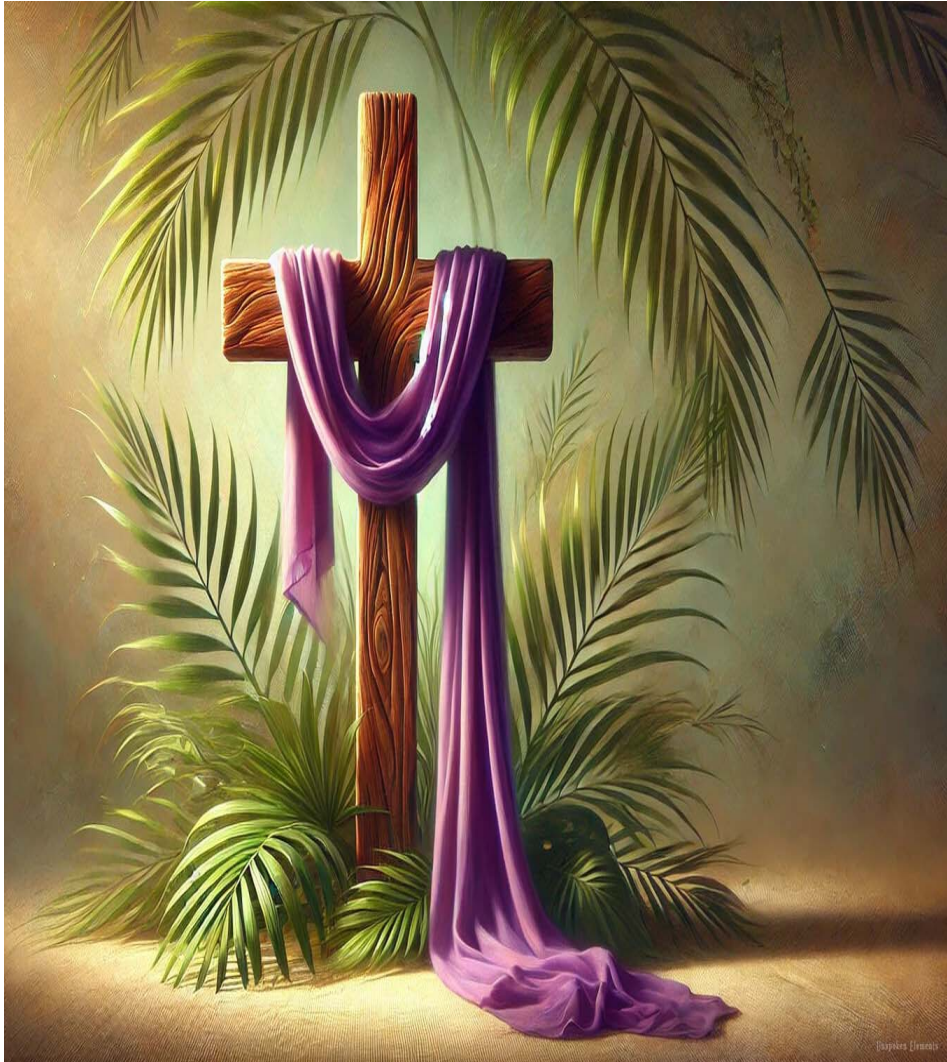


Daily Reflections for Lent



Ash Wednesday – 3/5/25
Holy Saturday – 4/19/25



**Epworth
United Methodist Church**
60 Merriman Way Road
Moneta, VA 24121
540-721-4926
epworthumcmoneta.org

Washington Cooperative Parish

“Ambassadors for Christ”
2 Corinthians 5:20-21

Pastor Jeffery T. White
540-520-7875
JefferyWhite@vaumc.org

Sue Hauptert-Johnson, Presiding Bishop
Sarah Calvert, District Superintendent

**Halesford
United Methodist Church**
1601 Lakewood Forest Road
Moneta, VA 24121
540-520-7875
halesfordumc.com



What is *Lent* and why does it last forty days?

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

Ask The UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications

A Lenten Greeting from Rev. Jeffery T. White

Greetings!

As we begin this sacred season of Lent, I invite you to join me on a journey of reflection, repentance, and renewal. Lent is a time to pause in our busy lives and focus on the deepening of our faith, as we seek to grow closer to God. This season offers us an opportunity to examine our hearts and draw near to God, the One who loves us unconditionally.

In the days ahead, we will reflect on the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice and the hope of His resurrection. This Lenten devotional will guide us through Scripture, prayer, and quiet moments of contemplation. Each day is an invitation to slow down, listen attentively to God's voice, and examine how we can live out His love more fully in the world.

The Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 NRSV, "*So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God.*"²¹ *For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*" During this season, let us reflect on the incredible grace of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and embrace the call to live as His ambassadors in a world in need of God's love and healing.

May this Lenten journey be a time of spiritual renewal for you, a season in which you draw nearer to the heart of God and experience His transforming power. I pray that through this devotional, you will find moments of peace, reflection, and strength as we prepare our hearts for the joyous celebration of Easter.

With you in prayer and faith,
Pastor Jeffery T. White
Washington Cooperative Parish, The United Methodist Church

Prayer

Dear God of Grace and Mercy,

We come to you as we enter our Lenten pilgrimage, praying that you will guide us through these forty days as you remind us the way of the cross:

We deny ourselves and open ourselves to your examination;

We ask you to take away our sin and to give us the mind of Christ;

We give over to you our selfish desires and pray that you will replace them with what you desire;

We pray that you will transform us and our congregation so that we reflect the fruits of your Spirit and become more loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, gentle, kind, faithful, generous, and self-controlled.

Have your way with us! Make us your salt, light, and yeast in our community, homes, workplaces, and everywhere we go. We follow you to the cross and into the joy of resurrection. We trust you to lead us where we need to go.

We pray in your blessed and glorious name, O Lord. Amen.

Sue Hauptert-Johnson
Resident Bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area
Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

March 5, 2025

Isaiah 58:1-12

TRUE FASTING

The Lord is asking us to fast with a purpose, with a passion. Your worship through your fasting should make you hungry for something more, something meaningful. One should have a substantive faithfulness in the Lord and his purpose for our lives. For us to continue to worship Him and look to Him for direction and guidance while on this journey and put our trust in Him through all circumstances with a clean, genuine, true heart. Isaiah says, for if we do these things the Lord will guide us ALWAYS and satisfy our every need. Our light will shine in darkness and we shall be rewarded.

PRAYER: Father, thank you for your word today and for reminding us of the true meaning of fasting and of your everlasting love. We pray that we do not get caught up in the everyday ways of life and continue to seek you in this walk of life. In your Holy name, we pray, Amen.

Taylor White
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 6, 2025

Psalm 51: 1-17

“Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and renew a right spirit within me.” We sing a version of these words as we pray God accept our offerings each week.

If we think about what Psalm 51 states, we are nothing. What we are comes from God and through His sacrifice, we are able to be in His world. I remember my seventh grade confirmation class with Pastor Bjornberg who shared with us the big S sin and the little s sin.

We commit the little s sins daily, frequently, accidentally, or purposefully as humans, and we cannot seem to help it. We ask God for His forgiveness for these sins, and as a patient and loving father, He pats us on the head, tells us to do better (even though He knows we will not be able to resist all), and sends us on our fragile human way. We try to do better, He knows, He forgives us and our lives go on.

He made a much greater sacrifice for the big S. The big S is the choice made by Adam and Eve to separate humans from God in the Garden. Humans chose to follow the wrong path, made poor decisions, and that separated humanity from God for all time. But God loves His creation, that which He formed in His image and He saved us. He sent His Son to die for us. God sent the sacrifice of the Lamb to bridge that great big S Sin and through that grace and that alone are we, through our belief in the Savior creates that clean heart. We cannot achieve that any other way, not through deeds, offerings or sacrifice, only through Christ.

Cleansing our spirit allows us to share the Word, teach others and bring the Light of the World into darkness. Psalm 51 reminds us we must understand that we cannot come to the Lord accept through Grace, but through that Grace we are able to be forgiven and help others find the grace of the Lord.

I’m sure for all the challenges my teenage self-presented poor Pastor B, he would chuckle that I (I was a pill) (1) Had actually listened to the lesson; (2) Understood the lesson; (3) Remembered the lesson; (4) Shared the lesson (more than once); (5) Lived the lesson..

PRAYER: O Lord, in your loving compassion, blot out my transgressions! Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sins! Father, through faith in you and trusting in your Son’s death and resurrection, I believe that I have been redeemed. I believe you can throw my sins from me as far as the east is from the west. Amen.

Carol Scarbro, Duncansville, PA
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 7, 2025

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Once again, the Apostle Paul shows his uncanny ability to be relevant today even in his centuries old writings. He begins by explaining that we all are ambassadors for Christ. Meaning we are all called to be Ministers of the gospel, and are assigned with spreading the good news, regardless whether you are licensed, or credentialed. He goes on in chapter 6 to state that with that responsibility, there will be hardships. There will be many obstacles, and many of those who oppose us. But we must not be discouraged, or swayed. Verse 8 sums it all up perfectly. “We serve God whether people honor us, or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us”.

PRAYER: Dear Lord continue to give us the strength, wisdom, grace, and the will to stay in the fight, and continue the assignment no matter what obstacles we face. Amen.

Marques Wilson
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 8, 2025

Matthew 6: 1-6

GIVING TO THE NEEDY

In this scripture, God is saying to humble yourself in all you do when doing all of his righteousness.

When you give to the needy, don't brag or boast about your giving. The left hand does not need to know what the right hand is doing.

When you pray, God will hear your prayer; an audience is not always needed. God knows our heart.

PRAYER: Heavenly father I thank you for all things seen and unseen. I thank you God for my being. I praise your Holy name and pray you will continue to bless, keep and protect us all. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Jimmie Hancock
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 10, 2025

Matthew 6:16-21

Verses 16-18: These verses in Matthew tell us about fasting. When you fast, do not look sad or look for praise from men, but only unto God who will reward you. Some people put ashes on their heads when fasting. (Fasting, however, could also be done as a sign of distress, grief or repentance.)

Verses 19-21: Tells us where our treasure is. It tells us not to store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

PRAYER: Lord, we ask you to watch over us and help us to be more like you this Lenten season, to strive and do your will all year long, in Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

Sandra Ruby
Quaker Baptist Church, Bedford, VA

March 11, 2025

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

My husband and I were talking recently about the “daily grind” of jobs, chores, and keeping up with two little ones. We were both feeling worn out. He mentioned this a few times in conversation with a wise woman he knows. This lady picked up on it, and observed, “You have mentioned a daily grind a few times. Why don’t you reframe that as daily blessings?”

My husband and I both know we will one day miss the crazy energy, snuggles, and yes, even the diaper changes of life with little ones. So for now, we smile and remind ourselves that we are surrounded by daily blessings. To me, the author of this passage in Deuteronomy is reminding us of the same thing: we are surrounded by daily blessings, and they all come from God.

PRAYER: God, giver of all good gifts, remind me to see the blessings in my life, and to remember they come from you. Amen.

Sarah and Dan Morris
St. Peter’s Catholic Church, Charlotte, NC
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 12, 2025

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

This scripture emphasizes that God is our protector. We should embrace his ever presence in all things. If we abide on a continual basis, God will send his angels to us should we need to be saved from harm. As the beautiful song, "On Eagle's Wings" says..."We will rise"; He will have you covered! This passage reminds me of a Whole Life Insurance policy, underwritten by GOD himself.

PRAYER: God grant us the wisdom to lean on your mighty strength. Thank you for your beautiful everlasting love. Amen.

Alice Prather
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 13, 2025

Romans 10:8b-13

"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:9

Paul is writing to the Romans and is giving them direction for the path to salvation.

Our study Bible gives a good explanation of this passage in Romans. It says, "These verses give you the answer to How to Become a Christian. Salvation is as close as your own Mouth and Heart".

Paul explains the path to salvation in a simple way that is easy to understand.

When I read these words in the Bible, it reminds me of God's Grace to all of us. As Paul said, it is for the Jew and the Gentile. God made a way for us to be with him always. And, the way is Jesus. Jesus is Lord.

Sometimes the chaos and troubles of this world are so loud, that they try to block us from God. But, all we need to do is stop and remember these words. We can overcome the World and its troubles. Just remember and confess that Jesus is Lord, over all of us. And, believe in your heart that he was raised from the dead. We are saved not because of who we are, but because of who He is. Praise the Lord.

PRAYER: Dear Father, We love you. You are good and your Mercy endures forever. Thank you for sending Jesus to the World to save us from our sins. I pray that all those that are lost will call out to Jesus and confess that he is Lord of all. And, that they will accept your gift of Salvation. And, please use your servant to be a light in this world and share your kindness and love to others. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Marie Flippen
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 14, 2025

Luke 4:1-13

In these verses of Luke, they describe how the Devil tested and tempted Jesus for 40 days. During this time, Jesus did not eat or drink anything. The Devil tested Him by telling Him to turn stones to bread and by casting Himself off a tall building. He then tempted Jesus with vast properties or countries, which Satan promised Him control over. Each time Jesus countered or opposed Satan with the Scripture.

This is something we should do in our daily lives. By knowing and obeying God's Word, we have an effective weapon for defense against temptation and Satan's attacks. But to use the Word effectively, we must understand it and have faith in God's promises. Satan also knows Scripture. The Devil knows how to turn Scripture around and twist it to suit his evil purposes.

PRAYER: I pray that today will be a good, positive, fear free day and I will constantly remind myself of God's presence in my life. I pray for my family that they will have their needs and desires met. I pray for this world. I pray for men, women, and children, that all will come together in unity and overcome the Devil's attempts to have us destroy each other. All these things I ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

This prayer is in part from my daughter Melissa's Bible study. She has since gone to be with Jesus.

Roy Ferguson, Jr.
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 15, 2025

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

A Covenant in the Old Testament was a binding agreement between two parties. Genesis Chapter 15 tells the story of God making a Covenant with Abraham.

Abraham was a 75-year-old God-fearing man who had a most remarkable experience. God came to Abraham in a vision and announced that Abraham would be richly rewarded. Abraham having no children asked God how he could be blessed with material things since he had no heir to pass them on to. God told Abraham that he and his wife Sarah would have a son and that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Further, his descendants were promised by Covenant that they would occupy the land, which today is part of the nation of Israel.

Abraham had his mind fixed on material things that could not be passed on without an heir. God's mind was fixed on eternal things. God was establishing a pathway for the salvation of all mankind that would come through the birth of Christ. A Savior who would give his life on a cruel cross for our transgressions. And it all started with Abraham and Sarah who gave birth to Isaac whose lineage then traced directly to Jesus.

As we approach the observance of Easter may we be reminded of The New Covenant through Christ. God has promised He will forgive sin and restore fellowship with those whose hearts are turned toward Him. Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant, and His death on the cross is the basis of this Covenant. God has promised us salvation through Jesus.

PRAYER: Father, this Easter may we lay our burdens and the things that easily beset us at the cross of Jesus. May we celebrate the Covenant we have with You. For through Jesus, You are faithful to forgive and uphold us. Amen

Wayne Loomis
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 17, 2025

Psalm 27

FAITH OVER FEAR

When you were small were you scared of things that go bump in the night? Scared of that ride at the amusement park? Scared of the first day of school? The fear of the unknown is like being afraid of the dark. We get scared because we cannot see what is ahead. It seems that we worry more about what we cannot see than what we can see.

As Christians, we should first look to God as David did in the Psalm. He says that God is his light and his salvation so of what should he be afraid. We should always remember that God is the source of our strength and our refuge.

We as humans can't help but to be afraid of the unknown but we must remember that God has a perfect plan and timing, so there is no need to panic. God will give us the light and the strength when we need it.

This psalm tells us to believe that our faith in God will never desert us, no matter what happens. Life without fear is not possible, but faith over fear can call us to live in God's will for our life instead of reducing our lives because of our fears.

There will always be someone that is waiting on us to fail, someone who don't want us to succeed. We must keep our minds, hearts and eyes fixed on God. We must remember that even in the darkness, He is our light and with His guidance, even our enemies cannot pull us into the dark.

PRAYER: Dear God, we know that You are the light of the world and our light in times of darkness. Please guide us and let us turn to You and turn our fear to faith. Let us see You in everything that we do and especially in times of darkness show us the light and turn our FEAR TO FAITH. Amen.

Teresa Edwards
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 18, 2025

Philippians 3:17-4:1

In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul describes how he's found a way to live a life that's more pleasing to God, even though the world constantly tries to distract him. He encourages his friends to follow his example.

Have you ever met people in church who seem to have a special peace and love for others? They are strong in their faith and seem to radiate joy and deep connection with God. Being around them makes you want to be like them! We all desire to grow closer to God and resist the temptations of the world. These individuals seem to have found a path that leads to a deeper relationship with God, much like Paul described for the Philippians.

During Lent, I try to make some changes in my life to become more heavenly minded, and release myself from my unhealthier earthly affections. Sometimes I limit what I eat, to remind myself that many people don't have enough food. I might also try to buy less stuff, like going on a shopping fast. I try to add things that bring me closer to God, like spending more time in prayer or reading the Bible. Are there specific areas of your life where you feel tempted to prioritize the world over your relationship with God? How might you adjust your priorities during this Lenten season?

It is very important that I don't do this alone! I ask my friends in church to help me stay on track. They're like mentors and cheerleaders, and they help me stay focused on my faith. Building a community around me like Paul did for the Philippians can be a goal for Lent as well – who are those people for you.

PRAYER: Lord, open my eyes so I can see the places and ways you desire for me to draw closer to you, and leave behind earthly temptations. Grant me good and healthy community for my journey, so that I can be accountable. Give me strength for the journey and a greater love for you each and every day! Amen.

Rev. Dr. Sarah Calvert
District Superintendent, Mountain View District
Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

March 19, 2025

Luke 13:31-35

I feel like Jesus is not happy with Jerusalem. He wants them to do better. But they are not. He does want to protect the people in Jerusalem, but I feel like he cannot. But he is also warning them that he won't return. He wants to protect the city from the Pharisees.

PRAYER: Dear God, bless the church, my family, my country, and the world. Amen.

Kenneth Banks
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 20, 2025

Isaiah 55:1-9

My first reaction to today's reading is pure gratitude (and a little hunger!). Milk, honey, and wine are all tantalizing and delicious; I know that these are metaphors for God's purest gifts, salvation and mercy. These verses urge us to focus on a relationship with the Lord above all else to realize his promises. Isaiah reminds us that God will never lose patience with us and will reward our attention with blessings we do not deserve, as he did with David and so many other heroes of the Bible. His blessings will be so abundant that it will attract the attention of non-believers. His goal is to bless us so profoundly that others will be drawn to what we have and come to Him too.

At the end, we are reminded that God's ways are not our ways. We can't demand His bounty to translate to our earthly desires and He's not promising we will win the Mega Millions! But his ways are also miraculous, and He will find a way when there is no earthly chance. His blessings will be beyond our wildest dreams.

We can be assured that our relationship with God can bring us even more joy, confidence, and peace than millions of dollars ever could. As we live our lives with His love, we can show others the way to everlasting enlightenment, and use that to spread God's word and promise.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for your endless patience and for granting us unending mercy. Only you can promise to always keep our cup full in this regard. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus Christ to take away our sins so that we may enter heaven. Though we cannot attain the perfection of His spirit, we know you will be merciful on us. Help us to live a life in His gracious example and so that all may know Your love. Amen.

Rebecca Mosig-Purpera
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 21, 2025

Psalm 63:1-8

DAVID IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDAH

While in the desert of dry land without water, David was praying, seeking and longing for God. There in the wilderness, David found satisfaction and strength in God. These verses show how David was brought closer to God.

We all are faced with situations in our lives. We pray and praise God for His help. While going through my health issues, God has given me the strength to deal with all of them.

PRAYER: Dear God, thank you for the blessings in all my situations.
Amen.

Diane Taylor
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 22, 2025

I Corinthians 10:1-13

There is a saying that I learned when I was in high school when we were learning about history...if you don't learn from it, you are doomed to repeat it. One thing that always amazes me each time I read the Old Testament is how the Israelites didn't seem to look at their history. I am then reminded that it seems we haven't learned from their mistakes. Hence, the lesson this passage of scripture seems to convey to us.

The first verse from the NLT says I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. It goes on to remind us of the warning in verse 5, "Yet God was not pleased with most of them..." We are being provided with the same warning. As it states in verse 11, these things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. And there it is. It behooves us to hear the voice of God, turn to Him for everything, and not forget from where He brought us out of.

PRAYER: Lord, first and foremost I give you glory, honor, and praise for yet another opportunity to praise Your holy and righteous name. You are Lord of All. You are the Lord of my life, the God of my Righteousness, and the God of my Salvation. I dare not even consider what my life would have been like had you not stepped out eternity into time to save my very soul.

Forgive me Father when I fail to follow your divine instructions. Forgive me Lord, when I fall outside of your divine will for my life. Forgive me Lord when I do not live the victorious life that your righteous blood sacrificed for me. Forgive me Father.

Help me to be the woman of God you called me to be, to walk in the righteous calling you planned for my life from the earth's foundation. I cannot walk this life without You and I dare not even try. Thank you Lord for all you have done and all you are going to do in my life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Elder Shawna Banks
Positive Impact Ministries, Roanoke, VA

March 24, 2025

Luke 13:1-9

Do you have a friend or family member that you have been trying to bring closer to God? Does it seem that your witness and testimony is not providing the results that you are hoping for? Do not be like the vineyard owner and give up. Be like the vineyard keeper who did not give up on the fig tree. Your work can still bear fruit. Pray for the person, ask God to give you the words needed to open the person's heart, invite the person to services or other church activities. Feed them with the word of God. Remember that you are working with God's seasons, not your own. Your work will bear fruit.

PRAYER: Dear God, please give us the words to help our family and friends to move towards you. Please help us show your love by our actions and how we live our life. Please bless us and our church family. We pray that this Lenten book brings people into the fold. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Randy Flippen
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 25, 2025

Psalm 45

Psalm 45 paints a picture of a glorious king, one who is strong, just, and blessed by God. It speaks of his righteousness, and the eternal nature of his kingdom. It is seen as a prophetic vision of Christ and His relationship with the Church.

When we read Psalm 45, we are reminded of the splendor and majesty of Christ, the perfect King. His rule is not built on power for power's sake but on righteousness, truth, and humility. As His followers, we are called to reflect these same virtues in our lives.

The psalm also speaks of the bride, beautifully adorned and prepared for the King. This can serve as a reminder that we, as believers, are called to be spiritually prepared, set apart for Christ, and faithful in our devotion to Him.

This scripture invites us to consider our relationship with Christ—are we embracing His rule in our lives? Are we preparing ourselves spiritually to be part of His kingdom? It is a call to draw nearer to God with joy, reverence, and love.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, Thank You for the beauty of Your Word, which speaks of Your majesty and love. You are a King unlike any other—righteous, just, and full of grace. Your throne is established forever, and Your rule brings peace to those who follow You. Help us to embrace Your kingship in our lives, to walk in truth, humility, and righteousness as You have called us to do. May our hearts be adorned with faithfulness and love, always seeking to reflect Your goodness in the world.

Lord, just as the bride in this psalm is prepared for the King, prepare our hearts to be devoted to You. Teach us to desire the things of Your kingdom above all else. Let our lives be a testimony of Your beauty and grace, pointing others toward Your eternal love.

Thank You for choosing us to be part of Your kingdom, for calling us beloved, and for Your unfailing love that sustains us. May our hearts overflow with praise for You, our King and God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

James and Sarah Absher
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 26, 2025

Isaiah 7:10-14

The season of Advent suggests a tempered waiting for both the birth of Jesus as well as his second coming. At the beginning of Advent we are preparing for Christmas, it is a reflective time - and a time of longing. Advent is a lovely season for special music selections - and one I had in mind that we don't hear often but that expresses the season of preparing for Jesus and mirrors the passage above.

Below are the lyrics for a traditional German Carol, 'Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming'.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright, Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.
Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, She bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.
This Flow'r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us,
And lightens every load.

PRAYER: The stillness of the rose in winter represents the quiet waiting and longing as we anticipate Christ's birth. The rose's blooming in winter represents the coming of Christ amidst darkness. Help us to be still as we wait and long for you, O, God. Amen.

Catherine Medovich
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 27, 2025

Hebrews 10:4-10

We don't need to offer elaborate sacrifices. Jesus relieved us of that burden. We only need to follow the will of God. Someone I know used to have a sign in his office: Jesus says, "Follow me." Simple, but not easy. We give our whole lives to God, saying, "I have come to do your will." For major life choices, it is appropriate to spend time in discernment and prayer to choose the best option, the one we believe God has prepared for us. But for my daily decisions, I often know pretty well what God would like me to do. God wants me to call the friend I've been thinking about, stop gossiping about my coworker, and show patience to my children. Simple. However, not always easy.

PRAYER: God, help me to know your will. And when I know it, help me to do it. Amen.

Sarah and Dan Morris
St. Peter's Catholic Church, Charlotte, NC
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 28, 2025

Luke 1:26-38

From my perspective when I read this scripture, I think of the feeling of being chosen by God. The gifts that God has given us! The talents we possess! We all are chosen by God to be on this earth for a reason. Whether it is to make someone smile, laugh, give birth, to play music to others, or to even make someone feel loved. And most importantly, we have been chosen to share and speak upon our faith we have of him. Any chance I get where I can speak about my God, I take that chance knowing God chose me.

Another perspective on this scripture is you never know what God has instore for you. At times, in life, things may not seem correct or things may seem like they are going in the wrong direction. You may ask yourself “why am I doing this,” but being chosen by God, He will not direct you in the wrong path. But in that path you take will sometimes be hardship. Sometimes God gives his best soldiers a difficult journey but in the end, a blessing will be given unto you.

PRAYER: Lord, we thank you for the kindness and caring you give to us. Lord forgive us for the day-by-day imperfections and mistakes we make. Lord, we come to you today to thank You for choosing us, choosing us to be your sons and daughters, choosing us to share your love and glory. Thank you Lord for the paths you give and blessing we receive. In your name Lord, we say Amen.

Jason White
Halesford United Methodist Church

March 29, 2025

Joshua 5:9-12

The Scripture talks about the circumcision of the Israelite men who were born during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after the Israelites came out of Egypt. The males were circumcised by Joshua at a place called Gilgal and by this God rolled away the disgrace of Egypt. The Israelites stayed camped at Gilgal and while there observed the Passover on the 14th of the month and the day after they began to find nourishment from the land for substance and no longer needed the nourishment from manna. God provided what man needed for their bodies to survive during their time in the wilderness, thru manna directly from heaven, and he fulfills the promise of the Promised Land after by providing nourishment from the earth.

To me this symbolizes God's love for us if we will follow him. We should obey God without fear of the consequences. He will remove our sin and He will protect and provide if we put our trust in Him. There is promise that God provides us but that doesn't mean our life is without problem or pain. However, through God we will come out on the other side of this and into His Promised Land.

PRAYER: Dear God, thank you for your promise. Thank you for providing me a way through my own wilderness of problems, pain and troubles; by trusting in you and knowing that your timing is perfect. The travel in our own wilderness is sometimes heavy and hard but with you there is peace. I ask that you help roll back my sins past, present and future with your grace and mercy and in all times good and bad I give you praise for without you - nothing would be possible. Amen.

Amy Wells
Epworth United Methodist Church

March 31, 2025

Psalm 32

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS OF DAVID

Psalm 32 is a beautiful prayer of confession and a path for seeking forgiveness. It is labeled a Psalm of David. Some commentators believe it is a confession for the whole Bathsheba debacle (see 2 Samuel 11). Sometimes the Bible tells us what not to do: don't commit adultery and murder the husband. And sometimes the Bible tells us what to do: i.e. confess our sins and seek forgiveness.

My most vivid memory of confession and seeking forgiveness came at the beginning of our very first retreat as part of Richmond Hill's spiritual direction program (RUAH). We were sent away with a scripture and questions for reflection for the entire afternoon. I read through the appointed scripture and all of a sudden, there was a list of sins that bubbled up from my spirit. I was a bit taken aback. I read the scripture again and the same thing happened. I was a mother of two young boys at the time and this was the first retreat I participated in since the birth of my first son 3.5 years before. I have a sense that my sins had been piling up and simply ignored because there was too much going on. After the second time the confession occurred, I realized the pattern and set to journaling and asking forgiveness. I left that time much lighter and was then better able to focus on the rest of the retreat.

Lent is a time when we pay extra attention to our spiritual lives. Confession AND forgiveness are one of the spiritual disciplines we highlight during Lent. I invite you to spend some time with God asking God to reveal the sins that you have hidden or forgotten so that you might unburden your soul, rejoice and walk away a little bit lighter and a lot more joyful.

Do you need a physical reminder of God's love, grace and forgiveness? Write your confession down; ask God to forgive and then burn the paper. In The Message version, it says 'my slate is wiped clean'. Perhaps you can find a chalk board or white board – write those sins down – pray – ask God for forgiveness and when you are ready – wipe the board clean as a physical reminder to you that God loves you and confessed sins are forgiven.

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PRAYER: O Holy One, Thank you for your provision for my life this day. The psalmist wrote:
Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

In this silence, please reveal to me: the times when I fell down, the times when I actively sinned and the time when I didn't realize the harm I was doing.

(Set your timer for two minutes and allow God to raise up those things that need to be confessed and healed – take more time if you need it). List them on paper or in your heart. After each confession, hear Jesus say, I love you; you are forgiven, live into the joy of the Lord. (after this time of confession, finish the prayer)

Thank you for wiping my slate clean and giving me a fresh start. Thank you for your loving grace and divine mercy of forgiveness.

Help me to continue to seek your forgiveness this Lenten season and to celebrate a joyous Easter. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Rev. Kimberly Barker-Brugman
Haygood United Methodist Church, Coastal Waters District
Appointed to extension ministry: Soul Story Ministries
Speaker for District UWF Spiritual Retreat, May 3, 2025

April 1, 2025

II Corinthians 5:16-21

If anyone is in Christ, we are new creatures. The old creature is gone. The closer my walk aligns with Christ, the less desire I have for things of the past. I do not have to fight to resist these things. New desires and goals now fills my life. The joy I have now is Christ driven.

The emphasis of their radical transformation shows that the old life of sin is replaced by a new life. This is characterized by a fresh perspective on the world and a primary focus in the ministry of reconciliation. Here Christians are called to represent Gods love by bringing people back into a relationship with him through the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus is the Great Mediator. Praise God for his ultimate sacrifice!

PRAYER: Dear God please continue to keep us all covered by the blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, help us to be ambassadors for Christ, actively working to bring people back into a relationship with God. Amen.

Rev. Pink Wimbish
Bellevue Missionary Baptist Church, Hardy, VA

April 2, 2025

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The parable that Jesus told his disciples of the lost son reminds me of how we, as followers of Christ, can become lost. Jesus' parable explains the story of a father with two sons whom he divided his land between equally, and left each of them to do whatever they pleased with their inheritance. This is symbolic of the way God gives us the free will to choose what we do with the blessings he gives us.

Jesus continues the parable, explaining how the younger son tainted the land he was given with prostitution and famine. The youngest son was then forced to be hired as a servant, and as a servant, he faced hardship. It was in this rough time for the youngest son that he realized that he had sinned against his father, so he decided to return to his father to apologize for his ways of living. This is symbolic of how sometimes as followers of Christ, we can stray away from God's path and fall into cycles of sin. However, we never truly depart from God because we feel the convictions of our sins that lead us to repentance.

The parable continues and after the youngest son realizes his wrongdoings, he apologizes to his father, and his father celebrates with a big feast. His father calls for him to be dressed in the finest robe and for a mighty celebration feast. This is symbolic of how God is always waiting for us with open arms to come back from sin. God will never depart from us, even if we stray away from him. God celebrates tremendously when we recognize our sins and repent for them.

At the end of the parable, Jesus explains that the oldest son becomes jealous of the grand feast and celebration that the youngest son received. The oldest son thought it was offensive for his father to receive his youngest son with such joy after all of the bad things he had done, especially since the oldest son had been doing everything right without sinning against his father. His father then tells his oldest son that he has always been with him and continually shared his glory with him by providing everything he needed. This is symbolic of how when we follow God's path and do not sin, that God is always blessing us and giving us all that we need. When we sin, we are choosing to disobey God; therefore, we do not continually share God's blessings. However, God is always celebrating our repentance and will welcome us back from sin with grace and forgiveness.

Jesus' main point with this parable is that when we sin, we are choosing to disobey God; therefore, we will not share his glory. However, when we recognize our sins and repent, we will be given grace and mercy, and we will be welcomed back with open arms. It is then that we will share God's glory with him, and hopefully spread that with others.

PRAYER: Dear God, Thank you for always welcoming us back into your glory when we stray away from it. Please help allow us to deviate from sin and instead find what we seek in you. Allow us to be fulfilled from just You and to stay strong when faced with temptation of sin. Amen.

Katie Wells
Epworth United Methodist Church

April 3, 2025

Isaiah 43:16-21

God has a way no matter what the situation looks like. In this scripture, we face tough times and can't see a way out. But God has it all planned out for us; the problem is already solved. All we need to do is have faith.

When we look at Exodus 14:6-7: "And he made ready his chariots, and took his people with him, and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them." God parted the Red Sea so that Moses and all the children of Israel were saved. Exodus 15:4-5: "Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone."

Exodus 15:2 tells us "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God and will exalt him."

Isaiah 43:18-19: "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." When we read that scripture, God tells us not to remember the former things in life and don't keep looking back into the past because He will make all things new and we shall go forth.

Isaiah 40:21 states "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

PRAYER: Dear Lord, Thank you for taking care of me when I can't seem to find my way, when the dark clouds roll around and there seems to be no way out. That's when I realize you are still holding my hand no matter what I go through. Thank you for making me stronger for whatever I have to encounter. Amen.

Dorothy Wilson
Full Gospel Holiness Church, Montvale, VA

April 4, 2025

Psalm 126

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Our mouths were filled with laughter then, and our tongues with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.” The Lord had done great things for us; we were joyful.”

The verses in Psalm 126:1-3 state the inevitable. When the Lord restored Zion, he had given a great blessing to the people during the time of distraught. They rejoiced in the Lord’s name with glee and excitement that Zion had been restored! When God sees us in trouble or distraught, it is always for a reason. He challenges us to obstacles everyday so we can prove our faith to him. In times of distress, the Lord sees us and gives us hope and comfort even in the darkest of times. Sticking with your faith is something everyone should do during these trials, for he rewards his good faithful servants with blessings in return, and as always, we should rejoice in the Lord’s name!

Psalm 126:4-6 states, “Restore our fortunes, Lord, like watercourses in the Negev. Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy. Though one goes along weeping, carrying the bag of seed, he will surely come back with shouts of joy, carrying his sheaves.”

Going to the Lord for help is one of the most rewarding things man can do. No matter what you’re like, the Lord wants you to come to him as you are, for he will do the rest of the work. Struggling, depression, hunger, weeping or thirst, the Lord can fix it all. He will make sure that you get what you need to be able to be on your feet to go and praise and spread the gospel!

PRAYER: Dear God, thank you for blessing each and every one of my sisters and brothers. You continue to let our feet hit the ground once more another day, and we can’t thank you enough Lord. No matter what problems we are facing, we will stay by your side and continue our walk in Jesus. The days may get harder but our faith only gets stronger. I pray. Amen.

Emily Wells
Epworth United Methodist Church

April 5, 2025

Philippians 3:4b-14

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

Paul is exhorting us to press forward while calling us to forget that which is behind our past fears, our past failures, and pressing toward the mark.

Paul tells us that the goal of our pressing toward the mark is to win the prize of the high calling of God. Let's press toward the mark and finish strong in 2025!

First, Paul discusses the importance of righteousness through faith in Christ rather than by works. (Philippians 3:1-11) Second, Paul talks about straining toward the goal of following Christ. (Philippians 3:12-21) In Philippians 3:1-11, Paul begins with a reminder to "rejoice in the Lord".

PRAYER: May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. Amen.

James L. Jordan
Halesford United Methodist Church

April 7, 2025

John 12:1-8

Preparing for what is yet to come! Preparing for a death you always knew was before you, preparing for the agony you would face, especially for the agony of having those closest to you turn away from you and deny you! So many times I have heard ..."Are you a Mary or a Martha?"

Instead of helping her prepare the food, Martha complained about Mary sitting at Jesus's feet. Judas complained about the value of the oil that he apparently thought was too precious to waste on Jesus's feet, and then the excess soaked into Mary's hair. **IT WOULD HAVE BROUGHT A GOOD PRICE! IT COULD HAVE HELPED THE POOR!**

Think about this! Compare the value of the oil compared to the value of what Jesus gave for our salvation! What value did He have then, and what value does his decision have for us in our lives today?

He sacrificed himself for us who are all sinners and now through mercy have an everlasting life! He died so that we might be forgiven, washed clean with his blood! Mary wrapped her **AGAPE LOVE** at His feet... she listened to Him...soothed Him...prepared Him to give His Life for us! What real value did the oil have compared to that?

PRAYER: Dear **LORD**, **YOU** have created us in **YOUR** own image! **YOU** have given us special talents, gifts for us to use in **YOUR NAME**. Help us to know what is **YOUR WILL**? Are we Marthas or Marys? Give us strength to do **YOUR WILL** even though others may slander us or **YOUR** purpose. **YOUR WILL BE DONE IN ALL THINGS!** Amen.

Renee G. Naden
Ebenezer Church, Bedford, VA

April 8, 2025

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

God's love never ends. We can trust God because He is good. His love continues with us forever. God will love us unconditionally.

Verses 19-29 tell us this is before Jesus's death. Jesus was rejected by the leaders of Israel and afterward He asked God to open the gate to the city of Jerusalem. Jesus thanked God for helping Him and the good people followed Him.

God knew what was going to happen because He had a plan. God made Jesus the Chief Cornerstone. The leader. The only one to guide the people to salvation. This day was joyful and everyone was glad. Jesus traveled to Jerusalem on a donkey and the people were waving palm branches and shouting "Hosanna" as He went by. The followers hoped for salvation. They didn't know that later Jesus would die and rise again. Jesus came in the name of the Lord to offer a sacrifice and save us all.

In this Scripture, Psalm 118, the first verse and the last verse are the same. This is what we all should believe. "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever.

PRAYER: Thank you, Lord, for You are good. You are our protector. Lead and guide us, Lord, on the right path of everlasting life. Amen.

Brenda Goad
Halesford United Methodist Church

April 9, 2025

Luke 19:28-40

THE SONG OF THE CROWD

Have you ever seen a lame man walk?

"Here is one..."

Have you ever seen a sick child healed?

"Meet my friend..."

Have you ever seen the hungry fed?

"I was there..."

Have you ever seen the King of Kings?

"He is here!"

Did you ever think the time would come?

Did you think we'd live to see the day?

Did you ever think that God would save?

Did you ever think we'd be set free?

I'm the man who Jesus made to walk!

"Praise the Lord!"

I'm the woman Jesus touched and healed!

"Glory be!"

I'm the child that Jesus held and blessed!

"Can it be?"

We're the ones that Jesus has set free!

"Blessed is he!"

He's the King who comes to bring us peace!

We have lived to see this blessed day!

God has come to set all people free!

God has loved and saved us by God's grace!

Stop this foolishness, break up this crowd.

Speak to them, tell them to quiet down.

Send them home, they are not welcome here.

Shut them up, tell them to go away.

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Have you never heard creation sing?

“Praise the Lord!”

Have you never heard the palm trees clap?

“Glory be!”

Have you never seen the green hills dance?

“Can it be?”

Hear the song these very stones cry out,

“Blessed is he!”

You're the King who's come to bring us peace!

We have lived to see this blessed day!

God has come to set all people free!

God has loved and saved us by his grace!

PRAYER: Holy God, Father of our Savior, Jesus Christ and sculptor of shouting stones, help us to imagine what it would have been like to be in that glorious parade with Jesus' disciples that day. Help us to feel in our hearts the depth of their yearning for your healing and wholeness and peace.

“Hosanna! Save us now!”

Mixed with joyful gratitude for your saving, healing, powerful, compassionate love.

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

By your grace, save us so that we might bless you with every breath of our being. Amen

Rev. Leigh Anne Taylor
Director of Connecting Ministries
Mountain View District

April 10, 2025

Isaiah 50:4-9a

This scripture is one of four Servant Songs found in Isaiah. Isaiah 50:4-9 is a passage that describes the servant of God as both a learner and a teacher, who suffers for his obedience to God. The servant listens to God's instruction every morning and declares the truths that comfort the afflicted. The servant also faces abuse and humiliation from his enemies, but he trusts that God will come to his aid and vindicate him. The passage is a prophecy of Jesus' journey to the cross and resurrection, and a reminder of the cost of discipleship.

The heart of this reading describes the servant's suffering at the hands of his enemies. He willingly offers his back to those who beat him, his cheeks to those who would pull his beard, and did not turn away when they mocked and spit on him. This reminds us of Jesus' suffering as he went through his trials and his crucifixion. It shows us the cost of being faithful to God's calling, and God's vindication of the servant's obedience.

The last few verses remind us that the servant---and Jesus---are not alone during this suffering. God is with him and helps him and will not let him be put to shame. God will ultimately vindicate him. What an example for us!

The path that we take as we follow Jesus will not always be easy. It may take us places we have never been before, and ask more of us than we think we can manage. But with God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit inside and beside us, we know we will have all that we need and we can be with them for eternity

PRAYER: Father God, we thank you for your Word, which we can use as a map to eternity with you. Through Jesus and the prophets, you show us your power, your grace and your mercy, and the comfort of knowing that you are ever-present. Help us to answer when you call, so we too may be faithful servants who trust that we are never alone. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Chris Mosig
Epworth United Methodist Church

April 11, 2025

Psalm 31:9-16

There may be times in our lives when it seems like the issues of life gets the best of us to the point that things don't seem to be in our control and it causes sickness and hopelessness. We begin to blame ourselves for things which we might have done or said to someone which caused your friends and acquaintances to disassociate themselves from us that what we did was displeasing to God and He had abandoned us. That is one of the tricks that the enemy uses against us to cause us to think that God has given up on us and if he succeeds in that he will attack us to our core. It's only when we stop believing that the enemy will come to destroy us. But when we keep our hearts and minds stayed on Him, we will remain strong and victorious knowing that God is always with us to carry us through.

PRAYER: Our Father and our God, we thank you for your word, which is your Promise that you will never leave us or forsake us as we continue to trust in you no matter what life's challenges bring our way. Help us to remain faithful and steadfast in our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ Name we pray, Amen.

Bishop Mark A. Nichols
Lovely Zion Baptist Church, Bedford, VA

April 12, 2025

Philippians 2:5-11

THE MIND OF CHRIST

God of course calls many people to serve Him right where they are. Whether we stay or go, we can all look to Him to surprise us with wonderful experiences and opportunities to live for Him in ways we might never have dreamed possible.

Taming the tongue isn't just about training ourselves to say the right things; it's about accepting the Holy Spirit's guidance so that our words generate the kindness and encouragement our world needs.

God calls and equips us to use our skills to meet needs that are present in our community and the world. Let's release our skills into the service of Jesus and see how He will use our acts of love to stitch hearts and lives together.

PRAYER: Father, thank you for giving the opportunity to serve you. Help me to be faithful with the talents and strengths you've given me to work for you. Amen.

Danny Ferguson
Halesford United Methodist Church

April 14, 2025

Luke 22:14-30

I believe that Jesus is telling his disciples that he will not be with them much longer and that his time on earth is coming to an end. I believe that Communion is a covenant between Jesus and us, to take him into us.

PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, help me to always appreciate the sacrifice you made for us on the cross. Help me to understand the meaning of taking your Body and Blood. Amen.

Pat Young
Epworth United Methodist Church

April 15, 2025

Luke 22:31-46

JESUS FORETELLS PETER'S DENIAL

Jesus knew his purpose and destiny, which was a very heavy burden to bear. His disciples did not fully understand what was about to happen. Jesus was always leading them, instructing them and teaching them things they must know. As he tells Simon in verse 31 and 32 that although Satan wants him, He has prayed for him that his faith may not fail and he must strengthen his brothers in return. Jesus also knew that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed! (vs. 34) But Jesus pressed on to fulfill his destiny and the scriptures as he went to the Mount of Olives to pray and left instructions for the disciples to pray as well so that they would not fall into temptation while he was gone.

Jesus was not excited or happy about what he must go through. In fact, he prayed and asked God to “remove this cup from me” (vs.42) but was willing to accept God’s will for his life. Then God sent an angel to strengthen and encourage him but it still did not relieve his agony. (vs.44) To make matters worse, when he returned to his disciples, they all had fallen asleep! How discouraging!

Too often, we all have great intentions but somehow fall short of keeping that promise! We must learn to keep the faith and press on as Jesus did in spite of the final outcome while believing that God has a plan and all things will be for our good in the end if we love and have faith in the Lord.

PRAYER: Lord, help me to keep the promises that I make and to continue to pray and trust in your word! Amen.

Valerie Jordan
Halesford United Methodist Church

April 16, 2025

Luke 22:47-65

Just before his crucifixion, Jesus Christ had partaken of a Passover meal with his disciples. He had informed them that this would be His last meal with them and that He would soon be betrayed by one of them. That same late night/early morning, He was taken prisoner.

He was brought to trial early that morning before the council of chief priests and scribes. He was accused of blasphemy for professing to be Christ, the Messiah. When questioned if He was the Christ, He stated that if He said He was, they wouldn't believe Him or let Him go. They then asked Him if He was the Son of God. He told them that they had rightly said so. They then found Him guilty, by His own testimony, of blasphemy.

Israel at the time was under Roman rule. Any criminal conviction and punishment had to be administered by Roman officials. Jesus was therefore taken to the local Roman magistrate, Pontius Pilate, to be tried and sentenced. They stated to Pilate that Jesus was perverting Israel with His teachings and disrespecting Rome by not paying taxes to Julius Caesar, the Roman ruler. He was also accused of blasphemy by calling Himself Christ the King. Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus stated that Pilate had spoken correctly. Jesus was actually King of the entire world, which included Rome. But because of the way Pilate had stated the question, he was not offended by Jesus' answer and professed he found no fault in Christ. This infuriated Jesus' accusers even more.

In the questioning of Jesus, it was disclosed that He was a Galilean. Pilate wanted nothing to do with the dispute and was delighted to know this fact. He sent Jesus to Herod. Herod was magistrate for Galilee and happened to be in Jerusalem.

Herod was overjoyed to see Jesus. He had wanted to meet Jesus for a long time because he had heard many things about Him and hoped to witness some miracles performed by Him. He asked Jesus many questions but Jesus did not respond to any of them. The chief priests and scribes continued to argue their case against Jesus.

Herod's attitude toward Jesus changed. He and his soldiers mocked Him, placed a robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate.

Jesus was rejected and denied by His own people. This was God's plan all along. This made the way for the Gospel to be presented to Gentiles. Jesus was crucified for the salvation of the whole world, not just Israel .

PRAYER: Father in heaven, we thank you for sending us your Son Jesus for the salvation of the world. Out of love for mankind, You gave us Your only begotten Son. Through His sacrificed blood, we are all saved. Amen.

George E. Wilson, Jr.
Full Gospel Holiness Church, Montvale, VA

April 17, 2025

Luke 22:66-71, 23:1-12

This passage tells us about the unfair trial and persecution Jesus endured. He was mocked and beaten through the night before his trial. The next day He stood in front of the Jewish council and Pilate who sentenced Him to be crucified. Jesus did not deny that He was the Son of God. He stood quietly as the crowds accused him of insurrection from Galilee to Jerusalem. The entire Bible has been leading up to this day. Jesus' arrest was accomplished by wicked men.

Everything seemed out of control, but God was in complete control. There are times in our lives when it seems God is not in control. Everything is going wrong and nothing is happening according to your plan. But God gives us freewill to make our own choices and it makes it easy to blame Him when things go wrong. We don't accept the responsibility of our own actions.

We may falter but never fail because God can take away our fumbling weakness and use them for good. This means showing forgiveness, kindness and peace to all mankind. This is when we realize God has ALWAYS been in control. So keep trusting God just as Jesus did leading to his crucifixion. He is in control even when circumstances may seem out of control.

PRAYER: Father God, help me to surrender my will to you. Guide me to trust in your plan for my life, even when it is difficult. I trust in your guidance and protection. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Sue & George Ruple
Epworth United Methodist Church

April 18, 2025

Luke 23:13-32

“...Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus...” Luke 23:13-32

I am the mother of a recovering addict. For 25 years, I prayed that God's will would be done in his life. I carried that cross for a long time—our son carried his cross for a long time. But God was merciful and He answered my prayers. Our son entered Hope Center Axton for a yearlong crisis recovery program. He graduated and turned that cross he carried into a way to counsel other young men during their recovery.

At one time, for a long time, his cross was large, heavy and bruising. Now that cross is a 2” wooden cross he carries in his pocket as a reminder that God made his cross shrink as he grew stronger in his faith.

Just like Simon of Cyrene, addicts carry a cross laid on them. But because they carry that cross behind Jesus—they can look to God's Son to lead them—to care for and love them.

Never give up on a situation—know that prayer is answered in God's time .

PRAYER: May God bless you all during this season of Lent. Know that you are loved from the Lenten season into the season of Resurrection—our Easter morning will come. Amen.

Sandra S. Fulcher
Stanleytown United Methodist Church, Stanleytown, VA

April 19, 2025

Luke 23:33-49

In this Scripture, Jesus is being told “save yourself” as He did others. As He was being crucified and mocked with sour wine, His garments were divided as tokens. One of the criminals who were crucified with Him said, “If you be the Christ, save yourself and us.” The other criminal rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God? We are under the same condemnation.”

Recognizing Jesus had done now wrong, he said, “Lord, remember me in your Kingdom.” Jesus answered, “You will be with me in Paradise.” Jesus even asked His Father to forgive the soldiers, for they did not know what they did. Then Jesus cried out, “Father, into your Hands I commit my Spirit”! And He took His last breath.

Many wanted Jesus to save Himself but He wanted to obey the will of His Father by sacrificing Himself for our sins.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your Son Jesus the Christ. His Love, His Mercy, His Holy Spirit.. Amen.

Michael Goad
Halesford United Methodist Church

PRAY

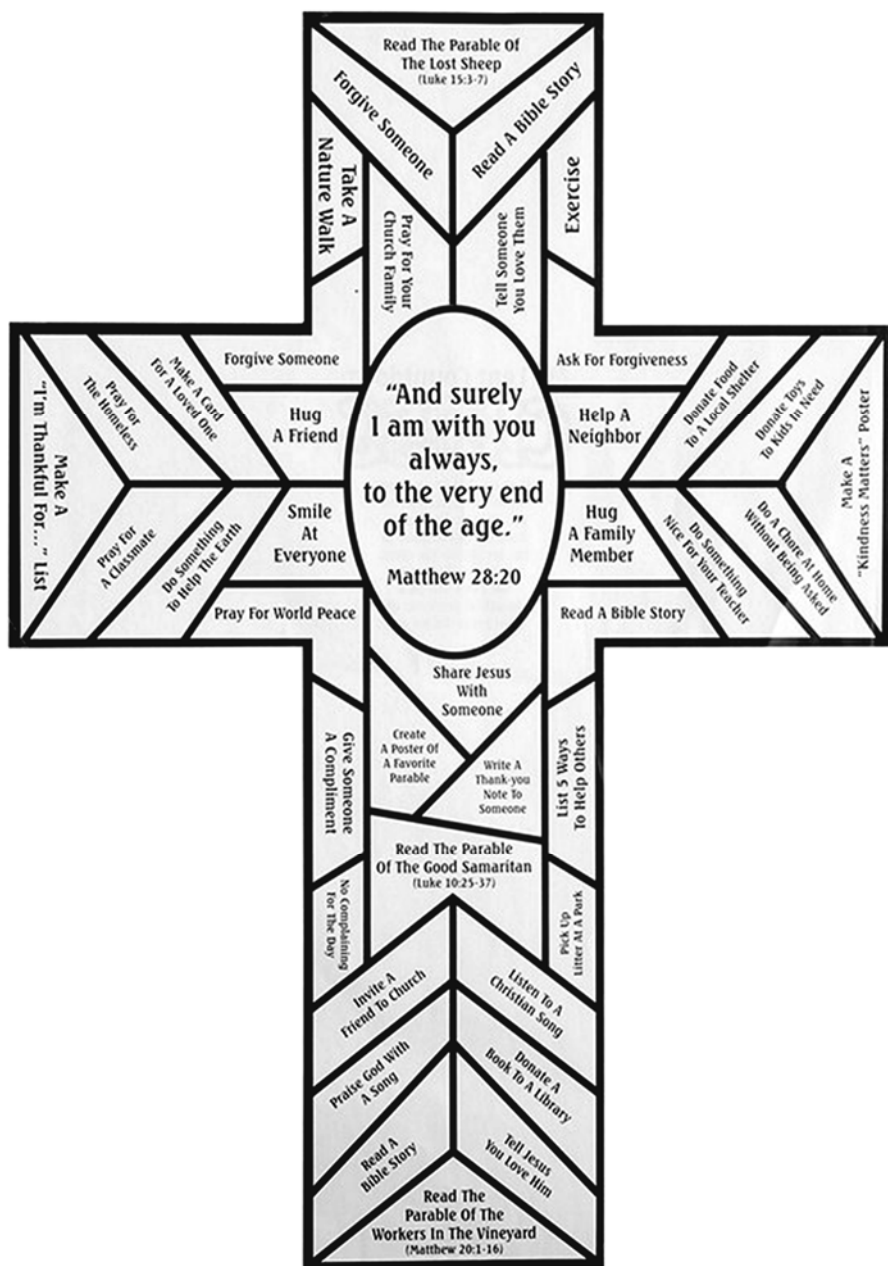
IS LOVE FOR GOD

FAST

IS LOVE FOR YOURSELF

GIVE

IS LOVE FOR OTHERS





Special thanks to our design team

Betty Johnson














Chris Mosig

Cindy Lollar

Kaye Hancock

Linda Devlin

Teresa Edwards

14	13	12	WALK THE LENTEN PATH...				
15 	 Lent	11	2 nd Sunday of Lent	10	9 	8	
16	Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving					7	
		34	33 	32	31	6	
3 rd Sunday of Lent					30	5	
17	 Palm Sunday			29	1 st Sunday of Lent		
18	35			5 th Sunday of Lent	4		
19	36			28	3 		
20	37			27 	2		
21 	38 Holy Thursday 	39 Good Friday 	40 Holy Saturday	26			
22	4 th Sunday of Lent	23	24	25	 Lent	1  ASH WEDNESDAY	

