

"Getting Mixed up in the Passion"

2003 Lenten Series

Our theme for Lent this year is: "Getting Mixed up in the Passion." It is based on five dramas by Tim Strommen. These five dramas will draw us to a deeper connection with the Passion Story of Christ. Within the Passion Story there were many characters who had to make choices, who had their values and beliefs challenged and threatened. These Biblical characters were not so different from us. Lent is a fine opportunity for each of us to make the Passion Story our story and to think about the characters who found themselves involved in those moving events.

This devotional guide is intended to help you stay connected during this season of Lent. It is always a joy to read how others have let the story wind through their lives and transform them for eternity. Let the season live in you.

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES

Wednesday night services will center on "Getting Mixed up in the Passion."
All Wednesday Evening services begin at 5:30 p.m. and are followed by soup and sandwich suppers. (Free will offering)

March 5	Ash Wednesday Service Imposition of Ashes, Holy Communion
March 12	Last Supper
March 19	Gethsemane
March 26	Sanhedrin
April 2	Barabbas
April 9	Crucifixion

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY

April 13 9:00 a.m.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 17 7:00 p.m.
First Communion for Fifth Graders

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP

April 18 7:00 p.m.

EASTER

April 20

6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service
Holy Communion
7:30 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 am. Festival Service
Holy Communion

March 5

Ash Wednesday

Psalm 42:11

Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God.

Just about the time I think I have gained some control over some black mood, some writer's block, some unworthy goal, the whole thing comes crashing down around me, and I am back to square one. In this rut of defeat, my prayers sound very much like this psalmist: "Why are you in despair, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God."

David has a right to his depression. Ungodly people have accused him unjustly, and he prays to the Lord for vindication - for a declaration of his innocence. But dark moods can give way to positive praying. Like the psalmist, I can't allow my mind to camp on negative ideas and feelings, but I can pray for God's light and truth to guide me. On this Ash Wednesday, I'm reminded of how fleeting this life truly is. Dust and ashes, but hope comes in the way of the cross and life forever. "For I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God."

PRAYER: Lord God, on this day we are reminded of the darkness of our sin. The cross of ashes on our forehead has been replaced with a water cross in baptism. We live in newness of life, and we praise you for it. Amen.

Pastor Sue

March 6

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

This is telling us that we should treat everyone as if he is our friend. We should not hold grudges and be more understanding. It will help in everyday life because you will have more friends, make you stronger, less stressful, less to worry about with being 'mad' at this person. Be kind to one another and treat others as you want to be treated. Open up your heart to people.

Dear God, please help me to be a more understanding person toward other people. To let my family and friends know that I am a forgiving person. Amen.

Confirmation Class

March 7

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

We are all together as the one true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This should make our lives easier to handle all the difficulties which encounter each and every one of us. Be thankful to the Lord, as His peace rules in all our hearts and souls. "Thanks Be to God" for each and all in this one body.

Eileen H.

March 8

Psalm 141:3-4

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice deeds of wickedness with men who do iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.

As children we were taught "sticks and stones will break my bones, but names can never hurt me." We have even taught our children this. We use this as a way to say to "roll off our backs." Recently our family has been learning that respecting each other must include what comes out of our mouths, and be portrayed by our actions. God has been telling us that our voices are to be used to uplift those he puts in our lives, whether we 'want to' or not. Being a part of a family, community, or group is not always easy. If we pray the prayer of Psalm 141:3-4, and ask that God help us to uplift each other by our words and deeds, the limits of our potential is only bound by God's mercy.

Marty, Jen & Ashley F.

March 9

1 Corinthians 13:4-6

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.

What a beautiful definition of love. The verses which follow these go on to say that love always protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres, and never fails. And when everything else fails or disappears, faith, hope and love will remain, but the greatest of these is love. Therefore, without love, nothing else matters.

Where does this kind of unselfish love come from? I think we need to remember that God is the source of all our love. There is no greater love than what God gave all of us freely - his Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross so that our sins would be forgiven. The closer we get to God, the easier it will be for us to love others. Our actions will reflect his unselfish love for us. Hopefully, as we go about our busy lives, we will be motivated to share love freely with our families, friends, and all people that we encounter. Even a small act of love could change someone's life forever.

Marge R.

March 10

Thessalonians 5:16-19

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.

Be glad for what the Lord has given you. In return you should rejoice and pray always. Always be thankful. If the Spirit is moving you to be a better Christian, don't stop it.

PRAYER: Thank you for everything you have given us and move us to be better Christians.

Confirmation Class

March 11

Isaiah 12:2

"Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the Lord God is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation."

Last fall a good friend of mine lost her 23-year old son in a freak accident. He was running a marathon when his heart suddenly stopped and he could not be revived. He had no prior medical problems and his family is still trying to cope with their loss. They are a good Christian family. Not only do they talk the Word, but also walk the Word. So much so, that they have spent a lot of time comforting others instead of feeling pity for themselves. They do not want their son's life or death to be in vain.

All of us have times when we struggle and have difficulties in our lives. It is how we deal with them and approach our faith that makes a difference in the outcome.

I have come to believe that God is a caring, compassionate God. When we lose a loved one or have deep sorrow, He is right there beside us sharing our pain and loss. I don't believe He causes bad things to happen in order to punish us. We are all sinners and come equally to the table to be forgiven. He does not pick and choose who should have the bad things and who have the good things...it just happens and He wants us to love, learn and live a better life because of it. He has given us all the knowledge to make positive changes in our lives. It is what we do with it that will make the difference. Do you look at the glass as half empty or half full?

Some days are like diamonds and some are like stones...and they are ALL a gift from God. We must trust in Him and draw strength from Him. He is a source of steadfast comfort.

Peg O.

March 12

I Timothy 4:4-5

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

Everything has some good - one way or another. It's easy to question God's motives about everything being good in some ways, like evil people, natural disasters like tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and droughts and thinking about our country being on the verge of war.

But don't take God's creations of any kind for granted. It's important as Christians to pray to God, to put our faith in His hands and trust in Him.

Gary and Jay W.

March 13

Deuteronomy 4:31

"For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them."

We often fail to remember God's watchful care. Caught up in tensions, we forget to reach out to Him for His unfailing help. We should trust in Him for peace and strength. There is no other God. We should not be overwhelmed by worldly possessions. We should obey His rules and commands. Just as Christ had

compassion for us, so must we have compassion for our fellow man. Not only in times of sadness and sorrow, but in the daily routine of everyday life. This is just one of the many ways to continue our spiritual growth.

Terry & Charlotte S.

March 14

Psalm 40:3-4

*And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;
How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust...*

How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust. Since September 11 people have returned or renewed their trust to God and worship. It is too bad that it took such a grave event to bring us back.

Think for a moment every day in our lives things happen, some good and some bad. So why is it that the bad always brings us back to God? If you look closely at each day, I think you will find, that most days there is more that is good than bad. So which is an easier reason for you to renew your trust in God and praise in his name?

Why wait for the next disaster in our world to put your trust in God? Look at all the good in each day, no matter how small and sing a song of praise to our God...

Dale F.

March 15

Psalm 27:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

This is a song of praise by David. Because he knows God is his light and salvation, he is certain he has no need to fear. As ruler of Judah and Israel he had fought many battles. His enemies were many and he could easily have been fearful of them. The following two verses list some things he could be fearful of, but David has faith in the Lord who lights his path and in whom he has salvation. When life looked fearful he found his refuge in his Lord.

The Lord is also our light and our salvation. Jesus died for us on the cross and rose again on Easter. When we become fearful of what can happen to us in our lives (we can all think of something fearful) we need to trust in the Lord and ask for His help and guidance. He will either keep our fears from becoming reality or lead us through safely. God cares for each one of us.

Lois Z.

March 16

Psalm 90:14

O satisfy us in the morning with Thy lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

When selecting a verse for my Lenten devotion, this one caught my attention because I consider myself to be a "morning person." My Study Bible tells me that the 90th Psalm was written by Moses, making it the oldest of the Psalms. So I did some quick research and calculating, and was surprised to see that Moses wrote a Psalm - so significant to today's society - nearly 3,500 years ago! The entire Psalm is a reminder

that God is eternal. He is not restricted by time. The span of a human life is but a blink to God. I find it very interesting that Moses struggled with learning to number his days, and to live each day wisely (verse 12). Isn't that a struggle for all of us?

Begin each day with God; just a little bit of each morning. Thankful for another day, another opportunity to serve Him, and ask for continued guidance throughout the day. He will supply joy and gladness for all our days!

June H.

March 17	Psalm 18:2
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The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalm 18 is David's song of deliverance from Saul. David never considered Saul as an enemy even though Saul was always after David to destroy him. In the book of Luke, verses 27-29 Jesus says to love your enemies, do good to them, which hate you, bless them and pray for them. Why? So they can see Jesus in you. Our human nature wants to take revenge, but we have to ask ourselves, what would Jesus do?

In Psalm 18:2 there are 8 titles of God:

My Rock: Unchanging, dependability

My Fortress: Home, Heaven

My Deliverer: He set us free, died in our place

My Refuge: Hiding place, shelter, comfort in times of trouble

My Shield: Protection, armor

My Salvation: Eternal life

My Stronghold: Strength

My Lord: Jesus Christ

We always seem to find time for ourselves and others, but what about Jesus? I challenge everyone and myself to rid ourselves of life's addictions and be addicted to Jesus. Jesus is our best friend, our deliverer.

Mary S.

March 18	Psalm 139:14
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*I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.*

Any expectant mother will tell you the wonders of the new life growing inside of her. With today's technology the gender and health of a new child is not as much of a mystery as it once was. By the time a child is born we can already know if it has any health concerns and whether or not to bring a pink or blue blanket to the hospital. Although the mystery may appear to be solved the magical mystery of God's hand crafted beauty still remains.

When I first held our new baby boy in my arms, I was amazed at how tiny and perfect he was. One of God's marvelous works. I am awed at how God can create being after marvelous being. The psalm verse begins with, "I will praise you." Isn't that how we feel when looking at one of God's little gifts. I will praise you!

Melanie N.

March 19

Psalm 143:8b, 10

Teach me the way in which I should walk; For to Thee I lift up my soul...Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; Let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Earlier in this psalm, the writer speaks of all God's works and considers what his hands have done. When I think of all God has done for me, all He does for me everyday, and the ultimate gift of eternal life by giving His only Son, I want to do His will.

If we lift our soul to Him, open our ears and our hearts to listen, God will lead us on level ground. Read God's word, pray, listen, God is guiding us.

Mark & Sandy A. & Family

March 20

Isaiah 42:6

"I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness. I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you.

This verse brought to mind a song my husband sings which goes, "We are broken, you are healer, Jesus Redeemer, mighty to save. You are the love song, we'll sing forever, bowing before you, blessing your name."

Worry and fear can go deep in our minds before we can blink an eye, but today I will take charge of my fears and accept God's help.

During this time of possible war and terrorism, we need to know that God is watching over us and He is there for us at all times and that He will take us by the hand and guide us if we will just let Him.

Wendy D.

March 21

Psalm 31:3

For Thou art my rock and my fortress; For Thy name's sake Thou wilt lead me and guide me.

Psalm 31 is described in the Old Testament as "Prayer and Praise for Deliverance from Enemies."

The third verse states, "For thou are indeed my Rock and my Fortress; for your Name's sake, lead me and guide me."

David is stating what everyone in this world should believe. God is not only our foundation but, our roof and walls also. He is our protection from all that is wrong. If we believe in Him and follow his guidance, we shall be free from harm. God will not lead us astray, even though at times we may falter. He is always there for us.

Choir (Men)

March 22

Isaiah 41:10

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

In Isaiah 41, God is talking to Israel and assuring them of His help. Verse 10 is directed to the people of Israel and still reads true to us today.

"Do not be afraid, for I am with you." This is what Jesus says at the beginning of this verse. He is stating that no matter where we are in our lives, He is at our side, and He is our protector. *"Do not look anxiously about you."* If we come to a crossroads, all we have to do is turn to Him for guidance, and He will be there for us. Do not be afraid to turn to the Lord. He keeps us strong and leads us down the right path.

The key to this passage, however, is going to Him and following the signs, which he has given us. As is written in the last section of the verse, *"I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."* The Lord is making a promise to us that He will always be there, and never leave us. He will keep us safe.

Pete & Shelly Winistorfer & Family

March 23

Psalm 28:7

*The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him and I am helped;
Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him.*

When times are tough, or when I am troubled with today's problems, this passage lets me know that God is always with me, even though I may not always see Him. So I put my trust in the Lord to help see me through, and remember how great life is.

Jim J.

March 24

I Corinthians 12:4-6

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

What gifts have you been given? Do you use these gifts? Sometimes we take the wonderful gifts and put them on the back burner. That isn't what God wants us to do. He gives us those gifts to be used. Each person was given specific gifts. As we go through this Lenten season let us stop and look at all of the wonderful gifts that we have been given and share these gifts with others.

Michelle T.

March 25

Proverbs 28:25-26

An arrogant man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely, will be delivered.

I was once asked, "But, why are you here?" I once read somewhere, "The foundation of greatness is service to others." Can an individual - each of us - change the world? I believe so, yes, if invited to do so by another. We should, therefore, grant respect for the other even in cases where the merits for our respect may not be initially in evidence, to our way of thinking, to our 'churched' value system. Maybe we might best stop trying to fix everything. Maybe it is not broken. Shall we best 'let go' now and then?

Bernie H.

March 26

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

As we go through life, our problems are much easier to handle if we truly believe in the Lord.

In addition, if we should be buried in problems, simply turn to the Lord and he will put your mind at ease. This is a better tranquilizer than medicines will ever be.

John & Kathy Z.

March 27

Matthew 10:42

"And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward."

A reward. How many of us as children haven't been offered a reward for good behavior or good grades? Even as adults we are told that if we do a good job we will be rewarded. Being rewarded is something that motivates us to do our best. We then are willing to work hard so that we may receive a reward. This verse tells us something different though. Here we are asked only to do a small kindness. Welcome God's own, no matter who they are, by offering them a cool drink and you will reap big rewards.

Ellen L.

March 28

Psalms 95:3-5

For the Lord is a great God, And a great King above all gods, In whose hand are the depths of the earth; The peaks of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for it was He who made it; And His hands formed the dry land.

This passage says so many things about how God has taken a big part in our lives. It also points out how sometimes we don't let God in as much as we should. If you were to read the Psalm it goes on to talk about how God was angered by His people because they just didn't listen. They were the ungrateful children that wouldn't listen to the parent who knew what was really the best thing for them. The point of this particular Psalm is to give God the praise and gratification He deserves for just being in our lives. He not only made himself a part of our lives, He is also our creator and gave us our salvation.

This Psalm, like many of the others, is there in Bible for readers to stop and think about how much we really owe to God, our Great Father. Psalm 95 also reminds us that we can anger God, but He always forgives us and loves us unconditionally no matter how we upset Him. He is the Father that we should listen to. If you've ever watched Bill Cosby, you might have heard him mention the line, "I brought you into this world, and I can take you right back out of it." The same goes with God. He created us

and He knows when our souls return to Him. So my point is to let God into your life and give Him the thanks and praise He deserves.

Gwen L.

March 29

Psalm 51:1-, 7

Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me. For my Soul takes refuge in Thee; And in the shadow of thy wings I will take refuge...My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!

I love the way these verses make me feel. Although they are only two verses, they take me through three very distinct phases. First I am afraid or ashamed and am asking God to be gracious to me, then, I take refuge in Him and soon after I am singing praises!

But, there is much more than that! As I read the second half of the first verse, an incredible warm feeling surrounds me as my Soul takes refuge in the shadow of God's wings. That feeling comforts me so much that I tend to forget my frustrations and worries, realizing that God is so much bigger than any frustration or worry I have and soon I am singing praises to God.

It is very comforting for me to know that God loves me so very much and is always there for me, just as he was when David wrote these verses.

Brian & Darla L.

March 30

1 John 1:5

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Oftentimes in the Bible the word Light refers to God in that He is free of sin. Darkness at times reminds us of evil, or sin. I believe that this verse encourages us to live our lives free of sin, or in the Light, rather than in darkness.

Heather B.

March 31

Psalm 9:7-9

But the Lord abides forever; He has established his throne for judgment, And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble.

The Lord is on His throne to rule the world, but is also there to be a comfort to those in need and in times of trouble.

Jon & Lois C. & Family

April 1

Deuteronomy 4:30

"When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice."

The Lord my God is a merciful God - what a comforting thought - When we have times of tribulation in our lives He is there for us, even though we at times reject Him - thinking that we can live our lives without Him. The Lord is always there waiting for us to return to Him. He is there for us.

Marilyn S.

April 2

Psalm 68:19

Blessed by the Lord, who daily bears our burdens, The God who is our salvation.

We know that God is with us everyday even when we feel that we have offended someone, or failed to see the needs of others before ourselves and look on ourselves as a failure, He is there to carry us through these times. The way we best relate to this verse is like it says in the 'Footprints.' The Lord replies, "My precious child when you saw only 1 set of footprints, it is then that I carried you."

Harold & Barb W. Family

April 3

Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

For me, this is a very powerful verse. A solemn commitment, dedicated, loyal - these are words that come to my mind when I see the word "devote." Devoting myself to prayer is devoting myself to God. Prayer is my connection to God. Without prayer there is no communication. Without communication there is no relationship. Prayer is not a one-way communication. Prayer is not only talking to God, but listening to Him. Don't just tell God what's on your mind, but be alert as to what God is saying to you. Recalling all the blessings God has given me is part of my prayers. Being thankful to God for what He has given me, helps me to pray that others may know of God's love and compassion. Prayer is a powerful weapon against the evils of the world.

Lord, we know that you are a God of love and compassion. We pray that this love and compassion reaches out to those places that know no peace. We pray that all government leaders ask you for your guidance. Let your voice be heard. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Janice L.

April 4

Psalm 95:7

For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice.

What a powerful passage. The first sentence lets me know just how special I am. God has chosen me to be one of His. He will always look out for me, care for me, be there for me. How blessed can I get? In this fast-moving world, God is my port of

comfort in any storm. What a great feeling to have such support. It brings peace to my life.

The second sentence reminds me that I need to listen to God and what He is saying to me. A shepherd has a hard time caring for sheep that run away from him and don't listen to his call. The same is true for me. I need to listen to what God is telling me but sometimes it is so hard to do. I am working on it, with God's help!

Pat J.

April 5

Mark 10:27

Looking upon them, Jesus said, "with me it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Daily we are met with trials and tribulations: illnesses, family squabbles, or the death of a loved one. When we try to deal with these problems on our own, try to make them turn out the way we want them to, we often fail.

When we do things God's way, with Him in our hearts and at our side, we will never fail, though the outcome may not be what we expected.

Choir (Sopranos)

April 6

Psalms 95:7

For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice.

He tells us to listen and to follow his lead. We are surprised that God would want to take care of us. We are God's people and we are to follow his commands as it makes us feel confident and important. He will always be by our side.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for always being there even when we don't always respect you.

Confirmation Class

April 7

2 Samuel 22:2-3

And he said, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation..."

No matter where life takes us in times of happiness - our wedding day, the birth of our children and grandchildren; in times of sorrow - the death of our parents, children, or friends; in times of uncertainty - the threat of war, the fear of terrorism, the unpredictable economy; but no matter where we are in our life journey, we know that God is with us and He will never forsake us. He is our rock - our safe place.

Jim C.

April 8

John 5:24

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

Jesus is saying that to accept Him is life and to reject Him is death. We believe that Jesus and God are one. To know Jesus is to know God and God is love. When we

follow Jesus, we enter into a new relationship with Him in which God is our Father instead of our judge. We are given new life and are able to relate to our brothers and sisters in a new way, replacing hatred and bitterness with love. We depend upon the Holy Spirit to guide us and strengthen us on our pilgrimage in this life and rely on God's promise of eternal life in the world to come.

Judy P.

April 9

Psalm 118:24

This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

When we read this Psalm it reminds us to enjoy each day the Lord has given us to its fullest. We should not dwell on the past as we cannot change what happened. We should cherish the memories and learn from our mistakes. We should not consume our day worrying about the future, but trust that God will watch over us and guide us. Everyone is so busy going about their daily routines it's easy to take each new day for granted. During this Lenten season, let us slow down and live each new day to its fullest.

Dan & Deb, Ryan & Alison W.

April 10

John 10:7, 10

Jesus therefore said to them again... "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."

The verses before John 7 and 10 speak of Jesus being the gate to God and as 'sheep' we choose to know Jesus and to follow Him to God. We know Jesus and God by being good people, reading the Bible, going to worship and volunteering in our church and community. Because of this we are not strangers to Jesus, we follow the voice of our shepherd. Jesus said we are to have a good life because He came to lead us in our faith - in our love and belief in God.

Jesus lived and died for us all. He was nailed on the cross and died for us. On Easter day He rose from the dead so our sins would be forgiven. Through this He saves us. We live because Jesus lived and died for us. It is important we don't take His sacrifice for granted.

Meg, Kacie & Mary W.

April 11

Matthew 7:7-8

"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks it shall be opened."

These are some of the more common verses, and that is a good thing! These verses help us to know that if we haven't found our gift yet, it is waiting for us! These verses use language we are familiar with. In no uncertain terms, all we need to do is ask and God will give it to us; or look for it and God will allow us to find it; or knock and God will open the door for us. He is always there, ready, and waiting for us. So if you haven't claimed your gift yet, now is your chance!

Choir

April 12

Isaiah 60:1, 5

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you...then you will see and be radiant; Your heart will thrill and rejoice."

When you accept the Lord into your heart, the Lord will bless you continuously. Your heart will swell because you believe and you'll be filled with happiness. When you believe, I think life holds so much more meaning and makes you really realize that Jesus died for our sins. We'll gain much more "wealth" than we'd ever have with money and more possessions that money couldn't compare to.

Jill B.

April 13

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

I have been blest with an understanding of God's love for me. God created me in His image and wants me to strive to be as perfect as is humanly possible. The problems and hardships that befall me from day to day are God's way to bring out the true nature of God instilled in every living person's soul. We are from time to time immersed in the melting pot to burn off some of the dross.

Jim G.

April 14

1 John 3:18

"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

Does this mean we shouldn't tell people we love them? No, what it does mean is that those words mean nothing if they aren't from the heart. How can we show love:

- ❖ Giving hugs and kisses
- ❖ Giving handmade gifts
- ❖ Helping others in need
- ❖ Support those less fortunate
- ❖ Helping around the house
- ❖ Following the Ten Commandments
- ❖ Forgiving others
- ❖ Saying prayers for others
- ❖ Being honest with others

God gives a little insight on how to love by what He does for us:

- ❖ Our health
- ❖ Eternal life through his Son, Jesus
- ❖ Our family and friends
- ❖ Our home
- ❖ Our free will to choose
- ❖ Forgiveness of our sins

❖ Answering our prayers

Dan, Rhonda, Miranda, Kali, Clare & Isaac T.

April 15

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all our ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

These words were put to memory early in my life as a song we sang in Sunday School. Reflecting on them now, I wonder if it wasn't much easier to believe them as a child. God seemed much bigger back then. I thought of God as an extension of my parents. When they were absent, God was present. I was secure in that sense of something taking care of me.

As a teenager, however, I was sure I had more understanding than my parents, and sometimes, even more than God. If I were God things would be different; no wars, no hatred, no homework, no chores. I would certainly make things straight.

Now I can see that was a very selfish understanding. Now I realize that leaning on my own understanding doesn't make it. Now I feel I want to go back to my childhood understanding. I'm in need of a God who has the power to make my path straight. I am in need of a God who sends his very Spirit to keep me on the path of following Jesus. The more I acknowledge the Spirit's leading the easier the walk. My heart yearns to trust God more.

Prayer: Gracious Father, help me to trust in your powerful grace to make my path straight to you.

Pastor Sue

April 16

Psalms 139:14

I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.

Our God is an Awesome God! How exciting and yet ironic it is that Psalm 139:14 is one of my favorite Bible verses and the one I received for the Lenten Devotional.

We are all God's children, fearfully and wonderfully made each with a specially designed plan for our lives. It is that plan that drives our inner soul to seek Him. Daily we need to thank God for what He has provided for us. It is through His teachings, the works of His followers, and the trials we face that draw us nearer to Him. He is our refuge and strength. Without Him we are lost. With Him we are found. As Easter draws near, we again can thank God for the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His only Son. It is through that sacrifice that we can spend eternity with God. He has forgiven our sins and cleansed us white as snow. "Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well."

Janet S.

April 17

Maundy Thursday

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove in vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

It's by God's grace we are what we are. His grace for me is to serve him. We are to work hard for the Lord in all we do, everyday. His grace is what keeps me going.
Jackie G.

April 18	Good Friday	John 5:24
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"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

This verse means that as long as you believe in God you'll have eternal life in paradise. Believing these words means that you'll always have a guiding light even in your darkest times.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for giving us the chance for eternal life. Please continue to be our guiding light. Amen

Confirmation Class

April 19		Psalms 118:17
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I shall not die, but live, And tell of the works of the Lord.

Here God gives us the fundamental reason for living. God smiles at our Christian living, especially when we give Him the praise for each of our blessings. Because our life is a gift, we need to cherish all days and spread His love. It reminds me of the song, "Because He Lives." "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fears are gone. Because I know, He holds the future. And life is worth the living, just because He lives. Amen."

Barry & Amy C. & Family

April 20	Easter	John 10:7, 10
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Jesus therefore said to them again,..."I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."

When I was choosing a Bible verse for the Lenten Devotional, the word "abundantly" caught my eye. To me the word abundant means ample, more than enough. Webster's Dictionary defines abundant as marked by great plenty, ample supply. These definitions seem adequate when talking about wealth, land, or food.

Thinking about what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross so that we might have life is beyond any word in our language. No greater love is that of one who lays down his life for another. The life we have in Christ is beyond ample, beyond plenty.

This Easter Day as we celebrate Christ's victory over the cross, let us rejoice in the life that was given to us.

Grace C.

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah!