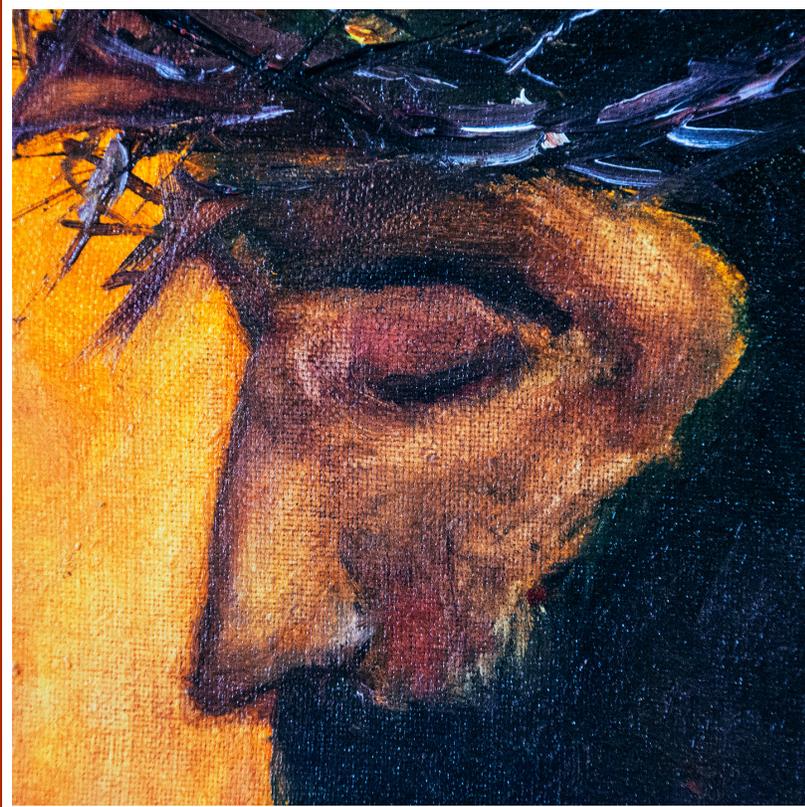


11225 Crabapple Road
Roswell GA 30075



Northbrook Community Lent Devotional

2023

”All who want to
come after me
must say no to
themselves, take up
their cross daily,
and follow me.”

LUKE 9:23

INTRODUCTION

Rediscover the Words of Jesus

in 1899, Lous Klopsch, editor of Christian Herald magazine, came up with the idea of publishing a Bible in which the words of Jesus would be printed in red ink. The words of Jesus inspired him in Luke 22:20, "This cup is the new covenant by my blood, which is poured out for you." When it was published, he said of the Red Letter Bible:

Modern Christianity is striving zealously to draw nearer to the great Founder of the Faith. Setting aside mere human doctrines and theories regarding Him, it presses close to the Divine Presence to gather from His own lips the definition of His mission to the world and His own revelation of the Father. . . . The Red Letter Bible has been prepared and issued in the full conviction that it will meet the needs of the student, the worker, and the searchers after truth everywhere.

During this season of Lent, we will be examining the difficult words of Jesus during Sunday worship. Throughout the rest of the week, we will be reflecting on other teachings and sayings of Christ.

In our world, words are seldom used to build up, encourage, admonish, and inspire. For the most part, we use our words to get things done. They are tools. They are the tools we use to send emails, complete assignments, and communicate our calendars. Words have lost their luster.

So we invite you to experience anew the wondrous words of Jesus, written here in red ink.

Louis Klopsch, "Explanatory Note," in *The Holy Bible: Red Letter Edition* (New York: Christian Herald, 1901), p. xvi

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 22, 2023

Rev. Kena Newkirk
Associate Pastor of Family Ministry

"If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, won't God do much more for you, you people of weak faith?" - Matthew 6:30

And just like that Lent is upon us once again. It is supposed to be a holy and reflective time, but I remember as a child it just being confusing. My earliest memories of Lent involved the wife of my childhood pastor.

Every Sunday after church, she would give a few of us children a lollipop which she kept in the cabinet under the pulpit (not a bad place to hide them). I remember asking if she was going to have one, and she said, "no, that's ok. I've given it up for Lent."

Slowly, I began to realize that Lent was a time of fasting, of giving up something. My teachers explained to me that we sacrifice something small in order to be reminded of Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.

As I grew, I began to think this was a little silly. I mean, Jesus gave up his life while I'm only giving up chocolate). But I wanted to be like my mentors in church, so I did my best to avoid sweets.

These days, Lent means something a little different for me. I still take time to reflect on my sins and Jesus's sacrifice, but I also remember my own mortality. Over the last two years, I have lost several grandparents and officiated their funerals. Graveside services are less common, but it's not a coincidence that the words we use to impose ashes and the words for a Service of Committal are so similar.

On Ash Wednesday, we say, "remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return." And someday, when we place your body in the ground, we will say, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." As Adam came from dust, so too, we all must return, someday, to the dust of the ground, awaiting the glory of the resurrected Christ and the rebirth of all creation. Someday.

A Prayer by Madeleine L'Engle

It is my Lent to break my Lent,
To eat when I would fast,
To know when slender strength is spent,
Take shelter from the blast
When I would run with wind and rain,
To sleep when I would watch.
It is my Lent to smile at pain
But not ignore its touch.
It is my Lent to listen well
When I would be alone,
To talk when I would rather dwell
In silence, turn from none
Who call on me, to try to see
That what is truly meant
Is not my choice. If Christ's I'd be
It's thus I'll keep my Lent.



Coloring By Ella, age 3

THURSDAY

February 23, 2023

Rev. Ed Cook
Pastor Emeritus

"You aren't doing the talking, but the Spirit of my Father is doing the talking through you."

- Matthew 10:20

I was adopted into my family as a four-year-old and was very shy when I left home alone for the first time at age thirteen. For some reason, I had asked permission to attend church camp. I was president of our MYF group and sang in the children's choir, but otherwise was a young loner.

I was left on campus scared to death. Other children were busy playing together, but in my shyness, I didn't know how to join in, so I walked up to a man supervising children at play and found he was a Methodist minister, Rev. Kenneth Harden.

Not even knowing why I was there, I began talking with him about his church and the kind of work he did in his ministry.

That was the beginning of a wonderful friendship that lasted many years until his death.

It was also the beginning of my plans for the Methodist ministry! Since then, I have come to realize the truth that our Heavenly Father uses our voice and actions to reach others. It was the Lord who had urged me to attend church camp leaving the shelter of a loving family and placing me into the presence of Rev. Ken for one purpose only - to call me into His ministry! We never know when God will speak through us, His unsuspecting children, to reach someone else!

Prayer: Please, God, use me to further your work for the Kingdom! Amen.

FRIDAY

February 24, 2023

William Newkirk
Mosaic Class

You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you. - Luke 10:40-41

Sometimes it pays to read several chapters in a row and imagine them like scenes in a play. In this passage, Jesus has been delivering lessons and parables to a large crowd of followers - so large that the Pharisees take notice and try to lure Jesus away from the intrigued crowd by offering him lunch.

The Pharisees were a highly influential group of teachers who educated lay believers about the Torah and the Law. Today these people would be somewhere between mega-pastors, million-follower podcasters, and pop philosophers.

Sometimes Jesus is terse with the Pharisees and does not seem in the mood to discuss with them, but on this day, he harangues them at length for their mistreatment of their followers.

Jesus rebukes them for manipulating and underserving their people. For sowing confusion and obscuring God's truths. For enjoying their honored status while knowing just how to keep others in their common place.

This Lent, we are studying the "difficult words of Jesus". This is an opportunity to be challenged and enriched. We will see illustrated in scripture reflections of our daily lives: many people whose voices are trying to obfuscate, patronize, or gaslight us for their own benefit, and one teacher whose words contain such selfless Truth that they led their speaker to execution on the cross as a punishment for his selfless honesty.

After Jesus' lively response to the Pharisees, he goes outside where "many more thousands had gathered." How many might gather to hear God's truth when we speak it in the world today, instead of us echoing the words of 21st-century Pharisees?

SATURDAY

February 25, 2023

Mason Gotsch
Northbrook Student Ministry

A Prayer by Howard Thurman

Open unto me — light for my darkness.
Open unto me — courage for my fear.
Open unto me — hope for my despair.
Open unto me — peace for my turmoil.
Open unto me — joy for my sorrow.
Open unto me — strength for my weakness.
Open unto me — wisdom for my confusion.
Open unto me — forgiveness for my sins.
Open unto me — love for my hates.
Open unto me — thy Self for my self.
Lord, Lord, open unto me!
Amen.

from Meditations of the Heart

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." - Matthew 7:7-8

God is our Father and wants to give his gifts and love out to the people.

Jesus wants us, the followers, to act and seek in confidence to build a better relationship with God.

And when you ask God for gifts of wisdom and well-being, he will deliver and will never take away from his followers.

SUNDAY

February 26, 2023

Rev. Laurie Moeller
Senior Pastor

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." - Mark 10:21

During the Sundays of Lent, we are going to be looking at the difficult words of Jesus. I have found that some of the more confusing passages of scripture can lead to a deeper understanding because they force us to really wrestle with them.

Stories and phrases that feel simple tend to be glossed over and never truly heard. I want to encourage you this season to slow down and engage with what Jesus is saying to you and to us as a community. Wrestling with scripture is essential to our growth and experience of God.

We begin with Jesus speaking to a person of wealth who is searching for deeper truth. He is looking for the pathway to eternal life, and Jesus suggests that he sell all he has and give it to the poor.

The man walked away from the invitation given by Jesus, disappointed and dejected because he had so much - too much to give away.

What is Jesus asking of you that feels unreasonable or unrealistic? What is Jesus asking of our community of faith? We begin this Lenten journey with Jesus' invitation to "come and follow me."

How will we set down the things that consume us in order to go?

Dear God,

We know that all things are possible with you.

During this season of Lent, open our hearts and our lives to make room for a deeper connection with you and your will for our lives. May we respond to your invitation with hope and anticipation.

Amen.

MONDAY

February 27, 2023

Allen Whittaker
Executive Director of Discipleship

One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part. It won't be taken away from her." - Luke 10:42

One day, as Jesus passed through Bethany, He made a stop by the home of His friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Jesus was welcomed in by Martha, who was distracted. Having found herself working alone, she went to Jesus and complained that she had to work alone while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. Can you see Martha's frustration, all because she chose to be distracted with serving and not being served? Distraction attempts to trap ALL of us!

Have you ever experienced distraction when you try to pray or read your Bible? Do you find your mind wandering when you do? This is distraction showing up in hopes of deterring you from your connection with God.

What distractions are taking the place of your time with God? When we fail to prioritize (maybe it's turning off our devices or getting away from things that will distract us), these things take a front seat in our lives, and cause us to put spending time with God at the bottom of the list.

Friends, nothing is more important than knowing and listening to Jesus. My prayer for you during this Lenten season is that you will remove anything that distracts and focus on all of God's promises to you.

Prayer:

God, clear my mind of wandering thoughts and distractions and allow me to focus on your loving message for my life.

Amen.

TUESDAY

February 28, 2023

Chris Gilliam
Fellowship Class

Jesus replied, "What is impossible for humans is possible for God." - Luke 18:27

The day my son announced that he had enlisted in the Army National Guard forever changed the trajectory of his future. After "majoring in fraternity" at Georgia Tech, he was graciously invited not to return. Perhaps he was embarrassed about unwise choices and having plenty of fun, but because he was 18, he could enlist without parental knowledge or permission. The recruiter told him he had excellent potential as a combat engineer, and although that sounded impressive, the job essentially involved identifying and then destroying IEDs. I sobbed for days. When he was deployed to Afghanistan, my tears were gone, but my fear and anxiety were immeasurable.

My wonderful Northbrook Family's prayers surrounded him, and I truly felt God's loving embrace and protection over him.

Fast forward thirteen years: my son made it home, although not all his buddies did. He returned as a responsible and respectful young man and re-applied to Georgia Tech with a whopper of an entrance essay that explained his war-zone experience changed him and provided new purpose and direction. Yes, he was accepted, started and led a veteran's organization on campus, worked a full-time job, and interned for two years with a company that hired him upon graduation.

Today my son is married with two delightful daughters. He'll coach his 3-year-old in Upward Soccer at Northbrook, where she attends preschool. In his spare time, he is the Director of Planning at a respected Atlanta-based company.

God's unmatched grace and mercies protected him; Northbrook's love and prayers sustained him (and me), and I will forever be humbled and grateful.

WEDNESDAY

March 1, 2023

Kobus du Plessis
Stewardship Chairperson

"Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven." - Luke 6:37

Personally, I think this verse talks to me about GRACE AND LOVE. Growing up in apartheid South Africa, it was very easy to talk about forgiveness (and grace) but extremely difficult to show grace and extend grace and forgiveness to people who don't look, think or talk like yourself.

I can still clearly remember all the hate, bitterness and uncertainty in the early 1990's when the white minority government started negotiations with all black political parties for a transition to a democratic South Africa. It was truly a miracle that this transition eventually happened without a civil war in 1994, with the first free elections for all citizens. This was mainly because of Nelson Mandela.

After 27 years in prison, he was the one person that had all the justification to "not forgive" and to be "bitter and angry," but he clearly understood more than everybody that "bitterness and anger just aren't worth it."

Some Nelson Mandela quotes that make me think about grace and forgiveness:

- No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, his background, or his religion (or political party).
- People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

In our current divided America, let's challenge ourselves every day to remember these quotes and apply the words of Jesus in Luke 6:37.

THURSDAY

March 2, 2023

Leigh Ann Launius
Discipleship & Spiritual Formation Chairperson

"The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed so that they could live life to the fullest." - John 10:10

Recently, my little dog Ziggy and I hit the road for a trip to St. Louis to visit my brother. We stopped overnight at a hotel in Nashville. When we got to our room, Ziggy became agitated, excitedly running to and fro, overwhelmed by all that was new, trying to take it all in at once.

He was distracted by so many things - all the new smells in the room, the voices of people walking down the hall, the noise from the heating units kicking on. I sat on the bed and called his name. He ran to me, and I set him down on the bed, where he curled up next to me and fell asleep.

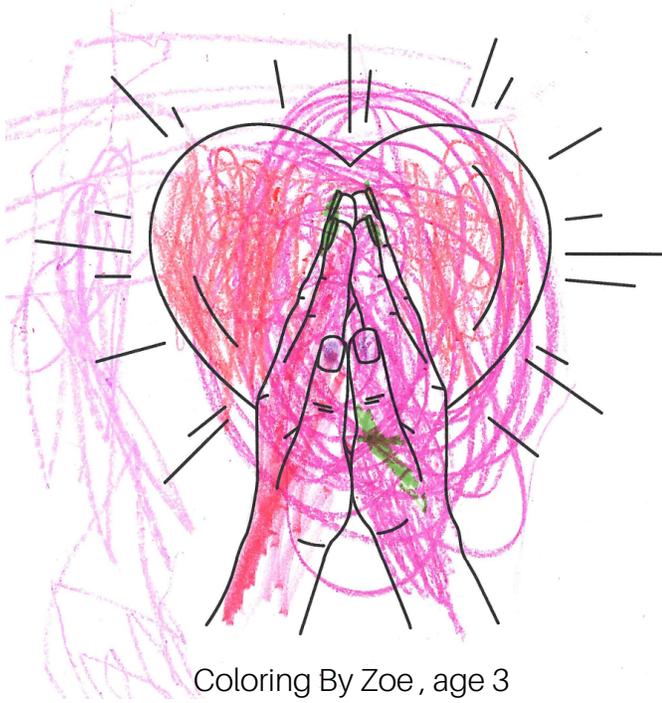
As I looked down at him calmly resting beside me, I thought how much like him I was. I am often distracted by the sounds and temptations of this crazy world.

Trying to do too much, distracted by things I don't even really need or want. But then I hear the voice of my Master calling me to come to him and rest. I stop, slow down, and come to Him. I've been well-trained!

I know from spending time with Him during my morning quiet time and through prayer, Bible study, and church worship that HE is all I need to have a full, complete life. Thank you, Jesus, for equipping me to respond to your voice! You are always faithful to providing the love, peace, and joy that I so desperately need!

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

March 3 and 4, 2023



Coloring By Zoe, age 3

A Prayer Walk

Prayer walking is a type of intercessory prayer that involves walking to or near a particular place while praying. As you prayer walk, your prayers extend beyond your own concerns, focusing directly on the needs of others and opening yourself to see them with God's eyes and heart.

Prayer walks are a means of asking God to give you a heart for your neighborhood, city and land. It gives you a concrete means of doing something for the well-being of your town as you ask the Holy Spirit to pray through you as you observe the world around you.

The C.S. Lewis Institute

SUNDAY

March 5, 2023

Rev. Laurie Moeller
Senior Pastor

"Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross, and follow me cannot be my disciple." -Luke 14:26-27

These words from Jesus are spoken to a large crowd of people following Jesus and are quite a gut punch to anyone hoping to be a faithful follower of Jesus. In fact, these words are the opposite of what we would expect Jesus to say. We are supposed to love and forgive - not HATE the very ones we are supposed to cherish.

Passages like this remind me that following Jesus is not simple or easy. Discipleship is demanding and calls for sacrifice. We are asked to shape our priorities and our relationships around Jesus.

Perhaps Matthew's version, which is softer, calling us to simply love Jesus more than all other people and things, is easier to swallow. But Luke wanted us to really struggle with making the work of a disciple THE most important part of our lives.

How are you being asked to sacrifice and struggle this season? What aspects of your life or what relationships interfere with your relationship with Jesus?

*Dear God,
While we know the call to follow you is not a simple path, we often fail to see the sacrifice required to be faithful disciples. Shine a light on the places in our lives that distract and disconnect us from living as faithful disciples.
Amen.*

MONDAY

March 6, 2023

Betsy Rhame-Minor
Director of Communications

"Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?" - Luke 12:25

I wouldn't really call myself a worrier, but I would consider myself a planner. (Maybe that's the same thing?) I spend not all my time but a whole lot of it most weekends prepping meals, doing laundry, picking out clothes for the week for both my children and myself (my husband is on his own!), and encouraging everyone to straighten up the house with me before we start over Monday morning.

Sometimes it feels like our family Google calendar, and checking all the things off my list is my "Bible" right now, so much so that I made a habit change at the beginning of the year that is still working.

We're a family of early birds, but I've made a commitment to getting up even earlier to have my own quiet prayer time without the interference of anyone else. That allows me prayer and reflection before the day really gets going. I feel very present in my quiet mornings. At about eight weeks into the year, I'm still committed, and I like how it sets me up for a good rest of the day.

It's been interesting to note how it sets me up for THAT day, but not as much in the days to come. It turns out that just focusing on just what is coming up that day feels just right, and it's just enough.

During Lent, I'm going to try my best to enjoy the right now instead of focusing so much on what's coming up. I'll try to attend to what's most important, which is showing up and being present, rather than trying to be perfect.

TUESDAY

March 7, 2023

Jennifer Smalley
Youth Parent

"Nothing outside of a person can enter and contaminate a person in God's sight; rather, the things that come out of a person contaminate the person." - Mark 7:15

As a parent of two teenagers, one of my concerns is the impact of who and what influences my sons. That influence could be people in their lives or what they consume through social media. When worry works its way into my parenting, I try to counter it with scripture. Today's verse reminds us that each person can decide what thoughts to allow in. We cannot completely control the outside influences in our lives, but we can choose how to process the world around us.

We can reject unhealthy ideas and ungodly thoughts using the guidance in Philippians 4:8.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

If we focus on filtering any influences through the lens of faith, our minds and hearts can discern what is true and noble and then discard what is not.

Today's verse tells us that we have defiled ourselves and others when we allow those impurities to escape from our lips and manifest in our actions. We can take comfort that we are not governed by the "garbage in, garbage out" concept because people are not computers. We can have a personal relationship with a loving God who can help us train our minds to focus on what is pure and praiseworthy, which will produce actions that demonstrate our beliefs.

WEDNESDAY

March 8, 2023

Lesé Cooper
Member & Office Support

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too."
- **Luke 12:34**

When I first walked into my office a little over a year ago, here at Northbrook, I was greeted by this verse on the wall: *"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* *Matthew 6: 21.* I thought, "Wow, what a beautiful reminder to come into each day.

The days passed, and I continued to see those words every day. One morning, I was reading a devotion with this statement: "If you want to know where your heart is, look at what you do with your money." **Cool!** That is on my wall! **And** I constantly see it! **Wait!** Am I helping others by giving to the church, giving to the poor, giving to missionaries who are in the trenches?

Ashamedly, I looked at where my money was going..... it wasn't to these people or places. Thank you, God, for that mirror!

Sometimes we get so comfortable in our day-to-day routines and minutia that we need to stop and meditate on all those lessons Jesus taught us during his short time on this earth. They are important; they are eternal.

Where is your treasure?

God, please help me to change my attitude toward this materialistic culture. Open my heart to put my treasure in that which will last forever. Please change the way my giving looks so that you will be honored in my heart. Amen

THURSDAY

March 9, 2023

Leslie Bowers
Director of Worship Arts

"Instead, desire his kingdom and these things will be given to you as well." - **Luke 12:31**

I used to read these words and think that, even though people said God wasn't a wish-granting genie, if I followed God well enough... well, maybe God would grant all my wishes. However, in a Bible study once, someone finally presented this verse in a way that truly transformed the way I desire God and the way I expect from God. She said something to the effect of, "If you are truly desiring God's will and God's kingdom, God will transform your desires to those of God."

It's not that if you desire God's kingdom well enough (works-based faith), everything you ever wanted (the lottery, a nice house, an eternally fit body) will be granted, but rather if you truly desire God and God's kingdom above all else, God will turn your desires to the things of God, God's Kingdom, and God's children and THEN give those desires to us. It's a distinction with QUITE a difference.



Coloring by Lydia , age 4

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

March 10 and 11, 2023

A Prayer of Julian of Norwich

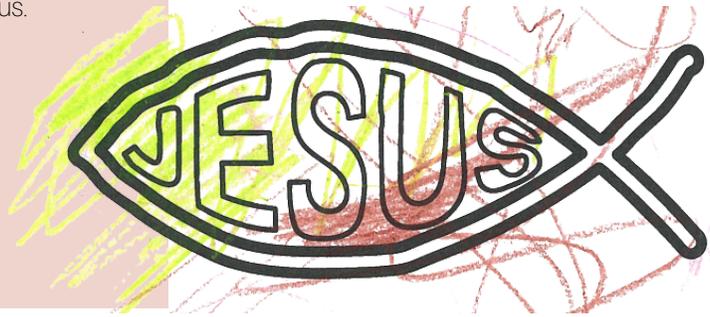
In you, Father all-mighty, we have our preservation and our bliss.

In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving.
You are our mother, brother, and Savior.

In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvelous and plenteous grace.
You are our clothing; for love you wrap us and embrace us.
You are our maker, our lover, our keeper.

Teach us to believe that by your grace all shall be well,
and all shall be well,
and all manner of things shall be well.

Amen.



Coloring by Fleurette A., age 2

SUNDAY

March 12, 2023

Rev. Laurie Moeller
Senior Pastor

*"Whoever wishes to be among you must
be a slave of all." - Mark 10:44*

As we continue in this season of Lent, asking for a renewed faith and a renewed focus on discipleship, we are confronted with yet another passage of difficult scripture. The call to follow Jesus is once again asking us to stretch and struggle. Jesus is getting closer to Jerusalem and closer to the cross. The disciples have no idea what is ahead, yet they seem to want to be faithful to the mission.

So often, we confuse being faithful with being important. I believe all Christians struggle with identity and position when it comes to living in community. James and John are really no different than you or me, asking to be significant and crucial to the work of Jesus.

But like James and John, we must be reminded that the world of a disciple is humble work. We are called to be small, called to be powerless, called to serve and not to be served.

Consider your role in the community of faith. How are you being challenged to serve? How does your faith story reveal a heart for others and a commitment to being last instead of first? Look for an opportunity this week to care for another person that you might not otherwise serve.

*Lord Jesus,
Forgive us for our desire to be first, to be important, to be honored. We want to be faithful disciples and committed to the work you have called us to do, but we struggle. Give us the courage to be servants.
Amen.*

MONDAY

March 13, 2023

Connor Gotsch
Northbrook Student, Age 13

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life." - John 3:16

John 3:16 is a special Bible verse to many people. It states that if you believe in the Son that God has given us, then you shall not perish but have eternal life forever.

On January 8, 2009, a man named Tim Tebow went to the College Football National Championship. At the time, he was playing for the University of Florida as the starting QB. They were going against the Oklahoma Sooners.

Right before the game had started, people noticed that Tim had on eyeblack that was normal. However, his eyeblack had words that were not normal. So, when Tebow and his teammates went out for the coin toss, people could read what was on his face. It said John 3:16.

When people saw that many did not know what it meant, they quickly googled it and saw what it meant. That night 94 million people googled what it meant, and now to this day, 90 million people (about twice the population of California) have googled John 3:16.

That shows that it is still one of the most popular and paid attention to Bible verses in the entire world.

TUESDAY

March 14, 2023

Sara Armstrong
Financial Administrator & Friendship Class

Jesus said to everyone, "All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow me." - Luke 9:23

In this passage, Jesus is preparing his followers for what will come after he is gone. Being a disciple was risky. Following Christ meant enduring rejection, persecution, imprisonment, torture, and possibly death. They denied themselves safety, security, and even family and friends for a faith that brought salvation.

Theologians have debated what picking up your cross means for today's Christians. Some say it is a call to constant evangelism; others say it directs us to turn away from the comforts of life and spend extensive time repenting, praying, and being of service to others.

I think the message is this: To be a disciple, the teachings and example of Jesus must guide whatever you do. Every decision must be filtered through, supported by, and measured against the tenets of your faith. You may lose your job, offend your family, be shunned by your friends, and perhaps worse. These are the crosses you may have to bear.

In return, following Christ brings you peace of mind, joy from being of service, acceptance in a loving community, the promise of eternal life, and much more. Following Christ is not easy.

Are you willing to bear the weight of the cross? Are the benefits worth the sacrifice? Whether you are a long-time person of faith, a newcomer, or a seeker, Lent is a time to reflect on these questions. Jesus is waiting for your answer.

WEDNESDAY

March 15, 2023

"All things are possible for the one who has faith." - Mark 9:32

In this passage, we see that Jesus performs a miracle by healing a boy possessed by an evil spirit. The boy's father had brought him to Jesus' disciples, but they couldn't cast out the demon. When Jesus arrived, he asked the father about the boy, and the father replied with words that many of us could relate to: "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

Jesus commands the unclean spirit to leave the boy and, as it does, causes him to become limp and lifeless. But then Jesus takes the boy's hand and lifts him, and he is healed.

This passage reminds us of several important truths about our faith. First, it reminds us that even the strongest faith can be tested and that doubt is a natural part of our spiritual journey. The father in this story believed in Jesus but still struggled with doubt. Take comfort in the fact that we are not alone in our doubts and that Jesus is always there to help us overcome them.

Christian Scheel
Student Ministry Lay Leader

Second, this passage shows us that Jesus has the power to overcome even the most difficult challenges we face. The demon in this story was incredibly powerful, but it was no match for the power of Jesus. Whatever challenges we face in our lives, we can trust that through Jesus, we can overcome them.

Finally, this passage reminds us that Jesus is always there to lift us when we fall. The boy in this story was lifeless, but Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him. In the same way, when we are feeling discouraged or overwhelmed, we can trust that Jesus is there to lift us up and give us the strength we need to keep going.

As we reflect on this passage, let us remember that Jesus is always there to help us overcome our doubts, overcome our challenges, and to lift us when we fall. Let us place our trust in him and allow him to work in our lives in powerful ways.

THURSDAY

March 16, 2023

"I assure you that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it can only be a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." - John 12:24

The first week of February, I took a trip to our local Home Depot. It was a beautiful sunny day, and the weather was cool but not yet warm. I browsed the plants in the garden center and twice had sales representatives remind me that we were very early in the season. So, I settled on some winter-friendly bulbs that would bloom in several months. They will take a long time to grow, but they will be spectacular when they bloom. I love gardening and had become tempted by the beautiful weather to jump right into the planting season. But we must do things in the right season and at the right time.

Rev. Kena Newkirk
Associate Pastor of Family Ministry

Lent is a lesson in just this sort of patience. The sacrifices we make, prayers we say, and services we render are all designed to nurture the roots of our faith. In John 12, Jesus uses a planting metaphor to talk about his own death and resurrection. Jesus's ministry led him to death on the cross and burial in a tomb. Yet, from that tomb, Jesus rose again, and the Jesus movement flourished, bearing fruit as the earth-changing Kingdom of God.

Lent is a season of dying; it is a season of giving ourselves to the work, reflection, and sacrifice that humbles and makes us more like Jesus. Know that whatever we sow in this season will spring forth into beautiful, flourishing life, like flowers in springtime and Jesus from the grave.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

March 17 and 18, 2023



Coloring By Cora, age 7

Prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your Wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you.
Forever and ever.
Amen.

SUNDAY

March 19, 2023

*Jesus replied, "I've been sent only to the lost sheep, the people of Israel."
But she knelt before him and said, "Lord, help me."
He replied, "It is not good to take the children's bread and toss it to dogs."
She said, "Yes, Lord. But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall off their masters' table."
- **Matthew 15:24-27***

Have you ever met someone who challenged what you thought you knew and changed your life? I believe the woman in this story did that for Jesus. In the verses before today's reading, a Canaanite woman whose daughter was possessed by a demon begged Jesus to heal her child. And our otherwise merciful Savior ignores her. Only after his disciples plead with him to send the woman away that Jesus responds by telling her, she's the wrong ethnicity; he's been sent to the house of Israel.

Rev. Elizabeth Pollard
Associate Pastor of Mission and Service

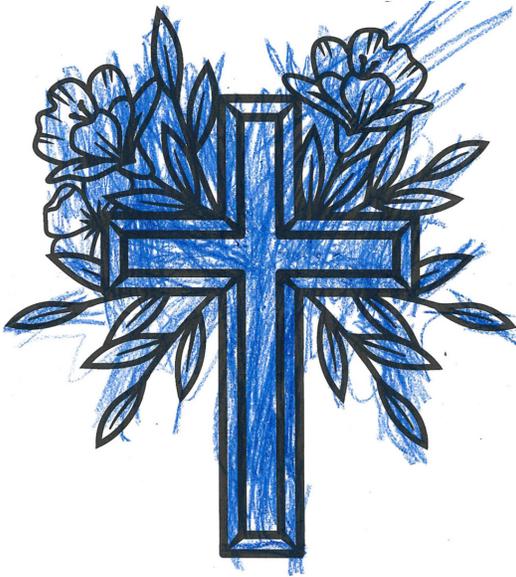
Ouch! This may have been one of Jesus' more human moments. This is harsh and unusual, but if we're honest, some of us have done similar things. We've drawn lines and have judged others who were unlike us. We may have even withheld something from others out of fear or malice. And we've prioritized people we feel most comfortable with, regardless of whom God may be calling us to.

While most would have left dejected after being dismissed and insulted, the Canaanite woman flips the insult with a clever response that impresses Jesus and potentially reveals one of his ministry blind spots. Her faith and love for her daughter help her to persist, and Jesus softens and grants her request. After this encounter, Jesus' mission expanded to include Gentiles, and we get the Great Commission in Matthew 28. This Lenten season, may our minds be changed and our conception of community expanded.

MONDAY

March 20, 2023

Jude and Dolly Swanner
Ages 9 & 7



Coloring By Jason, age 3

"This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you." - John 15:12

Jesus is saying to love other people just as God loves us, like the Golden Rule where we treat others the way we want to be treated. It is putting others before yourself. Today, I gave my little sister water before I had water. At school, I let friends in front of me in the line. If we loved others as Jesus loves us, the world would be a better place. No one would be bullied or make others feel bad. We should love other people in the same way that God loves us.

TUESDAY

March 21, 2023

Rev. Martha Fielden
Pastor Emerita

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." - Luke 19:10

A quiet rebuke to the Pharisees and priests and their followers, who would limit the redeemed.

Surely, the "publicans" and the great tempted mass of mankind needed him more than the happy, privileged class.

It was for the sake of the least, the last, and the lost that he came and dwelled with the poor, the disenfranchised, the marginalized, the forgotten, and the unnoticed.

But there was a vein of sad irony running through these words of the Master. Between the lines, we might read in some thoughts as these: "You know, O priests and Pharisees, you do not want me. You think you are safe already. But these poor despised ones, they want, and they welcome me."

Christ came to earth and brought salvation with him. He came into this lost world to seek and to save it. His design was to save when there was no salvation in any other.

WEDNESDAY

March 22, 2023

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." - John 15:12 NIV

As a teenage girl who grew up in Georgia specifically, almost everyone you meet calls themselves a Christian. As you grow up with the same people for years, there tends to be a "popular" group of people. When I went to public school, the "popular" group was made up of mostly girls, Christian girls, with bible verses on their Instagrams and constantly posting about how God loves you and that He is the answer. I agreed with everything about it, but there was one flaw, they weren't reflecting the words they were saying on social media in real life.

They made people anxious, belittled, and insecure. If you didn't fit their specific mold, you were seen as an outcast which isn't a bad thing, but to them, it was a reason to gossip about how different this person acted.

Natalie Pool
Northbrook Student

When I was in seventh grade, I found out that I had been brought up in one of these conversations, and the girl who told me decided that the "popular" group wasn't worth hanging out with, and she decided to befriend me no matter how much gossip was spread about her after. She was one of the only girls who had broken out of the mold and actually followed Jesus' word rather than just saying she believed it but never acting like it in public.

We are not close anymore, we go to different schools now but still talk occasionally, but I could not thank her enough for making an effort to be kind to someone. Like Jesus said, *"Love each other as I have loved you."* Make it a goal in your life to love everyone. No matter how different they are from you, they still deserve the love God gives and the love you can give.

THURSDAY

March 23, 2023

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven." -Matthew 15:13

Matthew chapter 5 opens where Jesus sees a large crowd gathering, so he goes up on a hillside, taking his disciples with him. He begins to teach, some say preach, probably the most important sermon in human history, a sermon that contains the tenets as to how we are to experience and live our faith as his followers, as Christians.

The Sermon on the Mount (believed to be on a hillside near the Lake of Galilee). He opens the sermon with the eight Beatitudes (a Latin word meaning happy or fortunate), and he offers them as a blessing to those who heard him speak, especially to his disciples. These eight blessings offered insight into his expectations for his followers.

Edward Sircy
Circuit Riders Class

To Jesus, "blessed" meant the experience of joy and hope, regardless of the circumstances of the world, even when people insult you, persecute you, and say false things about you. These "blessings" were his invitation to act and be more like him, to love others and serve them.

This means, as Christians, we are to live and act in such a "Jesus way" that God gets the credit for our actions, and our actions will hasten his Kingdom here on earth as it is in Heaven.

In this Lent season, let us fully accept and embrace the blessings that Jesus offered during The Sermon on the Mount, and your good deeds will surely be a blessing to others and to your Father in Heaven.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

March 24 and 25, 2023

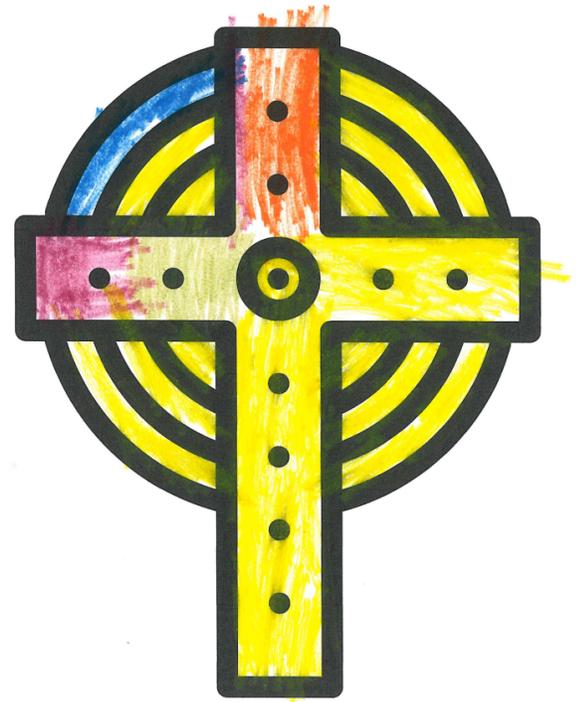
A Prayer by Walter Brueggemann

You, You giver!
You have given light and life to the world;
You have given freedom from Pharaoh to your people Israel;
You have given your only Son for the sake of the world;
You have given yourself to us;
You have given and forgiven,
and you remember our sins no more.

And we, in response, are takers:
We take eagerly what you give us;
we take from our neighbors near at hand as is acceptable;
we take from our unseen neighbors greedily and acquisitively;
we take from our weak neighbors thoughtlessly;
we take all that we can lay our hands on.

It dawns on us that our taking does not match your giving.
In this Lenten season revise our taking,
that it may be grateful and disciplined
even as you give in ways generous and overwhelming. Amen

From *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*



Coloring By Ollie, age 4

SUNDAY

March 26, 2023

"Now take the worthless servant and throw him out into the farthest darkness. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth."

- Matthew 25:30

"The only consolation I have is that he's going to hell," my friend said. She was talking about her father, who had abused her when she was a child and would never be prosecuted because of the statute of limitations. Jill would never have vindication.

Hell, as a place of eternal punishment, has some appeal when we think about mass murderers and global tyrants. And yet, we are assured that Jesus came to earth so that all might be saved. Then we hear the harsh words Jesus has for people who behave badly and don't honor God or their fellow human beings, saying they will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Ouch! That sounds like the kind of hyperbole parents use with their errant teenagers.

Rev. Katie Haney
Retired Presbyterian Minister

But maybe, instead of describing a real place, Jesus is trying to make a point about how important it is to treat others with kindness and respect. Maybe Jesus wants people to follow his example of humility instead of worrying about getting ahead. Amy Levine offers the perspective that "the outer darkness is not hell: it's the back of the line where those who thought they were first now find themselves."

Most of Jesus' words are positive words about how we are to conduct ourselves according to his ethic of love. Not many are about the outer darkness. Maybe that's an indication that Jesus is in charge of what happens to those who aren't obeying the love part. We don't have to worry about it. My friend can trust that her father's final accounting is in God's hands. Her job is to focus on doing God's will in her own life.

MONDAY

March 27, 2023

Tucker Bowers
Northbrook Student

"All who lift themselves up will be brought low. But all who make themselves low will be lifted up."

-Matthew 23:12

When you exalt yourself, you are praising yourself, not God. That means you need to be humbled because you can praise yourself for something, yes, but when you do that you should know that God has been by you that entire time helping guide you along the way.

When you humble yourself first though, God will praise you because putting God before yourself is always the right thing. When you praise yourself you pull God down but if you humble yourself and praise God you bring God up and you will be praised.

You exalt God, not yourself because he was the one who brought this whole world to life, including you. This text really puts in perspective how much God has done for us because he sacrificed his son to save us from our sins. But we still praise ourselves?

He is the one who has put his whole life down just for us. This really shows just how loving God is in all of the different ways that he has sacrificed to save us. So I think we could all do a better job of humbling ourselves and remembering that God is always on our side.

TUESDAY

March 28, 2023

Katie McRee
Community Engagement Steering Committee

"All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me and because of the good news will save them." **-Mark 8:35**

When I was in high school, my youth minister did a lesson where she allowed us to fill our open hands with as many treats as we could hold, as long as we didn't drop or exchange them during her teaching. She first offered old, leftover Halloween candy, and of course, we all filled our hands.

It was FREE CANDY! She brought out much better treats, including NEW Halloween candy and beautiful cupcakes. We were all standing there like a bunch of fools, fumbling with handfuls of candy corn, butterscotch disks, and Good & Plenty, leaving no room for the really good stuff.

Candy doesn't have the same power over me that it did when I was a child, but my desire to hold tight to false hopes still remains. It has simply matured. As a mother with two school-aged children, I now find my hands filled with all the hopes I have for my children. I hold the details of their days, the concerns of their schoolwork, health, and friendships, and the dreams for whom they will grow into.

I grasp these things tightly because I care so deeply and desperately want good things for my children. But I've realized that part of "losing my life" might mean holding these hopes and details with open hands. What might it look like to honor that my children belong to God and not me? How might I release my grip so that they can become all God has created them to be, not being limited to what I can imagine? How might I leave room for God to do the work in their lives (and my own) that brings the REAL good stuff?

WEDNESDAY

March 29, 2023

"But I say to you who are willing to hear: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you."

- Luke 6:17

"Revenge is a dish best served cold."

"An eye for an eye."

"My name is Inigo Montoya, you killed my father. Prepare to die!"

People really like revenge. Anger, resentment, jealousy, and "getting even" seems to come so naturally and instinctively to most of us. When we hurt, something in our brains tells us that making someone else hurt (not necessarily, but most especially, the person who hurt us) will make us feel better. There are whole genres of movies, books, and TV shows about revenge to scratch that particular itch in our brains.

Leslie Bowers
Director of Worship Arts

But Jesus tells us to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. Don't return hate for hate. Don't return hurt for hurt. Be an example of how one should treat another. Maybe they've never seen someone forgive and give love back for hate.

Maybe they have lived in a world where anger and revenge are expected. Maybe you'll help someone grow. Maybe you'll change a heart, heal a person, or alter someone's worldview. Maybe not. But loving your enemy and doing good in the face of hatred - it expels the heat of hatred inside of you faster than any revenge ever could. It will heal your hurt places faster than you can think of a great comeback. You might not change anyone else, but I guarantee you'll change yourself.

Easter Festival Today 5-7 pm

THURSDAY

March 30, 2023

"Not everybody who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will get into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter." -Matthew 7:21

Recently I watched two documentaries that reinforced the words of Jesus in this passage. The members of these churches lifted their hands in praise and said, "Lord, Lord," but operated far outside the will of God. Both ministries did good work, serving the poor and disenfranchised, offering counseling and job placement but practiced intimidation, shaming, and worse. How do we do the will of God?

Sara Armstrong
Financial Administrator & Friendship Class

First, make prayer and Bible study a priority in your life. Prayer creates a connection with God so we can hear his voice speak to our hearts. Reading and studying scripture gives us wisdom and holds us accountable for our actions.

Second, join a godly community where you can worship and serve. Find a place where leaders are servants and don't seek power and control. Find a family of believers where you can ask questions, where you don't feel intimidated or manipulated, and where you feel accepted and not judged.

Third, follow the teaching of the prophets and the example of Jesus. Act justly and honor truth, love mercy, and practice kindness, live your life in humble obedience to God. That is our assignment.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

April 1 and 2, 2023



Coloring By Micah, Kindergarten

A Prayer by John Donne

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, thou hast done;
I fear no more.

A Hymn to God the Father

PALM SUNDAY

April 2, 2023

He said to them, "Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter, you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it. Untie them and bring them to me." -Matthew 21:2

I am struck that Palm Sunday is the date on which human beings exalted Jesus as their king and Savior. The disciples found a donkey for him to ride. The crowd pressed in and waved palm branches and cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord". The religious and secular authorities succumbed to the uproar surrounding Jesus. They feared the worst. "Maybe he really is a King," and maybe he is ushering in His kingdom, and in so doing, will cause us to lose our positions of power, comfort, and status.

The irony is that everything that happens that fateful Palm Sunday is used for God's purposes and ends up fulfilling the prophecies.

Rev. John Moeller
President & CEO In Spiritus

Still, throughout the events of the day, Jesus never once exalted himself or did anything to draw attention to himself.

In the end, we, the readers, come to realize that we, like the throngs that day, are fickle, and like the crowds, we too will ultimately turn on Jesus and, in a matter of days, suggest he is crucified and banished from our lives.

The good news for me on Palm Sunday is that nothing anyone does or says that day or any day since that day can do anything to change the fact that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus loves creation, including you and me, with such transforming power that each of us is ultimately redeemed and purged from the curses that threaten to destroy us.

Amen, and amen!

MONDAY

April 3, 2023

Chad Hunt
Director of Worship and Music

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth". - **Mathew 6:24***

Jesus rarely made a speech without leaving his audience in awe. He left them with nuggets of wisdom to take back to their homes and share with family and friends. How blessed we are to have many of those expressions preserved in the Bible! In this Scripture, Jesus is delivering his Sermon on the Mount. He makes a proclamation that not only startled His listeners but continues to serve as a sobering thought for you and I.

Let's address one thing upfront: Jesus didn't say you had to serve him and be poor. It's thought that the word used for wealth is personified in terms of being used for worship.

From the moment we reach adulthood, we are taught that we need to get a good education, obtain a career that has benefits and retirement, and start saving and investing for our future. There's certainly nothing wrong with this advice, however, there are those who focus their time on materialistic treasures rather than collecting treasures in heaven. In other words, they dedicate their time and energy on obtaining status and possessions that are going to pass away and they fail to invest in loving those who are unlovable, giving to those who are selfish, forgiving those who are too proud to forgive, comforting those who are hurting, strengthening their relationship with God through prayer, study, meditation, fellowship, and service to others.

Through this Lenten season, may we look through a different lens and focus on what is eternal - those things that God gave his Son to die for.

TUESDAY

April 4, 2023

Gerald Scott
Serendipity Class

"For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."
- **Matthew 23:12**

Jesus speaks to his disciples in this verse, but His words are just as meaningful to us today. Jesus warns them against becoming like the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. The Pharisees 'lorded' themselves over others who were not as versed in the scriptures, but they did not practice what they preached.

Whether we admit it or not, we like to be recognized for our service to others. It's a human tendency to elevate oneself in the eyes of others. We are called to serve God as humble servants, not for show or recognition. When we serve God on Sunday morning, are we doing it so those around us can see how 'pious' we are? Or are we doing it to glorify God? That's something to think about.

I worry that I sometimes have the tendency to be more like the Pharisees than a disciple of Christ. I know the rules and can teach others, but how do I treat others in my everyday life.

Jesus carries this message further when He calls us to serve others rather than wait to be served.

In serving others, do we do it for recognition or simply because it's what we, as Christians, are called to do? Sometimes, we can't wait to tell others about the good deed we did for someone. Do we 'lord' ourselves over non-Christians, or do we love everyone as Christ loves us?

During this Lenten season, think about the words of Jesus in all that we do. Are we doing it humbly for the work of the Lord and not for self-recognition and gratification?

WEDNESDAY

April 5, 2023

William Newkirk
Mosaic Class

Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." - Luke 21:10

It is human nature to become accustomed to intolerable cruelty. Although we might think modern people have some novel insight into human suffering due to the twentieth century's two World Wars, multiple genocides, and the existential threat of nuclear annihilation, the truth is that since the earliest of days when Cain took up a rock in hatred and slew his own brother, we have been caught in a cycle of brutish, isolating suffering.

Standing on the steps of the marvelous Temple, Jesus tells us that we cannot change our inhumane ways. Even at that moment, he knew that his human life was soon to end at the hands of jealous, fearful, and power-desirous politicians and religious elites. We alone cannot break our cycle of violence because we have given ourselves over believing wholeheartedly in it.

What Jesus speaks to us in Luke's Gospel is that God operates an eternally victorious cycle of grace, mercy, redemption, and recreation. God's ability to re-create is always stronger than our ability to destroy.

Jesus goes on to promise "**wisdom that none of your adversaries can contradict**" and that, though we might suffer individually and communally, we should "**stand firm and you will win life... your redemption is drawing near**". Still, in the year 2023, the people of this world have yet to reach out together toward God's grace with greater strength than we suppress, marginalize, hurt, and abuse one another.

Lord Jesus Christ, give us over fully to your Grace and re-create our hearts as vessels for your spirit of mercy for the transformation of the world. Amen.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 6, 2023

Rev. Kena Newkirk
Associate Pastor of Family Ministry

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. - John 13:12-14 NIV

During the final meal, before his crucifixion, Jesus washed his disciple's feet. He then asks a pointed question, "**do you know what I have done for you.**" When Jesus washes his disciples' feet, he lowers the bar for accomplishment in the Kingdom of God. Instead of a race to the top, a competition to see who can garner more glory and notoriety, Jesus illustrates that sharing God's love is a race to the bottom; to see who can be the better servant of the community. If the disciples were not quite sure what Jesus required of them, he goes on for the following two chapters about the importance of love.

Yet, I keep returning to the question: **Do you understand what I have done for you?** It's as if Jesus is speaking through the disciples directly to us nearly 2,000 years later.

I wonder if Jesus has been pondering this question his entire earthly ministry. With every healing, teaching, prophecy, and prayer, was this question at the back of his mind? Perhaps he asked this question when Judas betrayed him, or when Peter denied him, or when the Pilot condemned him. Maybe, just maybe, he even asks it to us today.

The first answer to that question is, of course, no. We do not understand. How could we possibly understand the whole drama of the incarnation, God made flesh? The radicle reversal of corrupted order back to God's dream of perfect union with creation. How could we, as broken and fragile as we are, ever hope to fully grasp what Jesus has done for us?

The first answer to Jesus's question is no; we don't understand. But we are called to a lifetime of discipleship by which we will slowly figure it out.

Foot Washing 6:30 pm

GOOD FRIDAY

April 7, 2023

Jesus said, "*It is completed.*" Bowing his head, he gave up his life. - **John 19:30**

Written at the first church council in 325, The Nicene Creed features the line: "For us and for our salvation [Jesus] came down from heaven." This line reflects an idea within the Eastern church that the definitive moment of atonement was not the cross but the incarnation. As Bishop Kallistos Ware writes, "Christ's Incarnation is already an act of salvation. By taking up our broken humanity into himself, Christ restored it. But in that case, why was a death on the cross necessary?"

It's a fair question. Why is death on the cross necessary? This seems to be the same question Jesus wrestled with in the Garden of Gethsemane. But then again, the moment in the Garden of Gethsemane gives us insight into the full weight of Jesus' sacrifice because it demonstrates clearly that Jesus' sacrifice is a choice.

Rev. Kena Newkirk
Associate Pastor of Family Ministry

Bishop Ware says, "God saves us by identifying himself with us, by knowing our human experience from the inside. The Cross signifies, in the most stark and uncompromising manner, that this act of sharing is carried to the utmost limit."

Jesus *chooses* to die on the cross. Jesus *chooses* to identify with every painful, shameful, and hateful part of the human experience. Jesus makes this choice and so redeems the darkest corners of human suffering.

Suddenly, his call to his disciples to "**take up your cross**" is filled with overwhelming meaning. It is a call that bids us come and die. Make the choice, for it is a choice. And know that Jesus has already walked through the valley of the shadow of death. We really do have nothing to fear. He has shown us the way. He will walk it with us. The work is already "**complete**," and death really has no power anymore.

Worship 6:30 pm

HOLY SATURDAY

April 8, 2023

The Vespers on Great Friday

He whom none may touch is seized;
He who looses Adam from the curse is bound.
He who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial;
He who closed the abyss is shut in prison.

He before whom the powers of heaven stand with trembling stands before Pilate;
The Creator is struck by the hand of the creature.
He who comes to judge the living and the dead is condemned to the Cross;
The Destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb.

O thou who dost endure all these things in thy tender love,
Who hast saved all men from the curse,
O long-suffering Lord, glory to thee.

From *The Lenten Triodion*



Coloring by Carson, age 4

EASTER SUNDAY

April 9, 2023

Rev. Laurie Moeller
Senior Pastor

Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, for I haven't yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" - John 20:17

We are taught early on - either by children's books or movies or the bible - light is good, and dark is bad. With Easter, we are reminded that the God who created the light -- first created the dark: "In the beginning, the earth was a formless void, and darkness covered the earth. And God said, let there be light, and there was light, and God saw that it was good. God called the light day and the darkness night." Genesis: 1:1-5

So naturally, God's new plan..... the coming of eternal light into the world happened while it was still dark. While it was still dark, early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. The stone was rolled away from the entrance. Neither she nor the other disciples thought about resurrection or what a dark empty tomb might mean.

Easter has happened - but it happened while it was still dark. While it is still dark, God's most triumphant power is at work.

John starts his story of Jesus with these words: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. Ever! Easter has happened. Easter is happening! HE HAS RISEN!

Easter Worship

7:00 am - Sunrise & Communion in the Outdoor Chapel
9:00 am - Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary
11:00 am - Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary



KidNorth

Coloring by Cora, age 7

Thank You



Thank you to all the Northbrook community members who made this devotional possible. Your thoughtful reflections on the words of Jesus have helped to bind us closer to one another and closer to our Lord.