



WE ARE A NEW CREATION!

2021 Epiphany Lenten Devotions

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You are holding in your hands a booklet that has been crafted in love for you by the youth of Epiphany Lutheran Church with help from our adult leaders. We hope that God will refresh and renew you in moments spent with the words in these pages and that the Spirit will bless you and guide you through these 40 days of Lent.

The time of Lent – which originally meant “spring” – is a period of forty days in which we reflect on the renewal and rebirth God gives us through our baptism into Christ’s death and resurrection. This year Lent begins on Wednesday, February 17.

As we prepare to celebrate the victory of Easter, we invite you to pause each day to reflect on the cross and our call to follow Jesus, knowing we begin this season in the bitterness of winter but Easter will bring us to bright days, growing flowers, and trees raising their green branches in praise to God – and so let’s pray God will re-create us within, too!

Each day you will find a scripture chosen by a member of our community and their reflection on its meaning, as well as a question for pondering, journaling or discussion, and a prayer. We have also included readings, reflections and prayers that correspond to our Sunday readings.



Here are some suggests on how you could use this journal:

- + **For family reading and discussion** Keep the book on the dinner table and over supper (or breakfast if you're earlier risers!) read the scripture and reflection and think about and answer the question together. Use the prayer given or pray your own,
- + **For personal journaling** Keep the book by your bedside and reflect on the verses when you wake up or each night before going to sleep,
- + **Add your own prayers** Pray for the person who offered the reflection each day and their family, our community, the world, and other people and places God draws your mind and heart toward,
- + **For sharing with friends** After reading and reflecting consider texting verses or prayers to those you love or a friend who needs encouragement,
- **Join us for our "New Creation" 6-week Lenten Study** 5-12th grade youth are invited to meet on Zoom for Bible study beginning on Sunday, February 21 and gathering each Sunday for six weeks, ending on Sunday, March 28. We will meet from 1-2pm and use these reflections as our guide. Look for an invitation and link coming soon in your email.

May this booklet be good company for you through these 40 days, as we give thanks to God for the promise that if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

God bless you!

Peace+

Pastor Joseph

Ash Wednesday, February 17

Day 1

READ

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. (Isaiah 41:10)

LISTEN

This verse from Isaiah provides reassurance to me that no matter how dark things get, God will remain by my side. The most powerful part for me, however, is the fact that the scripture reads “your God” and not “God”. This is because God has a special relationship with each and every person and because of that, God will guide different people through their struggles in different ways. Trust in God and in His plan for you and the rest will fall into place. – Ryan Henry

REFLECT

We begin Lent by hearing the words, “You are dust and to dust you shall return.” God has initiated a special relationship with each one of us in Jesus, becoming flesh in a human body just like yours. When was the last time you were really dirty? What did it feel like? What does it mean to you that in Jesus, God experienced and took on a human body so that God knows what it means, intimately, to be dirty with us?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are our God and you are not afraid to come and be with us in our dirtiness, in our darkness, and in our struggles. Be with us and help us trust you so that we will not be dismayed, but be filled with confidence in you. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Thursday, February 18

Day 2

READ

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6)

LISTEN

This really just speaks to me and my personal journey with my own mental health, in which I've had to learn to place my trust in others and use my own time with God as an outlet to relieve certain worries. ~ Abby Rigler

REFLECT

Who is a person who helps you feel less anxious when you are together? What is it about them that helps you feel better?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you have conquered the worst the world can throw at us and you live with us every day, knowing our needs before we even ask. Shield us from the anxieties that can steal away the joy you desire for us and inspire us to reach out to others in friendship. Ease our minds and let us have times of laughter today. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Friday, February 19

Day 3

READ

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

LISTEN

The verse has given me comfort during the last few months as the uncertainty of when things may get back to 'normal' continue on and the numbers of cases continue to rise. Knowing that God is in my corner and is telling me not to fear, reading this verse gives me hope and strength to get through another day, a week, a month. Though times are hard now, sticking to His plan and being strong throughout all that is being thrown at us day in and day out, this is only a moment in our life and we will come out of it stronger and more appreciative of the times and experiences we have in the future. – Emily Dietrick

REFLECT

In baptism, Jesus has claimed us as his own and stands up for us and is in our corner when people and forces in the world would tear us down. What would you like to ask God for the strength to accomplish today?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, we have all known times of deep darkness and sadness as well as mountain-top times of joy, and you are with us through it all. Continue to give us your strength so that we can endure, looking to your cross. You are our champion and our strength. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, February 20

Day 4

READ

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.
(1 Corinthians 16: 13-14)

LISTEN

These verses remind me that God wants us to be strong and courageous in our decisions, yet think with our hearts and do actions out of love for others because God loves us. –
Nathan Myers

REFLECT

We all want to make good decisions, be wise people, and maybe even be people whom others consult as knowledgeable and helpful. Scripture tells us that fearing God (or being in awe of God's goodness and majesty) is the beginning of wisdom. What difference does it make that we begin all our decisions and actions having first been loved by God? What big decision is on your plate right now? How will you go about making it?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, the cross loomed large throughout your earthly life, its shadow was cast over all you did and said for us. Thank you for making the decision to love us and die for us. Help us to remember your humility, kindness, and regard for others as we seek to make decisions that would give you honor and glory with our lives. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Sunday, February 21

First Sunday in Lent

(Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is a resurrection day or a “little Easter”)

READ

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” (Mark 1:9-15)

REFLECT

We are baptized just as Jesus was baptized, and just as God spoke words of love to Jesus before his ministry had even begun, God loves us before we do anything, before we succeed at anything, and before we accomplish anything. What does it mean to you to know your foundation in life is God’s delight and pleasure at having made you?



PRAY

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, February 22

Day 5

READ

Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)

LISTEN

I like this verse because I am usually the type of person who loves to be on the go and doing as much as possible, but I realize that sometimes I need to take a break and let God be in control. I have liked this verse since 2019 when I used it in confirmation, but I think it is even more important now that we have to socially distance and quarantine due to COVID. ~ Catherine Burger

REFLECT

We have been more “still” than maybe ever before over the last year – many of us have had limited travel, cancelled vacations, cars that are full of gas for months at a time, and probably have gone a little stir-crazy. It was dead quiet in the tomb on Easter Saturday. God was perfectly still, and yet with Easter morning a New Creation burst forth from the big bang of Jesus walking out of the tomb. What does it mean to you that God is in control and we can trust God to be in control?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in the midst of the struggle. You don't keep us out of the storm but you are with us and will bring us through. Lead us to trust you more and look to you, knowing you are God of all creation. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Tuesday, February 23

Day 6

READ

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them. (Matthew 18:20)

LISTEN

This verse fits well with our current time of small group meetings and time spent at home with family. It serves as a reminder that wherever we go, God is with us all the time. It also pairs well with the hymn "We are the Church". The church is not a place we go, but is comprised of the people within it and when we engage in worship from our homes, we are still a church community together. ~ Jon Luetgen

REFLECT

If you have been to a synod even you have sung the words:
You can go to worship but you cannot go to church
You can't find a building that's alive no matter how you search
We are the church, the body of our Lord;
We are all God's children, we have been restored...
The church it is the people
Living out their lives
CALLED - ENLIGHTENED - SANCTIFIED
For the work of Jesus Christ...
We are the church, the body of our Lord;
we are all God's children, we have been restored

Can you reflect in a new way on what it means to be the Body of Christ as described in the lyrics to this song? Has this year of pandemic given you new insights into what it means to be the church?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, thank you for calling us to be your followers, enlightening us with your word, and making us holy and special people, set apart to serve you through your Spirit. Build your people up into a structure that will shelter those in need and provide care and safety to the most vulnerable. Inspire us to praise you with abandon and be with us on the journey. Amen.

Wednesday, February 24

Day 7

READ

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. (Ephesians 1:17-19)

LISTEN

I like this verse because it has a very hopeful message that's always able to brighten my day when I'm feeling down. – Skylar Schuetze

REFLECT

What's the thing that's the most valuable in your life in terms of monetary value? Sentimental or emotional value? What does it mean that the riches of God's glorious inheritance – God's power at work in our lives – is given to us as a totally free gift?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, open the eyes of my heart and the ears of my mind to hear you calling me. Help me to understand what you want me to do with my life and all the blessings I have been given. Give us the wisdom that comes from trusting you and knowing, because you love us, everything will be okay. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Thursday, February 25

Day 8

READ

Cast all of your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

LISTEN

I like this verse because even though I don't necessarily have anxiety it still makes me feel like even with all of the flaws I have God still loves me throughout. – J.T. Helberg

REFLECT

People living with anxiety disorders frequently have intense, excessive, persistent worry, and fear about everyday situations. Often, anxiety disorders involve repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes (panic attacks). These feelings of anxiety and panic interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control. Even if we don't live with clinical anxiety, when one person among us suffers we all suffer and experiencing occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. God cares for us when we are strong and when we are anxious. What is a prayer you have for yourself or for someone you love who lives in the shadow of anxiety?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you invite us to take your yoke upon our shoulders, to allow you to help us carry our burdens, and to learn from you; for you gentle and humble in heart, and you will give rest for your souls. Send our worry to flight and cast out our anxiousness. Fill our hearts instead with gratitude and trust in your love, knowing that you are with us on the journey. Amen.

Friday, February 26

Day 9

READ

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)

LISTEN

This is my favorite verse and was also my confirmation verse. I like it so much because I love the message of God uplifting me and illuminating my path ahead of me. Also, it's the main line in a song we sing at synod events which takes me back to the places my faith has been strengthened through the years and makes it super easy to remember! ~ Madeline Myers

REFLECT

Lent is a journey to the cross of Jesus whose light illuminates the whole world! What does it mean to you that this living Jesus is still speaking to you through his word, which we can read in the Bible, sing in songs, and which is there to guide our thoughts, desires and decisions?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, your word of forgiveness, healing, and love leads us to trust in you, serve the world you love, and care for all creation. We thank you for your word which reassures us of your goodness. Let us seek you in the morning and learn to walk in your ways, trusting that step by step you lead us all of our days. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, February 27

Day 10

READ

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.
(Habakkuk 3:17-18)

LISTEN

I really like this verse because it teaches me that although life may not be fruitful at the moment, I can still remain faithful and find joy in God's love. This especially applies right now when not much is going on and I feel as if I am missing out on experiences. It reminds me of the small joys in life that triumph over these hard times. ~ Yasmine Groener

REFLECT

What small joys have you experienced throughout the pandemic time (or perhaps reflect on the last week or so)? Have you found joy in ways you would find difficult to image in any other circumstances?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you were faithful to God and trusted your Father on the cross, with your very clothing stripped from you and everything, including your life, taken from you. Give us your faithfulness, that we may rejoice in the Lord and be filled with joy in God our Savior, as we travel with you on the journey. Amen.

Sunday, February 28

Second Sunday in Lent

(Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is a resurrection day or a “little Easter”)

READ

Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:31-38)

REFLECT

Think about a time you have suffered, a time when someone you know and love has suffered, or somewhere you have seen suffering in the world. What does it mean that Jesus is willing to suffer with us?



PRAY

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, March 1

Day 11

READ

I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. (Psalm 31:7)

LISTEN

This verse reminds me that God not only understands everyone, but he loves us unconditionally. When regular people would usually walk away from someone with troubles, God has stayed and will stay with us no matter what. ~ Ben Beausergent

REFLECT

“I see you.” We say this to one another to let each other know that we are seen, known, and loved. Who did you see today that needed a prayer said for them? Is this a person you could reach out to in some way with a word of encouragement?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you see us in our afflictions and in our times of anguish, you are unafraid to be with us. Turn our weeping to laughter, our mourning to dancing, and our cries of despair into songs of praise. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Tuesday, March 2

Day 12

READ

Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you ~ you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed, your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:25-33)

LISTEN

These words tell me do not worry about what you will eat or what you will drink or what clothes you wear but trust in God and it will be all okay. ~ Declan Dougherty

REFLECT

What specific gift from God are you giving thanks for today? How would things be different if we really trusted that God knew our needs and instead of worrying we were able to focus all that energy on seeking God, caring for others, and reaching out to the people in our life in acts of kindness?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you have clothed us, given us a place to live, and fed us today, just as you promised. Fix our hearts on your abundant gifts and fill us with gratitude. Free us up to seek you and reach out to others who may be worried with the good news that all will be okay because you love us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Wednesday, March 3

Day 13

READ

For it was you, O God, who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. (Psalm 139:13-14)

LISTEN

I find Psalm 139 to be comforting because I've recently been anxious and worried about planning for the future and what my life will look like with having a baby and how everything will fit together as we navigate a new way of life. Psalm 139 reminds me that God knows all of my thoughts and worries and knew me and loved me from before my birth, just like he knows and loves my baby before his birth and that instead of trying to control things and plan I can rest assured that God sees me, hears me, and has a plan for me and I should continue to pray for guidance and peace and trust in his plans for me. I know the youth aren't having any children right now but I think this Psalm can still serve as a good reminder that we are seen, known, and loved even when we may be having difficult inner thoughts. – Alexandra Griffin

REFLECT

We all make mistakes, have bad days, and sometimes even wonder if we are worthy of love. Reflect on the truth that GOD MADE YOU and God is perfect. What do you think it means that you are “fearfully and wonderfully” made? What are you really good at?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, we are yours, and all our days are known to you. Thank you for the way you made us. Help us to see our beauty and be in awe of your craftsmanship. Inspire us to use the gifts and talents you have given us to brighten the lives of those around us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Thursday, March 4

Day 14

READ

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

LISTEN

During difficult times this is comforting because I know I can find strength and hope in God. It's nice to talk to God and express my worries. This gives me some peace of mind.
- Vivian Sarych

REFLECT

What burden have you been carrying today or this past week? Can you be vulnerable and share them? What would it be like to let God help you carry this burden?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, on the cross you carried the weight of my sins and all the sins of all creation. Call to my mind and heart the truth that my burdens are not too much for you to bear. Help me to be honest with you knowing you already know me completely anyway. Help carry my burden and be with me on the journey. Amen.

Friday, March 5

Day 15

READ

Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the LORD your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

LISTEN

This is my favorite verse because it reminds me that it doesn't matter what others think because God loves me and is always in my corner no matter what. ~ Audrey Bates

REFLECT

Do you think you would have the courage to pray for your enemies by name and ask God to bless them and lead them? Why or why not? What might happen if you did?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, on the cross you prayed for the very people who were crucifying you asking God to forgive them and understanding that they didn't know what they were doing. We pray that by the same power that raised you up on Easter – a power that can do the seemingly impossible – we might become friends with those who were our enemies. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, March 6

Day 16

READ

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

LISTEN

It makes me feel safe knowing God is there for me. ~ Rowan Keith

REFLECT

Gratitude is the determined act of choosing to think about the gifts and blessings in our lives rather than dwelling on the things that are not as we wish them to be. Gratitude can cast out fear. Trusting that Jesus cares for you and loves you, how many specific people, places, and things can you list for which you are grateful?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you care for us and enjoy being in our company. You delight to hear our prayers and to listen to our problems and worries. You promise to help ease the burden because of them. Keep us in the safety of your love and help us to be there for one another in the same way you are there for us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Sunday, March 7

Third Sunday in Lent

(Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is a resurrection day or a “little Easter”)

READ

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” ¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:13-22)

REFLECT



While Jesus is truly the divine Son of God, he is also truly a human being. This is a moment when we see Jesus’ rage and anger displayed because the poor were being taken advantage of and God was being disrespected. Does anger have a place in our life of faith as disciples of Jesus? What has made you righteously angry?

PRAY

Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, March 8

Day 17

READ

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

LISTEN

I like this verse because it reminds me that there is someone out there, Jesus, who will always look after me and help me in life. It also is powerful and I think it sounds pretty cool too. ~ Ryan Poole

REFLECT

If you have ever participated in sports and had a coach you know that a coach is someone who looks after you, helps you develop your skills, and uses your gifts to make the team stronger. In Jesus, we have a coach who makes us a part of the community of faith where we can learn from one another about how to serve, grow, and walk with God. Who is someone whose faith you admire? What is it about this person that makes them someone you'd like to emulate?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are always looking out for us and it is powerful to think of the way you have been with us from our mother's womb, you are with us now, and will coach us along all the days of our life whatever they bring. Form us into your team, running the plays you design for service, forgiveness and love. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Tuesday, March 9

Day 18

READ

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)

LISTEN

To me this means whenever I am anxious or in distress, I know I can talk to God and he will listen. I know this because I have faith in him, Jesus Christ. ~ Arden Ebbesen

REFLECT

Have you ever known someone who wasn't really listening when you talked but thinking about what they wanted to say? Have you ever had a friend who really, really listened, just asking good questions, not giving cliches, just letting you spill it all out until you felt better? It makes a big difference! We have a God who really listens. What difference does this make?

PRAY

Loving God, in your earthly ministry you had friends who deserted you in the hour of your greatest need and left you alone, and yet you forgave them and called them back into friendship with you and then sent them out to change the world. Help us not to give up on our friends when something comes between us, but lead us to have hard conversations and repair any misunderstandings or hurts. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Wednesday, March 10

Day 19

READ

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

LISTEN

Literally the first time I came to Epiphany... into Price Hall... there were large posters.... or handmade banners....with different scriptures written on them posted up on the higher part of the walls. This was one that was up and just seeing it soothed me and let me know I was in the right place. It's simple message delivers such a message of love and support. It tells me God is there for me when I am in need. Anxiety can feel complex.... sometimes it makes sense and sometimes it just comes out of the blue... it can be so unsettling but this verse tells me and reminds me that God is there for me and cares about me. I often say it in my head when I'm feeling anxious or uncertain. It really is all I need to know! ~ Jane Lanham

REFLECT

Perhaps you have had anxious moments when you wondered if you were in the right place, had the knowledge that you needed for the moment, or even felt like you weren't up to a challenge. But have you ever felt like you were in just the right place at just the right time? If so, what was that moment like?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, thank you for people who give us messages of love and support, especially in difficult circumstances. Bring us closer to these people and help us hear those messages in the core of our being. Help us as we grow and develop to find the right place and the best way to serve you by using the gifts you've already given us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Thursday, March 11

Day 20

READ

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

LISTEN

This is how I have tried to live my life. — Scott Dietrick

REFLECT

Jesus washes the feet of the friends who will betray him and tells them that he knows that will betray him in the worst, darkest moment of his life, but that he forgives them and he will be there when they are ready to come back to him to start fresh. Jesus means for us to live our lives as he did and he is with us to help us do just that. Have you ever had a relationship that you thought was broken but was able to be mended? Who would you like to find reconciliation with?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are always transforming our lives and creating us anew everyday, and we pray that you will keep working in us and with us. Keep our hearts from hardening and continue molding us into something new as we grow in our understanding of your desire for our life together. Help us forgive as you forgive and be with us on the journey. Amen.

Friday, March 12

Day 21

READ

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

LISTEN

This Bible verse speaks to me because it is a reminder to take all of your fears, anxieties, and uncertainties of the future, and give them to God. This is something I know I need to hear every day, and a message that is relevant in each time and stage of life! ~ Grace Lanham

REFLECT

What do you think the difference is between the peace the world gives and the peace that Jesus gives? Which peace is superior? Do you think we look for different kinds of peace at different stages of our lives?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, as we grow and change through the different stages of life your love is constant. When we feel lonely and separated from one another, please surround us with your peace and invade our troubled hearts with your light and love to rescue us and remind us you are near. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, March 13

Day 22

READ

You may not understand now what I am doing, but someday you will. John (13:7)

LISTEN

I like this one because I believe this is honestly something numerous people can relate to. It's like when someone does something like keeping a secret that could hurt your feelings but they think it's the best so you don't get hurt. We all do things that you may not understand now, but eventually you will. ~ Maggie Long

REFLECT

Jesus says these words when he is washing the disciple's feet. They don't understand about the cross yet, but now the secret is out: Jesus died on the cross out of love for us. Now we can tell the whole world through our words and actions. Who is someone who has takes care of you, served you, or helped you and you didn't realize it at the time but you see it now? How did they care for you? What does that mean to you?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, thank you for your unfolding grace and all the people who help us see you more clearly. Open our eyes to see who you are calling us to be, to understand the gifts you have given to us, and the people you would have us serve for your sake. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Sunday March 14

(Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is a resurrection day or a “little Easter”)

READ

Jesus said: ¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.” (John 3:14-21)

REFLECT

As the Israelites looked up at the serpent in the wilderness they were healed and Jesus lifted up on the cross is God’s sign and declaration of healing for the whole world to see. Is there anyone in your life for whom you pray today – that they would know and see God’s healing in Jesus?



PRAY

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, March 15

Day 23

READ

Fear not for I am with you; be not dismayed. for I am your God; I will strengthen you; I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. (Isaiah 41)

LISTEN

This scripture boosts me up in spirit whenever I read it. This is for sure my favorite! ~
Fiona Stapleton

REFLECT

Isaiah is writing to God's people who were defeated by a foreign power, captured, and taken away, and had to endure slavery in the far-away country of Babylon, where they no longer got to live in their own homes, own anything, and were probably even separated from family and friends. God brought the people home and God promises even in these nearly-unspeakably-terrible circumstances that he will rescue us. What has been the hardest thing for you to endure during this pandemic?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you know full well what we have to endure. Cast out our fear and boost us up to recall that God helps us – the same God who brought the exiles home from Babylon and who raised Jesus from the dead – this God – you, O God, still help us, strengthens us, and will uphold us with your victorious hand. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Tuesday, March 16

Day 24

READ

So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. Matthew 6:34

LISTEN

I like this verse because I tend to worry....a lot! I have this verse written in various places in my home and car. It reminds me that God wants us to turn our worries over to him and all will be well! ~ Marcie Perryman

REFLECT

Its really is good to create reminders for ourselves and for one another – cards, text messages, notes. There is a member of our congregation who is homebound who writes scripture on cards and places them all around her room – there are hundreds of them on her walls, falling out of books, and used as coasters for drinks. She passes them out to people who live at her nursing home and to the people who work there. What do you have in your room or in your house that is a reminder of God's love for you? Is there something else you could set up or put out that would be a reminder to you of God's love for you?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you invite us to lay down our worry. Free us from fear and remind us that you will provide all we need – food, drink, and clothing – but also friendship, purpose for our life, and meaningful work that springs from the gifts you have given us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Wednesday, March 17

Day 25

READ

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans (8:38-39)

LISTEN

Lists are super helpful to me because I can be an extremely disorganized person without them. My agenda is constantly filled with check lists and to do lists so I don't forget things. So, it seems natural that this list of things in Romans brings me comfort in knowing that these things and others can never separate me from God's love. And when things in my life get worrisome or scary, I think of this verse and add them to Paul's list to remind myself that they too cannot separate me from Jesus. – Taylor Williamson

REFLECT

Can you make a list to add to Paul's and Taylor's lists of things that cannot separate us from the love of God in Jesus?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are one with God in the Spirit forever and nothing can separate your perfect Triune life. Give us as your followers this same unity and convince us again today that there is no escaping your love. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Thursday, March 18

Day 26

READ

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you, he will never leave you or nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

LISTEN

To me this verse means that you should never be afraid because God is always with you and he has a plan in store for you. (Krista Boyle)

REFLECT

Moses speaks these words of encouragement to Joshua and the Hebrews as they prepare to enter the Promised Land after forty long years in the wilderness and God does drive out their enemies and prepare a place for them. God made a way for his people and Jesus is the plan to make a way for all of us and all creation into the very heart of God our Father. When is a time that God has prepared a way for you – when you didn't think something would work out but it did? Did God use a person to help you? Give you confidence to overcome?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you endured the wilderness and temptation just as the Israelites endured the wilderness and temptation. We also are in a wilderness time where we don't know how much longer the pandemic and its related challenges will last or how this will end. Be with us in this wilderness time to keep us from the temptation to despair or lash out in anger or become closed off from others. Lead us forward in strength and courage and be with us on the journey. Amen.

Friday, March 19

Day 27

READ

I can do all the things through him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

LISTEN

I feel like people need a lot of strength right now to get through Corona and hoping it will end. I also think this verse reminds people that God is there for you and always willing to help. ~ Will Burger

REFLECT

Paul is in prison when he writes to the Philippians, not knowing when his imprisonment will end, or even if it will end, and yet it's a letter full of confidence in God and joy in Jesus. Imagine Paul in prison as he passes the long, long days. Paul encourages us in this letter to think about good things as a way to stay strong. How is God giving you strength right now? Through a person, good memories, a hope you have?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, accompany us in this time of pandemic, which can feel a lot like a jail cell. Be especially with those who live with anxiety, depression, or mental illness; who feel sad or despair. Call to their mind's good thoughts, remind them of people who love them and are there for them, and especially send your Spirit to help us all remember we are made in your image and we are loved by you. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, March 20

Day 28

READ

For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

LISTEN

This is one of my favorites because in such a time of change and uncertainty it's easy to become overwhelmed when you're unsure of where to go next, this verse reminds me that God has a plan for me even when I'm unsure. ~ Laura Dillard

REFLECT

How has God provided for you today? How has God made a way for you and “attended to your welfare”?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are God's plan to bring us back into perfect, whole, complete relationship with you where nothing prevents us from receiving your mercy and kindness. Help us to trust you will take care of us and inspire us to take risks for you – befriending those who are difficult to be friends with, forgiving when its hard, and serving when no one is looking. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Sunday, March 21

Fifth Sunday in Lent

(Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is a resurrection day or a “little Easter”)

READ

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. (John 12:20-33)

REFLECT

Jesus says that he will draw all people to himself and on the cross we see that his arms are quite literally open to all. Is there a way that you feel God leading you to be more inclusive of others? Someone in particular?



PRAY

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, March 22

Day 29

READ

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

LISTEN

I like this verse because it explains what you need really to be a follower of Christ. I also like it because it brings me memories of Camp Caroline Furnace. ~ Cole Domaleski

REFLECT

Where is a specific place that feels holy or special to you? Where is a specific place where you feel “right with the world” or close to God?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you seek us with your undivided heart, whole soul, and re-creating might. Thank you for calling us and for showing us through your service, healing, and humility how you expect us to live. We are grateful for places like Caroline Furnace, Epiphany Lutheran Church, Eagle Erie, Roanoke College, and our homes where you meet us and call us into deeper relationship with you and one another. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Tuesday, March 23

Day 30

READ

Do not be afraid for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east and from the west I will gather you. (Isaiah 43:5)

LISTEN

This verse speaks to me now more than ever because I feel as though we all need to know that someone is with us, helping us along the way and guiding us through these times. ~
Diana Paget

REFLECT

One of the promises of our baptism is that we have one another as sisters and brothers and that we are bound together by blood – the blood of Jesus’ gift of himself on the cross – all the way through this life and forever. What can it mean for us to be brothers and sisters to one another, with God as our Father?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are our brother and you have made your Father, our Father. Thank you for a family in which we have a place and a purpose. Gather us together, our families, our congregation, and your whole church, so that we may truly love and serve as your sisters and brothers. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Wednesday, March 24

Day 31

READ

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

LISTEN

My parents chose for me when the Church first presented me with a bible. It's my favorite verse because it reminds me that no matter where we go in life God will always be by our side and come through for us when we need it. – Cooper Speidell

REFLECT

Who has reminded you of God's love for you today (or this week)? What did they say or do that was encouraging to you? Do you think God has used you this week to encourage anyone and remind them that God will always be by our side?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, as Moses passed on leadership to Joshua, Jesus passed on leadership to his disciples, and our parents and loving adults are passing on leadership to us, keep us on the path that begins in Eden, runs through the cross and the empty tomb, to the moment of this prayer. Make us shine like stars with your love and respond to your love with faithfulness. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Thursday, March 25

Day 32

READ

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

LISTEN

This line speaks in reference to us being created God's children, but I believe it also relates to our attitudes and states during the pandemic. We need to know that's there's light at the end of the tunnel (glory) and that we need to persevere through difficult times because after it's over, the suffering we went through doesn't compare. ~ Josh Smithson

REFLECT

In this passage, Paul says that God has adopted us as children, so that we should call God "Father" or "Abba" (translated best as "Daddy" or "Dad"), and that Jesus is our brother. He goes on to say that the Spirit helps us believe this and trust that the suffering we experience will end. What's the one thing you're really looking forward to ending from the pandemic? What hope do you have for life at the end of the tunnel?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are well acquainted with suffering, knowing the pain and loneliness of the cross. Thank you for being with us in our pain and loneliness and sending your Spirit to cry out in faith so we can call God our Father. Help us to trust you will bring us through all our suffering to the joy you have prepared for us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Friday, March 26

Day 33

READ

The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.
(Isaiah 40:8)

LISTEN

This is one of my favorite Bible verses because it talks about the strength of God's love. No matter what we go through, His love is unshakable and I think that's so important, now more than ever. ~ Riley Speidell

REFLECT

Can you hear it as good news that the grass withers, the flower fades, and our own lives are a breath and a sigh in the long stretch of time that is God's creation? Why or why not? How we use our time matters a lot. Is there any way you'd like to use your time differently tomorrow? If so, why?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, your love is unshakeable. Though the earth should quake, though the world would fall, your word stands forever and we belong to you. Make us confident in your love for us, bold in our living, and inspire us to use our time to give you praise and serve on your behalf those who are in need. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, March 27

Day 34

READ

I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)

LISTEN

The word of God isn't something we just listen to or read, it's something that sticks with us so we're less likely to sin. ~ Jake Barger

REFLECT

Jesus is God's word, spoken to us so that we know how much God loves us. We have not been together now, as we usually would be in person, for over a year. What's something about church life, synod events, or youth group that still sticks with you, that you still remember?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, thank you for sticking with us through it all. Make your word our greatest treasure that we would cling to your promises and trust in your word. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Palm Sunday, March 28

(Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is a resurrection day or a “little Easter”)

READ

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. (Mark 11:1-11)

REFLECT

Jesus wants to enter every part of our life – our friendships, our free time, our hearts desires – where would you like Jesus to enter into your life to bring his joy, healing, and saving power?



PRAY

Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Monday, March 29

Day 35

READ

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10: 24-25)

LISTEN

This verse means a lot to me right now because even though we cannot meet with each other in person, we should encourage each other, reach out and check on each other, and make sure everyone is okay and not lonely. We should also find ways we can help in our community during the pandemic. We have a responsibility to look out for the needs of others. If it becomes a habit now, then after COVID, we are more likely to keep doing it.
- Ryan Smithson

REFLECT

What have been the most meaningful ways that people have reached out to you during the pandemic? What do you think has been the most impactful way you have reached out to others? What new adventure in encouragement and friendship might you undertake?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, your good deed in the cross is the beginning of all our acts of love and friendship. Inspire us to take risks to reach out to others – family, friends, new people we meet, people we haven't talked to in a while – to share the love we have received from you. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Tuesday, March 30

Day 36

READ

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

LISTEN

No matter how bad the present may be, you can always look forward to tomorrow. – Beckett Sarych

REFLECT

What is your greatest hope for the future? How could this hope inform and effect your relationships and friendships in a new way today?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are lord over all our tomorrows and you promise that at the end of all things you will wipe away every tear and there will be no more weeping but only joy in your presence. Fix our hearts on this promise and lead us to live securely in the hope you extend to us. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

READ

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even 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. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)

LISTEN

I memorized Psalm 23 at such a young age and it always had an important meaning to me. It simply reminds me that God is there. I don't need to worry. I might be in a dark place but I don't need to fear because God is there with me to bring me up. Whenever I'm worried, I say this verse in my head, and it always has made my worry decrease. (Katie Bridges)

REFLECT

The good shepherd in this psalm uses the shepherd's rod and staff to beat back the wolf or whatever would attack. The shepherd prepares a table for the writer and not only protects him from enemies but these enemies have to watch as he is seated at a table with sumptuous food and drink! God protects us and seats us at a special place at his table. You may not have had communion in a while, but you have tasted and seen and heard God's love for you in Holy Communion and you can recall it. What does it mean to you that Jesus seats you in a special place at God's table?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, in bread and wine we taste your love, our cup overflows, and we remember again that your goodness and mercy are free gifts. Thank you for seating us at your table and making a home for us. Call to our minds people that you would like us to extend hospitality to and help us imagine ways, even in these physically distant times, that this hospitality is possible. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Maundy Thursday, April 1

Day 38

READ

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." (John 13:7)

LISTEN

This is my favorite bible verse for many reasons. It gives me hope that there is something amazing mapped out for me. I might not understand what is happening now but in the end I will. At the end of each path there is something beautiful. After every rainstorm there is a rainbow. All we have to do now is pray to God and wait for the storm to end to see the beauty. ~ Clare Martin

REFLECT

After the storm of the cross there was the rainbow of the empty tomb. When the storm of this pandemic ends, how might we live the 'rainbow of life' in Jesus in a new way? Do you think you will choose to do anything differently than you did before the shutdown? Are there ways you have already been given a new way of seeing things, even now?



PRAY

Loving Jesus, you washed the feet of those who betrayed you and served them bread and wine at the table. Forgive us for all the ways we have not loved you and not loved one another as we should. Forgive us, call us again to your table, and give us your vision and courage to love those who have hurt us so that we may all sit at your table together. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

READ

Jesus said “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know that way to the place where I am going...I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14: 1-4)

LISTEN

This verse helps me to feel calm and to remember that God is there for me. – Josh Baker

REFLECT

Jesus died on the cross for you so that you could be at home with God forever. Is there any part of your home that has been a special refuge during this time? What does Jesus’ promise that he makes a *home* for us with God mean to you these days?



PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are the way to the heart of the Father, you are the truth of God’s love, and you are the life that never ends. Thank you for being our friend when it feels like we have no one else, for offering us an end to our fear and worry, and for preparing a place with you that no one and nothing can ever take away. Fill us with joy on this good and wonderful day when you accomplished our salvation. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

Saturday, April 3

Day 40

READ

But Jesus looked at them and said, “with mortals this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26)

LISTEN

I think about this verse a lot while I’m doing something that seems impossible but when I think about it, I’m reminded of God’s strength. I also like this verse because it reminds me of God’s power and that nothing is impossible through God. – Joe Schneider

REFLECT

It may seem impossible that a human who died could live again. It may seem impossible that God could die. Many things seem impossible everyday – that enemies can become friends, that the rich can care for the poor, that ordinary people like us can trust in God – and yet, with God all things are possible! On this Holy Saturday, when Jesus rested in the tomb, rest in the knowledge that in the darkness of the tomb, God was about to do a new thing...about to begin a new creation.



PRAY

Loving Jesus, your body was broken, you were buried in silence, and the evil, darkness, hate, and sin of the world looked like it had gotten rid of you, and yet because God loves us, he was waiting to make a new creation through your resurrection. We praise you that you are alive! We praise you for your love! We praise you for our new beginning in you! Fill our hearts to bursting to celebrate you and be with us on the journey always. Amen.

Easter Sunday, April 4

READ

¹When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint [Jesus' body]. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:1-8)

REFLECT

The women were clearly afraid when they heard the news that Jesus was alive and the last thing Mark tells us is that they fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid – but obviously they did tell others, because we have this gospel story today. May we be filled with awe at the power of God and live with joy in Jesus, knowing that we are already a part of the new creation that has come through the cross and empty tomb. May we trust in all our bones that *if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!*



PRAY

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Easter Monday, April 5

READ

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God ~ what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

LISTEN

These days my main artistic outlet is music but I used to do a lot of visual art and I always enjoyed sculpting. Clay can be made into just about anything you can imagine but if you leave it out, it hardens and it can't be sculpted anymore. If you keep working the clay you can keep forming it into something new. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has reimagined and transformed what it means for us to be human, and his artistic vision is to show us that there is more to life than popularity, power, or enjoying privilege and that God wants more for us than this world can give: God wants us to know true joy, real peace, and to work for justice for all. Easter is the beginning of everything new. May God guide you and may God guide us to make us cruciform, serving and loving as Jesus hands and feet in the world God loves.

REFLECT

What creative task gives you the most joy? How could you put it in service to God? How will you live in the light of Easter?

PRAY

Loving Jesus, you are always transforming your lives and creating our shared life together, and we pray that you will keep working in us and with us. Keep our hearts from hardening and continue molding us into something new as we grow in our understanding of your desire for our life together and in service to the world you love. Be with us on the journey. Amen.

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Fiona Stapleton	Clare Martin
Declan Dougherty	Cooper Speidell
Katie Bridges	Riley Speidell
Audrey Bates	Joe Schneider
Rowan Keith	Josh Baker
Ryan Poole	Ryan Smithson
Arden Ebbesen	Vivian Sarych
Jane Lanham	Beckett Sarych
Emily Dietrick	Diana Paget
Alexandra Griffin	Josh Smithson
Scott Dietrick	Jake Barger

