

2025

Devotional

The

Season of Lent



11th Episcopal District Christian Education

The Right Reverend Marvin C. Zanders II

Mrs. Winifred H. Zanders

The Reverend Dr. Paula Lake

The Reverend Dr. Rhella P. Murdaugh

The Reverend Dr. Roy Jones Jr.

Dr. Donnell Moore

Presiding Bishop

Episcopal Supervisor

Christian Education Director

Lent Devotional Coordinator

Lent Devotional Coordinator

Lent Devotional Coordinator

The Season of Lent

The purpose of Lent is to prepare believers for Easter by encouraging self-discipline, spiritual reflection, and a closer relationship with God. It is a 40-day period of fasting, prayer, and repentance observed by many Christians, particularly in Catholic, Orthodox, and some Protestant traditions. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. The 40 days stand for the time Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness before beginning His public ministry. Lent culminates in Holy Week, which includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, leading up to Easter Sunday, celebrating Jesus' resurrection.

Significant Days of Lent

Ash Wednesday — The first day of Lent. **Receiving Ashes** – During church services, priests or ministers apply ashes to the forehead in the shape of a cross, saying, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19) or “Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). The ashes symbolize human mortality, repentance, and the need for God’s mercy.

Holy Week — Holy Week is the final and most sacred week of Lent, leading up to Easter Sunday. It commemorates the last days of Jesus’ life, His passion, death, and resurrection.

- **Palm Sunday (Beginning of Holy Week)** — Celebrates Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where crowds welcomed Him with palm branches (Matthew 21:1–11).

- **Holy Monday to Holy Wednesday** — These days recall Jesus’ teachings and events leading up to His betrayal. **Spy Wednesday (Holy Wednesday)** marks Judas’ betrayal of Jesus for 30 silver coins (Matthew 26:14–16).

- **Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday)** — Commemorates the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Eucharist (Holy Communion) and washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:1–17).

- **Good Friday** — The most solemn day, remembering Jesus’ crucifixion and death (Luke 23:44–49). Observed with fasting, prayer, and special church services, including the Stations of the Cross. Many churches hold a Veneration of the Cross service.

- **Holy Saturday** — A Day of silence and waiting, recalling Jesus’ time in the tomb. The Easter Vigil takes place in the evening, celebrating Jesus’ resurrection with fire, candlelight, and scripture readings.

- **Easter Sunday (End of Holy Week)** Celebrates Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:1–10). The most joyful and important day in Christianity, symbolizing victory over sin and death.

Day 1

Here You Grow Again!

Psalm 91:1-2

God knows just what you need and when you need it. How coincidental that the Lent Season begins in a season whereby executive orders are flying, DEI is being dismantled, and America's democracy is being tested like never before. It is during this season of repentance, refocusing, and realigning yourself with God's purpose for your life that God says He will rescue you as well as honor you. (vs.15) During Lent, you are called upon to pray as a way to connect with God while reflecting on Jesus' sacrifice. Praying helps you become attuned to God's voice, seek forgiveness, and GROW closer to Him. St. Augustine said, "Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for Him." This thirsting calls for self-reflection and renewal which invites you to align your life with God's will.

The writer of Psalm 91 anchors down in prayer by invoking four names of God. The Most High is greater than anyone or anything you will face. As Almighty, God is sufficient to handle all your difficulties. As Lord, God is ruler and sustainer over the enemy in order to protect you and shield you from the snares of the accuser.

Finally, as you petition, your God- you invoke the name El, the strong one who is able to keep you from falling. All of this is attained through the discipline of prayer. As you Grow though this Lent Season, let it be through intimate conversations with your God who will take you from strength to strength. May these forty days of prayer and fasting in the midst of uncertain times remind you that there is something about calling on the name of Jesus. Go on and Grow through prayer!

Prayer

God we call on You, the God who answers and sustains us in and through all seasons of our lives. You are our Strong Tower and because we put our trust in You, we are certain during these uncertain times that You are with us. Thank you for being our Shelter. In Jesus name, Amen.

Bishop Marvin C. Zanders II
Presiding Prelate
11th Episcopal District

Day 2

When Doubt is Overcome by Faith

Exodus 6:1-13

In Exodus 6:11-12. God says, "Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his land." But Moses spoke to the Lord, "The Israelites have not listened to me; why should Pharaoh listen to me, poor speaker that I am? This scripture teaches epic lessons about doubt being overcome by faith.

As chosen leaders of God, from the pulpit to the pew, we must expect opposition and misunderstanding from our followers, and at the same time, know how to approach God in humility. We must be bold and stand tall before God's people but broken in the presence of God as we seek divine strength and wisdom to carry out God's instructions. Moses became doubtful to do God's will because of Israel's lack of faith. As leaders, this is an all-too-common reality. Knowing Moses' heart and faithfulness, God encourages Moses by telling him seven times "I will" bring the Israelites out of Egypt. When we are confident that God is in control and we stand on His promises, we can experience inner peace and the courage to do God's will even in difficult situations.

Moses was faithful to God; however, he was not always blessed to be the leader of faithful people. This no doubt is the nature of ministry leadership today. In situations like these, it is best to simply do what God tells us to do, leaving the consequences with God. When Moses proceeded to tell Pharaoh to let God's people go, everything worked according to God's plan because nothing God plans would fail.

Prayer

O God, in times of uncertainty and doubt, remind us to cast our cares on you, knowing you care for us. Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Paula Lake
11th Episcopal District Christian Education Director

Day 3

GOD IS WITH US

Psalm 91:9-16

This popular Psalm is oftentimes heard recited at funerals. It conveys a sense that God is caring for those who love God and are devoted to the call of God. When the people of God make the Lord their dwelling place; which simply means to dwell in the house of the Lord, to live where God does, and to place their lives under the protection of Almighty God; they are assured that God will take care of them. If we ever needed the assurance of God's love, care, and protection, we sure do need it now.

Our worldview has been distorted by the national trauma of the election of a government whose leaders are purposefully and with surgical precision, eroding the very foundation of our democracy and bounds of humanity, justice and fair play. And because of the erosion, our world order has fallen into chaos. Are these the serpents and the lions God has promised to protect us from? Is this the scourge that God has promised not to allow near our tents? What we now see in the natural world is frustrating to the spirit. Unaffordable housing, mass firings of federal workers, reassurances of diseases we have long since thought eradicated, breakdown of diplomacy, mass deportations, inflation, looming threats of government shutdowns, and the list goes on and on. Daily this contributor asks the Lord to intervene and move in this situation and is often left bereft when God does not.

Despite the internal protestation, verse 15 provides the hope and assurance we are looking for; "...When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble..." God has promised to be WITH US in time of distress. God is WITH US as we navigate the housing and job markets. God is WITH US as we pivot from the pain of the whitewashing of our history to the purpose of telling our collective stories. God is WITH US as we continue voter education and mobilization. God is WITH US as we wield the power of our purse. And God is WITH US in the brokenness of our lives. Emmanuel is more than a word that denotes an Advent special. It is a name, a truth, and a year-round promise. So, in these days as we journey together as the Eleventh Episcopal District towards Calvary, be encouraged because God walks WITH US. God talks WITH US. God loves us because God is WITH US.

Prayer

Jehovah-Nissi, we pause in this moment to thank You for Your promise to be with us in times of trouble. When we find ourselves in the cold, dark depths of the trenches of life, we are assured that You are with us. When fear and loneliness threaten to overtake us, draw near and whisper to our spirits that You are our Living Hope who is never far.

The Reverend Dr. Missiouri McPhee

11th Episcopal District Christian Education Secretary

Day 4

A Noteworthy Account of God's Word

Luke 4:1-4

Luke 4:1-4 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ²being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days, He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. ³And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'

Because Jesus has defeated Satan for us. Which means that no matter what is happening in our lives, no matter the temptations and trials and tests we might be going through, we can turn to Jesus, and He will be there for us, to lead us and guide us all along the way.

God desires for us to be detailed and exact in our account of His Word. The truth of God's Word teaches, rebukes, and convicts' righteousness to equipped us for every good work. We must have a solid foundation of His Word, so that believers may be able to stand unwavering to share with those who are hurting and without hope. Let us tell our story and God will get the glory!

Prayer

Most gracious and Heavenly Father as we come now in the name of Jesus. God, I want to thank you for all that you have done for us and will continue to do for us. Heavenly Father we ask now that you bless and strengthen us as we go and do the will of the Lord. God, we thank you for being a provider, protector, sustainer and deliverer. God, we ask that you bless us to be able to share your Word and share it with clarity. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Rhella P. Murdaugh
11th Episcopal District Christian Education Curriculum Chair
Pastor of Mount Zion AME Church, Ocala

Day 5

The Atonement for Sin

1 John 2:1-6

Today's devotion reminded me of a recent episode while visiting a patient in the hospital. I walked in on a distressed patient, his doctor, and another individual who was called the patient's advocate. A patient advocate is someone who helps individuals navigate the healthcare system, ensuring they receive proper care, understand their medical options, and have their rights protected. After the doctor left the room, I waited patiently as the patient's advocate helped the patient consider options and next steps toward improving his medical condition. The information given to the patient to consider by his advocate provided immediate relief and a sense of calming satisfaction and assurance.

Although I did not probe the patient regarding the details of the conversation, I realized in that moment the impact the patient's advocate had on his quality of life. As I thought about our text for today, it arrested my spirit; what the patient's advocate did for him is exactly what Jesus does for us every moment of every day as our Advocate. Sin is our human condition; however, we have the blessed assurance that when we sin, Jesus advocates on our behalf to God. The advocacy of Jesus allows us to live holy and righteous before God even though we are prone to sin in various ways.

As true believers in Jesus Christ, "we know Him, and He knows us." Daily, as we strive to live saved lives that are pleasing to God, we need not get distraught when we sin, because we have an advocate from God who washes our sin away.

Prayer

Thank you, God, for covering our sins in the blood of Jesus, who is our atoning sacrifice once and for all. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Dr. Donnell Moore
Daytona Beach District Christian Education Director
Allen Chapel AMEC, Daytona Beach

Tips for Choosing the Right Wash Cycle: A Way to Understand Purification

Zechariah 3:3-4 “Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, ‘Take off his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.”

Zechariah 3 reminds me of times in my life when my laundry had very filthy clothes, offensive odor, heavily soiled, and noticeable sweat stains. My dirtiest laundry resulted from sports. Filthy clothes need more attention than the average household laundry, which we can learn from as we continue this Lenten journey.

Lent invites us to engage in practices that promote spiritual growth, purification, and transformation, meaning a positive change in a person’s life as a follower of Christ. In general, these practices can be hard to maintain, and having a designated time in the calendar to focus more on our Christian path is vital. So, I offer tips on understanding and moving towards self-examination and spiritual purification, or the Spiritual Wash Cycle:

Soak - Seek cleansing early and often. Talk with God. Examples of praying without ceasing are scheduling time on your calendar, doing breathe prayers, praying when you pass up a meal, or some other self-denial.

Wash - Read and re-read instructions on God’s lessons about forgiveness, salvation, and direction for God’s will in your life. Like Joshua, your old, soiled attire was exchanged for new, high-quality clothing, which means there are different instructions for how to live now that you are clean.

Rinse - Remember that the soil, or sin, referenced in Zachariah is about Joshua’s mind, heart, intentions, and behaviors. Joshua’s new, high-quality clothing is a metaphor for how God sees us. A Christian who wears second-hand garments is no less than a Christian who wears A-list designer fashion. Even though you are soiled or sinful, God loves you as if you are the most delicate and expensive item.

Spin cycle: Seek help from the Holy Spirit and others in your fellowship. Don’t get down on yourself if you make a mistake.

The Lord offers purification to genuine believers who earnestly seek to serve the Lord. We must be purified so that God's Holy Spirit can reside within us and work through us to fulfill God's perfect will. Our New Testament cleaning agent is the precious blood of Jesus Christ. “What can wash away my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus, what can make me whole again, nothing but the blood of Jesus!”

Prayer -I thank You for reminding me that, just as Joshua stood with filthy garments, I too often approach You weighed down by my sins and shortcomings. You offer forgiveness and the opportunity for personal transformation necessary to be a dedicated servant. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

The Reverend Reginald Johnson - 11th Episcopal District Superintendent

Day 7

Praying for Deliverance

Psalm 17: 1-2

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

Contrary to God's will, persecution is becoming normalized in our world. Many are facing persecution because of who they are, how they look and what they believe. What is persecution? It is oppressive behavior that is being carried out by people in authority. It is being manifested in various forms of mistreatment, including harassment, discrimination, violence, imprisonment and social exclusion.

We must be aware that persecution is not new to the Christian community. In John 15:20, Jesus warned: "if they persecuted me, they will persecute you." Given the certainty of persecution's proliferation, how should we respond? For illumination and new revelation, let's focus on King Saul's history of persecuting King David. In Psalm 17, King David is highly instructive with insights into prayer that led to his deliverance. Notably, King David did not retaliate or seek to vindicate himself. Was that arrogance on his part? No, look at the humility and sincerity displayed in Psalm 17:1-2 as King David, a man with clean hands and a pure heart, petitioned God. Like us, King David sinned, but he was quick to confess and repent. Let us resolve to follow his examples.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You with praise and thanksgiving. As You delivered King David, please also deliver us. Please forgive all our sins and bless us with clean hands and pure hearts as we pray and fast in anticipation of Your deliverance. In the name of Jesus, we praise You and glorify your name. Amen

Dr. Catherine S. Powell, Christian Educator & Writer
Assistant Florida Conference Christian Education Director
Bethel AME, Pensacola

Day 8

Dwelling in His Presence

Psalm 27:1-6

Lent is a sacred season of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a time when we intentionally set aside distractions to draw nearer to God. In Psalm 27:1-6, David expresses unwavering confidence in the Lord, declaring, “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” His words remind us that God’s presence is our greatest security, even in times of uncertainty.

Life is filled with challenges, and fear often tries to creep into our hearts. We fear the unknown, the trials we face, and even the sacrifices God calls us to make. But David’s testimony encourages us to trust that God is not only our protector but also our guiding light. Lent invites us to release our fears and lean fully into His presence.

David’s greatest desire was not just deliverance from trouble but intimacy with God. He writes, “One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” In a world filled with distractions and competing priorities, how often do we truly long to be in God’s presence? Lent calls us back to that longing—to seek Him above all else.

Spending time in prayer, fasting, and meditating on His Word deepens our relationship with Him. As we do, we experience the beauty of His presence, which sustains and strengthens us. No matter what trials we face, we can find peace in knowing that God has already made a way.

During this Lenten season, let us seek to dwell in the Lord’s house—not just in moments of worship, but in every aspect of our daily lives. May we trust Him fully, worship Him wholeheartedly, and rest in the assurance that He is our refuge.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, as I walk through this Lenten season, help me to seek You above all else. Remove any fear that hinders my faith and remind me that You are my light and salvation. Teach me to dwell in Your presence, to long for You more than anything this world can offer. Let my heart be fixed on You, and may my trust be unwavering. In moments of doubt, be my stronghold. In times of trouble, be my refuge. Draw me close to You, that I may dwell in Your house forever. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

The Reverend LaMone A. Gibson
Pastor of Roberts Mount Pisgah, Atlantic Beach, FL

Day 9

Imitate Me

Philippians 3:17-20

Paul issued a compelling invitation to the Philippians to emulate his unwavering and profound reliance on Christ. Although Paul acknowledged his imperfections, he committed daily to pursuing God through both words and actions. We should aspire to imitate this dedication. As Christians, our lives should be consistently guided by Scripture, offering a visible example to the world. Our purpose is not to conform to the world, disseminating false teachings, offering lukewarm advice, or setting an inadequate example. Instead, we are called to demonstrate a mindset that is entirely trusting and dependent on God. The ultimate aim is not perfection but to inspire others that God's Kingdom is the sole citizenship we seek each day.

During this Lenten season, we should introspectively ask ourselves: "Can someone imitate my behavior in all environments? Can someone imitate my love for God's people? Can someone imitate my presence on social media? Can someone imitate my service and commitment to the church?"

Let us all endeavor to be like Christ, thereby becoming examples, that others can follow to deepen their relationship with God.

Prayer

Lord, we come totally relying on you. Guide us so that all that we do reflect that we are citizens of Your Kingdom. Amen.

The Reverend Carla "PK" Bouie
Founder of The Black Church Student

www.theblackchurchstudent.com

Day 10

Blessed is He Who Comes

Psalm 118:26-29

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord, we bless you. The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With bows in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 118:26-29, NIV)

As we move through Lent, we are reminded of the deep significance of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem—His triumphal entry that was celebrated with cries of "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 21:9). In Psalm 118, the psalmist calls the people to bless the Lord, acknowledging His goodness and enduring love. The verse invites us into a spirit of celebration and gratitude for God's faithfulness.

Lent is a season of preparation, a time to reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross and the immense love that led Him to sacrifice Himself for our salvation. These verses encourage us to prepare our hearts, much like the people of Jerusalem did, to welcome Jesus into our lives more fully. The psalmist recognizes that God's light shines on us, and in this season, we are called to reflect that light through our actions and worship.

The invitation in this passage is to join in the festival procession, to praise and exalt God for His goodness. As we remember Christ's journey to the cross, may our hearts be filled with gratitude and awe for the love that endures forever. Let this season of Lent be a time of renewed worship and devotion.

Prayer

Lord, we bless You for the gift of Jesus, who came in Your name. Help us to live in the light of Your love, offering our hearts in praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

Sister Raven Gainous

President, 11th Episcopal District RAYAC

Day 11

Trusting in God's Presence

Psalm 27:7-14

"Come," my heart says, "seek his face!" Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

Psalm 27:7-14 calls every believer to pursue the Lord, trust His faithfulness, seek God's guidance, and wait for His deliverance. As we journey through the Lenten season, we find people all around the world navigating societal or political challenges, not at all unlike the Psalmist or the Children of Israel at one point or another.

David's plea, "*Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!*" (v. 7), is timeless and universal. We in the African diaspora are not alone in our cry for justice in our communities, for fairness in policies affecting our families, and for leadership grounded in righteousness. Christians around the world, share a common bond and face similar issues. Like David, we all must hold fast to the promise that God sees, God hears, and God answers. We are reminded of this when David says, "*I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*" (v. 13). The same God who delivered David, is the same God who brought us through the perils of yesterday. He has not changed, nor does He have respect of person or nationality! He is the same in America, South Africa, Ukraine, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Most importantly, our God reigns supreme over every political voice, over every continent, and every earthly power! There is no one greater! Therefore, with great confidence, we heed the call: "*Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart*" (v. 14). Let us continue to stand in faith. Continue to move forward with wisdom, knowledge, counsel, and might. Continue to reverence God and know; that He is working behind the scenes for our good! We can boast in this hope! Remember political ideologies and global leaders will come and go; but God's love and justice, God's provision, and God's power remain eternal. Let this be a season of renewal and repentance, a time to seek God more deeply, to trust Him more fully, and to stand with confidence. For we know through Christ Jesus, that we are more than conquerors because our God REIGNS!

Prayer: Gracious God, help us to seek Your presence with open hearts of forgiveness. Strengthen our faith, that we may trust in Your grace and Your mercy. We patiently wait for Your deliverance and believe unwaveringly in Your promises. Guide us with wisdom and give us courage. Let us stand firm in Your love, through Christ Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

The Reverend Rebecca Thompson
Outstanding Orlando District Christian Education Director
Pastor, St. Paul AME Church, Winter Garden, Florida

GET UP AND LEAVE! GO GET YOUR INHERITANCE

Exodus 33:1-6

33 The Lord said to Moses, “Go, leave this place, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, and go to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’ ² I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ³ Go up^[a] to a land flowing with milk and honey, but I will not go up among you, or I would consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” ⁴ When the people heard these harsh words, they mourned, and no one put on ornaments. ⁵ For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do to you.’ ” ⁶ Therefore the Israelites stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

Have you ever noticed how blessed you are? I mean really blessed, despite you not being worthy or not doing anything to deserve God’s grace and mercy. Do you realize that if justice was served instead of grace, you would have you slain for your sins, stubbornness, and disrespect. Yet, our Holy Father rewards us with gifts, favor, and blessing that we cannot conceive. All because of a promise he made. The Lord tells Moses to get the people and leave this land so that they can receive their inheritance; but tells them to remove the ornaments and that he is not going with them. He promised their forefathers that their descendants would gain access to lands flowing with resources called milk and honey (the best of the best). We are all despicable; we have sinned. Nevertheless, Jesus reconciled us back to the Father. Accepting Jesus as our Savior allows us to be forgiven and saved by the Grace of God. God is the same God that he was yesterday. Now we are commanded to get up, leave, and go get our inheritance, both figuratively and spiritually. Stand on the Promises of God to lead us through these terrible times. His grace is sufficient.

Prayer

Dear Lord, you are an Awesome God! We thank you because love us better than we can love ourselves. Please give us strength and grace to follow you in faith. Forgive us on this day. For we know you are all powerful, mighty, and able to do exceedingly more than we can ask. Please save us and heal our land this day. For it is in Jesus Name we pray. AMEN.

**Dr. Viesta Kinsler Skipper, Lively Lakeland District Christian Education Director
Hurst Chapel AME Church, Winter Haven**

Title: Remembering God's Faithfulness

Psalm 105:1-7

1 O give thanks to the Lord; call on his name; make known his deeds among the peoples. 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. 3 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. 4 Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually. 5 Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles and the judgments he has uttered, 6 O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. 7 He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

Lent is a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal. As we journey toward the cross, Psalm 105:1-7 calls us to remember and proclaim God's faithfulness. This passage reminds us to: give thanks, seek the Lord, and remember His wondrous works.

So often, in times of difficulty, we forget how God has been present in our lives. The Israelites, too, struggled with forgetfulness despite God's mighty acts of deliverance. Yet, the psalmist urges them and us to recall His faithfulness, especially in seasons of challenge.

During Lent, as we examine our hearts and turn back to God, we are invited to shift our focus from our struggles to His steadfast love. When we seek the Lord (v.4), we are not just asking for His help, we are deepening our relationship with Him. In fasting, prayer, and reflection, we open ourselves to His presence, allowing Him to renew and transform us.

The psalmist also calls us to proclaim what God has done. Lent is not only about personal repentance but also about sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ's redemption. Just as God kept His covenant with Abraham, He fulfilled His ultimate promise in Jesus, who came to rescue us from sin and death.

Today, take time to remember God's faithfulness in your life. Where have you seen His goodness? How can you proclaim it to others? As we journey toward Easter, may we seek Him with our whole hearts and trust in His everlasting promises.

Prayer

Lord, as I walk through this Lenten season, help me remember Your faithfulness. Give me a heart that seeks You daily and lips that proclaim Your goodness. Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Vaseal V. Montgomery
Pastor, Mt. Zion AMEC (Southside)
East Conference, Director Christian Education

Jehovah Mephalti: The Lord My Deliverer

2 Chronicles 2: 1-4

Jehoshaphat was afraid; he set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **2 Chronicles 2:3**

During Lent, we are reminded that circumstances in life often bring battles we are unprepared to fight. Like King Jehoshaphat, we may face challenges that seem overwhelming, unfair, or even unexpected. The weight of personal struggles, temptations, or uncertainties about the future can feel like an army marching against us. Jehoshaphat's response, however, was not panic or self-reliance but an immediate turn to God. He called and commissioned the people to fast and seek the Lord's help. In the face of fear, he chose faith. Instead of focusing on the threat, he led the nation in prayer.

Lent is our season to do the same. It is a time to pause, fast, and seek God's guidance. When we surrender our fears, anxieties, and struggles to God, we make room for *El Shaddai* to intervene and work in our lives. What battle are you facing today? Instead of carrying it alone, bring it to *Jehovah Mephalti* in prayer. Fast, seek God's presence, and trust that God will fight for you.

Prayer

Jehovah Mephalti, as I journey through this Lenten season, draw me closer to You. Teach me to surrender my worries, my sins, my battles, and my desires at Your feet. Help me to seek You with a repentant heart, fasting from distractions and feasting on Your Word. Strengthen my faith as I walk in humility, trusting that You are my refuge in every trial. Shift my perspective from the weight and worries of this world to your delivering power. May this time of reflection deepen my love for You and align my heart with Your will. Lead me in Your grace and prepare me for the victory that was secured by your resurrection. In Jesus 'name, Amen.

**The Reverend Sha'Leda Mirra, Ph.D., M.S., MSW, M.Div., LCSW, CAP
Senior Pastor, Saint Paul AME Church, Ocala, Fl**

Faithful Fortitude in Trials
Révélations 2 :8-11

In Revelation 2:8-11, the message to the church in Smyrna speaks profoundly to our own experiences of suffering and perseverance. The passage highlights Jesus' acknowledgment of their tribulations and poverty, yet He calls them rich in spirit.

This paradox reminds us that true wealth lies not in earthly possessions but in our steadfast faith. The believers in Smyrna faced persecution, with the threat of imprisonment looming over them, yet they were encouraged to remain faithful even unto death, but they are not without hope. Jesus reassures them with the promise of the "crown of life," a reward for those who endure trials.

This passage serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of spiritual resilience in the face of adversity. In our own lives, we may encounter various forms of trials—be it personal, relational, or spiritual. Yet, like the Smyrna church, we can find solace in knowing that our struggles do not define our worth or our identity in Christ. Instead, they can deepen our relationship with Him and strengthen our witness to the world around us.

Prayer

"Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts that seek Your strength and comfort. In times of trial, help us to remember that our true riches are found in You. Grant us the endurance to face our challenges with faith and courage, just as the church in Smyrna did. May we hold fast to Your promises and trust in Your presence, knowing that You are with us through every storm. As we navigate our struggles, let us shine Your light to those around us, reflecting Your grace and love. We thank You for the assurance of eternal life and the hope that sustains us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

The Reverend George L. Reed, Jr.
Pastor, Mount Zion AME-GCS

Awaken and Strengthen What Remains
Révélation 3 :1-6

As we journey through Lent, we are called to examine our hearts, repent, and renew our commitment to Christ. In Revelation 3:1-6, Jesus speaks to the church in Sardis, warning them that although they have a reputation for being alive, they are actually spiritually dead. His command is clear: **Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die.**

How often do we, like the church in Sardis, become complacent in our faith? We may go through the motions—attending church, praying, serving—yet our hearts can grow cold, our devotion superficial, our devotion hollow. Jesus' words remind us that it is possible to appear spiritually vibrant on the outside while being distant from Him within.

Lent is a season of awakening. It is a time to recognize where we have drifted, to confess where we have grown spiritually weak, and to seek renewal through Christ. Jesus calls us to remember what we have received and heard, to hold fast, and to repent. He promises that those who remain faithful will be clothed in white, their names secure in the book of life.

Today the request is to:

1. **Examine Your Heart** – Where have you become spiritually complacent? Are there areas where you need to wake up?
2. **Strengthen What Remains** – Identify the parts of your faith that need renewal. How can you cultivate a deeper relationship with Christ during this Lenten season?
3. **Hold Fast and Repent** – Jesus' call is one of grace. Repentance is not just about acknowledging our faults but about turning fully toward Him, embracing His love and guidance.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we walk through this season of Lent, awaken our hearts to Your truth. Reveal to us the areas where we have grown cold and give us the strength to return to You with renewed passion. May we be faithful to Your calling, holding fast to Your promises, and walking in the light of Christ. Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Vaseal V. Montgomery
Pastor, Mt. Zion AMEC (Southside)
East Conference, Director Christian Education

Continually Bearing Good Fruit

Luke 6:43-45

43 “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear fruit; **44** for each tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a bramble bush. **45** The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

During the Lent Season, we focus on examining areas of our lives we need to change in order to be more like Christ in all that we say and do.

Have you ever gone into a grocery store and purchased the best-looking fruit you could find? After you taste it, you are convinced that it’s the very best. It was so good that you went back specifically to get the same fruit. How disappointed are you when the fruit doesn’t taste the same; in fact, it isn’t good at all. Do you think the fruit came from the same tree?

It all starts in our heart. Our hearts should be conformed to God’s will and our words and deeds will follow. Once our hearts are right, the obedience we display will truly be heartfelt and will be manifested in what we Say and Do. Our hearts determine the fruit we bear. To continually display good fruit, we must fertilize our heart through prayer, fasting, and studying God’s word.

This Lenten Season let’s ask God to guard our hearts that we may be that tree that is able to bear good fruit; over and over again.

Prayer

Dear God, I ask you to purify my heart and let me continue to display it in everything that I say and do. Let my heart be filled with Love and your Holy Spirit. Fill me with the love you have for your children and show me how to share that love so that others may draw closer to you and continually bear good fruit.

Sister Sharon Rashad
Alachua-Central District
Christian Education Director

**Thirsting for the Wellspring: A Lenten Journey Through
Psalm 63:1-8**

Lent is a desert season. A time of stripping away the distractions and superficialities that often quench our spiritual thirst with fleeting pleasures. Like the psalmist, we find ourselves in a "dry and weary land where there is no water." This isn't necessarily a physical desert, but a spiritual one, where our souls yearn for something deeper, something more substantial than what the world offers. In these opening verses, we witness David's raw and honest expression of his longing for God. He doesn't sugarcoat his needs. He doesn't pretend to be strong or self-sufficient. He admits his soul "thirsts" and his flesh "faints." This vulnerability is the first step in our Lenten journey. To acknowledge our spiritual dryness, our deep need for God, is to open ourselves to His refreshing presence. David's solution is not to seek a mirage, a temporary fix. He directs his gaze to the sanctuary, to God's "power and glory." He remembers God's "steadfast love," a love he deems "better than life." This remembrance is pivotal. It's in recalling God's faithfulness, His unwavering love, that our parched souls begin to find hope.

During Lent, we are called to cultivate this same practice. To remember God's saving grace, His sacrifice on the cross, His promise of resurrection. This remembrance fuels our praise, our "joyful lips" that bless Him "as long as I live." The image of a "rich feast" is a powerful contrast to the desert landscape. God doesn't just offer a sip of water; He provides a banquet, a fullness that satisfies our deepest hunger. This satisfaction comes not from material possessions or worldly achievements, but from intimate communion with Him. David finds this communion in the quiet moments, "when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night." Lent invites us to create space for these moments of solitude, where we can reflect on God's presence and allow His word to nourish our souls.

Finally, David declares, "My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me." This clinging is an act of surrender, a recognition that we cannot sustain ourselves. We need God's strength, His guidance, His unwavering support.

Prayer

As we journey through Lent, let us embrace the desert experience, allowing our thirst to draw us closer to the Wellspring of life. Let us remember God's steadfast love, cultivate moments of quiet reflection, and cling to His right hand, trusting that He will satisfy our deepest longings. Let us allow this season to transform our dry and weary lands into fertile grounds of faith, where our souls sing for joy in the shadow of His wings.

**The Reverend Nekeshia Sharell Harris, M.A.Ed., M.Div.
DMin Candidate-Payne Theological Seminary
Pastor, Bethel AME- Bellville, Jennings, Fl**

“NO FAVORITISM”

Romans 2:9-11

9 There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on sinning-- for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. 10 But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good-- for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.

11 For God does not show favoritism

When it comes to family dynamics, although no two families experience sibling rivalry in quite the same way, the concept of sibling rivalry is still alive and well. In some families, sibling rivalry is nothing more than a passing comment by which the siblings tease one another with light-hearted humor, saying such words as, *“Everybody knows you were momma’s favorite”* or saying something like, *“It’s no secret that daddy loved you best”*. While in other families, such comments would not be taken as lightly, because such comments often bring with them a resurgence of emotions such as inadequacy, or anger, jealousy, or even rage stemming from the behavior of one or both parents that caused the children to believe that there was indeed *“a favorite”* child.

As we consider the Jews and Gentiles being spoken of in Romans 2:9-11, we can begin to see how these same types of family dynamics can exist in the church family as well. From chapters 1 and 2 of Romans, we can almost hear the back and forth among the adult Jew and Gentile children of GOD as one quotes to the other, about how the Apostle Paul declared, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, For the Jew first and also for the Greek”* (Romans 1:16) Only to hear the Gentiles clap back immediately from the Gospel of Matthew, by quoting Jesus as saying, *“But many who are first will be last, and the last first”* (Matthew 19:30) As both the Jew and Gentile Children of GOD walk away from yet another family gathering feeling justified in thinking that surely Father GOD loves them best.

Prayer

Father GOD, we thank You. We thank You for being just; for being merciful; and for being the GOD who shows no favoritism. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Reverend Willie L. Merrick
Florida Conference Christian Education Director

GOD'S FINAL VERDICT

Romans 2:12-16

“12 When the Gentiles sin, they will be destroyed, even though they never had God’s written law. And the Jews, who do have God’s law, will be judged by that law when they fail to obey it. 13 For merely listening to the law doesn’t make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. 14 Even Gentiles, who do not have God’s written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. 15 They demonstrate that God’s law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. 16 And this is the message I proclaim that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone’s secret life.”

Judgement day is a moment of truth, and no one will be exempt. How we live our lives will determine if we are worthy of the eternal reward. God’s judgement will be fair and based on the evidence presented during our time on earth. However, the evidence is not limited to the law, and the work we do; it also includes our secret thoughts and the things that are kept in our hearts. Paul expresses the importance of obedience to God in everything throughout this lifetime.

If you were to stand trial in God’s court, what verdict will God give you? How would you plead: guilty, not guilty or no contest? Will the works of your hands and the meditation of your heart be the evidence that supports your plea? Our human efforts will not secure our place in the Kingdom, nor will our knowledge of the law secure our place in the Kingdom.

It is by grace through faith that we are saved. It is the acceptance of Christ and the sustainability of salvation and justification that will lead us back to the Father.

The good news is that the Apostle Paul uses the Gentiles, who have God’s law written in their hearts as the example for all to follow.

Therefore, through the blood of Jesus, God’s final verdict: “NOT GUILTY”!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I come to ask that you forgive us for our past mistakes. Help us live a life that is pleasing and acceptable unto you. As we walk in righteousness and in obedience along the path that You have set before us, oh God. Please guide us and give us the strength to do what is required and to overcome temptation with our whole heart. We ask You, Lord, to help us so that we don’t just hear Your word but that we will also apply Your word to our lives. So that on the day of judgement we will hear You say, *“Well done my good and faithful servant”* Amen.

The Reverend Nikita Wiggins
Tallahassee District
Christian Education Director

OBEY GOD AND TRUST HIM

Numbers 13:17-27

When God speaks to us, we must obey. The heart is the seat of sincerity and God wants obedience that comes from the heart. This involves listening to and acting on what God tells us to do. We need to pay attention to what God says and trust that God wants the best for us. Have faith and obey God. Those that disobey will suffer the consequences as did the Israelites. God commanded Moses to send leaders from the 12 tribes to explore the land God had promised them. They had to report back as to whether the land was good or bad; whether the towns were walled or unwalled; whether the soil was fertile or poor; whether there were trees or no trees; and how strong the people who lived there were. The leaders found that the land flowed with “milk and honey”, meaning that it was of great value. After receiving the report, the size and strength of the people who occupied the land caused some to be afraid. Because of their fear and disobedience, they did not possess the land. Instead, they wandered about in the wilderness for forty years until all the men died. The following scriptures encourage obedience to God:

“If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment. Job 36:11

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: “Deuteronomy 28:1-2

We must all remember that He has done everything necessary in his death and resurrection to bring us into the land God promised, a New Heaven and a New Earth. As we follow the commandments of God, it is God who will reward our obedience.

Prayer

Father God, I promise to listen and adhere to Your word, even when I am afraid. I know You are with me and will give me the strength to do what You ask of me. Thank You for continuing to bless your servants with obedient hearts and for granting them everlasting life. Amen

Sister Carolyn K. Hill
Quincy-Monticello District
Christian Education Director

REMEMBER WHAT HE'S DONE

Joshua 4:1-5

When the entire nation had finished crossing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua:

2 "Select twelve men from the people, one from each tribe, 3 and command them, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood, carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you camp tonight.'" 4 Then Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites, whom he had appointed, one from each tribe. 5 Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, one for each of the tribes of the Israelites,

As the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, God commanded them to take twelve stones from the riverbed and set them up as a memorial. These stones were not just for decoration; they were reminders of God's faithfulness, provision, and power to bring His people into the Promised Land.

Lent is a season of reflection—a time to remember God's faithfulness in our lives. Just as the Israelites needed tangible reminders, we must pause and reflect on the ways God has brought us through. The struggles we have faced, the victories He has given, and the grace that has sustained us all serve as our memorial stones.

What are the "stones" in your life that remind you of God's goodness? Perhaps it's a moment when He answered a prayer, a time He provided when resources were low, or a season when His peace carried you through uncertainty. Whatever they are, let them be a testimony, not just for yourself, but for others who need to hear about God's faithfulness.

During this Lenten season, take time to remember. Reflect on where He has brought you from, and let those memories strengthen your faith for where He is leading you next.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, Thank You for the reminders of Your goodness in my life. Help me never to forget how You have carried me through. As I journey through this Lenten season, my heart may be filled with gratitude and trust for the road ahead. Let my life testify to Your faithfulness, pointing others to Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Reverend Christopher Jordan
Marianna District Christian Education Director

“WALK BY FAITH”
2nd Corinthians 5:6-10

Apostle Paul presents a dual portrait of living in a physical body and of having a spiritual mindset. Paul appears to be in a reflective stance, perhaps resulting from the mistreatment he often received for preaching the word of God. In the spiritual realm, the more we aspire to please our God, the more power we yield over our fleshly instincts. When we bring our lives into the subjection of our Lord and Savior, we gain more strength to overcome the temptations of unholy desires. As Paul intimates, living holy is a choice we must make consistently. This is how we can control the weakened condition of our sinful thoughts and behaviors.

Paul emphasizes that we must walk by faith and not by sight. Meaning that as we become more knowledgeable of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the inward man begins to reflect the spiritual changes. No longer are we instantly led to follow the negative choices our media driven world presents to us. Our instincts become, *“What would Jesus do?”* in every choice and situation that is presented to us. Walking by faith is only possible as our relationship with God strengthens. Our physical sight unfortunately, is tuned to worldly devices that can cause us to become more dependent on ourselves instead of our God. As Paul describes this dual existence of being housed in a physical body, we must understand this is only temporary. Our most important desire must be feeding our spiritual temple with the Word of God, fasting and praying, and ensuring that we are growing closer to the goal of living in eternity with our God.

We are living in what is known as the dash, the time between birth and death. Jesus Christ has already come as the Lamb of God. His next appearance will be as the righteous judge before whom we will all appear to account for the things we have done during our dash.

The question to ponder is how are we sacrificing our worldly existence to fulfill the demands of our spiritual presence? As Paul wrote to the Church in Philippi, *“To live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* To spend eternity with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we must make a personal choice to follow the biblical roadmap God has planned for us. We must be born again and accept the eternal plan of salvation offered to each of us. Our physical temple will return to the dust, but our spiritual being will live forever. The question is, where will you spend eternity? The choice is an individual response each of us will make. Let’s be sure that we are choosing to live for Christ.

Prayer

Gracious God, we give honor, praise and glory to You for being our loving Savior. We thank You for teaching us how to live holy lives during our earthly existence through Your Holy Word. As we grow in our faith, continue to allow Your Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and knowledge of who You are and how we can avoid the negative strongholds that can so easily distract us. We love You, dear Lord, and will always endeavor to acknowledge Your power, grace, favor and blessings in our lives. In the Name of Jesus we pray and God, we thank You. Amen

The Reverend Bettye J. Weaver
Pensacola-Panama City District
Christian Education Director

Day 24

WHO IS YOUR GOD?

Exodus: 32:7-8

And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf and have worshiped and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!' "

In verses seven and eight of the text, God is speaking to Moses.

This says to me that we the people of God should in no circumstances want our true God to deny us. Note how God tells Moses that these are your (Moses) people because they have quickly turned from Me and made for themselves idol gods.

As we continue to study this text, Moses intercedes for the people and God relents.

So then, prayerfully as we are going through the Forty Days of Lent, we will not forget who our God is and from where our God has brought us.

The three traditional pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We should be journeying through the three pillars of Lent to develop a closer relationship with God. If this was not our focus, it is not too late to begin. God always stands with arms opened, waiting patiently for us to come to Him.

Prayer

Father, guide each of us not to act or be like the Your people were back in the days of Moses. We thank You for guiding us to keep You first in our daily lives with prayer, fasting and almsgiving, as well as guiding us to wait patiently for You in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In Jesus' name. Amen

The Reverend Carrie Lovely Brown
Pensacola Panama City District

Embracing New Seasons in Christ

Joshua 5:9-12

"The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.' And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal, they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year." (Joshua 5:9-12, NRSVUE)

As we journey through Lent, we are invited to reflect on seasons of transition in our own lives—those moments where God calls us to step forward into the new while leaving behind the old. In Joshua 5:9-12, the Israelites are standing at the threshold of a new season in the Promised Land. The Lord tells Joshua that He has “rolled away the disgrace of Egypt.” The Israelites are no longer in the wilderness of their past, and their daily manna from heaven ceases. Instead, they feast on the produce of the land—a sign that God’s provision is moving from the miraculous to the tangible, from the unknown to the known.

Lent is an invitation to leave behind the old ways of sin and regret and embrace the new life Christ offers. Just as the Israelites transition from reliance on manna to living in the abundance of the land, we too can trust that God is guiding us into new seasons of growth and blessing. This Lenten season, let us reflect on what God is “rolling away” from our lives and prepare to live in the fullness of His promise.

Prayer

Lord, help us embrace the new seasons you are leading us into. Roll away the weight of the past and fill us with your grace and provision. May we step forward in faith, trusting in Your faithful guidance. Amen.

The Reverend Lynnette Daughtry
West Coast Conference Christian Education Director
Pastor-Payne Chapel Sarasota

The Foolishness of Rejecting God

Psalm 53:1-6

“The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'” These opening words of Psalm 53 invite us into a reflection on the foolishness of rejecting God. In this passage, the psalmist describes those who deny God's existence, turning to their own ways and ignoring His justice. Their actions lead to corruption, and they are separated from God's guidance and righteousness. This passage challenges us to examine our own hearts: Are we living as though God's presence and will are optional?

During Lent, we are invited to turn our hearts back to God and renew our commitment to seeking Him. In a world that often ignores or rejects the truth of God's sovereignty, it's easy to become distracted or even complacent in our faith. Psalm 53 reminds us that apart from God, we are lost in our own sin and rebellion. Yet, the psalm also holds a note of hope: God is not far from us. He sees our brokenness and longs to restore us.

In verse 6, the psalmist prays for the restoration of Israel, a cry for God's salvation and deliverance. In the same way, we are called to seek God's restoration in our own lives. This Lent, let us examine any areas where we have turned away from God, and pray for the grace to return to Him. Through repentance and faith, we can experience the restoration and salvation He offers to all who seek Him.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for the times I have lived as though I could manage without You. Open my heart to Your presence and restore my soul. Guide me back to You during this season of Lent and help me to walk in Your truth.

The Reverend Briana Robinson Franklin
Historic Bethel AME Church-St Petersburg

Day 27

Rest and Renewal

Leviticus 25:1-7

"The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying: Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath to the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the produce. But in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest, or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine; it shall be a year of complete rest for the land." (*Leviticus 25:1-5, NRSVUE*)

As we observe Lent, we are reminded of God's command for a sabbath rest in Leviticus 25. This command, given to the Israelites, was meant to allow the land to rest and renew every seven years. Just as the land needed a break from cultivation to restore its fertility, we too need periods of rest and renewal in our lives. The sabbath rest was a time for the people to trust God's provision and reflect on His faithfulness.

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to neglect rest, both physically and spiritually. But Lent calls us to pause, reflect, and renew our commitment to God. This season is a reminder that our work and striving are not what sustain us. It is God's grace, His provision, and His power that bring renewal.

Just as the land needed a sabbath, our souls need time to rest in the presence of God. Let this Lenten season be a time of spiritual renewal, where we allow God to refresh our hearts and minds, trusting that His rhythms of rest and work will lead us into a deeper relationship with Him.

Prayer:

Lord, teach us to rest in You. Help us to trust in Your provision, knowing that You will renew and sustain us in every season of life. Amen.

Sister Jocelyn Harrist
Pleasant Chapel AME Church-Tampa, FL

Day 28

Abundant Provision

Luke 9:10-17

"When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then He took them with Him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. When the crowds learned it, they followed Him; and He welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured. The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to Him and said, 'Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.' But He said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.' And they did so, and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces." (*Luke 9:10-17, NRSVUE*)

In this passage, Jesus provides abundantly for a crowd of thousands with just five loaves of bread and two fish. In the midst of scarcity, Jesus demonstrates the power of divine provision. The disciples, facing the reality of their limitations, wanted to send the people away. But Jesus saw the situation differently. He invited them to participate in the miracle by trusting that God would provide.

As we journey through Lent, we are reminded that Jesus often calls us to trust Him with what we have—no matter how small or insufficient it may seem. Just as He multiplied the loaves and fish to meet the needs of the crowd, He will provide for us in our moments of scarcity. In our own lives, when we feel like we don't have enough—whether it's time, energy, or resources—Jesus invites us to bring what we have to Him. He will use it for His purposes, multiplying it beyond what we can imagine.

Prayer

Lord, help us to trust in Your provision, especially in times of scarcity. Take what little we have, bless it, and multiply it for Your glory. Amen.

Brother Greg Bowers
West Coast Conference RAYAC President
New Bethel AME Church Lakeland

Day 29

The Heart of a Servant

Philippians 2:19-24

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me, and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon."
(Philippians 2:19-24, NRSVUE)

In this passage, Paul speaks highly of Timothy, a true servant of Christ who demonstrates genuine concern for others. Timothy's heart is not driven by selfish ambition, but by a deep desire to serve Christ and care for the well-being of others. His life mirrors the humility and selflessness that Paul encourages in the Philippians, and by extension, in us.

As we reflect on this passage during Lent, we are reminded of the importance of selfless service. The Lenten season calls us to lay aside our own desires, just as Christ laid down His life for us. Like Timothy, we are invited to serve others with sincerity, focusing not on our own interests, but on the needs of those around us.

Lent is a time to examine our hearts. Are we seeking our own comfort and gain, or are we willing to serve in the way that Christ served—humbly and sacrificially? May this season inspire us to cultivate hearts like Timothy's—serving God with a genuine concern for others, reflecting the love of Christ in all we do.

Prayer

Lord, give us hearts of service like Timothy's. Help us to prioritize the needs of others and follow Your example of selfless love. Amen.

The Reverend Byron B. Pressley, Sr.
Pastor-Turner Chapel AME Church Palmetto

Labor of Love
Philippians 2: 25 - 30

²⁵ Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus—my brother and coworker and fellow soldier, your messenger^[c] and minister to my need,²⁶ for he has been longing for^[d] all of you and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. ²⁷ He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. ²⁸ I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again and that I may be less anxious. ²⁹ Welcome him, then, in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people, ³⁰ because he came close to death for the work of Christ,^[e] risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

Being a caregiver is not easy. It is not for the faint of heart. As a matter of fact, physical, mental, emotional, and financial sacrifices, at times, make caregiving downright hard. To care for the ill, the dying, the imprisoned, and the various marginalized requires special traits and characteristics. One must be well-acquainted with selflessness, self-sacrifice, humility, kindness, graciousness, and above all love. Oftentimes, caregiving is referred to as a labor of love due to the fact that service is necessary and must be accompanied by love. In this text, Epaphroditus – “a brother and coworker and fellow soldier” was a messenger between Paul and the church in Philippi and a servant leader. After recovering from illness, near to death, Paul encourages the church to welcome him back with joy and honor. Though the text does not reveal the specific nature or source of Epaphroditus’ sickness, it was “for the work of Christ.” Wow! Herein lies the challenge: to work for Christ, even unto death. We, of faith, are called to be caregivers. We are to render aid to the broken and broken-hearted for the cause of Christ. This does not necessarily mean sacrificing life and limbs, but it does require we die. We must die to our will and declare as Christ, “Thy will be done.” As we journey through this Lenten season, let us remember those who have labored for the kingdom, particularly for us, sacrificing life and limb to bring us closer to Christ and the joy of redemption. Furthermore, let us strive to be the same for another who would benefit much from our kingdom service, our kingdom sacrifice. In so doing we glorify God, who is just to bestow God’s honor upon all God’s caregivers.

Prayer Father God, we thank you for the opportunity to serve. You call each of us to a particular work, especially tailored to our gifts and talents. Help us to serve with gladness. Remind us that presenting our bodies as living sacrifices is our reasonable service. We are grateful to be used in this kingdom purpose. Prick our hearts to hear and feel your gentle nudges and to respond quickly. Help us not to just “fast” from habits but to also be fast to do your will. We love you. We thank you. We praise you. Amen.

Reverend Shalonda Sokson
Victory AME Church

Protected By the Blood

Exodus 12:21-27

²³When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. ²⁴“Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. ²⁵When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. ²⁶And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ ²⁷then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshipped.

What do you do when the world around you is closing in? When oppression looms, justice seems delayed, and the weight of history presses against the present? The Israelites knew that feeling. Enslaved, unheard, and desperate for change, they cried out—and God answered. He gave them a sign of deliverance: the blood of the lamb. Mark your doors, stay inside, and trust that when destruction comes, it will pass over you.

This promise of protection is not just a story of the past. It is our story today. As members of the AME church, we understand what it means to live under the shadow of destruction—racism, systemic injustice, political hostility, and violence. Yet, just as God shielded His people then, He shields us now. The blood of Jesus—the Lamb of God—still covers, protects, and redeems. The destroyer may come, but when we remain under the covering of God's power, it will pass over us. But this is not just about our delivery, it is about the generations to come. The Israelites were commanded to teach their children about this night, to pass on the testimony of God's saving power. We must do the same. Our ancestors survived by faith, leaning on the God who delivered them through slavery, segregation, and struggle. Now, it is our turn to pass on the truth to our children: that God still saves, still delivers, still makes a way. We cannot let them forget.

This Lenten season let us not only reflect but also commit—to telling our story, to keeping the faith, and to ensuring that no matter how dark the night may seem, we remember that the blood still speaks. The blood still covers. The blood still delivers. The blood still works.

Prayer - O God of our weary years, O God of our silent tears, you who have brought us thus far on the way—hear our cry. Remind us that the blood of Jesus still covers us, that Your hand still delivers, and that You are a God of justice. May we hold fast to Your promise, teach the next generation of Your faithfulness, and trust that even in the face of oppression, your power is greater. May we trust in You, walk boldly in faith, and prepare our hearts for the victory of resurrection. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Reverend Michael Clark
South Annual Conference Christian Education Director
Pastor, Historic St. John AME-South Miami

Day 32

I Can See It

Isaiah 43:16-21

"See, I am doing something new! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:19

In this passage, the prophet Isaiah reminds the people of God's goodness throughout history. Reflecting on the past allows us to glimpse what God can do in our future struggles. From leading the children of Israel through a massive exodus to parting the Red Sea, God has always made a way when things seemed impossible. Here's an open secret: we serve the same God, just in a new season! If we dare to use our spiritual eyes, we can see the hand of God moving on our behalf. Close your eyes for a moment. Can you see it? Can you feel it?

We are meant to remember our history, as it provides factual evidence that God has fulfilled His promises. However, we must not become so attached to our struggles and past victories that we believe nothing new is happening. We are called to step into our future with hope and resilience. Our hope for the future is the source of optimism, reminding us that our Creator can create a highway in the middle of the desert to guide us where we need to go.

Prayer:

God, thank you for always being with us. Help us open our spiritual eyes to see the new things you are doing in our lives. Please give us the courage to step into the future with hope and resilience, knowing that you are always making ways for us.

The Reverend Suzetta L. Anderson
Executive Minister, St. Paul AME-Miami

Day 33

Just Do It!

Hebrews 10:19-25

Most everyone has heard this tagline of Nike. This slogan has become part of a worldwide cultural lexicon. This ad campaign focuses on pushing oneself to achieve no matter what obstacle may stand in the way.

I would like to use this slogan to be an inspiration during this day of the Lenten season. The writer states the fact that as High Priest, Jesus completely, perfectly, and permanently accomplished that which in the old covenant was incomplete, representative, and temporary.

Christ shedding his blood as the perfect sacrifice tore down the barrier between God and his people. We can now enter into the presence of God.

So, we have permission and access to commune with the Lord. We tend to let our fears and past sins prevent us from seeking an intimate relationship with Him. My advice: Just Do It! God's love and forgiveness are continually available.

There are three clear exhortations for us. Let's draw near. We should actively seek to get closer to God and be near Him.

Let us hold fast to our confession. We should strive to hold fast to our faith. Wherever you are in your spiritual walk, do not waver in the promises of God.

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds. We are blessed to bless others. Actively seek, find, support, and encourage another believer through love and good deeds. Just Do It!

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the honor and privilege to boldly approach your throne of grace with confidence through Jesus Christ. Please continue to cleanse our hearts, renew our spirits, and strengthen our faith. We commit ourselves to live today as your disciple. Help us to continually encourage one another in love and good deeds. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Reverend Alvin L. Jones

Minister-Mt. Hermon AME-Fort Lauderdale

Christian Education Director

Central District | South Conference

11th Episcopal District | AME Church

PRAY FOR OTHERS

Psalm 20:1-5

May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble; May the name of the God of Jacob [a]defend you; 2 May He send you help from the sanctuary And strengthen you out of Zion; 3 May He remember all your offerings, And accept your burnt sacrifice. Selah 4 May He grant you according to your heart's desire And fulfill all your [b]purpose. 5 We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

This prayer (Psalm 20:1-5) was offered for David as he prepared for battle. It reminds us of how important it is to pray for others, especially those we deeply care about. We must pray in times of joy, celebration, sadness, and confusion. It is a way of aligning ourselves with God's will that we pray for one another, that we pray without ceasing, that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

During this season of Lent, this prayer resonates with us as a beacon of hope for tomorrow and reassures us that we have a Savior who we can turn to when absolutely nothing else will do. At the same time, praying for the well-being, success, and happiness of others, reaffirms our faith in God the Father and in the power of His divine grace and mercy.

Praying for others allows us an opportunity to show gratitude for the empathy, love, and compassion which the Lord has granted each of us. We can each attest to the fact that prayer changes things. When we take the time to intercede in prayer for someone else, it helps strengthen our commitment to God and emboldens our faith.

We are truly blessed to also know that prayers for others not only bring blessings to the one being prayed for, but also to those offering prayers. May we continue to pray and seek God's blessings with faith, humility, and gratitude, with the assurance that the Lord loves us, hears us and is with us through it all.

Prayer

Merciful Father, we humbly come before you grateful for the opportunity to grow closer to you through our prayers and our acts of repentance. We thank you God for your grace and mercy, for your power and your strength, and above all for your divine love. In Jesus name we pray. Amen!

Dr. Sandra Thompson Smith
South Conference
Greater Mount Pleasant AME Church, Hollywood

GOD IS TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING

Luke 18:31-34

³¹ Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, “Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³² For he will be handed over to the gentiles, and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. ³³ After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.” ³⁴ But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. Luke 18:31-34 (NRSVUE)

While studying at Payne Theological Seminary, one of my professors, the late *Dr. William J. Augman*, who was very passionate in his teachings often reiterated a forever remembered declaration. The class would be intensely listening and engaging, then he would without notice proclaim, “Y’all don’t hear me!!” Though that was his signature proclamation, his intent was to ensure that we had gotten the thought process he was trying to communicate to us. If we weren’t listening, we certainly would be from that point forward.

The scriptures tell us in Luke 9 that Jesus foretells of his death and resurrection. Yet, this was the third time Jesus was trying to give the disciples a “heads up” as to the sacrifice for the sins of many, that was about to be made in the upcoming days. The details were specific as to what would happen. Even though they were listening to Jesus, they couldn’t hear what was being said to them. Their “mind’s eye” simply could not comprehend. The disciples just didn’t understand and were afraid to ask. Jesus was preparing his closest circle of people, the disciples, for the future and for their ongoing missions.

During this Lenten season, we have considered what sacrifices we should make in order to draw closer to God. While we are making this sacrifice, we should pay special attention to hear what the spirit of the Lord is communicating to us while on this journey. We must focus on the Word of God and ask for clarity for the lesson we must learn, so that we too, can share the Gospel. Speak Lord.

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, we ask you for your divine intervention to help us to hear and understand when the spirit of our Lord is speaking to us. Help us to see that the simple sacrifices that we make during this Lenten season will draw us nearer to thee, help us to become better people and to give you all the glory. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Denise M. Smith-Blue, Lead Pastor
Allen Chapel AME Church – Ft. Pierce, FL
Christian Education Director North District | South Conference

Healing Comes through the “ONE”

Isaiah 53:10-12

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul and be satisfied. By His knowledge, my righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:10-12 NKJV)

In the movie entitled, “Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, Dr. Spock sacrifices himself to save the Enterprise and her crew. His reasoning, “the needs of the many out way the needs of the few.” Captain James T. Kirk, painfully watching his best friend take his last breath he then adds, “Or the One.”

Making the decision to take on the punishment for someone else’s crime can be impossible for others to comprehend. However, love and compassion are never black and white. In these verses, the Prophet Isaiah is speaking of a person to come, whose love for others was unknown to the world. A person who would be innocent of any and all crime yet allows himself to be counted among the guilty transgressors and made intercession for them. What kind of love would sacrifice divine perfection for the justification of a sin sick world? Only divine love could seek to set us free. Only divine love could see victory and triumph in pain of an innocent sacrifice. This is God’s glory and victory, and we rejoice. *“But he was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53: 5)* For it was not the nails that held him on the cross. It was his everlasting love for you and me.

Prayer: Dear Lord, during this season of Lent we thank you for your sacrifice on the cross. Your love, grace, and mercy are truly beyond our earthly comprehension. Therefore, by faith we love you, trust in you and place our lives in your hands. In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Charmayne G. Davis
Pastor, Mount Zion AME- Vero Beach (Gifford), Florida
Women in Ministry Coordinator
Noble North District | South Annual Conference
11th Episcopal District | AME Church

God Cares for You

Isaiah 54:9-10 (NKJV)

9 “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, so have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.
10 For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.

It’s a New Season to embrace the plan of God. However, the enemy is busy trying to distract and defeat us. We must stay focused and keep the faith. We can and will overcome the forces of the enemy because God Cares. We are reminded through God’s Word that He is faithful.

1. God is a Covenant keeper. *“Like the days of Noah”*: This refers to the flood, signifying a promise as strong as God’s covenant with Noah that the waters would never again cover the earth.
2. God is compassionate. *“I will not be angry with you”*. God reassures His people that He will not be wrathful or rebuke them as He has in the past.
3. God’s love for us is consistent. *“Mountains may depart, hills be removed”*: Even if the natural world undergoes drastic change, God’s love and covenant will remain steadfast.
4. God is committed to us. *“My unfailing love for you will not be shaken”*: This emphasizes the permanence and unwavering nature of God’s love.

Prayer

God I am thankful for your Unconditional Love. Thank you, Lord, for love that will outlast any storms that we might face. Lord, I praise you for your covenant of peace that encourages us to stand firm. Lord, give us strength when we feel overwhelmed by life’s challenges. In times of doubt, Lord, strengthen our faith by reminding us of your unwavering commitment, and protection, in Jesus Name.

The Reverend Dr. Roy Jones, Jr.
Central Conference Christian Education Director
Pastor of Saint James AME, Titusville

Trust in God's Steadfast Love

Psalm 31:9-16

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief, yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. I am a reproach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and am repulsive to my acquaintances; those who see me outside flee from me. I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. For I hear the slander of many; fear is on every side; while they take counsel together against me, they scheme to take away my life. But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me. Make Your face shine upon Your servant; save me for Your mercies' sake."

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited to reflect on the challenges, struggles, and sins that weigh us down. In Psalm 31, David voices deep despair, feeling forgotten, rejected, and oppressed by his enemies. These are things that we all experience in life. Yet, even in the darkest moments, he does not lose his trust in God. David chose to trust God even when it didn't feel good. The psalm transitions from sorrow to faith, showing that despite external hardships and inner turmoil, God is still his refuge. Believers, this is how we must walk this Lenten season.

This passage reminds us that, just as David faced intense personal and spiritual battles, we too may experience seasons of grief, frustration, or loneliness. Yet, like David, we can choose to place our trust in the Lord, knowing that our times are in His hands. In Lent, we focus on surrendering our burdens, seeking His mercy, and allowing God's presence to shine on us, guiding us through the darkness. God is the only one capable of carrying us through our most difficult seasons in life. In this sacred time of prayer and fasting, let us turn our eyes toward God's steadfast love and faithfulness, relying on Him to deliver us from the trials we face.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts burdened by the trials and struggles of life. We trust that, as David did, you are our refuge and strength. Help us to surrender our worries, sins, and fears into Your loving hands. Shine Your face upon us, O Lord, and deliver us according to Your mercy. May this season of Lent draw us closer to You and remind us of Your unending love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

The Reverend Dr. Marcus Green
Pastor, Mount Olive AME, Orlando

The Stones the Builders Rejected

Psalm 118:19-23

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD.

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD, Through which the righteous shall enter.

²¹ I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.

²² The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ This was the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. (NKJ)

With much praise, the psalter leads us to the place where righteousness resides, which is in our Lord and Saviour Jesus, the Anointed One, the Chief Cornerstone. Even in this present era of injustices and callousness, the message still resonates in the true believers' spirit that the Lord DOES answer the genuine, fervent prayer of the righteous. To these praying, praising, and serving believers, the gates of righteousness will fling open because of Jesus' life, works, victory on the cross, resurrection, and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon his people. With all the strategies and weapons, we are using to fight injustices today, we must not overlook our Chief Cornerstone but keep him first in all of our undertakings toward righteousness.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for helping us realize that you are our Rock of Ages. No matter how turbulent and volatile the field of injustices may seem, you are our strong towering refuge and sanctuary where the righteous are saved. You are the source of our strength, and our trust is in you for deliverance. Open your gates to us and give us your righteous knowledge, direction, mercies, restorative hope, and protect us from visible, cloaked, and concealed dangers. Many are trusting in people, government, employment, and their own might while still rejecting you even to this day. But thank you, Lord, for we understand that you are still Chief Cornerstone, the first stone, the foundation, and the stability of the building. Because you suffered on that old, rugged cross in our stead and arose from death, we already have the victory through you. Help us to bring others to the understanding that we, your children, will survive because you will align and position us within your gates of righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!

The Reverend Dr. Caroline Shine

Pastor, Greater Faith AME Church, Deltona

1st Vice President, 11th Episcopal District Women in Ministry

THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD

Psalm 36:5-11

⁵Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. ⁶Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O LORD. ⁷How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. ⁸They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. ⁹For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. ¹⁰O continue your steadfast love to those who know you and your salvation to the upright of heart! ¹¹Do not let the foot of the arrogant tread on me or the hand of the wicked drive me away.

Lord, we thank you for the steadiness of your love. We thank you, Lord, even when it seems the wicked have prevailed. Your steadfast love lifts us and places us under the shadow of your wings into the safety of your protection.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for being our light shining in dark places. Thank you, Lord, that the feet and the hands of the wicked cannot overcome your steadfast love for us. Thank you for being our refuge and our strength. We put our trust in you!

The Reverend Phyllis Rose Brown, M.Div.
Pastor, Grant Chapel A.M.E. Church, Oviedo, FL

Day 41

Glorified Seed!

John 12:20 – 25

'Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.'

'Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.'

In the fullness of time, The Lord of the Harvest planted His Holy Seed into the earth. First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. Just as grain grew, the Holy Seed grew in wisdom and in stature, reached maturity and began to produce seeds; seeds of teaching, of miracles, of healing and of the twelve. Like the Greeks, we, with contrite hearts, want to see Jesus. However, Jesus desires more for us than just to be seen by him. Jesus has come to do the will of his Father, which is to add to the Harvest, to the Kingdom of God. The Holy Seed must die, be buried and rise again. Salvation is His 'yes' – to all who desire to see Him and to become his seeds.

Prayer

Master and Reaper of our souls, it is by faith that we sow in the sunshine and in the shadows, fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze. We, His seeds, are harvest, and when the labor ends, we shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Amen

The Reverend Patrea Wilson

Central Conference Women in Ministry Assistant Coordinator

Second Wind: I Have a Race to Run

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart”

Accepting Christ into our hearts and lives marked the beginning of our race as Christians. Oh, what a joyous moment and occasion it was! One can truly say that our eyes were fixed on Jesus, and our minds were made up. Yet, like a natural race, this Christian journey can become long and seemly unbearable due to life challenges, circumstances, and/or disappointments. However, the Apostle Paul encourages and reminds us that we have a race to run and have been graced with a second wind. He summons us to remember the One who called us and can keep us (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24) and is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

We must keep our eyes on Jesus and embrace our helper and comforter, Holy Spirit, which renews our faith. Yes, there is a Joy set before us and a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 11).

Prayer

Thank you, Father, for sending Your Son, giving me victory. Your thoughts toward me are good, not evil, giving me hope and a future. Nothing shall hurt or harm me, and in every temptation, you have given me a way out. In Jesus Name, Amen!

**The Reverend Linda F. Parker
Greater Mount Olive AME Church, Coleman
Interim Pastor**

Day 43

Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet

John 13:1-17

After He had washed their feet, had put on His robe, and had reclined again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So, if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

In this portion of scripture, we see Jesus, the Master leading by example, He is not just saying what to do but is showing His disciples exactly what and how to do it. As leaders in every area, we are called to serve and not to be waited on hand and foot.

Jesus is showing us, that even in the midst of all the chaos that is going on around us, we must still show love and reach out to help lift up our brothers and sisters who are unable to get up on their own. This Scripture shows us that the devil will use anyone who makes themselves available to be used by him. In "James 4:7 submit yourselves therefore unto God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." For Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, and that Peter would deny Him.

We don't have to fall into the traps that the devil has set out there for us, if we treat each other the way that we want to be treated. Jesus shows us in this scripture how to show humility, how to serve others. Let us all take on the attitude of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, and no matter what the enemy tries to throw at us, no matter what our status in life is, what we have or do not have, or what position we hold, if we trust Jesus Christ, and follow His teachings and leadings, we will overcome all that the enemy has thrown at us. Let us be our brothers and sisters' keepers, trust and obey the word of God, and watch Him bring us out. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." The words of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

Prayer - Most gracious and everlasting Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus the Christ, to be an example and a role model for us to follow. Help us to be doers of Your word and not hearers only, help us to show love despite, most of all to trust you in everything and live our lives pleasing unto You, in the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

The Reverend Winifred Gibson Williams
Bahamas Conference Christian Education Director.

Day 44

The Unwavering Love of God

John 19:16-27

We encounter the profound scene of Jesus' crucifixion, where His unwavering love for humanity is on full display. Despite the immense suffering—being mocked, whipped, and crowned with thorns—Jesus' focus was not on Himself but on others. In His final moments, He ensured the care of His mother, showing His deep concern for those He loved, even while enduring the weight of the cross.

This selfless love is a defining characteristic of God. Unlike human love, which can be conditional and fleeting, God's love is steadfast, patient, and enduring. We see this in verses like 2 Timothy 2:13, where God's faithfulness is emphasized, and in Jeremiah 31:3, which highlights His everlasting love. The ultimate expression of God's love is found in John 3:16, where we are reminded that God gave His only Son for our salvation. As we reflect on the depth of God's unwavering love, we are called to emulate it in our relationships with others. We are invited to love without expecting anything in return, to show compassion and care, just as Jesus did. Whether through small acts of kindness or larger sacrifices, we are called to spread God's love to those around us, offering hope and comfort in a world that often feels broken.

Reflection

Take a moment to consider how God's unwavering love has impacted your life. How can you demonstrate this same love to others, providing support, comfort, and care to those in need?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your unwavering love that knows no end. Help me to reflect Your love in my life, spreading kindness and compassion wherever I go. Amen.

Brother Bernard Evans

Bahamas Conference

11th Episcopal District

Day 45

The Burial of Jesus

John 19:38-42

“Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.”

This is one of the saddest scriptural text in the Bible as Jesus is flogged, a crown of thorns placed on his head, repeatedly wiped by soldiers, lied on, spat upon, and brought before Pilate who had the authority to either punish or free him. The Jewish authorities were adamant on having Jesus crucified, though He was killed by the Romans, betrayed by His own people, and denied by His own disciples. Interestingly, those closest to us inflict bodily suffering, emotional distresses, and mental strain on us, not our adversaries.

After the death of Christ, most of his disciples were nowhere to be found. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea his secret followers, because of their fear of the Jews, and their prominent positions in the Sanhedrin Council came forth boldly to care for the body of Christ and prepare him for burial.

The death of Jesus significantly impacted the lives of these two men, confirming His identity as the Son of God. Their actions exemplify boldness, belief, and resilience. Despite, hiding their faith, God’s death, burial, and resurrection offer a second chance, urging us to risk our reputation, popularity and position. What will you do with your second chance?

Charles Wesley wrote these lyrics “No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine; alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine, bold I approach the’ eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.”

Prayer

Thank you Gracious God for your Son who is clothed in righteousness and is seated on the throne. He is our Savior. Amen.

The Reverend Robyn Young
Associate Minister
Robinson Morris AME Church, Nassau, Bahamas

Day 46

Empty Tomb

John 20:1-9

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus’s head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” – John 20:1-9 NRSVUE

John 20:1-9 captures the moment when Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John discover the empty tomb. While it was yet dark Mary arrived at the tomb, she was sorrowful and uncertain. However, in the midst of her grief, she kept seeking Jesus. Often, we experience moments of darkness and hopelessness in our lives of confusion, loss, or fear. But just as the empty tomb signified victory, God is working even when there is no clarity, and our visions are blurred by life’s challenges.

The news of the empty tomb got a different response from Peter and John. Peter eager to see for himself ran straight. John hesitated but, upon seeing the grave clothes, believed immediately. This reminds us that faith grows each of us in different ways. Some of us need more time to process, while others believe immediately. Jesus meets us where we are, guiding us toward deeper faith.

The empty tomb is proof that God conquered and have power over sin and death. It reassures us that no circumstance is beyond His redemption. When we face uncertainties, we can hold on to the truth that Christ has already won the victory. Here are some of the questions we can ask ourselves today; Are you in a season of indecision? Well, be encouraged and trust that God is at work. Mary is a good example, so like she did keep Jesus in view even when times seem dark. Like John, choose to believe, even without all the answers.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the victory I possess because of the resurrection. Help me to trust You, in dark seasons of uncertainty. Strengthen my faith and open my heart to Your presence. Amen.

Sister Chinyere Culmer
Local WMS President
Bethel AME Church
Savannah Sound, Eleuthera, Bahamas

The Eleventh Episcopal District

African Methodist Episcopal Church



**101 E. Union Blvd | Suite 301
Jacksonville, FL 32202
904.355.8262**