



# 2022 Lenten Daily Devotional Booklet

**GOD'S ABIDING PRESENCE**



Central Lutheran  
MINNEAPOLIS



# Welcome

Lent is the 40-day journey from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. It is a time when we renew an intentional life of prayer, listening for God, worship and faith. Lent this year offers us the opportunity to return to in-person worship with the reminder that it is an opportunity as you tend to your own sense of wellbeing. You will know when it is the right time to return to an in-person worship routine. After two years of the pandemic's challenge, the fatigue and isolation we feel, in-person worship will be an essential part of healing, a new normal and the gift of community.

This year our shared devotional journey will be grounded in daily prayer. The prayers included in this devotional have been written by fellow members of the congregation. Daily devotional and prayer are the centering moments in the day when we personally listen for God. As we offer a shared prayer, we are united as a faith community. Thank you to all who were able to write a prayer or two for this Lenten devotional.

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## **LENTEN THEME: GOD'S ABIDING PRESENCE**

The Lenten theme for this year is "God's Abiding Presence." It is a theme shaped by John's Gospel and the narrative lessons for each weekend in Lent. It is also shaped as we return to *Luther's Small Catechism* again this Lent. This year we turn to the sacraments, listening for God's real presence that is given in, with and under water, bread, and wine. In weekend worship and the Lenten mid-week Wednesday worship we will continue to listen for God's abiding presence in John's Gospel. On Sunday mornings at the adult forum, we will study the questions and answers of Luther on baptism and communion.

## **THE SHAPE OF DAILY PRAYER**

A pause for daily prayer can take shape in many ways. These devotionals will follow a basic outline. On the weekend, Saturday and Sunday, the devotional will invite you into the narrative Gospel from John as you prepare for worship or reflect on worship. Monday-Friday the devotionals will invite us to reflect on the sacraments and the image of God's abiding presence. Each weekday devotional time will be grounded in one of the prayers offered by a fellow member. May this devotional open you to God, deepen the gift of faith and surround you in God's abiding presence that is with you in love.

### **Jesus the Good Shepherd: John 10: 1-18**

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

<sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

### **Ash Wednesday, March 2**

#### **WELCOME AND INVITATION**

Lent begins today. Worship is offered in-person or online at noon or 7 p.m. It is a day to ponder our brokenness and give thanks for God’s good news of forgiveness and love. The service begins with confession and is grounded in John 10, Jesus the Good Shepherd. Ashes will be offered at the end of the service and Holy Communion is celebrated.

As Lent begins, the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is comforting. It will form the basis for this devotional time.

#### **DIVINE READING**

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God’s abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read this Gospel lesson for today. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God’s abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of “Divine Reading,” a careful listening with head, heart and soul for God’s abiding presence.

#### **ASH WEDNESDAY PRAYER**

When you are ready, close your time with this prayer that will be offered in worship today.

*Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

### **Thursday, March 3**

#### **WELCOME AND INVITATION**

These are the first days of Lent. Many people ponder how their Lenten journey might be shaped by leaving something out for the 40 days, like caffeine or sugar. It is a way to be open to God. Others ponder adding something, like a daily email of gratitude or a new way to serve in the community at some point in Lent. As Lent begins, the permission is that it is less what you leave out or add and more about the intention to be aware of God’s abiding presence throughout the day and season.

**LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM**

In 1529 Martin Luther gathered the essentials of faith into a catechism (teaching) book: the 10 Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, The Sacrament of Baptism, Confession and Forgiveness and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. He added questions and answers that he wrote to help and encourage faithful reflection. Often, we think of this as doctrine to memorize, but at its heart Luther hoped the Catechism would open prayer, conversation and deepen faith at home. This year we reflect on the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, with some time to ponder confession and forgiveness, as well. Today we begin a two-week reflection on the Sacrament of Baptism through Martin Luther's question and answer offering.

Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

**LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:**

**What is the Sacrament of Baptism?**

Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead, it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's word.

**PRAYER BY PAUL PRIBBENOW**

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God, closing with this prayer.

*Good and loving God, we know the ashes that mark our existence on this earth, our ashes of pride and war, of greed and progress, of poverty and injustice, of the darkness and unexpected, of the loves that did not survive – this is who we are as fallen humans. But who we are has been transformed by the love of God, the love we know in our communities of faith, in our bonds of love, in the embrace of our children ... the love we know in the cross of our Savior, who creates in us a clean heart, a new and right spirit. Thanks be to God who loves us so much that he sent his only Son to save us from our ashes. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you enter or close your day, perhaps make note of where you experience God's abiding presence.

**Friday, March 4**

**WELCOME AND INVITATION**

These first days of Lent continue. Many ponder how their Lenten journey might be shaped by leaving something out for the 40 days, like caffeine or sugar. It is a way to be open to God. Others ponder adding something, like a daily email of gratitude or a new way to serve in the community at some point in Lent. As Lent begins, the permission is that it is less what you leave out or add and more about the intention to be aware of God's abiding presence throughout the day and season.

**LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:**

**What is the Sacrament of Baptism?**

Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead, it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's word.

**What then is this word of God?**

Where our Lord Christ says in Matthew 28, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

**PRAYER BY TOM ALLEN**

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God, closing with this prayer.

*Life Giving God. Your wisdom was present before the existence of the entire creation. Your word created the cosmos. It continues to create, sustain, and animate all that is. Christ consciousness permeates all. Awaken us into that consciousness within us and all around us. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you enter or close your day, perhaps make note of where you experience God's abiding presence.



**Jesus Raises Lazarus: *John 11: 1-44***

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." <sup>4</sup>But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup>Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup>after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

<sup>7</sup>Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup>The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" <sup>9</sup>Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. <sup>10</sup>But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." <sup>11</sup>After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." <sup>12</sup>The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." <sup>13</sup>Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. <sup>14</sup>Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup>For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup>Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

<sup>17</sup>When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, <sup>19</sup>and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup>When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup>She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

<sup>28</sup>When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup>And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup>The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup>When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup>He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup>Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup>The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

## Saturday, March 5

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the first weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Saturday night at 5 p.m or on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

### DIVINE READING

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

### PRAYER BY LOIS WOLFF

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God, closing your time with this prayer.

*Dear gracious God, O Giver of all good things, please be with us as we enter this journey into the season of Lent – a sometimes darker more somber time, which also gives us the luxury of slowing down and not only confessing our shortcomings, but also praying for your mercy and forgiveness. May your love and kindness sustain us with courage to reflect our Savior Jesus' love in this complex world. We pray this believing that your Spirit will guide and embrace us into abundant life now and forever. Amen.*

## Sunday, March 6

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the first weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers. If you were able to spend time reflecting on the lesson yesterday, perhaps wait until after worship and return to the lesson this afternoon or evening.

### DIVINE READING

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God, closing your time with this prayer that is offered in worship this weekend.

*God of the living and the dead, when your dear friend died you wept, but you did not leave him in the grave. As you have raised Lazarus – raise us and set us free. Unbind your people and restore us to community. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*



## First Week of Lent

### Monday, March 7

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the first full week in Lent. This week offers the opportunity to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence brings new life.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

*Martin Luther's Small Catechism* is shaped by questions and responses. This week we pause to reflect on an essential question. Today the question and the entire response of Luther, then for the rest of the week we will pause to prayerfully consider each gift. Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **What gifts or benefits does baptism grant?**

It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promise of God declare.

#### PRAYER BY JUDITH HEDMAN

*Healer of all things, sometimes I feel like I just can't pray. I know you can still hear me when I can't speak or form a coherent thought. You know what we need, care about. Thank you for sending your healing presence into our lives. In all things, we pray to you, God of all healing. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin your day or at the close of the day, how does God's abiding presence bring new life?

### Tuesday, March 8

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the first full week in Lent. This week offers the opportunity to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence brings new life.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **What gifts or benefits does baptism grant?**

It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promise of God declare.

#### PRAYER BY KARIN ABEL

*Oh, God, who's ever present nearness gives us new life, help us to bathe daily in your life-giving water. Just as we sprinkle the new baby's head with water droplets to clean his hair, God sprinkles us with water made holy by his word, washing our sins away.*

*We thank you for cleansing and renewing us; for your constant mercy; and for giving us the gift of baptism. Most of all, we thank you for always wanting to be with us and encouraging us to want to be with you. In your name. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin your day or at the close of the day, how does God's abiding presence bring new life?

## Wednesday, March 9

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the first full week in Lent. This week offers the opportunity to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence brings new life.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### What gifts or benefits does baptism grant?

It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promise of God declare.

### PRAYER BY BOBBIE SPRADLEY

*Gentle Holy Spirit, as we go about our daily lives, help us be aware that you are with us. May we hear your still small voice, heed your wise counsel and trust in your abiding presence. We give you thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin your day or at the close of the day, how does God's abiding presence bring new life?

**Reminder:** You are invited to mid-week, Wednesday worship today at noon, followed by the soup and salad lunch, or online from wherever you are at noon today.

## Thursday, March 10

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the first full week in Lent. This week offers the opportunity to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence brings new life.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### What gifts or benefits does baptism grant?

It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promise of God declare.

### PRAYER BY ANN OYEN

*Loving Creator, at our baptisms, you welcome us into a large and diverse community of believers, where all your children have a voice in the choir. Thank you for giving each of us a part. Thank you for giving us one another as we journey through life. Show us how best to care for one another, to both give and receive from the well of your abiding love.*

*As we seek to do your work and be your hands in the world, teach us not only to warm the shivering, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and welcome the stranger, but also to walk with them, to learn from them, to hear their stories, to stop labeling them "them". Awaken our souls to see the soul that you have planted, in each of your beloved children. Amen*

**Prompt:** As you begin your day or at the close of the day, how does God's abiding presence bring new life?

## Friday, March 11

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the first full week in Lent. This week offers the opportunity to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence brings new life.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### What gifts or benefits does baptism grant?

It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it, as the words and promise of God declare.

### PRAYER BY DEBORAH BAUKNIGHT

*Dear Lord, Remind me as I feel the water on my skin that you are washing me with your forgiveness and blessing me. You wash me clean in my baptism so that I can go forth into the world with a new beginning to share your love that you give to me with others. May these blessings go as far and wide as the water on the surface of the earth spreads. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin your day or at the close of the day, how does God's abiding presence bring new life?



**Jesus Washes Feet: John 13: 1-17**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

<sup>2</sup>After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup>So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. <sup>17</sup>If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

**Saturday, March 12**

**WELCOME AND INVITATION**

It is the second weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Saturday night at 5 p.m. or Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

**DIVINE READING**

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

**PRAYER BY REV. BRIAN GUTZMANN**

*God, who blesses our earthly journey. From you all good things come. When we are cold, warm us with the*

*fervor of your love. When we are weary guide us toward hope. Renew us by your grace and continue to shape our desire to do your will. In your holy name. Amen.*

**Sunday, March 13**

**WELCOME AND INVITATION**

It is the first weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers. If you were able to spend time reflecting on the lesson yesterday, perhaps wait until after worship and return to the lesson this afternoon or evening.

**DIVINE READING**

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Servant Lord, you show us your love in so many ways. You humble yourself to share your blessings with us. Teach us to wash one another's feet so that when we know better, we do better. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### Monday, March 14

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the second week in Lent. This week we continue to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence washes with grace and love.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

*Martin Luther's Small Catechism* is shaped by questions and responses. This week we pause to reflect on the third and fourth questions that Luther asks and answers. We begin the week with the third question. Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **How can water do such great things?**

Clearly the water does not do it, but the word of God, which is with and alongside the water, and faith, which trusts this word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is plain water and not a baptism, but with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a grace-filled water of life and a "bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit," as St. Paul says to Titus in chapter 3, "through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure."

#### PRAYER BY GAYLE DUSTRUD

*Loving God, we stand in need of your gracious love and forgiveness. Just as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, knowing that one would deny him and one*

*would betray him, we ask you to pour your unconditional love over each of us. Help us to see others through your eyes, so that we might love our neighbors as you do. We pray to you in thankfulness for your abiding love. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence wash with grace and love?

### Tuesday, March 15

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the second week in Lent. This week we continue to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence washes with grace and love.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **How can water do such great things?**

Clearly the water does not do it, but the word of God, which is with and alongside the water, and faith, which trusts this word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is plain water and not a baptism, but with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a grace-filled water of life and a "bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit," as St. Paul says to Titus in chapter 3, "through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure."

#### PRAYER BY SARA KLOMP

*Egil Hovland's song "Stay With Us" based on Luke 24:29, reminds us we are not alone while we wait. May his words be our prayer as we wait this Lenten season.*

*"Stay with us, Lord Jesus.*

*It soon is evening and night is falling.*

*Jesus Christ, the world's true light,*

*shines where the darkness cannot overcome it.*

*Let your light pierce the darkness*

*and fill the Church with its glory." Amen*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence wash with grace and love?

## Second Week of Lent

### Wednesday, March 16

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the second week in Lent. This week we continue to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence washes with grace and love.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **What then is the significance of such a baptism with water?**

It signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

#### PRAYER BY DICK HILDEN

*Creator God, we thank you for the beautiful earth on which we live together. We thank you for the elements which help to bring us together as one, such as the water in baptism, the bread and wine in communion, the food that sustains our lives, and much more. Help us to be instruments of your love, embracing love for ourselves, our community, and for all elements and members of your creation. We offer this prayer that we may be joined, in our wide diversity of gifts, as one with all of creation. Amen*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence wash with grace and love?

### Thursday, March 17

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the second week in Lent. This week we continue to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence washes with grace and love.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **What then is the significance of such a baptism with water?**

It signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

#### PRAYER BY BOBBIE SPRADLEY

*Gracious God, we are so blessed to have been baptized into new life in Christ. Because of your great love we are forgiven and we are your own beloved children. Thank you that we can freely pray to you in Christ's name. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence wash with grace and love?

### Friday, March 18

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the second week in Lent. This week we continue to pause and meditate on the gifts given in Baptism. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence washes with grace and love.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **What then is the significance of such a baptism with water?**

It signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

#### PRAYER BY LYNDA MINNICK

*God of compassion, you know us. You know when we are life-less, when we are bound – enwrapped in the grave clothes of fear, of self-centeredness, of busyness. Open our eyes to see, our hearts to receive the new life you bring each day in countless ways. Unbind us and call us forth to walk with you in loving service, O God of abiding presence. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence wash with grace and love?



**Peter's Denial: John 18: 12-27**

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup>First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

<sup>15</sup>Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, <sup>16</sup>but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. <sup>17</sup>The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." <sup>18</sup>Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

<sup>19</sup>Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. <sup>20</sup>Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup>Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" <sup>24</sup>Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

<sup>25</sup>Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." <sup>26</sup>One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" <sup>27</sup>Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

## The Third Weekend in Lent

### Saturday, March 19

**WELCOME AND INVITATION**

It is the third weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Saturday night at 5 p.m. or on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of well-being at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

**DIVINE READING**

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

**PRAYER BY THE REV. DR. JUDITH STONE**

*Holy and Gracious God, as we enter Lent during this dark season of the year, we could be overwhelmed by the challenges of the pandemic, by the pain, suffering and injustice around us, and by the increasing sense of helplessness and hopelessness in our world. And yet, we know that You have been with us since our baptism and are with us now in Word and in bread and wine.*

*Help us to change our cry from, "How long, O Lord?" to "You are here, O Lord!"*

*Help us to face each day with hope and confidence in You. We humbly pray. Amen.*

## The Second Weekend in Lent

Sunday, March 20

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the third weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers. If you were able to spend time reflecting on the lesson yesterday, perhaps wait until after worship and return to the lesson this afternoon or evening.

### DIVINE READING

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Dearest God, at times we sure do make a mess out of things, Like Simon Peter we are afraid. You speak openly of your great love for us. Hold us in that love even when we are in denial. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## Monday, March 21

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the third week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on confession and forgiveness. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### What is confession?

Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive the absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God himself and by no means doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

Which sins is a person to confess?

Before God one is to acknowledge the guilt for all sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before the pastor we are to confess only those sins of which we are aware and which trouble us.

#### Which sins are these?

Here reflect on your walk of life in light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted, or injured anything.

### PRAYER BY HEIDI AND JEFF HAINES

*Creator God, thank you for the gift of baptism and when I get discouraged and lose hope, help me to remember the unconditional love showered over me in the baptismal waters and shout, "I am baptized"! Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

## Tuesday, March 22

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the third week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on confession and forgiveness. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

*Martin Luther's Small Catechism* is shaped by questions and responses. This week we pause to reflect the questions and answers regarding confession and forgiveness. In recent catechism translations this section is placed between Baptism and Holy Communion. Today we begin with the first question and response. Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### What is confession?

Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive the absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God himself and by no means doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

#### Which sins are a person to confess?

Before God one is to acknowledge the guilt for all sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before the pastor we are to confess only those sins of which we are aware and which trouble us.

#### Which sins are these?

Here reflect on your walk of life in light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted, or injured anything.

### PRAYER BY MARIE WIEGERT

*Dear Creator God, thank you for water. Water is all around us and we receive a blessing. God, you created*

*our bodies with a high content of water. Through your Word, water provides us with sustaining life.*

*We pray that our water will be pure for all of your creation plants, land and sea creatures. Forgive us for our lack of concern about littering. As a result, the litter eventually gets into our water causing contamination. With your Word and the water of our baptism or even daily remembering our baptism we feel and see your abiding presence.*

*Praise to you Creator God, Amen*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

## Wednesday, March 23

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the third week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on confession and forgiveness. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### Which sins are a person to confess?

Before God one is to acknowledge the guilt for all sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before the pastor we are to confess only those sins of which we are aware and which trouble us.

#### Which sins are these?

Here reflect on your walk of life in light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted, or injured anything.

### PRAYER BY GAYLE DUSTRUD

*Compassionate God, we thank you for your abiding presence in our lives, especially in times of sorrow. Help us to know you are holding us in love and to trust that, in times of waiting, you are already leading us to new life. We pray to you, God, our source of hope. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

## Third Week of Lent

### Thursday, March 24

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the third week in Lent. We pause and meditate on confession and forgiveness. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### Which sins are a person to confess?

Before God one is to acknowledge the guilt for all sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before the pastor we are to confess only those sins of which we are aware and which trouble us.

##### Which sins are these?

Here reflect on your walk of life in light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted, or injured anything.

#### PRAYER BY PRAYER BY LYNDA MINNICK

*Loving God, In Peter, we see ourselves – when confronted with the opportunity to witness to your love and presence in our lives, we sometimes fail. We find it easier to say a quick no rather than engage in those conversations. Yet you never break the relationship, but offer forgiveness and new opportunities to share your love in our words and our actions. For your abiding presence, we thank you, O God. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

### Friday, March 25

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the third week in Lent. We pause and meditate on confession and forgiveness. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect how God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### Which sins are a person to confess?

Before God one is to acknowledge the guilt for all sins, even those of which we are not aware, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. However, before the pastor we are to confess only those sins of which we are aware and which trouble us.

##### Which sins are these?

Here reflect on your walk of life in light of the Ten Commandments: whether you are father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, lazy, whether you have harmed anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted, or injured anything.

#### PRAYER BY BONNIE WEISENBURGER

*Greta Schrumm wrote:*

*"To pray is to Laugh, Whistle, Dance on happy feet, Sing, Shout and Jump higher than ever before. But it is also a Whisper, Wonder, Stumble in dark places, Cry, Scream or just hold a tired head in tired hands and wait ... Prayer is our tired reaching out to the One who holds us closer and loves us more than we would dare imagine."*

*So Lord, I am thankful when I can laugh, whistle, dance, sing and shout! I have a little trouble jumping at my age, however, but I can whisper to you in wonder and lean on you in the dark places. I can do that because I know that you are there and can hear me when the tears come and I need healing and comfort and the all enveloping love that only you can give. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?



**Jesus and Pilate: John 18: 28-40**

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup>So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" <sup>30</sup>They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." <sup>31</sup>Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." <sup>32</sup>(This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

<sup>33</sup>Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" <sup>35</sup>Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup>Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup>Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup>Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. <sup>39</sup>But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" <sup>40</sup>They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

**The Fourth Weekend in Lent****Saturday, March 26****WELCOME AND INVITATION**

It is the fourth weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Saturday night at 5 p.m. or on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of well-being at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

**DIVINE READING**

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

**PRAYER BY PASTOR STEPHANIE FRIESEN**

*Gathering God: thank you for Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who knows and calls us by name. In his abiding presence, we live in confidence knowing that we will never be lost or left alone. As Jesus leads and guides his sheep, help us embrace others with love and grace.*

*We pray with thanksgiving in the name of your son Jesus – the Good Shepherd. Amen*

**The Fourth Weekend in Lent****Sunday, March 27****WELCOME AND INVITATION**

It is the fourth weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

## Fourth Week of Lent

### DIVINE READING

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this week-end.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Dearest God, you are the way and the truth and the life. Even in your most troubling moments on earth you spoke this truth to those who sought to kill you. Remind us all that we belong to your and tune our ears to the truth of your love for all people. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Monday, March 28

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fourth week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is the truth that feeds us for life, healing, and hope.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

*Martin Luther's Small Catechism* is shaped by questions and responses. This week we pause to reflect the first two questions and answers regarding Holy Communion. Today we begin with the first question and response. Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### **What is the Sacrament of the Holy Communion?**

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

#### **What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?**

The words "given for you" and "shed for you for the

forgiveness of sin" show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.

### PRAYER BY SUSAN TROSELIUS

*Almighty Creator, Shepherd and Healer, as we continue our Lenten journey, we ponder the grace and commitments of our Baptism. Prepare a place in our hearts and minds for silence and solitude, blessing and generosity, patience and hope, compassion, reflection and reconciliation. Guide us with your abiding presence this Lenten season as we pray, fast, and give thanks for a grace-filled life given to us in the waters of Baptism. We pray this in your Holy Name. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

## Tuesday, March 29

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fourth week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is the truth that feeds us for life, healing, and hope.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### **What is the Sacrament of the Holy Communion?**

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

#### **What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?**

The words "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin" show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.

### PRAYER BY LOIS WOLFF

*Dearest Jesus, thank you for being our Brother, our Bread of Life, and our Good Shepherd who gave your life out of forgiveness and love for all people. We praise you for being our All in all as you continue to be with us through our many struggles, fears and joys. Your abiding presence comes to us from the time of our baptism and the gift of receiving bread and wine in the fellowship of Holy Communion.*

*May we know and express your living Word in our daily lives. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

### Wednesday, March 30

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fourth week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is the truth that feeds us for life, healing, and hope.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

The words "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin" show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.

#### PRAYER BY JUDITH HEDMAN

*Creator of all things. Today I see water in the form of ice and snow. Thank you for this water that will eventually bring crops from the fields, provide a home to the ducks and fish, and give refreshment and recreation to us. To the God of the rainbow, we pray in thanksgiving for the wonder of creation. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

### Thursday, March 31

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fourth week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is the truth that feeds us for life, healing, and hope.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

*Martin Luther's Small Catechism* is shaped by questions and responses. This week we pause to reflect the first two questions and answers regarding Holy Communion. Today we continue with the second question and response. Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

The words "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin" show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.

#### PRAYER BY TOM ALLEN

*Restorative and life giving God. Thank you for the gift of our humanness as a portal into your inherent God given Divinity within us and all around us. All of life is filled with your restoring presence. We pray that you will awaken us to these truths. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?

### Friday, April 1

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fourth week in Lent. This week we pause and meditate on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is the truth that feeds us for life, healing, and hope.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

The words "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin" show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.

#### PRAYER BY SARA KLOMP

*Lord, we walk this season of Lent together. Thank you always for your guidance and hope and guide us on our individual paths as we journey together. In His name we pray. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how does God's abiding presence loves us into vulnerability, reconciliation, and restoration?



**Jesus Condemned: John 19: 1-16a**

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. <sup>2</sup>And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup>They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. <sup>4</sup>Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." <sup>5</sup>So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." <sup>7</sup>The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

<sup>8</sup>Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. <sup>9</sup>He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." <sup>12</sup>From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

<sup>13</sup>When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup>Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" <sup>15</sup>They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." <sup>16</sup>Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

**The Fifth Weekend in Lent  
Saturday, April 2**

**WELCOME AND INVITATION**

It is the fifth weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Saturday night at 5 p.m. or on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of well-being at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

**DIVINE READING**

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

**PRAYER BY KARIN ABEL**

*We welcome you, Jesus, each day and every hour of the day, to sit next to us and feel your presence as we do in the sacrament of communion. Thank you for the "remembrance of you" as we eat the bread and drink the wine feeling the indwelling of your Spirit next to our hearts. We thank you for your sacrifice on the cross so that we may have forgiveness of our sins. As we seek your closeness, have mercy on us and stir in us the desire to be your disciples, to spread love and peace with humbleness and joy. In your name, Amen.*

## The Fifth Weekend in Lent Sunday, April 3

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fifth weekend in Lent. You are invited to worship on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

### DIVINE READING

As you begin, pause for a moment. Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe in and breathe out, mindful of God's abiding presence with you. When you are ready, read the Gospel lesson for worship. What do you hear that is good news? What brings comfort? How is God's abiding presence here in this reading? This is the heart of "Divine Reading," a careful listening with head, heart, and soul for God's abiding presence.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day for worship this weekend.

*Holy God, you sent your dear Son into the world to save us from all the principalities and powers that strive to destroy your love. As we remember his trial this day, remind us that you hold all power and your love will prevail. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Monday, April 4

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fifth week in Lent. This week we continue our reflection on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM

*Martin Luther's Small Catechism* is shaped by questions and responses. This week we continue reflecting on Holy Communion through the third and fourth questions and answers. Today we begin with the third question and response. Perhaps begin by reflecting on the question on your own, before reading on with Luther's response. Then, when you read Luther's response, does it resonate with you? It is helpful or do you find yourself in a different place when you meditate on the

question? The question is to open our reflection, and the response is a starting point for meditation.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### **How can bodily eating and drinking do such a great thing?**

Eating and drinking certainly do not do it, but rather the words that are recorded: "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin." These words, when accompanied by the physical eating and drinking, are the essential thing in the sacrament, and whoever believes these very words has what they declare and state, namely, "forgiveness of sin."

#### **Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?**

Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

### PRAYER BY PAUL PRIBBENOW

*Loving God, your command is clear:*

*Do this. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. Remember me as you love one another. This is how you must live as I depart from you. Do not forget.*

*I've taught you how, you remind us. Gather at table, wash each others' feet, love one another. And when the meal is finished, go from here with these words in your hearts and minds, to be my disciples in all you say and do. This is how the world will know you as mine. Do this.*

*These, then, are God's gifts to God's faithful people. A commandment, to love one another. A table, at which to gather and remember. A covenant, to forgive and redeem.*

*Do this – gather, serve and love – in remembrance of me.*

*God keep us in these three days. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how is God's abiding presence in Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world?

## Fifth Week of Lent

### Tuesday, April 5

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fifth week in Lent. This week we continue our reflection on Holy Communion. This week the devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **How can bodily eating and drinking do such a great thing?**

Eating and drinking certainly do not do it, but rather the words that are recorded: "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin." These words, when accompanied by the physical eating and drinking, are the essential thing in the sacrament, and whoever believes these very words has what they declare and state, namely, "forgiveness of sin."

##### **Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?**

Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

#### PRAYER BY WILLIAM NICOL

*God who leads us to understanding, reveal to us the meaning of our differences. That reconciliation comes from the task of figuring out why we differ and what is practical going forward. Give us your peace to give substance to our resolutions so that we have a standard to measure our resolve. That peace that is Christ's joy for humanity that chose life over death and whose presence we ask. Amen*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how is God's abiding presence in Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world?

### Wednesday, April 6

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fifth week in Lent. We continue our reflection on Holy Communion. The devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world.

#### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

##### **Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?**

Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

#### PRAYER BY BEN LONGMAN

*Healing Creator, we can't fully live without your balm of mercy. Without your life-giving salve we are indeed lost. Come to us now, for we are feeling the distresses of our so human journey. Enable us to return to you, so that we can again feel the unbridled joy of our humanity. In your love we pray, O God. Amen*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how is God's abiding presence in Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world?

## Thursday, April 7

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fifth week in Lent. We continue our reflection on Holy Communion. The devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### **Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?**

Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

### PRAYER BY THE REV. DR. JUDITH STONE

*Precious Lord, despite an abundance of food, we may still be hungry. It wasn't satisfying. Despite a small amount, we may be content. Did we share it with those we love? We know, Lord, that true abundance comes from more than quantity; and that quality satisfies.*

*May we remember that the bit of bread and the sip of wine in Holy Communion is shared with those around us and throughout the world. It is You we are receiving as You give yourself to us over and over again in love that transcends time and place. Thank you, Lord. We need you over and over again. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how is God's abiding presence in Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world?

## Friday, April 8

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

It is the fifth week in Lent. We continue our reflection on Holy Communion. The devotional will invite you to reflect on how God's abiding presence is Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world.

### LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

#### **Who, then, receives this sacrament worthily?**

Fasting and bodily preparation are in fact a fine external discipline, but a person who has faith in these words, "given for you" and "shed for you for the forgiveness of sin," is really worthy and well prepared. However, a person who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, because the words "for you" require truly believing hearts.

### PRAYER BY WILLIAM NICOL

*Heaven's all mighty, in our moments of uncertainty we find comfort in the table that Christ set for us. These consecrated fermented products of bread and wine allow us to share the experience and presence of those that have gone before us. For those that have made us and what we have made of ourselves, what are we when we are freed from our sins? What is the good that we present to one another? Lead us to redemption Lord and help us to share for the good of your creation and for our eternal life. Amen.*

**Prompt:** As you begin or end your day, how is God's abiding presence in Jesus, incarnate love given for the life of the world?



## Palm Sunday Weekend

### Saturday, April 9, Palm Sunday Weekend WELCOME AND INVITATION

Palm Sunday weekend arrives and with it the entry into Holy Week. These are the final days in the Lenten journey from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday. There is a simplicity called for during these holy days. You are invited to read, ponder and listen for the promise of God's abiding presence in the Gospel lesson for this weekend. It is the account of the Crucified Messiah: John 19: 16b-22.

You are invited to worship tonight at 5 p.m. or on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

As you prepare for worship and the entry into Holy Week, you are invited to offer traditional entrance hymn for your prayer in this devotional time.

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

*Refrain*

*All glory, laud, and honor  
to you, redeemer, king,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.*

4 To you, before your passion,  
they sang their hymns of praise.  
To you, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise. *Refrain*

5 Their praises you accepted;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
great author of all goodness,  
O good and gracious King. *Refrain*

*Text: Theodulph of Orleans, c. 760-821; tr. John M. Neale,  
1818-1866, alt.*

### PRAYER BY BONNIE WEISENBURGER

*Teach us, my Lord to look to you when we need to  
voice disappointment and frustration, to confess our  
own frailties and weaknesses.*

*We all have a little of Peter in us when we would  
deny, knowing that you are the one who has the an-  
swers. We want to think that we can handle  
things on our own. Teach us Lord, to rely on your  
understanding and your abundance of Grace and  
Love when we stray, when we deny, when we lose our  
way. Thank you for always being there, even when we  
cannot feel your presence. Help us to whisper a word of  
love to you from time to time, so that our faith will ever  
continue to grow. Amen.*

### Sunday, April 10, Palm Sunday Weekend WELCOME AND INVITATION

Palm Sunday weekend arrives and with it the entry into Holy Week. These are the final days in the Lenten journey from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday. There is a simplicity called for during these holy days. You are invited to read, ponder and listen for the promise of God's abiding presence in the Gospel lesson for this weekend. It is the account of the Crucified Messiah: John 19: 16b-22.

You are invited to worship tonight at 5 p.m. or on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 10:30 a.m. We gather in-person or online worship, depending on your own sense of wellbeing at this point. Each weekend in Lent we will pause for a divine reading of the narrative Gospel lesson for the weekend. There is repetition here for a reason. It is a gift to spend time in the lesson before worship and after you have heard the sermon, sung the hymns and offered your prayers.

As you prepare for worship and the entry into Holy Week, you are invited to offer traditional entrance hymn for your prayer in this devotional time.



## Monday in Holy Week, April 11

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

These are the final days in this Lenten journey. There is a simplicity called for here in Holy Week. God's abiding presence invites us into deep listening and preparation for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. Each day in Holy Week you are invited to meditate on and offer one verse of Brian Wren's remarkable hymn. When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and conclude with today's verse.

"Great God, Your Love Has Called Us"

- 1 Great God, your love has called us here  
as we, by love, for love were made.  
Your living likeness still we bear,  
though marred, dishonored, disobeyed.  
We come, with all our heart and mind  
your call to hear, your love to find.

*Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936*

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### PRAYER BY MARIE WIEGERT

*Dear Lord Jesus, as you were participating in the Passover, you took the time to wash the disciples' feet, thus making them clean. Jesus, you had women wash your feet with an expensive oil and dried your feet with their hair. Such a love for you. Washing feet is a humbling experience given with grace and love. We give you thanks for our feet, the platform of our structure with the many bones to provide mobility. Those whose feet are compromised we are grateful for the many mechanical devices for mobility.*

*As we use the water with your Word, we become justified by your Grace, thus abiding in your presence. Thank you, Jesus. Amen*

## Tuesday in Holy Week, April 12

### WELCOME AND INVITATION

These are the final days in this Lenten journey. There is a simplicity called for here in Holy Week. God's abiding presence invites us into deep listening and preparation for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. Each day here in Holy Week you are invited to meditate on and offer one verse of Brian Wren's remarkable hymn. When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and conclude with the verse for today.

"Great God, Your Love Has Called Us"

- 2 We come with self-inflicted pains  
of broken trust and chosen wrong,  
half-free, half-bound by inner chains,  
by social forces swept along,  
by powers and systems close confined  
yet seeking hope for humankind.

*Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936*

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### PRAYER BY DEBORAH BAUKNIGHT

*Dear Lord, as we give and receive the bread of life "given for us" and blood of life "shed for us" help us to remember that we are always worthy in your eyes just be being a child of God, blessed and loved. We pray that your life giving sharing of yourself nourish our souls so that we can become your words and hands in this world and through our relationships with people spread your message of hope, love, kindness, mercy and wisdom as we are sent back out into the world. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.*

## Holy Week

### Wednesday in Holy Week, April 13

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

These are the final days in this Lenten journey. There is a simplicity called for here in Holy Week. God's abiding presence invites us into deep listening and preparation for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. Each day in Holy Week you are invited to meditate on and offer one verse of Brian Wren's remarkable hymn. When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and conclude with today's verse.

"Great God, Your Love Has Called Us"

- 3 Great God, in Christ you call our name  
and then receive us as your own  
not through some merit, right, or claim,  
but by your gracious love alone.  
We strain to glimpse your mercy seat  
and find you kneeling at our feet.

*Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936*

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#### PRAYER BY TOM ALLEN

*Incarnational God. In your dying upon the cross, you invited us into a fuller and more abundant life by becoming more Christ like – both fully human and fully Divine. We pray that you would draw us into that possibility within ourselves. Amen.*

### Maundy Thursday, April 14

#### WELCOME AND INVITATION

This is the final day in this Lenten journey. You are invited to meditate on and offer this verse of Brian Wren's remarkable hymn. When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and conclude with the verse for today.

"Great God, Your Love Has Called Us"

- 4 Then take the towel, and break the bread,  
and humble us, and call us friends.  
Suffer and serve till all are fed,  
and show how grandly love intends  
to work till all creation sings,  
to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

*Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936*

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#### PRAYER BY PASTOR STEPHANIE FRIESEN

*God of grace & mercy: You invite all to your table and offer us so much more than bread and wine. When gathered with others in the beauty of Holy Communion, we dwell in your presence and are assured of abundant life where sins are forgiven, life is celebrated and salvation is promised. Thanks and praise to you O God for this remarkable gift.*

*We pray this in the name of the one who makes it all possible – Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**Reminder:** You are invited to worship tonight at 7 p.m, in person or online.

*John 19: 23-42*

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. <sup>24</sup>So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

<sup>25</sup>And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

<sup>28</sup>After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup>A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup>When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

<sup>31</sup>Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. <sup>32</sup>Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. <sup>35</sup>(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) <sup>36</sup>These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." <sup>37</sup>And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

<sup>38</sup>After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. <sup>39</sup>Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. <sup>40</sup>They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup>Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup>And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

## Good Friday, April 15

It is Good Friday, God's Friday. You are invited to begin by meditating on the crucifixion as recorded by John. Take time to listen deeply for God's abiding presence for you. When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and conclude with this final verse in Brian Wren's remarkable hymn.

"Great God, Your Love Has Called Us"

5 Great God, in Christ you set us free  
your life to live, your joy to share.  
Give us your Spirit's liberty  
to turn from guilt and dull despair,  
and offer all that faith can do  
while love is making all things new.

*Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936*

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### PRAYER BY BEN LONGMAN

*Loving God, help us to see and hear our inner way  
so that we may be aware of your presence, and that we  
may then accompany others on this labyrinth of life.  
We ask this in the name of the one who knows the trail,  
gentle Jesus. Amen*



### Easter Gospel: John 20: 1-18

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>So 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.” <sup>3</sup>Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples returned to their homes.

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup>and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her. †

## Holy Saturday, April 16

At the center of Holy Saturday is the Easter Vigil. It is the oldest service order that we have, dating back to the early Church. You are invited to the Vigil at 5:00 pm this evening. Another theme to ponder on this Holy Saturday is waiting. Jesus has been laid to rest in the tomb, the good news of Easter has not been proclaimed. We wait in this space between loss and new life. It is a day that we understand. How often do we live in that space, the waiting between and the waiting for new beginnings?

You are invited to read and meditate on the Easter Gospel lesson from John today.

As time allows, pause to consider the moments in life when you have waited. What were you waiting for and who did you wait with? When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day.

### PRAYER FROM LOUISE GRIFFIN:

*In the desert of my spirit,  
in that dark land, parched and dry,  
Sprang a well of living water  
from beyond the earth and sky.*

*Like the grass amid the waters,  
like the willows bending low,  
Never thirsting, life is nourished,  
where the living waters flow.*

*In the silence hear a new sound  
that the priceless water brings;  
Hear the Spirit freely flowing  
like a hundred thousand springs.*

*May the desert bloom with flowers,  
may the grass rise, green and new,  
May the living water well up  
to eternal life in you.*

*(May be sung to the tune of "May the Circle Be Unbroken")*

## Easter Sunday, April 17

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! The good news rings out for you today. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. New beginnings abound, God's healing is yours. What are your hopes and dreams today? What do you long for and wonder about this morning? We gather all into our prayers and into worship this Easter Day.

You are invited to read and ponder the Easter Gospel: John 20: 1-18 .

When you are ready, offer your prayers to God and close with the prayer of the day.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

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







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You are welcome. No exceptions.



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