

Psalm 146:3 (NRSV)

I am reminded of false gods and golden calves; of fancy colors and flashy jewelry; of “fair-weather” friends and misplaced loyalties; of hero-worship; of bowing to mortal beings or, at least, “displaced loyalty” when something better comes along. William Shakespeare had much to say on the subject, and, case in point, is Brutus’s famous speech in the play, *Julius Caesar*: “Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear. Believe me for mine honor. . . If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more” (3.2.14–28). Many around the world place trust in “princes” as defined by celebrities, reality stars, historic and active royalty as well as a myriad of others who grace television, movies, books, social media, and online, in general. This trend makes me wonder whether those who religiously follow these “false gods” have truly lost the ability and interest to follow God or the one in whom people place their respective blankets of faith. The world is a distracted place, and we need to cut through the clutter. We must not allow ourselves to be led from the pasture into the pen if that which is doing the leading is something that turns out to be a mirage. God is not a mirage, not ephemeral but real in every sense. God is omnipresent and

is always our “true north.”

O God, please let us always remember to love you and follow your guidance, that you are our “help in ages past” as well as in our present and future. You are our “true North” and will never lead us astray. Help us to trust you and to have faith in you both now and forevermore. Amen.

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

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Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Isaiah 60:17-22

Bronze, iron, wood and stone I make.
Peace and righteousness too.
No devastation or destruction in your walls.
By night, God will be your everlasting light.

from Isaiah 60:17–22 (CEB)

Last summer, my mom and I went to a poetry class. We learned about something called a blackout poem. This is a writing technique where you black out some words and leave some others. At the end you will be left with a version of your choice of words from the original work. All the words in this one come from Isaiah 60:17–22.

I chose to keep the words above because they stood out to me.

The first two lines explain to us that not only does God make all the physical objects in the world, but he also creates non-tangible things such as our emotions, which is what sets us apart from his other creations. Furthermore, God did not just create us. He also promises to take care of us and wants good things for us. Even though the world has physical light, sometimes it feels as though you are walking through an

endless night. The last sentence reminds us that God is there, watching over us, even if we can't always see or sense him. We have to hold on to these truths.

Dear God, Thank you for creating the world and us with our complex emotions and always taking care of us. When we walk through a dark tunnel in life, help us remember that you will walk with us through it. In your Son's name we pray, Amen.

Isabel Lewono is in sixth grade at the Waldorf School of Princeton, and part of Middle School Fellowship at church. She enjoys writing, drawing and painting as well as woodwork. Isabel lives in Princeton with her family and dog, Olivier.

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Thursday, March 23, 2023

Ezekiel 1:1-3; 2:8-3:3

And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel."

Ezekiel 3:1 (NIV)

In 597 BC, in the second deportation from Judah (part of ancient Israel), the Hebrew King Jehoiachin together with various nobles and the prophet Ezekiel, were exiled to Babylon (which was some 50 miles southwest of today's Baghdad, Iraq).

In this passage, the word *eat* offers a fitting picture of feeding on God's Word and filling our souls with his truth. This naturally leads to the ability to hear and follow his commands. The prophet was then told to *go*, which offers a mental picture interpreted as being directed to step out positively to minister and fill our own and other people's' souls with confidence in God. In Ezekiel's case, the word "go" suggests captive Israelites' future eventual return to Israel.

Lord, please help us to accept that we do not need to experience the prophet's exile or other negative motivations. We can digest God's directive to Ezekiel and actively go forward with orderly and purposeful lives and with Christian faith. Amen.

Val Mathews has enjoyed good health and luck in working in the United States military-industrial complex, including international telecommunications in southern Russia, Colombia and the Texas oil patch, while bluffing in several languages. After retiring twice, he enjoys his role on the board of a military prep high school. Val is in Nassau Men's Breakfast team. His wife Martha sings in the Nassau choir and they are blessed with three children and six grand-children.

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Friday, March 24, 2023

Ezekiel 33:10-16

"...If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person's former righteousness will count for nothing. And if someone who is wicked repents, that person's former wickedness will not bring condemnation."

Ezekiel 33:12 (NIV)

Ezekiel, writing more than 500 years before Christ was born, seems to say that a lifetime of good behavior is canceled out by a single act of disobedience to God. It makes me want to cry, "That's not fair!"

Think of the parable of the prodigal son, in which the broken, debauched son returns home to great celebration, to the outrage of his steady, hard-working brother. Or of the parable about the master who forgave large and small debts, to the frustration of the man who owed little.

We'd like to think that we who try to live by the rules are somehow better, more deserving of God's love and grace, than those who do not.

But if we accept that none of us are good enough to be saved by our own actions, then we are all equally dependent on God's love and grace for forgiveness.

Does that mean that nothing we do really counts, so long as we repent?

The prophet Micah tells us that the Lord requires us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Dave Davis exhorts us from the pulpit to be the "hands and feet of Jesus in the world"—so, clearly, there are behavioral expectations of Christians.

I find this baffling. But what I come down to is that we should try

to live as God has commanded, that we will fail, and that we must seek forgiveness and make reparation when we do.

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of this life, and help me to remember that what I do with it is my gift to you. Help me to discern what I should be doing and give me the skills and the courage to do it. Amen.

Elizabeth (Liz) Beasley, a member of Nassau Church since 2007, is an ordained ruling elder and deacon and a volunteer with Villages in Partnership, a church mission partner. She retired from Rutgers University in 2019, and lives with her husband Kim Beasley in Princeton. When she is not spending time with her grandchildren, she takes courses in fiction-writing, sings karaoke, and co-chairs the Activities Committee for the Present Day Club.

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Saturday, March 25, 2023

Psalm 130

Kiviti Adonai, kiv'tah naf'shi
V'lidevaro hochal'ti

קִנִּיתִי יְהוָה קִנְיָתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלְתִּי:

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in God's word I hope.

Psalm 130:5 (NRSV)

Let yourself enter into a space of meditative longing and joy through the presentation of this original canon created with both the original Hebrew and an English translation of a text so central to our doubts in a hurting world, and our lives of faith.

Video will be posted online: <https://nassauchurch.org/worship/daily-devotional/>.

Creator God, we bless your name, even as we thirst for signs of your presence in and among us in hardship and joy. We wait for you. Our souls wait for you. In you is our only hope. Bless us, and bless all we do that we may bring into the world your very kingdom. 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, and sang in the choir for several years before the gifts of her two children. Now that her children are in school, she gratefully uses her gifts to create more music to serve God and beautify the world.

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Sunday, March 26, 2023

Luke 1:26-38

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

Luke 1:38 (NRSV)

The Scriptures for today identify two opposing responses to the call of God. The verses in Isaiah show us that King Ahaz did not obey the Lord’s command to ask for a sign, instead saying, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test” (Isaiah 7:12). Guilty conscience. Unable to receive grace.

Despite the impenitence of Ahaz, God’s message was delivered anyway: of humanity’s critical need for salvation, and of God’s providing it through Jesus’ sacrifice.

In Luke’s Gospel, Mary was utterly surprised by the appearance of Gabriel, who delivered God’s message “up close and personal,” clearly laying out for Mary things to come and her unique role in them. This unexpected, mind-blowing message of honor and choice was met by Mary’s words, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” True humility. A heart of love and trust.

In Hebrews we see that Jesus, like Mary, followed God’s plan without reservation. As we read in Isaiah, the system of animal sacrifice proved displeasing to God; it was not God’s ideal. To satisfy the terms of that Old Testament, Jesus himself became the sacrifice. He was a man on a mission—indeed, “God on a mission”—to give us complete and eternal forgiveness.

Do we respond like Ahaz, somehow unwilling to accept the good news? Or do we follow the example of Mary and of Jesus, unreservedly

embracing a life of faith?

A spoken recording of this text may be found on YouTube: https://youtu.be/B_Nva5MFYII

Dear Lord, thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, the New Testament sacrifice to keep us forever in relationship with you. “Here am I...let it be with me according to your word.” In Jesus’s name, amen.

Elem Eley and his wife Miriam Eley have been Nassau members since 1997. In addition to singing as bass soloist/section leader in the Adult Choir, Elem is Professor of Voice Emeritus at Westminster Choir College and an active performer, and is pursuing new opportunities as a voice actor.

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Monday, March 27, 2023

Psalm 143

Answer me, LORD—and quickly! My breath is fading.

Don’t hide your face from me

or I’ll be like those going down to the pit!

Tell me all about your faithful love come morning time,
because I trust you.

Show me the way I should go,
because I offer my life up to you.

Psalm 143:7–8 (CEB)

How does God tell you that God loves you? Is it an auditory process or more of an experience? For me it is often the latter. I hear God telling me, “I love you,” in moments of awe, wonder, and love from friends, family, and strangers. As I meditated on these verses, I had a profoundly moving experience. The song, “Make You Feel My Love” by Bob Dylan came into my head out of nowhere, so I decided to pivot and give it a listen. Right away I could hear Jesus singing this song to the psalmist, who is in such deep distress and desperate to hear of God’s faithful love. Just as quickly I felt it speak to all of the hurting places in

my heart and soul as well. I encourage you to give it a listen through this lens.

I also hear God saying, “I love you,” when I see random heart shapes in my day. These hearts always surprise me and nearly always take my breath away. Many are found in nature, some are human made. No matter what form they take, they always make me pause to hear that still small voice inside of me whisper a profoundly heartfelt, “I love you more than you can imagine.”

Even in the darkest moments we can trust that signs of God’s faithful love are all around. Look for them. When you find them, linger there and soak in the balm of God’s soul soothing love.

Faithful and abundantly loving God, we love you. Thank you for sending Jesus to show and teach about your love. Thank you too for the many different ways you speak of your steadfast love for each one of us now. Help us to recognize signs of and to feel your love, a love that is so much more that we could ever ask for or imagine—and teach us to love one another better and better each day. Amen.

Elizabeth Gift and her husband Kevin are blessed with four amazing children, a wonderful daughter-in-law, one grandchild, and a second grandchild due in June. In her fifteen years at Nassau, Elizabeth has served as ruling elder, deacon, church school teacher, small group leader, and secretary of the Westminster Foundation Board. Elizabeth enjoys puzzles, running, playing with her grandson, and sharing the random hearts she finds on Instagram (@elizabethgift4). She warmly invites you to check them out.

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Tuesday, March 28, 2023

2 Kings 4:18-37

He said, “At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son.”When the child was older, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. He complained to his father, “Oh, my head, my head!” The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.”the child sat on her lap until noon, and he died.

So [Elisha] went in and closed the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. Then he got up on the bed and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and while he lay bent over him, the flesh of the child became warm... and [he] opened his eyes. "Call the Shunammite woman." She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took her son and left.

2 Kings 4:16, 19–20, 33–36 (NRSV)

I found Elisha's recognition of the Shunammite woman's kindness and their shared faith in God's powers to repair and make things right inspiring. The woman believed in God and in Elisha, his servant, to bring and restore life. She noticed another's needs and provided Elisha a room to rest. She had a calm about her. She had a home with her people. Everything was all right. She didn't need anything. What a good place to be in what could have been the last years of her life! When Elisha promised a child, it came to be, and that was an unexpected blessing. How often does something truly unexpected and wonderful come into our lives and continue to shine and hold the first Lights? When her child became sick and died, she knew immediately that everything would be all right if she could reach Elisha. When he saw her approaching, he knew there was trouble, but he also knew exactly what to do. Go to the child, close the door of his room, and pray to God. Elisha would breathe and touch and lay on hands until life returned to that room, that child, and that woman. There was no doubt in Elisha or the woman.

When receiving a great gift, we rejoice. However, when the Light dims, the hope fades; we pray Jesus will know our trouble, come and be with us, repair, heal, and restore the life and Light promised.

Precious Lord Jesus, please hear my prayer that promises made and hopes nourished over 182 years will be answered. You alone know our journey's twists and turns as your historically Black Presbyterian Church. May we have the Shunammite woman's kindness, faith, and clarity to seek Elisha, rely on Jesus, the true Light of the world, and be assured prayers are always answered in

God's time. It will all be all right as I live among my own people.
Amen.

Denyse Leslie serves as a ruling elder of Witherspoon Street Church and has served as clerk of the Session. She is a co-founder of the WSPC–NPC Joint Partnership and a co-facilitator of a Bending the Moral Arc Courageous Conversations small group. The Paul Robeson House of Princeton is another passion that includes many Nassau friends. In this hopeful time in the Christian calendar, Denyse is looking forward to adopting a dog, having lost her chocolate lab Cali after 15 years on January 11, 2022.

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Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Psalm 143

Therefore is my spirit
overwhelmed within me;
My heart within me is desolate.

Psalm 143:4 (KJV)

This psalm is very interesting, as it starts off depressed and ends happier. I think the writer of this psalm is very depressed and is looking to God for hope, in a world that seems bleak to him. He is saying that he is very depressed and feels sad and overwhelmed, but that he is meditating on God for help. I always feel sad and overwhelmed when alone, and I think everyone sometimes feels that way.

Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning;
For in thee do I trust:
Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee (Psalm 143:8 KJV).

I think that feeling loved is very important, especially when things feel like they are going badly. It definitely feels like love is needed when reading the psalm! I feel that for the writer of this psalm, praying was a way to help him when he felt sad and alone, and I feel like maybe it could help all of us.

Dear God, cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning.
Cause us all to hear thy lovingkindness all day long. Amen.

Caleb Carter is 12 years old and in seventh grade, homeschooling since the beginning of the pandemic. He has lived in Princeton, New Jersey, and worshiped at Nassau Presbyterian Church for his whole life.

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Thursday, March 30, 2023

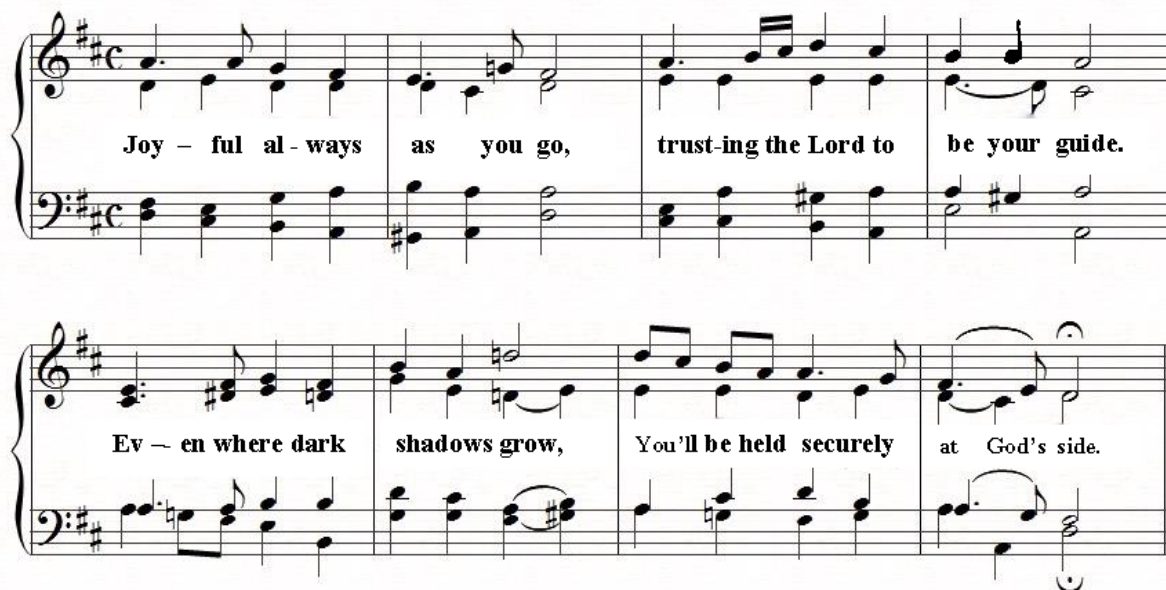
Philippians 1:1-11

I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy.

Philippians 1:4 (CEB)

At the conclusion of a wedding celebration in Denmark some 60 years ago, other guests invited me to join hands while they sang with reverent joy. For nearly 200 years their beloved benediction has frequented weddings, confirmations and funerals, encouraging brave reliance on God, especially during life's darkest hours.

On Liberation Day, the Queen and common folk sing it, too, when they gather at a place where Danish Freedom Fighters faced firing squads during World War II. Although the title, "Altid Frejdig Når Du Går," can be translated "Always Joyful as You Go," American translations grimly miss the "joyful part." To lift up the hymn, I offer my own translation with joy restored:



2) Like the stars that shine at night,
Glistening in the sky above,
Be a bearer of Christ's light,
Brightening this world with Jesus' love.

3) Let God's Word be your delight,
Lifting you up 'til life is done.
Serve the Lord with all your might,
Knowing that in Christ, the vict'ry's won.

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Lord, even in dark times, help us to always remember the “joyful part” while prayerfully sharing your love with our needy world.
Amen.

Ed Madsen is a self-proclaimed “ABD” (American Born Dane) and retired real estate appraiser, worshipping at Nassau for 30+ years. Author of *The Shoestring Letters—A Tribute to the Immigrant*, he also co-authored *Don't You Know Me*, recounting a Soviet prison camp survivor's confrontation with God.

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Friday, March 31, 2023

Philippians 1:21-30

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.

Philippians 1:21 (NRSV)

The three readings for this day (Job 13:13–19, Psalm 31, and Philippians 1:21–30) express a range of emotion in response to adversity: For

Job, anger and defiance; for the psalmist, resignation and pleading; for Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, hope and joy. Wait a minute. Joy in the face of adversity? Really, Paul? I can understand and resonate with Job's and the psalmist's response, but I just don't get Paul's happiness. He is in prison, yet he writes that his being there is helping to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. If he is alive, Paul explains, he is doing the work of Christ and should he die, well, that is even better: a "gain" as his work will be done and he will be with Christ!

Maybe Robert Lowry (1869) best captures an understanding of Paul's joy and hope in Christ in the face of adversity when he penned the hymn "My Life Flows On (How Can I Keep from Singing?). The refrain is the prayer for this devotional.

*No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from
singing? Amen. Lord, let it be so!*

Harriet Black has been a member of Nassau Presbyterian Church for 23 years. She has served as a Sunday School teacher, deacon, and member of the Emergency Response Team. A retired nurse, Harriet spent the greater part of her career working with persons who have diabetes, helping them to improve their self-management skills. Harriet is married to Clifton, and they are the parents of Caroline, Nassau Church Confirmation Class of 2005.

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Saturday, April 1, 2023

Mark 10:32-34

"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles. They will mock him and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him, and after three days he will rise again."

Mark 10:33-34 (NRSV)

Jesus knew his purpose, he knew the plan and he knew the ultimate victory with clarity and conviction. He wasn't born knowing it. It

was revealed to him by God the Father through constant fellowship with him. His devotion in prayer, scripture, song, meditation brought in the Father's revelation of the plan, people, challenges and solutions in his ministry from the beginning through to the end. With that came provision for all that was needed to sojourn.

I wonder how many times Jesus meditated on those last words "and after three days he will rise" remembering the first time the Father revealed this to him. How fiercely did he hold onto those words as he went through the agony of the passion? What did the Father reveal to him about the resurrection and the kingdom to come that kept him committed? What did he reveal about the depths of love, about being the final sacrifice?

Jesus stayed the course for you, for me, for the world. His resurrection spiritually healed the chasm between God the Father and humanity. It allows us to walk freely in forgiveness and bathe in relationship with God the Father. We too can attune our ear to God for direction in times of ease and in times of pressure as we make our sojourn.

Lord Jesus, how grateful we are for your love for us and for your commitment to stick to God's plan of redemption for humanity. Thank you for making a way to God the Father for us. Amen.

Karen S. Berliner is wife to Jeff and mother to Rachel and Sarah. She and her family have been at Nassau Church for about 12 years. Karen currently serves as a ruling elder, participates in a variety of church activities and is so grateful for her church family. Additionally, she's a bit of a renaissance gal with her work and interests in diverse areas.

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Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023

Philippians 2:5-11

He humbled himself by becoming
obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:8 (CEB)

It is Palm Sunday. You can feel the excitement, transferred from generation to generation from that day long ago. Children skip and run, twirling their palm branches, and waving to greet this humble king, the one they have heard so many stories about. Their elders crane their necks to catch a glimpse while watching the young ones with a smile. The excitement fills the air—then and now. And suddenly, the door. Slams. Shut. Unlike those filling the roadside with excitement that day so long ago, we know what is to come. Just as Jesus knew what was to come. He knew the cross he was going to bear, and he also knew that cross led to the joyous fulfillment of God's promise of resurrection. So, the very human Jesus put one foot in front of the other and plodded his way through Holy Week, through its pain and betrayal, keeping his eye on the promise of his Father. In our humanity, we know what is to come, not just this week but for the entirety of our lives. Jesus shows us the way, in attitude, in behavior, in hope and in his daily humanity. May we bear our crosses with that grace and understanding of God's promise revealed to us anew as we plod through this week in Jesus' footsteps to arrive at Easter Sunday.

Loving God, grant me the grace to bear my crosses, on the days when they are so light as to be almost nonexistent and on the days when I struggle to put one foot in front of another, they are so heavy. Guide me to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, that I might live my life more and more in his likeness and to your glory. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Kim Kleasen is a ruling elder and a current deacon. She is a long-time member of the Adult Choir, a flautist 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. Her study launched the Art of Faithfulness at Nassau, where she is one of its leaders.

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Monday, April 3, 2023

Isaiah 42:1-9

In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.

Isaiah 42:3b-4 (NIV)

Every day we are inundated with stories of injustice. The news tells us of atrocities that have occurred to individuals because of the color of their skin, the religion they practice, the people they love, the gender they identify with... the list can go on! We, as a people of God, are called to walk in Jesus' footsteps. This means mirroring Jesus' plan for the world—bringing forth justice. This is a monumental task though. How can one person do such a thing? The answer is to remember that we are not alone! Individually, we can confront injustice when we see it and try to actively engage in dialogue, augmenting communication and fostering love and comradery in those we encounter. But, that is one small piece of this charge. Our community is the true body of Christ and there are many levels at which we can operate and affect change. We can, as a church, actively engage in local politics and community events, raising awareness to injustices that may be unseen. As a presbytery, we can try to foster justice in the state level. And as an ecumenical Christian body, we can call for justice in the country and around the world. Remember, as

Benjamin Franklin once said, “Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.”

Dear Lord, give us the strength to act in your image, bringing justice to the world. Keep our eyes open to injustices we may not notice or experience. Allow us to find ways to bring us one step closer to your goal for humanity, whether it be through individual tasks or community organization and advocacy. In your name, we pray. Amen.

Robert Duffy is a long-term “visitor” of Nassau Presbyterian Church, who has chosen to make this his spiritual home. He is a fourth-year dermatology resident at Cooper who spends most of his days in clinic and the hospital. When free, he enjoys cooking, hiking, and going on adventures. You can often find him at Longwood Gardens, exploring Philadelphia, or unwinding at Small World.

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Tuesday, April 4, 2023

John 12:20-36

“Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit....Walk while you have the light.”

John 12:24, 35b (NRSV)

Out of death comes life: my immediate reaction to the first verse of my scripture. The grain of wheat must die to be fruitful. How, then, do we track this message in these current, unfruitful times? What or who performs this modern miracle of rebirth? Clearly, our Easter lilies will have blossomed from last year’s bulbs, but with sun and water and plant food, they are waiting on our windowsill for delivery this Sunday.

That baby born in Syria to a dying mother is a gurgling, smiling testament of life from death. With love and protection, he will grow into a fine adult. A concerned passer-by chronicled the death of George Floyd and transformed it into lively protest. A lucky one of us will have depression and spiritual death turned into hope by a friend who listens.

Out of the death of California forests, Syrian earthquakes, and Florida flood, new life is begun by firefighters, First Responders, nurses, doctors, and other miracle workers. Can we identify the life that emerges from warfare?

Each of these “deaths” has been reversed by secular intervention, but the ultimate remedy is the light (of Jesus) with us a little while longer. Walking in the light is defined as “following righteousness, faith, love and peace.” With these guidelines, we will conquer the “deaths” in our own lives and in society. Christ’s resurrection is the hope for our rebirth and fruitfulness.

We thank you, Lord, for your blessings that “fill our lives with good things.” We pray that every ray of your light will shine upon our sisters and brothers everywhere. Amen.

Cecelia B. Hodges, a member of Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church since the late 70s, is a retired college professor and a performer in one-woman shows of poetry and prose. She has initiated courses in oral interpretation of literature and in Black literature and drama at Rutgers and Princeton where she was also an Assistant Dean of the College, and she is the Founding Director of the Witherspoon Verse Speaking Choir. She loves the Lord and prays without ceasing.

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Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Isaiah 50:1-9

Let’s stand up together.

Who will bring judgement against me?

Let him approach me.

Look! The LORD God will help me.

Who will condemn me?

Look, they will wear out like clothing;
the moth will eat them.

Isaiah 50:8a–9 (CEB)

God’s love is a simple thing. If we choose to listen to God, have faith in God, and indulge in God, we will forever be protected. Nothing

bad can happen to us, if we are truly faithful. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to be that way, therefore, we do not always invite God's protection. We reject it, because we feel that we know better than God in certain circumstances, and that although God does help us, God does not know what is truly good for us in those certain circumstances. If we do not worry about problems and truly believe that God will take care of us, we will be fine. Those who don't choose to have faith in God "will wear out like clothing". No one who gives God their full trust will ever "wear out like clothing".

Dear God, help us to listen to you and to fully trust and have faith in you, so that we may be forever loved and protected by you. Amen.

Pierre Soumeillant is a tenth grade student who has been attending Nassau Presbyterian Church since he was five years old. He loves playing soccer and reading books. His favorite subjects in school are math and chemistry.

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Maundy Thursday, April 6, 2023

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it.

1 Corinthians 11:23b-24a (NRSV)

A Psalm, a passage about Passover, a final supper and a foot washing. What to learn from the passages for this Maundy Thursday? The word that bubbled to the surface—betrayal. Betrayal from within a dearly held community wrecks us. It slices our soul, steals our sleep, fragments our focus, sabotages our functionality, and makes us ill in body and soul. We want to withdraw and we struggle not to become embittered.

And yet,

On the night Jesus experienced betrayal, he took a loaf of bread and gave thanks. **Gave thanks.** Knowing he was about to experience intense

grief, knowing his body was about to be broken, knowing he was being treated unjustly, Jesus was able to give thanks.

And this: “Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet...” (John 13:5 NRSV). **Jesus knowingly washed his betrayer’s feet.** Bending in humility, he acted in love and service, despite the pain. He washed Judas’s feet.

The same chapter ends with this:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35 KJV).

Can we emulate Jesus in this? Can we, rather than curling up in self protection or lashing out in righteous indignation, respond with humility and love?

Communion will never be the same for me as I consider the words: “On the night he was betrayed...he gave thanks.” The Lenten journey will never be the same for me as I consider Jesus’ response to betrayal.

Dear Lord, let this Lenten journey change each of us as we reflect on the heart-wrenching pain of betrayal and how Jesus responded to it: with obedience, love and continued service. Jesus went to the cross and gave his life not only for the eleven, but also for Judas, his betrayer. Help us to love and serve one another—everyone, not only those with whom we agree or those who treat us justly. Thank you for your example. Amen.

Janine Edwards has followed her husband here to Princeton and this church. Aside from her children, Elias and Adeline, something that brings her earthly joy is planning for and being part of pilgrimage. She wants to assure readers that it is not her lovely family or this church that has left her feeling betrayed.

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Good Friday, April 7, 2023

John 18:1-19:42

Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

John 19:39–40 (NRSV)

Years ago, I taught eighth grade Sunday School in a Presbyterian church (PCUSA) in Northern New Jersey. I decided one Sunday morning that I would encourage my students to memorize what I called the most important verse of the Bible, John 3:16. To provide an extra incentive, I said once they recited it from memory they were dismissed.

I never saw more enthusiasm in a Sunday School class before or since. They memorized quickly and one by one, out of the room they zipped. They had a rare shot at free play on a Sunday morning.

Midweek, I received a phone call from the Sunday School superintendent. She very politely, not without a modicum of mirth, asked me to please never do that again.

A little while later a friend who was in seminary and doing her field education with us substituted in the same class. She told me after she had proclaimed she was going to talk to them about the most important verse in the Bible.

The students said, “Oh, Mr. McKnight already taught us that.” They recited John 3:16. It was not the verse she had in mind, but she thought about it and said, “I don’t have a problem with that.”

When Jesus spoke those words, our Savior who would one day rise again from the dead, was talking to Nicodemus. In turn and in time, Nicodemus responded with a loving kindness by caring for Christ’s body, broken for us.

Savior God, we give thanks for your loving presence in our lives each moment of every day forever and ever. We ask that you

remind us to act as Nicodemus did by responding with loving kindness to those who are in need. Amen.

Marshall McKnight is a child of God, 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 LifeTies. He works for the State of New Jersey.

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Saturday, April 8, 2023

Job 14:1-14

But a man dies and is laid low;
he breathes his last and is no more.
As the water of a lake dries up
or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,
so he lies down and does not rise;
till the heavens are no more,
people will not wake or be roused from their sleep.

Job 14:10–12 (NIV)

Today's meditation from a pilgrim on a Lenten journey reflects on the pain and mystery of death. Job faced incredible personal disasters...loss of wealth, health, and family. The story is very compelling. I am moved by it. It is one of my favorite portions of scripture. One of my first recollections of this story is from Sunday School at age nine or ten. Our teacher wondered if we thought that Job's and his wife's later super-abundant recovery of wealth and children offset their earlier losses. We knew the story of Job well and were quick to affirm that indeed in the end it all turned out well for Job and his wife. However, Mrs. Limberg, who had lost her son in the Vietnam War, was emphatic that the pain of the loss of their children would never be gone.

This lived experience made a lasting impression on me in part because it was at variance with what we saw as the message of the final chapter... likely an attempt by a later editor to make the Job story more theologically palatable. It is interesting that this editor seems to follow in the

approach of Job's orthodox friends. The pain of life is real and attempts to deny the pain ring hollow and cheap.

As the turmoil of plague and war still overwhelm us, Job's cry, "If only you would set me a time and then remember me!" (Job 14:13b) feels very real and contemporary. We continue to cry out to our God, "Why?" and "How long?"

We are mortal, Lord.

Fix your eyes on us and hold us with your arms.

Hide us in the shadow of your wings.

Help us understand the mystery of our lives. Amen.

Doxology: 24/7 Sacred Choir & Chant Radio for Relaxation, Prayer, Work, Meditation & Sleep - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmqHiTF3XXA>

On Sundays **Larry Alphs** usually finds himself among the Nassau Presbyterian balcony worshippers. 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.

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Easter Sunday, April 9, 2023

John 20:1-18

Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

John 20:16–17 (NRSV)

Noli Me Tangere

Again in the garden
grapes sour on the vine
the Gardener vanishing

I grasp at His substance
He will not let me
Stay with me

He says my name
Evanescence
reveals a prophecy

His reach to breach
essence of crimson cloud
boundless galaxy

Mute vessel
I sing like stars in a void
I am witness

Stay with me

God of Light and God of Love, we are eternally grateful that you sent your only begotten Son to suffer and die for our sins. Yet, he is risen; he is risen indeed! To you be all the glory. In the blessed name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

This year **Roz Anderson Flood** is Poet-in-Residence, in partnership with three other Artists-in-Residence at Nassau Church. Roz serves as a deacon and sings in the Adult Choir; she is a member of the Worship and Arts Committee and is a ruling elder, not currently on the Session.

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Lenten Worship

In the Sanctuary unless otherwise indicated.

*Services that will be livestreamed.

Ash Wednesday

February 22, 12:00 PM

Niles Chapel

JOEL 2 : 12-13

Lent I (Communion)

Sunday, February 26, 9:15* & 11:00 AM

MATTHEW 13 : 34-35

Lent II

Sunday, March 5, 9:15* & 11:00 AM

LUKE 11 : 5-13

Lent III

Sunday, March 12, 9:15* & 11:00 AM

LUKE 15 : 3-7

Lent IV (Youth Sunday)

Sunday, March 19, 9:15* & 11:00 AM

MATTHEW 13 : 1-30

Lent V

Sunday, March 26, 9:15* & 11:00 AM

MATTHEW 20 : 1-16

Choral Evensong

March 26, 5:00 PM

at Trinity Church, Princeton

Adult Choirs of Trinity & Nassau Churches

Lenten Communion

Wednesday, March 29, 3:00 PM

at Stonebridge

JAMES 5 : 13-16

Palm Sunday

April 2, 9:15* & 11:00 AM

MATTHEW 21 : 33-46

Service of Wholeness & Healing

April 2, 2:00 PM

Niles Chapel

JOHN 17 : 1A, 11B-13

Maundy Thursday (Communion)

April 6, 7:30 PM*

Tenebrae Readings:

MATTHEW 26 : 20-25;

LUKE 22 : 39-44;

MARK 14 : 26-31, 66-72;

MATTHEW 26 : 59-67;

MARK 15 : 12-20; LUKE 23 : 33-46

Good Friday

April 7, 12:00 PM*

The Way of the Cross:

MARK 15 : 1-20;

LUKE 23 : 26-49; JOHN 19:25-29

Easter Sunday

April 9, 6:30 AM sunrise service

Princeton Cemetery

Easter Sunday

April 9, 9:00* & 11:00 AM

(note the earlier time for first service)

LUKE 5 : 33-39

61 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08542
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Please recycle.

