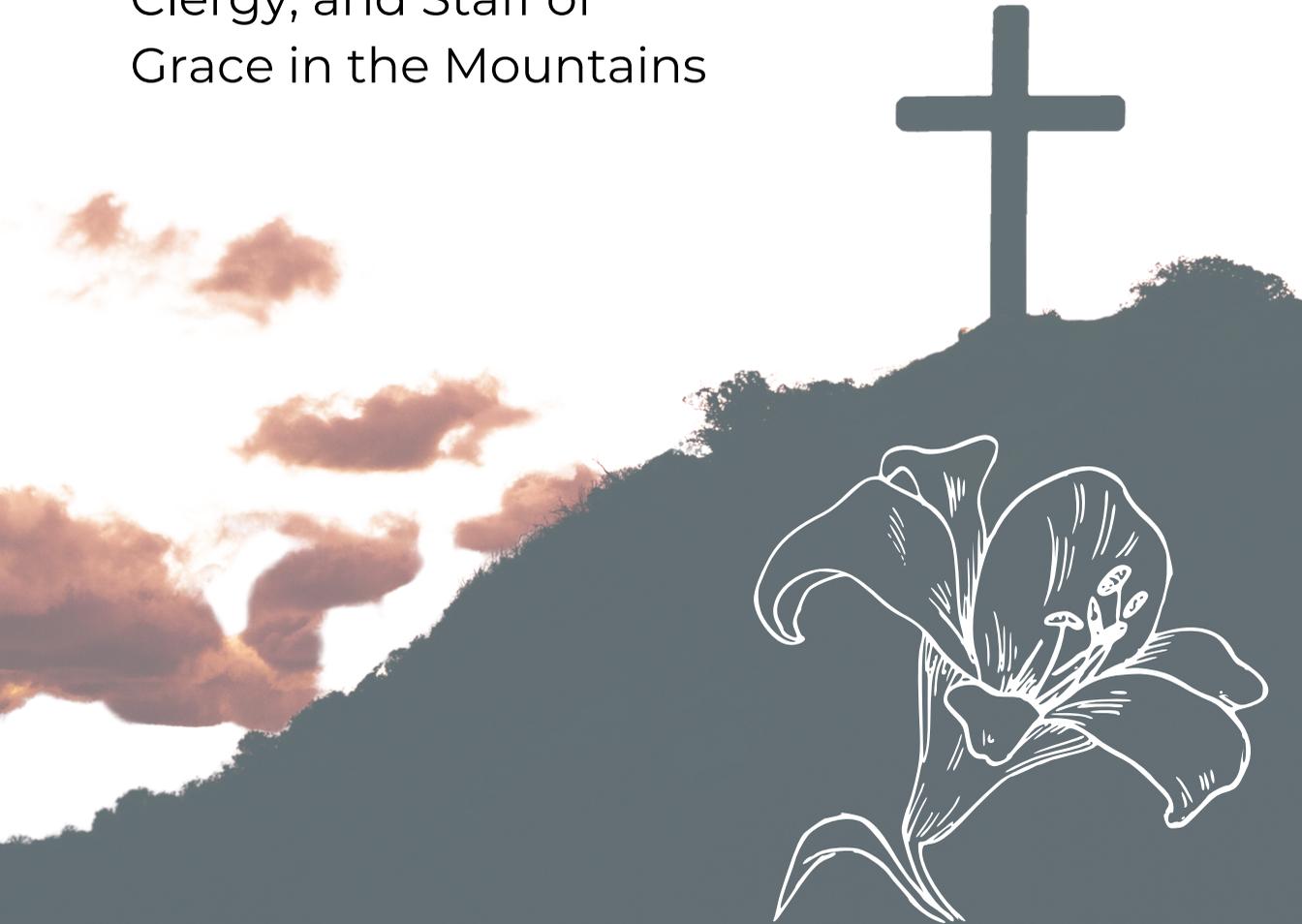


# 2022 Easter Devotional

Created by the Parishioners,  
Clergy, and Staff of  
Grace in the Mountains



Produced by the members of  
Grace Church in the Mountains  
394 N. Haywood St.  
Waynesville, NC 28786  
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It has been a gift to read, view, and listen each of these Easter devotionals, and I am excited to be able to share them with you. Each person who volunteered to contribute to this devotional was given four scripture readings from the Daily Office, and was asked to read them, meditate on them, and create something that reflected what they found meaningful in them. Our community is filled with wonderfully talented folks who offered valuable insight, asked questions, created inspiring art, and even some music!

It is a vulnerable and courageous thing to share our own interpretations and reflections on Scripture, and I have great respect and gratitude for all who have offered a part of themselves and their time to this ministry. I hope that you, the reader, will as well. And, if you feel so called, to reach out to the person who contributed that day and tell them how their writing or art moved you or added a new perspective to your understanding. This work and sharing is all about weaving our stories and lives with one another's.

Suggestions on how to use this devotional:

- read and reflect on the Scripture passage yourself, then read or view the reflection for the day
- include the reading of each day's Scripture and reflection as part of Morning or Evening Prayer
- use the devotional as a journal prompt and respond to what the author is inviting you towards
- try out a new form of art inspired by the devotional that day

However you choose to enjoy this devotional for these 50 days of Eastertide, I pray that these devotions will be a great addition to your personal and communal prayer practice in this season.

- Madison Owen, *Director of Parish Programs*

*Scripture: Psalm: 118:1-2, 14-24, OT: Isaiah 65:17-25, NT: 1 Corinthians  
15:19-26, Gospel: John 20:1-18*

*Reflection by the Rev. Joslyn Schaefer*

**Wondering & Whimsical (and a few serious) Questions  
Based on Isaiah 65:17-25**

I wonder...

v. 17 How long is God's "about"?

What happens to my memories? Good, bad, indifferent. If I can't remember, will I still be me?

v. 18 What places, what cities give me joy now? What is it like to be delight?

v. 20 What is it like to be 100? Is boredom impossible in the new creation?

vv. 21 – 23 What would our country look like if those who actually built houses lived in them? If those who harvested our food ate as abundantly as we do?

How would our nation's history be different?

What would my house look like if I had to build it? What would I eat if I had to grow it all?

v. 24 Do we need to learn to ask for things, to cry out to become fully human? Fully mature?

v. 25 Will snakes never be forgiven...even in the New Creation?

Who is the "they" in the New Creation?

**April 18, 2022**

**Monday in Easter Week**

*Scripture: Psalm: 93, OT: Exodus 12:14-27, NT: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11,*

*Gospel: Mark 16:1-8*

*Reflection by Laura Armour*

Transformation. More often than not, it is accompanied by pain and fear. The Israelites were in fear of being struck down by the Egyptians. The women fled from Jesus' empty tomb in "terror and amazement." Paul was humbled and afraid at his calling as he considered himself unfit because of his past.

Transformation in our personal lives often originates with pain and fear. Something happens to us, and we know we are never going to be the same. We move forward not knowing where we are going, anxious because we don't know what's happening, waiting for the scales to fall from our eyes.

Perhaps that is why Spring is often so painful for those suffering from trauma. We see the transformation of death into life all around us in nature and know that we, too, must choose life.

*Scripture: Psalm: 103, OT: Exod. 12:28-39, NT: 1 Cor. 15:12-28, Gospel: Mark  
16:9-20*

*Reflection by Richard Ploch*

### **Mark 16:9-20 - What does God look like?**

Mother gave her daughter a piece of paper and magic markers to keep her quiet in the pew one Sunday morning.

A few minutes later, mother whispered, "What are you drawing?"

"A picture of God."

"But sweetie, no one knows what God looks like."

"They will when I finish."

In the last chapter of Mark, Jesus walks out of the tomb and the first to see him is Mary Magdalene. Unlike the disciples, she has shown up and listens when he says to tell the others that she has seen him.

She goes to the disciples who are hiding, "mourning and weeping" and tells them she has seen Jesus. They don't believe her.

Jesus tracks down the men, scolds them for their unbelief, and gives final instructions before his ascension. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." They did and the church was born.

The little girl who was drawing the picture got it right. She drew a picture of Jesus. Read the stories, listen to Jesus' words, and for Christians, you'll see that Jesus is what God looks like.

We also know what Jesus looks like. Look at the church, said German WWII martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The church is the physical manifestation of Christ. For so many of us, Grace and its ministries are how we see Jesus alive.

Look at Jesus and you see God. Look at the church and you see Jesus.

April 20, 2022

Wednesday in Easter Week

*Scripture: Psalm: 97, OT: Exod. 12:40-51, NT: 1 Cor. 15:(29)30-41, Gospel:  
Matt. 28:1-16*

*Artwork by Caroline Denwood*

**Corinthians 15:37-41**



What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

1 Corinthians 15:37-40

To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)

*Scripture: Psalm: 146, OT: Exod. 13:3-10, NT: 1 Cor. 15:41-50, Gospel: Matt.  
28:16-20*

*Reflection by Mary Beth Dorgan*

## **Matthew 28:16-20. The Commissioning of the Disciples**

I didn't know what to say or do about this passage when I first read it. It seemed so overwhelming, a huge ask. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Thoughts ran around my brain. Why did I sign up to do this reflection? Is that my role, to baptize people? I don't have that authority. There are too many people to reach.

But then I took a step back. What is a disciple? The dictionary defines it as "any follower of Christ." An easier definition but not necessarily an easier "ask". "Teach what I have commanded you," Jesus said.

The passage is not just about words or belief. It's a call to action, a very specific ask. It's about setting an example to be followed. It's about loving those around us as Jesus did. Our neighbors. Who are our neighbors? As I've grown in my spiritual life, my concept of my neighbor expands. It still seems overwhelming, the call to be a disciple, to love your neighbor. Love your enemies. An even harder ask. I need guidance to rise to the task.

Then I read the last line. "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Knowing that, feeling that, on a daily basis makes the "ask" less daunting. He is with me and I can use that "knowing" to accept the challenge.

**April 22, 2022**

**Friday in Easter Week**

*Scripture: Psalm: 136, OT: Exod. 13:1-2, 11-16, NT: 1 Cor. 15:51-58, Gospel: Luke 24:1-12*

*Reflection by Donna Buckner*

“Remember how he (Jesus) told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” Luke 24: 6-7

Are we like Peter and Jesus’ other followers? When we hear disturbing news do our minds freeze and miss “the rest of the story?” Have our fears about war, continued disease, death, and depression caused us to find an empty tomb? Peter ran to the tomb still doubting, still confused, still afraid and finds the tomb empty except for the linen clothes and he finally begins to understand. He begins to remember!

Can we hear and understand when Jesus says, “Peace be with you...why are you frightened and why do doubts arise in your heart?” Luke 24: 36-38

And can we remember “the rest of the story?”

Alleluia! Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

**April 23, 2022**

**Saturday in Easter Week**

*Scripture: Psalm: 145 , OT: Exod 13:17--14:4, NT: 2 Cor. 4:16--5:10,, Gospel: Mark 12:18-27*

*Reflection by Linda Sexton*

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says that the resurrected will be like angels. We won’t be angels, but we will be like angels.

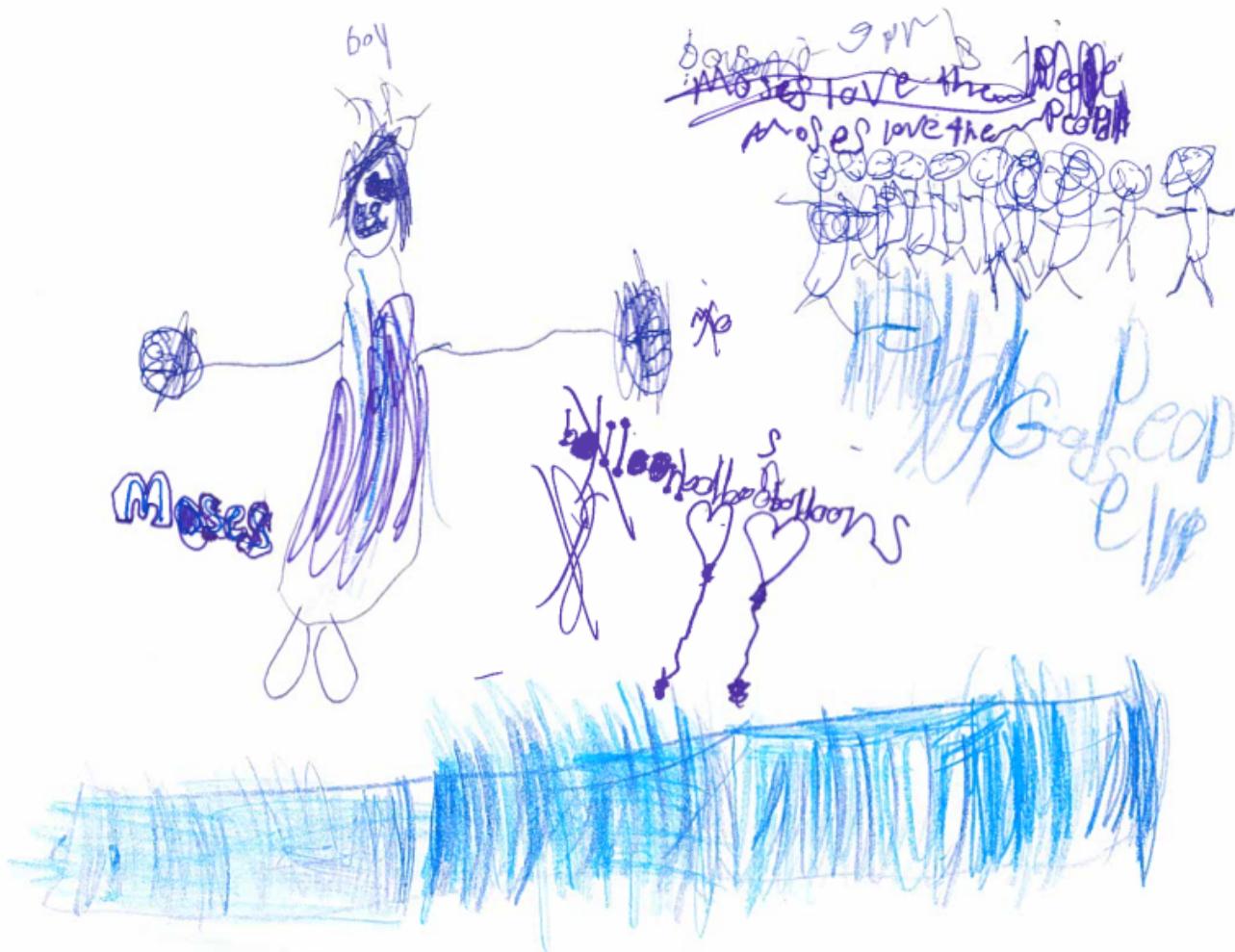
When Tony was very sick, I told him to look for me in heaven when he is there. I said, “Don’t look too soon, but at some point look for me.” I know I was trying to comfort myself. I didn’t want to lose him forever. I wanted there to be recognition of who we were to each other, the love we shared. For those of us who have been married more than once, it is comforting for me to think that in heaven there will be no marriage. That is an enormous thought; to contemplate that love will be felt for all of creation, not specifically a family member. We will be in communion with multitudes. God Love present in everything. It is hard for my human mind to picture such bliss. May I just “be” with that feeling and hope.

April 25, 2022

Sunday in Easter 2

Scripture: Psalm: 147, OT: Exod. 14:5-22, NT: 1 John 1:1-7, Gospel: John 14:1-7

Drawing by Susannah Schaefer



To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
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April 26, 2022

Monday in Easter 2

Scripture: Psalm: 1, OT: Exod. 14:21-31, NT: 1 Pet. 1:1-12,

Gospel: John 14:(1-7)8-17

Drawing by Elias Schaefer



To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
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**April 27, 2022**

**Tuesday in Easter 2**

*Scripture: Psalm: 5, OT: Exod. 15:1-21, NT: 1 Pet. 1:13-25,*

*Gospel: John 14:18-31*

*Music by Brian Schaefer*

**A chant based on Miriam's Song**

"Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea."

To listen to Brian's devotion offering of music, please go to

[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)

**April 28, 2022**

**Wednesday in Easter 2**

*Scripture: Psalm: 119:1-24, OT: Exod. 15:22--16:10, NT: 1 Pet. 2:1-10*

*Gospel: John 15:1-11*

*Reflection by Donna Culp*

When my husband, John, and I made the decision to buy a sailboat, we thought it wise to enroll in the Coast Guard Auxiliary boating class. Upon completion of all the required class work, and hands on sailing instruction we were ready to take the leap, and soon "Mariah" was part of the family. After our four children completed the same instruction designed for kids, now giving us our crew, we logged many sailing adventures over the next ten years.

Nature has a way of keeping you humble out on the water, and without proper references to guide a captain and crew, things can get really ugly, really fast. Playing to each other's strengths, understanding where everyone's weaknesses are, we learned how to work together in fair weather, as well as stormy seas. Reading a chart is fundamental to navigating channels, shoals, and rivers, especially at night. Understanding, and adhering to the rules of sharing the waters with all manner of watercraft is essential to everyone's safety. Without knowledge of these basic references so much can go wrong, and there's no shame in returning to the books to reorient one's efforts. There's a lot of wisdom among seasoned sailors that's also at the ready for sharing. We learned much from other sailors when docked at days end, or when at the marina doing maintenance on Mariah.

Continues on next page...

**April 28, 2022**

**Wednesday in Easter 2**

*Scripture: Psalm: 119:1-24, OT: Exod. 15:22--16:10, NT: 1 Pet. 2:1-10*

*Gospel: John 15:1-11*

*Reflection by Donna Culp (Continued)*

And so, it is with life. Thinking of God as a seasoned old sailor to seek out when it looks like there's a squall line in the sky indicating rough weather and seas lie ahead can be a comfort and strength. Referring back to scripture as if rechecking your chart and compass to make sure you're not in danger of running aground is sage. Such is life with the master chart we have in God's word, and with God. Amen.

**April 29, 2022**

**Thursday in Easter 2**

*Scripture: Psalm: 18:1-20, OT: Exod. 16:10-21, NT: 1 Pet. 2:11-25,*

*Gospel: John 15:12-27*

*Reflection by Kathie Johnson*

### **John 15, 12-27**

Here Jesus is calling on his disciples to "love one another as I have loved you". He says that he has chosen them to "go and bear fruit", and warns them that they may be persecuted for it. He talks about when the "Advocate" comes. I think he is referring to the Holy Spirit here.

Jesus is telling his disciples and believers to support one another and is sending them out into the world to spread the "Good News". As Christians, he wants us to also spread the word about the love of Christ and not be worried, as the Holy Spirit will be there supporting us and backing us up, even in the face of adversity. In loving one another, we can give support to each other through both good and difficult times, and in that love we can find strength. In this love we form community, which is so important in keeping our faith strong and centered. And the Holy Spirit is there guiding us all the way.

*Scripture: Psalm: 16, OT: Exod. 16:22-36, NT: 1 Pet. 3:13--4:6*

*Gospel: John 16:1-15*

*Reflection by Christian Ploch Basulto*

### **Psalm 16: A Michtam of David**

Although being familiar with this psalm and its name, it occurred to me that I wasn't quite sure what a Michtam was. Upon further research one finds that nobody really knows of its context in the Bible. Many speculate that it could denote the Psalm as being "golden", or perhaps a literary or musical term. Others think it means "cover" or "lid".

David opens by asking God to watch over him, and places his trust in God, stating that God is his refuge. This simple part of the line is a good reminder to all Christians to remember that God is there and will provide a safe space for us. During these often-troubling times, it is important to remember that even in our darkest hours God is there to be a place of counsel for us. If this is done, and if we, as Psalm 16 says, choose the lord as our "portion and cup", he will "hold our lot". David says that with the Lord beside him he will not be moved. This is another important reminder to again, especially in times of conflict, relinquish our worries and fate to God, and accept the fact that in the end, he is "at our right hand". With this mentality accepted, David's "heart and soul rejoiced", and furthermore, "his body dwells secure". It is only with this security that we can truly enjoy our lives to the fullest, and again, this is achieved by a trust and reliance on God. David then goes on to state that the lord will not abandon him, or let him see "the pit". While at first glance this seems like a reassurance of protection from the Abyss, I think it could also be referring to "pits" in life. It is important to remember that God should be a familiar comfort for us not only on Judgment Day, but throughout our lives. If we know the Lord we will not "see the pit".

In further analyzing this Psalm, I like to think that a Michtam is in fact a "Cover or a Lid". Not a lid as on a jar or can, but the envelope of God's protection and guidance. With the Lord at David's right hand he was covered from evil and was "shown the path of life".

*Scripture: Psalm: 20, OT: Exod. 17:1-16 , NT: 1 Pet. 4:7-19*

*Gospel: John 16:16-33*

*Reflection by Joyce Brooks*

### **Sorrow Will Turn into Joy**

John 16:20-24

*20 Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. 21 When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. 22 So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. 23 On that day you will ask nothing of me.[a] Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.[b] 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.*

(New Revised Standard Version)

In Verse 20 of the 16th Chapter in the Gospel of John we are told about how the next three days are going to be for Jesus. He is going to die. He tells his disciples that they will weep and lament when this occurs. However, notice what the world is going to do. "But the world will rejoice." The world hates Jesus. We would like to think that people would be sad over the death of Jesus. But they are not. Why would the world find joy in the crucifixion of Jesus?

The world rejoiced because they were tired of hearing what they were doing was evil. Sound familiar? In our present day world, there are those who try to confuse and manipulate Christ's teachings, especially if His truths go against what society might view as the norm. Jesus does not mince words about our responsibility as His followers. The degradation of His very earthly example is being carried out even by those who call themselves Christians yet ignore Jesus' words and actions while worshipping ideals, country, and even the Holy Bible.

Yes. The world rejoiced over His death and Jesus knew this would happen. This is a powerful testament to the amazing grace and love of our Lord as He still sacrificed himself even though He knew their hatred would be so great that they would rejoice over his death and that He would give His life for the haters also.

But this is not the end of the story. The death of Jesus would not be the end. Sorrow would be turned to joy. "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy." The resurrection turns the sorrow of the cross into our joy. The cross is horrific and shameful. Yet three days later the pain and sorrow of the cross was to be radically changed. Joy was going to be found in the cross.

I love the song, "I'm Trading My Sorrows" by Darrell Evans. Take a listen if you get a chance. Please note: It's a contemporary song and not for everyone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5I86UXcrpQ>

"I'm trading my sorrow; I'm trading my shame  
I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord  
I'm trading my sickness; I'm trading my pain  
I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord  
Though sorrow may last for the night  
Joy comes with the morning." (Resurrection Morning!)

May 1, 2022

Sunday in Easter 3

*Scripture: Psalm: 148, OT: Exod. 18:1-12, NT: 1 John 2:7-17*

*Gospel: Mark 16:9-20*

*Photo by Janet Turley*

## **First Spring Butterfly**



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May 2, 2022

Monday in Easter 3

*Scripture: "Psalm: 25, OT: Exod. 18:13-27 , NT: 1 Pet. 5:1-14*

*Gospel: Matt. 3:1-6"*

*Reflection by Diane Collins*

**"The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep His covenant and obey His demands" Psalm 25:10 (New Living Translation)**



*Scripture: Psalm: 38, OT: Exod. 19:16-25 , NT: Col. 1:15-23*

*Gospel: Matt. 3:13-17"*

*Reflection by Jesse Nelson*

Like the Israelites freed from the bondage of Pharaoh and Egypt, so humanity has been given the opportunity of liberty from the bondage of sin and evil. In Christ and in His resurrection, we are encountered with a gift and call. The message God gives to the Israelites, through Moses, is clear- "if you obey my voice and keep my covenant...you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation". This is a high calling indeed; but, one that we as the people of God are asked to be, a priestly and holy people.

To identify oneself as a Christian, or descendant of Abraham, doesn't fundamentally make one's actions, habits, etc. pleasing to God. As of late, my thoughts have been filled with questions of identity and purpose, particularly my identity and purpose in the will of God. Though I may not always practice such, being a child of God takes persistent listening and responding to the Holy Spirit.

As we live each day in the light of the Resurrection, how might we further align our identities and purpose to God's will for our lives? If we truly and utterly believe in the Gospel of faith, hope, and love-how might we allow ourselves to be cultivated for God and our neighbor?

May 4, 2022

Wednesday in Easter 3

*Scripture: Psalm: 38, OT: Exod. 19:16-25 , NT: Col. 1:15-23*

*Gospel: Matt. 3:13-17*

*Artwork by Mariah Nehus*



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*Scripture: Psalm: 37:1-18, OT: Exod. 20:1-21, NT: Col. 1:24--2:7*

*Gospel: Matt. 4:1-11*

*Reflection by Mary Alice Lodico*

### **Matthew 4:1-11**

This scripture should be painfully dark and foreboding, however for me it is oddly comforting. My memory of this encounter with the Devil is of a suffering Christ, weak from fasting forty days in the desert, and sorely tempted by the Devil. On re-reading this many years later, I am struck by the powerful strength of Christ's faith. Here is my response to Satan:

Oh Satan, ye of small mind, your fiendish temptation of our Lord after his forty days and nights of deprivation is feeble in light of Christ's powerful love of God. Jesus firmly believed that he would be fed, that he would be raised up by God's angels and that God would never destroy his own beloved kingdom. Our Christ multiplied loaves and fishes, he never fell from Grace, and he lived, though briefly, in the glory of God's kingdom. Our God has dominion over all - the dark side and the holy, and sends his angels to us over and over again to minister to Christ and to us. Jesus was unwavering in his trust in God and ultimately willing to die for God's people. You are frail, oh Devil, alongside Christ's faith and God's loving care.

May 6, 2022

Friday in Easter 3

Scripture: Psalm: 105:1-22, OT: Exod. 24:1-18, NT: Col. 2:8-23

Gospel: Matt. 4:12-17

Artwork by Marie Shaginaw and daughter, Amy



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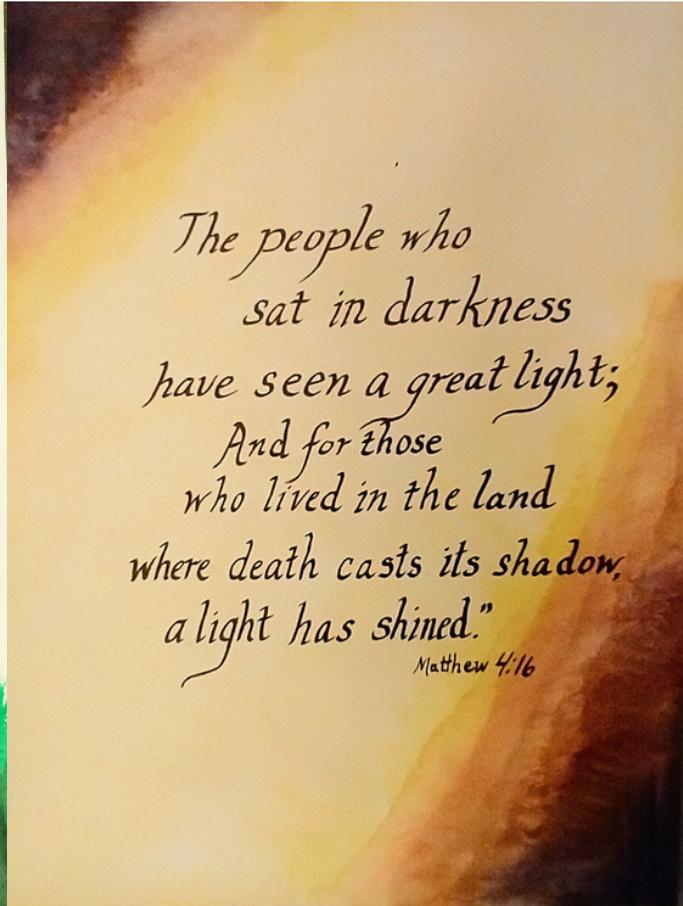
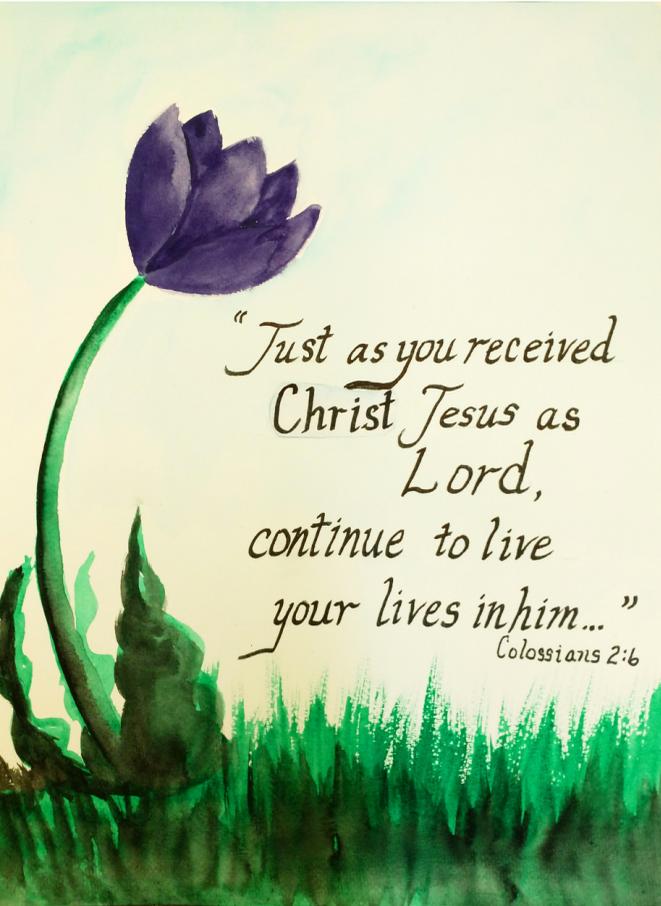
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Gospel: Matt. 4:12-17

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*Scripture: Psalm: 30, OT: Exod. 25:1-22, NT: Col. 3:1-17*

*Gospel: Matt. 4:18-25*

*Reflection by Madison Owen*

### **Calling of the first disciples - Matthew 4:18-20, CEB**

*As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him.*

For the past few years at the Parish Fair, I've helped out with the children's tent. We play games, color with sidewalk chalk, paint faces, but the real hit of the tent is the "fishing for ducks" game (courtesy of Mary Lockey's kiddie pool and some rubber ducks and a net from Mary Hartman). Each child gets a few chances to splash around in the kiddie pool and use the net to catch a pair of ducks. Once they're caught, we turn them upside down to reveal the numbers or the shapes on the bottom, and if it's a match they get a prize.

Last summer, one little boy hung around with us while his mother walked around the fair. He was growing impatient, so I tried to redirect his energy and challenged him to see if he could fit ALL the duckies into the pool. This game got his attention. This game reminded me of the other fishing story in Luke, and I told him the story of how Jesus helped his future disciples with the miraculous catch of all those fish, and when they were finished how Jesus said he would teach them to be fishers of people.

The boy looked up at me afterwards and said, "Well, Jesus might have made those guys fishers of people, but today I am a fisher of ducks."

***What are you a fisher of today?***

*Scripture: Psalm: 63:1-8, OT: Exod. 25:1-4, 30-38, NT: 1 John 2:18-29*

*Gospel: Mark 6:30-44*

*Reflection by Amanda Wells*

### **Psalm: 63:1-8**

I am getting older and have had to make some really tough (and not so tough) decisions. Some of those decisions have been heartbreaking, others have brought great happiness, and still others have not seemed to have much effect on me or the people around me. Now, as my children are growing up and having to make more decisions on their own, I have thought a lot more about ways to guide and teach them about wise discernment. I continue to struggle with "I have to make the right decision at all times." I heard this thought echoed in my oldest daughter who is a senior in High School. She is in the process of making decisions about where she will attend college in the fall. I reminded her that she is earnestly seeking what God wants for her and her life. That is what He desires from her, and from each of us. When we listen, obey what He is telling us, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us then God is in whatever decision we make. At times, we do not hear a definite answer from God, even when we are asking and seeking His will. I think that is God's loving way of allowing us to choose what we want and He will be right by our side in the midst of it. Sometimes it doesn't become a question of is this a good choice or a bad choice. It becomes a question of am I earnestly and humbly seeking God in all of my life's choices.

**May 9, 2022**

**Monday in Easter 4**

*Scripture: Psalm: 41, OT: Exod. 32:1-20, NT: Col. 3:18--4:6(7-18), Gospel: Matt. 5:1-10*

*Reflection by Hannah Wells*

**Matthew 5:1-10**

In fifth grade, my school was a "Seven Habits School." Teachers, parents, and administration encouraged the "Seven Habits of Healthy Kids." There was a book, and even a song, highlighting seven things that I could do as a 10-year old that would make me successful. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus starts by introducing The Beatitudes, the Eight Habits of All Christians. At first, I looked at The Beatitudes as an outline to follow that would make me a better Christian. But Jesus is not listing rules or demands. He is setting forth the nature of His people; He states the character of all His citizens. We as Christians do not get to choose which Beatitude we "specialize" in. All Christians carry these traits and goals; they are our responsibility as citizens of His Kingdom, and He is promising us so much. He promises His Kingdom and eternal life, He promises comfort and fulfillment, and He promises joy. Christians are set apart by these attitudes. They are God's mark on all of us, and they are who we are as God's children.

**May 10, 2022**

**Tuesday in Easter 4**

*Scripture: "Psalm: 45, OT: Exod. 32:21-34, NT: 1 Thess. 1:1-10, Gospel: Matt. 5:11-16*

*Reflection by Christopher Wells*

As some of you may or may not know, I was confirmed recently. It was a big decision in my life, and is a decision that I 100% am glad I took. I confirmed my faith and put my trust in the Lord that He will guide me on the right path and take care of me as I walk with him. When I got confirmed at lake Logan on the outdoor stage, I felt the holy spirit around me and could feel it touch me. I felt warm and comforted when the bishop touched me on my shoulders and my head. I felt this warmth as a sign to me. A sign that shows that the holy spirit is with me, and a sign that I should welcome it in my heart. After my confirmation I know that the holy spirit is with me and I can trust Him. Especially with starting high school this past year, and having 3 more years to go until I graduate, I need to obey and trust him. I am going to need to make many decisions, and in order to make the right decisions, I have to listen to the holy spirit. Even later in life, I will need to trust it and let it guide me the right way. Having the holy spirit in my heart will help me in life and has helped me, and having it in your heart will also help you as well.

*Scripture: Psalm: 119:49-72, OT: Exod. 33:1-23, NT: 1 Thess. 2:1-12,*

*Gospel: Matt. 5:17-20*

*Reflection by Julia Wells*

**Exodus 33:17-18, 1 Thessalonians 2:4-7, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-14**

I play multiple sports, and one thing that is needed for every sport is trust. In soccer you must trust your teammates to do their job, by making runs, covering you when you're going for the ball, having consistent passes, the list could go on. Your teammates need to trust you too. God will trust you if you obey him. That is your job. If you put your trust in God you will feel saved. Putting your trust in someone that you have never seen their face in person can be hard, but he is your Father. And your Father is a Miracle Maker.

**Prayer request:**

Pray that people will trust in the lord and obey him, even if it will be hard.

*Scripture: Psalm: 50, OT: Exod. 34:1-17, NT: 1 Thess. 2:13-20,*

*Gospel: **Matt. 5:21-26***

*Reflection by Mary Lockey*

### **But I say...**

In the fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus tells his listeners, "You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world..." He explains that if you lose your saltiness, you lose your effectiveness. If you put your light under a bushel basket, no one can see it, and the world remains dark. "Salt of the earth... light of the world..." Jesus sees something in his listeners, in you and me. Perhaps he sees the image of God, an image in which we are all created.

Jesus proclaims that he has not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. When I read Matthew 5:21-26 it sounds as though Jesus is making the law stricter, with very harsh punishment. Is that what he means by fulfilling the law - making it even more impossible to follow?

Jesus also says, "You have heard that it was said.....but I say..." Jesus says this at least six times in the fifth chapter of Matthew. Whenever Jesus says, "...but I say..." he challenges us not to focus on the letter of the law, but to think about our neighbors, our community, the people in this same world that we occupy. Relationships. Jesus wants us to interpret the law vis a vis our relationship to each other. Don't murder? Don't even get angry, Jesus says! But if you do get angry, and if you do remember that your neighbor has something against you (how does Jesus know we're going to fall short?) go and be reconciled before you bring your offering. Restore your relationships, then come and offer your gift to God.

Perhaps for Jesus, fulfilling the law means to bring about the dream of God, "...the restoration of the good creation that God brought into being at the beginning..." (The Dream of God, Verna Dozier.) To fulfill the law just might be to look beyond the literal interpretation of the Bible and focus instead on the love of God. Bishop Curry calls it, "The loving, liberating, and life-giving love of God." Then we will see that we all are the salt of the earth; we all are the light of the world.

May 13, 2022

Friday in Easter 4

*Scripture: Psalm 40: 1-3, 6-8*

*Reflection by Susan Williams*

I waited patiently for the Lord;  
he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He drew me up from the desolate pit,  
out of the miry bog,  
and set my feet upon a rock,  
making my steps secure.  
He put a new song in my mouth,  
a song of praise to our God.

...you have given me an open ear....

“I delight to do your will, O my God;  
your law is written within my heart.”

What more is needed, to live in God?

Feet set upon a rock, secure steps along the way.  
A new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.  
An open ear (one who has ears to hear, let them hear)  
Your law, written within my heart.



To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)

*Photo: Anthony Toribio*

May 14, 2022

Saturday in Easter 4

Scripture: Psalm: 55, OT: Exod. 40:18-38, NT: 1 Thess. 4:1-12

Gospel: Matt. 5:38-48

Artwork by Patty Coulter



To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)

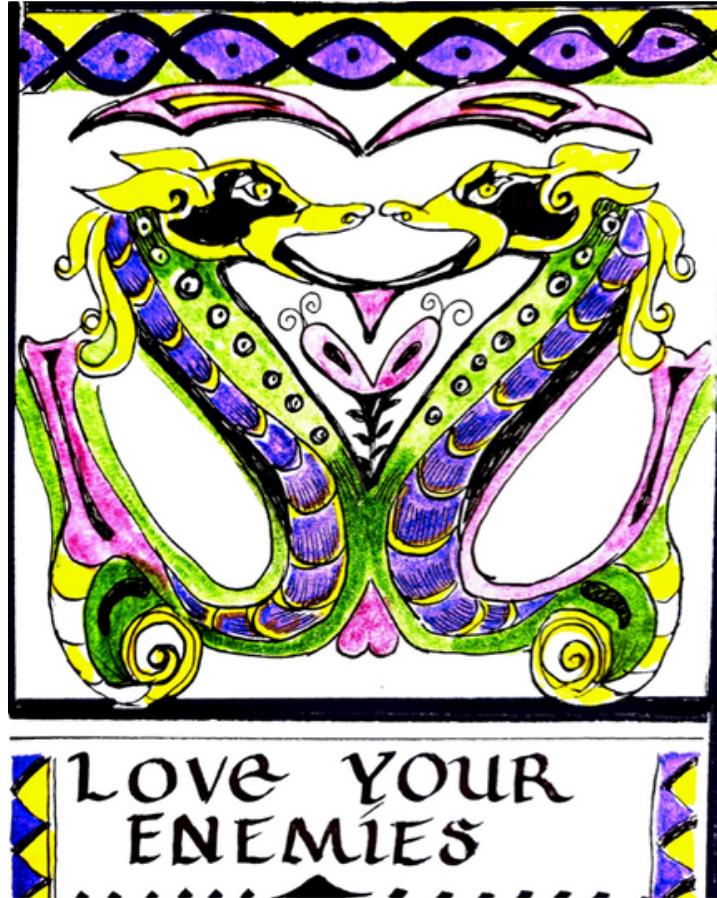
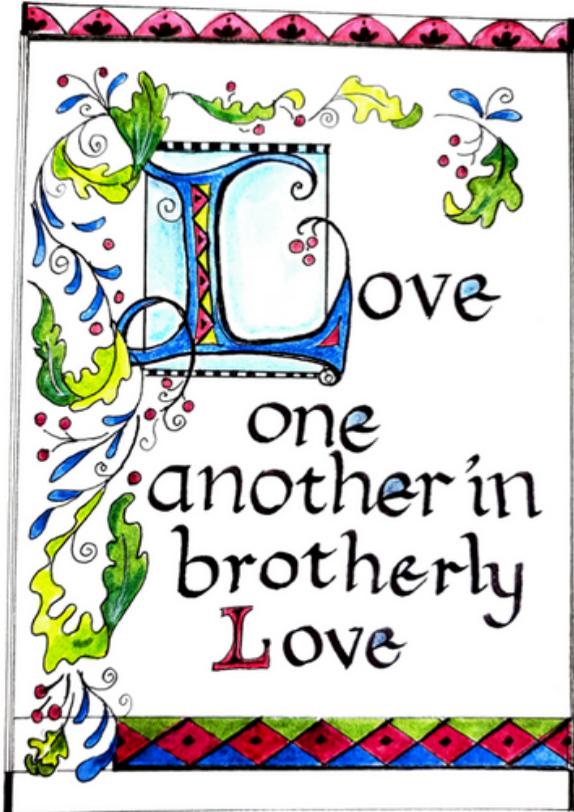
May 14, 2022

Saturday in Easter 4

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Gospel: Matt. 5:38-48

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[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)

*Scripture: Psalm: 24, OT: Lev. 8:1-13, 30-36, NT: Heb. 12:1-14,*

*Gospel: Luke 4:16-30*

*Reflection by Martha Coats*

**LUKE 25:** "I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon." (NIV)

In this passage, Jesus is preaching to his hometown congregation in Nazareth. They are not happy with what he says because they were expecting him to make a miracle for THEM like he had made in Cana.

I have a framed art print just inside my front door that I have treasured for many years. It appears to be a theater poster, and I had always assumed that it was a portrait of a woman from classical times because at the top is written "Theatre de la Renaissance." One day recently, I became curious about what the artwork represented and looked more closely. "Sarah Bernhardt" (the great French actress of the 19th and early 20th centuries) is written above the portrait and "La Samaritaine" is written below. I suddenly realized that it was a portrait of Bernhardt as "the Woman at the Well from the Bible!" (John 4:4-9). I was amazed because I have often identified with that Samaritan woman who had a life-changing conversation with Jesus. I came of age in the 1960's and was brought up in a non-Christian household, yet I had an Eastertide encounter with Jesus. God is the God of everyone, not just of the Israelites, the Christians, the Episcopalians, or any other particular denomination or group. Thanks be to God!



*Scripture: Psalm: 56, OT: Lev. 16:1-19, NT: 1 Thess. 4:13-18*

*Gospel: Matt. 6:1-6, 16-18*

*Reflection by Bob Stambaugh*

I found it interesting to note that within the “depths” of our Easter revelry, today’s gospel reading from Matthew is precisely the lesson we heard on Ash Wednesday over two months ago when we first began our journey toward the Resurrection. Coincidence? Maybe not. Probably not! The church in its wisdom reminds us throughout the joys of Eastertide, that our full experience of Easter requires a deeper awareness of the realities attendant upon our journey to and from the empty tomb. The end of the journey is most certainly the place from where we must start: the empty tomb. What seems to be a place of desolate emptiness is the place where we resume our journey. It doesn’t fully end on Easter morning, but throughout all the days of our personal Easter to the end of all our days. Only then will we arrive at the promised land. Now, the risen Christ’s earlier words can resonate even more and remind us to “beware practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven...do not let your right hand know what it is doing, so that your alms may be in secret...when you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret...and when you fast anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men, but by your Father who is in secret.” And the end result of all this shadow imagery is that “the Father who sees (all) in secret will reward you!

It’s important to note this directive follows upon our reading of today’s Old Testament lesson from Leviticus which in contrast invites us to view the elaborate temple sacrificial rituals required by the old Law. With its seemingly endless attention to ritualistic rubrics and postures, it’s easy to understand why Jesus, a devout Jew, often railed against the excessive attention paid to the legalistic prescriptions to which Judaism had resorted, and which he taught only hindered full access to the loving God of the Hebrews whose plan for full redemption had come to so little.

In Matthew's gospel for today, Jesus teaches that three things are essential when approaching the Father: the giving of alms (caring for the poor, the marginalized, the weak, the widows, the children). In other words, helping those who cannot care for themselves because there are none who will care for them; second, true prayer, not just the empty repetition of words and phrases, but heartfelt openness before the all-loving and all-knowing heart of God; and fasting, not just abstinence from food, but abstinence from the ways of the world, refraining from participating in those things that feed only the body but not the spirit and the soul.

What I gather from today's lessons is that true Easter Joy can only be fully experienced from the shadows, from the empty and desolate places within ourselves and our world where we are able to see all those other places that require our full observation and participation. Ash Wednesday is never far from Easter, the shadow side of Easter if you will, but ever before us, lurking in the background or alongside us just as is our mortality, even as we bask in the lengthening days of light and bloom. If we allow ourselves, we can then experience what we only partially see, and by not allowing ourselves to be blinded by superficial light, but by what is right there before us, recognition of the needs of others and our own true needs. Only then will we be able to fully experience the true meaning and joys of the Resurrection experience.

I love God!

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Readings: Psalm 61

OT - Lev 16:20-34

NT - 1 Thess. 5:1-11

Gospel - Matthew 6:7-15

As you read today's Bible verses, choose one or two activities to help you connect with Jesus!

## Activities

- Read all the verses and see how many different names for God you can find!
- Find some smooth rocks in your yard or a creek:
  - Read or recite the Lord's Prayer, stacking a rock with each line, making a small altar/tower.
  - Build 2 structures - one with rocks and one with Legos or Blocks. Use a leaf blower to see which one is stronger!
  - Paint some rocks with bright colors and happy things. Leave them around town to encourage a stranger!

Grace Church

*Scripture: Psalm: 72, OT: Lev. 19:1-18, NT: 1 Thess. 5:12-28,*

*Gospel: Matt. 6:19-24*

*Reflection by Mary Hartman*

Matthew 6:19-24

New International Version

### **Treasures in Heaven**

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

We can be led down the path that security and happiness both depend on amassing treasures. Homes, furniture, bank account, and IRA’s all are important to happiness. But all of these are ethereal – houses can burn or depreciate, bank accounts can dwindle, stocks can hit a bear market. I don’t think that many of our assets are diminished by vermin and moths – possibly furniture/ books and mementos.

The other path is to focus our energies on heavenly treasures. I am interpreting that to mean living a God-centered life – sharing, helping, loving, and worshiping. I don’t think these treasures can decay.

For me this is not an either/or plan and I believe that earthly treasure building is not necessarily bad, but the balance of being aware of decisions and not neglecting heavenly treasures is important.

*Scripture: Psalm: 71, OT: Lev. 19:26-37, NT: 2 Thess. 1:1-12,*

*Gospel: Matt. 6:25-34*

*Reflection by Madison Owen*

**"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life..."**

I wonder if this passage from Matthew is comforting to you? Most days I am filled with worry. "Will the live stream work on Sunday?" and "How do I cook for one and not waste so much?" During the height of the pandemic my big worry was: "Am I making the best decisions to keep myself and loved ones safe from COVID-19?" During college, I worried: "Am I doing the right thing with my life?", "What if I don't graduate on time??", and "How in the world am I going to pay off these student loans???" In middle and high school I worried "Am I liked by my peers?" and "What if I never quite find the place where I belong?"

Sometimes when I share my worries with others they say things like "Oh, just don't worry about it!! You're going to be fine!! Trust in God to show you the way!!" The first words of today's Gospel have often reminded me of these empty, and invalidating "comforts".

However, this time when I read the ending words of this passage: "Each day has enough trouble of its own", I had a new realization. No matter how much I worry, my loved ones will still occasionally get hurt or sick; some days I will find joy and purpose in what I am doing and others I won't; some days will feel like I belong and others will feel out of place; and those student loans, while they are slowly being chipped away at, aren't going anywhere any time soon.

When I find myself overwhelmed with worry, I pray that I might be able to pause, have compassion for myself and ask "What is it that I need right now, and how has God already provided for me?"

**What do you worry about that is beyond your control? What is something that you worry about that you can change or influence?**

*Scripture: Psalm: 106:1-18, OT: Lev. 23:1-22, NT: 2 Thess. 2:1-17,*

*Gospel: Matt. 7:1-12*

*Reflection by Emily Chatfield-Lusto*

**Matt. 7:1-12**

*“Don’t judge, so that you won’t be judged. You’ll receive the same judgment you give. Whatever you deal out will be dealt out to you. Why do you see the splinter that’s in your sibling’s eye, but don’t notice the log in your own eye? How can you say to your brother or sister, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ when there’s a log in your eye? You deceive yourself! First take the log out of your eye, and then you’ll see clearly to take the splinter out of your sibling’s eye. ...Therefore you should treat people in the same way that you want people to treat you; this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

All of today’s readings concern law and lawlessness. They each contain stories of God speaking to his people or Jesus teaching his followers about the way to behave.

I don’t know about you but I spend a lot of my time these days thinking about what’s right in the world and what is not right; about who is doing good and who is doing evil. And once I make up my mind about who’s doing wrong, I’m in hard and fast with judgment. Teachings about loving my neighbor as myself, or taking the splinter out of my own eye before I start talking about the splinter in my “sibling’s” eye? They go out the window in whirls of self-righteous, finger pointing, anger, grief and sorrow.

Here’s the heart of the matter for me: When I’m angry about what’s happening in my country, or my county, for example, do I have God’s permission to ignore the laws he gave us? When I’m grief-stricken about poverty, climate devastation, war and senseless death, do I have the holy OK to judge? Who is my neighbor then? Who is my sibling? And closer to home, when someone hurts my feelings or misunderstands my intentions, and me, is it OK to hold back forgiveness and healing and to carry a grudge? Whose laws am I following then?

***Do you think it’s ever acceptable to ignore God’s laws? How do you find your way back to right relationship with others?***

**May 21, 2022**

**Saturday in Easter 5**

*Scripture: Psalm: 75, OT: Lev. 23:23-44, NT: 2 Thess. 3:1-18, Gospel: Matt. 7:13-21*

*Reflection by Laura Armour*

Deciding who to help in our community and our world is difficult, because we are also implicitly or explicitly deciding who not to help.

We can't carry everyone's burdens, only God can do that. All we can do, just as Paul says in 2 Thessalonians is to set a good example, talk about problems compassionately and try not to treat anyone as an enemy.

We pray that working together we can help direct each other along the path leading through the narrow gate Jesus referred to in Matthew 7 on our journey back to the Creator.

**May 22, 2022**

**Sunday in Easter 6**

*Scripture: Psalm: 93, OT: Lev. 25:1-17, NT: James 1:2-8, 16-18,*

*Gospel: Luke 12:13-21*

*Reflection by Ginny Moe*

Leviticus is by far my favorite book of the Bible, and one of the most exciting exhibits I have ever seen was the Dead Sea Scrolls which included parts of it. Leviticus was codified while the Israelites were gradually defining what made their tribe different than surrounding tribes, and especially what was different about their God than the gods of other tribes. And a major difference is that in Leviticus, God makes promises to us. The gods worshipped in 1000 b.c. were pretty unreliable, and pretty dangerous. People offered sacrifices or prayed to gods who were arbitrary, who rewarded or punished or just meddled with humanity, for good or evil and with no discernible reason. But the God of Leviticus makes a promise: do these things and I will be faithful to you. So, the question answered in Leviticus is "How can we, miserable sinners that we are, co-exist with God?" And the answer is "Our sin will be removed from us when we follow these rules." While many of these practices seem out of date to our modern times, the promises of God still remain. The tools given in Leviticus are easy to understand. Participate in special rituals, provide for trained priests and their assistants to administer these rituals, learn how to be pure and how to become cleansed when we become impure. Keep the sabbath holy. Atoned for your sins. Celebrate and share the Good News. Take care of the land. Play instruments to praise God. Be good and fair to one another. I am the Lord your God.

**May 23, 2022**

**Monday in Easter 6**

*Scripture: Psalm: 80, OT: Lev. 25:35-55, NT: Col. 1:9-14,*

*Gospel: Matt. 13:1-16*

*Reflection by Deacon Carter Smith*

**Matt 13:1-13**

The Parable of the Sower: A sower went out to sow... This is one of my favorite parables. Jesus, speaking to the crowd, describes the four places where the seed could fall: the path, rocky ground, among thorns, and on fertile soil. This is one of the few parables which Jesus actually explains. The seed which Jesus is talking about is, of course, the word of the kingdom or the Gospel.

I personally find myself somewhere along the continuum between Thorns and Fertile soil. The cares and concerns of the world, my world, tend to get in the way of me fully receiving and living out the Gospel. Often I have to make a conscious choice to not get bogged down in the minutia of life and choose the path that leads to eternal life.

**What type of ground with which do you most identify?**

**May 24, 2022**

**Tuesday in Easter 6**

*Scripture: Psalm: 78:1-39, OT: Lev. 26:1-20, NT: 1 Tim. 2:1-6,*

*Gospel: Matt. 13:18-23*

*Reflection by Carter Smith*

**Matt 13:18-23**

As Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower he describes the seed that falls on rocky ground. He says that "this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet such a person has no root, and when trouble or persecution arises, immediately falls away." Have you known anyone like that? As we are entering a post Covid world, have you noticed that we don't have as many people attending our in-person services as we did pre covid? Some are not attending for good reason. Some are immunocompromised. But I wonder if, for some, the seed has fallen on rocky ground? And more importantly, as good and faithful gardeners, do we have a role in removing stones from the garden?

**Is there someone who you haven't seen at church in a while that you might reach out to?**

**May 25, 2022**

**Wednesday in Easter 6**

*Scripture: Psalm: 119:97-120, OT: Lev. 26:27-42, NT: Eph. 1:1-10*

*Gospel: Matt. 22:41-46*

*Reflection by Tim Moe*

I was struck by the contrast between today's Old and New Testament readings. Both sets of texts are seemingly intended for the purpose of demonstrating how people can follow God faithfully both as individuals, and within a larger community. The old testament readings were obviously directed towards the Hebrew people, providing examples of faithful living paired with the consequences of unfaithful living. Despite the warnings, God still promises to be faithful to those who return in repentance with humble hearts, although perhaps not without going through difficult times in the process. There is also a reflection on God's covenant promises to the people of Israel. As the Psalmist writes:

111 "Your statutes are my heritage forever;  
they are the joy of my heart.

112 My heart is set on keeping your decrees  
to the very end.

The Epistle and the Gospel, on the other hand, are saying something different. Paul points to a new way of thinking and being as the adopted children of God, freely given through the gift of God's grace in Christ. This gift gives the power to live and act both as individuals, and in community, to witness and share the unconditional love of God with the world. Paul writes to the Ephesians of an organic, profoundly communal purpose.

Paul writes of the..."mystery of God's will according to the good pleasure, purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ."

Finally, in the Gospel, Jesus silences the Pharisees as to who the Messiah is. During this Easter season, let us continue to reflect on this message, and may we each prayerfully seek our calling and place in doing God's work and sharing God's love.

*Scripture: Psalm: 8, OT: Dan. 7:9-14, NT: Heb. 2:5-18*

*Gospel: Matt. 28:16-20*

*Reflection by Richard Ploch*

### **Psalm 8**

*Lord, our Lord,*

*how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory*

*in the heavens.*

*Through the praise of children and infants.*

### **A Party for the Saints**

Our daughter's first-grade birthday party had been in the planning for weeks. She was our only child, a sweet kid with lots of enthusiasm, and a birthday party became a major family event.

Her friends from school were invited – a crowd of girls and one brave boy, Joey. The big day finally arrived. Six-year-old Christine watched anxiously through the living room window for her friends, and climbed up on the couch for the best view.

When the first car pulled into the driveway, she jumped off the couch, burst through the front door and ran to the car to greet her friend. As the little girl climbed out, Christine grabbed her in a hug as they jumped up and down with excitement. Both of them then ran back into the house, jumped back on the couch and watched for the next car to arrive.

When the next child pulled up, two girls came banging through the front door, party dresses flying, as they danced with laughter, hugging one another. This continued as each child arrived for the party. A growing and excited crowd ran out to greet each guest.

I'd been inside doing whatever it is that dads do for a party when I realized what was unfolding. "I'm going outside to watch," I yelled to Carol. I've been looking for this kind of feeling my whole life. Imagine how it would feel to arrive at a party and have everyone run out to meet you, happy that you are there!

And that's what happened when the lone boy, Joey, arrived. As he opened the car door, the whole party came running out into the yard squealing with excitement to see him. He could barely climb out of the car. His face was filled with astonishment.

Years later I told this story one Friday evening at an informal worship service at our small, multicultural congregation in suburban Washington, D.C. I ended by thanking the people gathered there for accepting us so warmly, helping us to feel as welcome as Christine's friends felt the day of her first-grade birthday party.

And then a guest pastor friend stood and followed my story with these words as the room grew quieter, "Whenever heaven is depicted, it's often described with the intimidating image of St. Peter at the gates, checking to see whether you are on the guest list as you wait anxiously to hear if you're welcome. But I think heaven is far more like Christine's party when all the saints rush out to greet us, calling out our name, happy that we are there."

Warm and caring congregations are a foretaste of this heavenly hospitality. As the apostle Paul once wrote, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God."

Scripture: Psalm: "Psalm: 85, OT: 1 Sam. 2:1-10, NT: Eph. 2:1-10,  
Gospel: Matt. 7:22-27"

Reflection by Andrea Croskery

**Psalm 85:7**

7 Show us your *faithful* love, Lord!  
Give us *your* salvation!

**1 Samuel 2:9**

God guards the feet of his *faithful* ones,  
but the wicked die in darkness  
because no one succeeds by *strength alone*.

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

8 You are saved by *God's grace* because of your faith. This salvation is God's *gift*. It's not something you possessed. 9 It's not something you did that you can be *proud* of. 10 Instead, we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

**Matthew 7:24**

24 "Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock.

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This is Memorial Day Weekend, a time set aside to remember those who have given the "last full measure of devotion" in service to the United States of America. Those of us who have not served or have a close family member who serves in the military cannot truly understand the sacrifices that are made by the few for the many. We get a glimpse of it from time to time in the images we see in the media. But the sacrifices made by those who serve to protect us, (including police, firefighters, EMTs, doctors, nurses, etc., especially during the COVID pandemic) understand, perhaps more fully than us, what it means to risk all, to lay down their life for another.

**May 27, 2022**

**Friday in Easter 6**

Not everyone is called to give that “last full measure of devotion” but we would do well to remember that we are here on this good Earth for a brief time – that our salvation comes as a gift from God. and through nothing we have done that we “can be proud of.” But as God’s “accomplishment” we are put here to do what is necessary to help the Kingdom of God break through. We are “created in Christ to do good things” and “God planned for these good things to be the way we live our live.”

Remember that you were put here for a reason. You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God has put you there. God has a purpose in you being there. Christ whose spirit dwells within you, has something he wants you to do where you are. Believe this! Live gratefully and do good things.

*Scripture: Psalm: 87, OT: Num. 11:16-17, 24-29, NT: Eph. 2:11-22*

*Gospel: Matt. 7:28--8:4*

My thoughts have been dwelling on peace and healing. I am filled with anguish for the needs of peace and healing in our world. I find encouragement from the readings of Ephesians 2:11-22 and Mathew 8:1-4

I look to God for peace in this world and peace for our country's division . In Ephesians 2:11-22 Peter wrote about the separation of Gentiles and Jews. He reminded us that those who have been far have been brought near through the Christ's blood. "He (Christ) is our peace: in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us." Jesus ability to facilitate peace to divisions and hostilities is so reassuring to me.

In Matthew 8, Jesus heals the leper who asks our Lord to be made clean. I am reminded that Jesus used touch to heal the leper and that we to have the ability to touch each other with prayerful and healing actions.

I believe that both peace and healing require us to have faith that Christ does heal and we need to proclaim this.

My heart wants to sing the hymn (537):

***Christ for the world we sing;  
the world to Christ we bring  
with loving zeal:  
the poor and them that mourn,  
the faint and overborne,  
sin-sick and sorrow worn,  
whom Christ doth heal.***

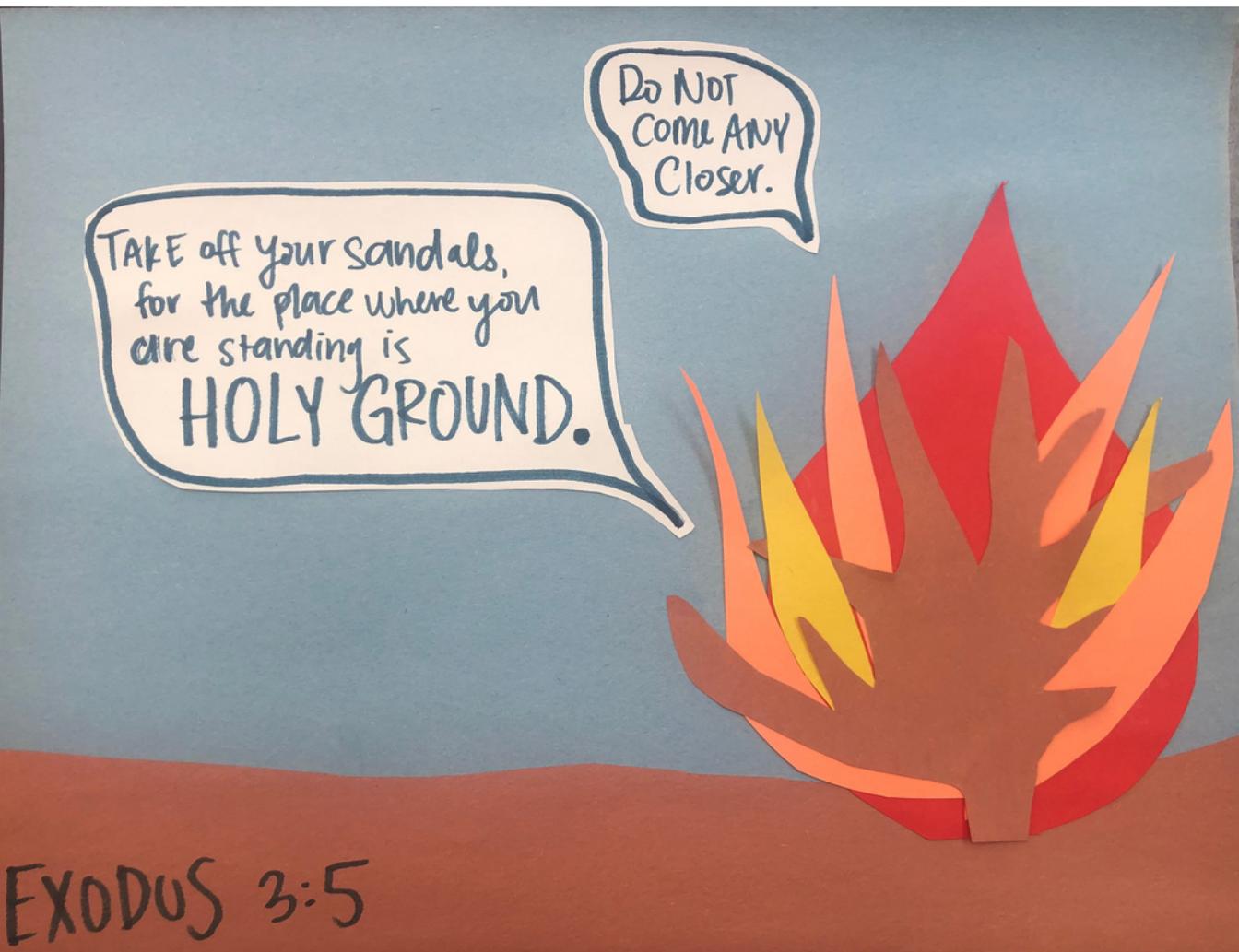
May 29, 2022

Sunday in Easter 7

Scripture: Psalm: 66, OT: Exod. 3:1-12, NT: Heb. 12:18-29

Gospel: Luke 10:17-24

Reflection by Madison Owen



To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)

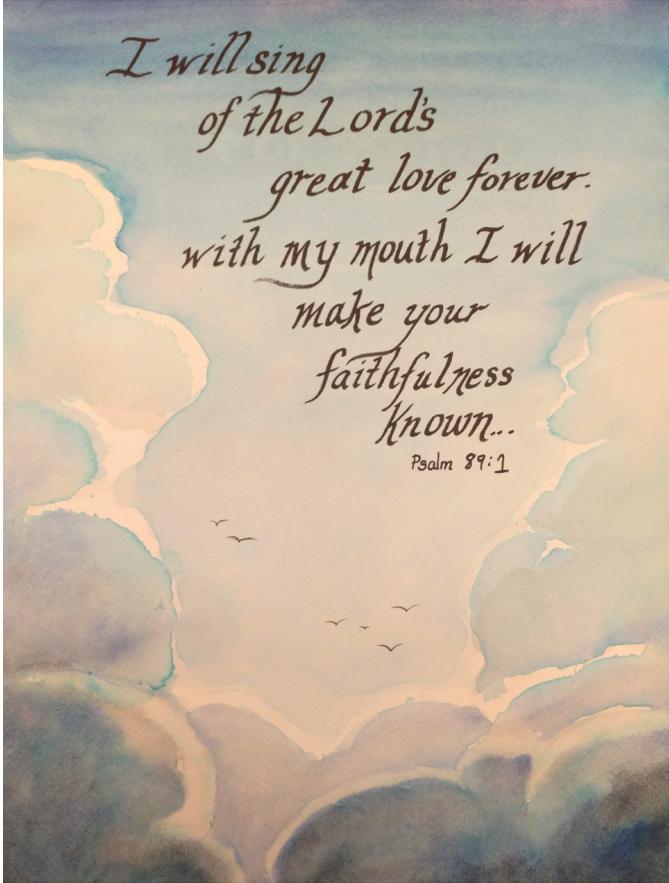
May 30, 2022

Monday in Easter 7

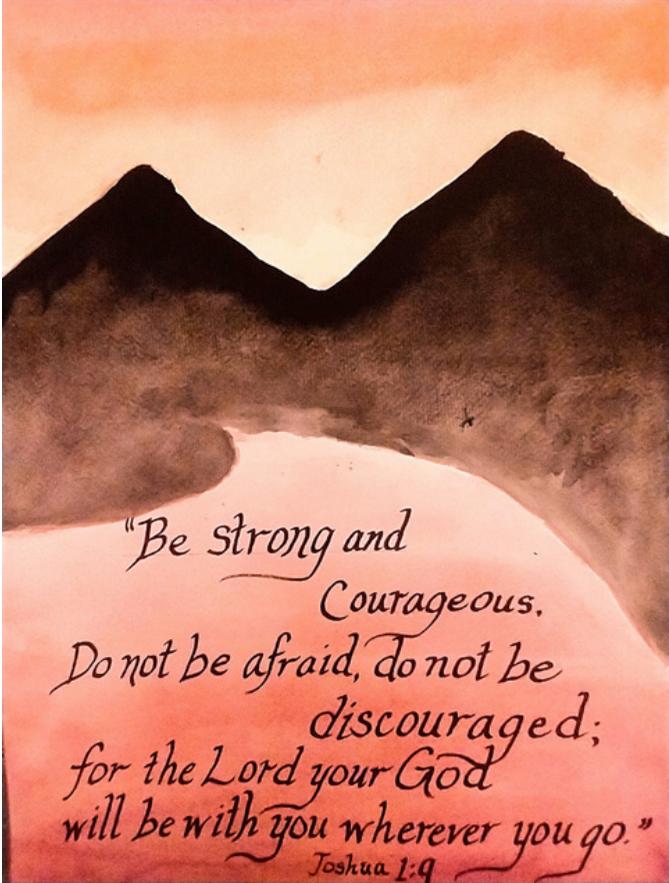
Scripture: Psalm: 89:1-18, OT: Joshua 1:1-9, NT: Eph. 3:1-13

Gospel: Matt. 8:5-17

Reflection by Marie Shaginaw

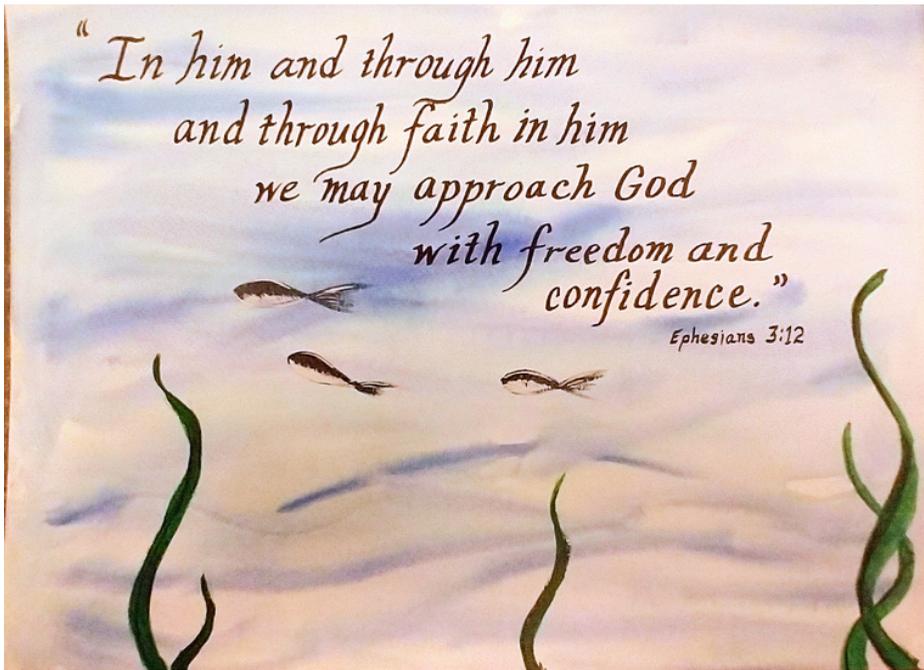


*I will sing  
of the Lord's  
great love forever.  
with my mouth I will  
make your  
faithfulness  
known..*  
Psalm 89:1



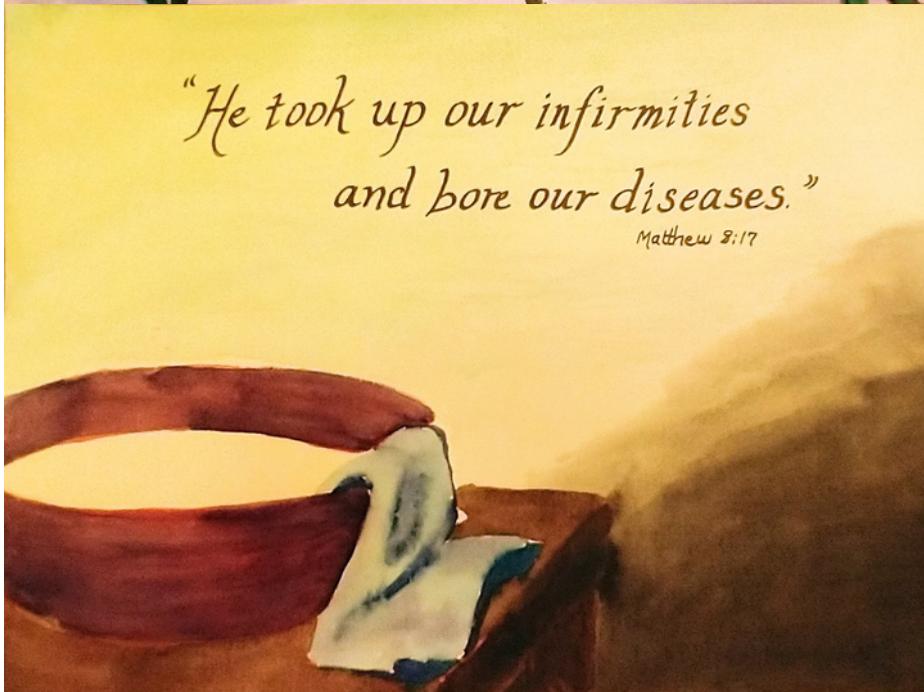
*"Be strong and  
Courageous.  
Do not be afraid, do not be  
discouraged;  
for the Lord your God  
will be with you wherever you go."  
Joshua 1:9*

To see the artwork in full color, please go to  
[www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022](http://www.gracewaynesville.com/easter-devotional-2022)



*"In him and through him  
and through faith in him  
we may approach God  
with freedom and  
confidence."*

*Ephesians 3:12*



*"He took up our infirmities  
and bore our diseases."*

*Matthew 8:17*

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*Scripture: Psalm: 97, OT: 1 Sam. 16:1-13a, NT: Eph. 3:14-21,*

*Gospel: Matt. 8:18-27*

*Reflection by Susan Williams*

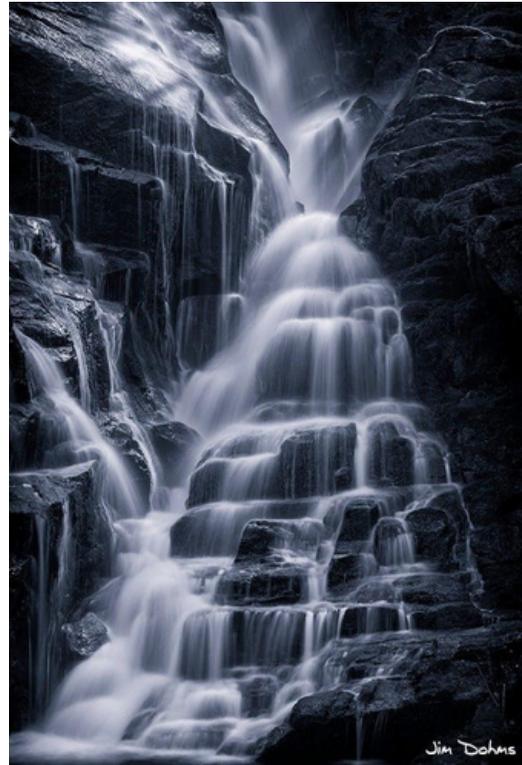
### **Ephesians 3: 14-21 from The Message**

*My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.*

*God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.*

*“Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.”*

Majestic waterfalls, so dynamically captured in the photo by Jim Dohms (“Eastatoe Falls”) speak to me of depths and heights, manifesting powerfully in the sacred geometry of flowing water and solid rock. These two elements are drawn together in a dance of sorts, an invitation to live in the fullness of God. Do you see it? Letting go, following the flow, holding fast in “this-ness,” the solidity of stone. These seemingly opposite forces actually become one, as we become one with the fullness of God when we “Reach out and experience the breadth!” It is “far more than you could ever imagine...”



In the second photograph (“Sunlight and Mossy Waterfall” by Andreas Vitting) I feel the gentle reassurance and reminder from the Apostle Paul that God does not push us around, but works within us, “his Spirit deeply and gently within us.” The softly falling water nourishes and sustains the green and growing mosses; slanted sunlight does not overwhelm tender growth with brightness. As green and growing plants grow from within, the Spirit of God resides deep within us, guiding our growth and providing the elements we need to thrive and come into fullness of being.



We are blessed to live in a land of many waterfalls. May you be graced by their beauty and held in wonder at their flowing.

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**June 1, 2022**

**Wednesday in Easter 7**

*Scripture: Psalm: 101, OT: Isa. 4:2-6, NT: Eph. 4:1-16,*

*Gospel: Matt. 8:28-34*

*Reflection by Tim Moe*

**Psalm 101:6a**

*6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land,  
that they may dwell with me;  
the one whose walk is blameless  
will minister to me.*

In the Old Testament lessons for today, we catch a glimpse of heavenly realms, or rather how our current vision, life, and walk might build a better world in the earthly realm we now inhabit. This is to be an active walk of faith and obedience to God's call, but with the sure knowledge that we do not walk it alone, as in the book of Isaiah -

*"...the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. 6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain."*

I offer these words of a hymn by Henry Alford in way of reflection on these texts:

*We walk by faith and not by sight;  
With gracious words draw near,  
O Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke:  
"My peace be with you here."*

*And when our life of faith is done,  
In realms of clearer light  
May we behold you as you are,  
With full and endless sight.*

*Scripture: Psalm 105:1-22; OT: Zechariah 4:1-14; NT: Ephesians 4:17-32;*

*Gospel: Matthew 9:1-8*

*Reflection by Jesse Nelson*

Biographical accounts whether found in literature, film, or etc. have always fascinated me. I particularly enjoy those of individuals who experienced a transformative event or process. In Christianity we have great reverence of individuals with transformative stories, individuals like St. Paul, St Augustine, Rev. John Newton (author of 'Amazing Grace'), or CS Lewis. Each of these individuals have made significant impressions on the Christian faith and the world at large. One has to wonder, what great stories haven't we heard? Everyday we are given (countless I'm sure) opportunities to minister to those around us and strengthen our faith.

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul urges the church at Ephesus "to clothe themselves with the new self". Though this may sound something like the mantra of a self-help pamphlet, it is the same exhortation that had driven many great Christians forward. The ability we have to renew ourselves each day and to suddenly direct our lives into new and exciting directions is sourced from Christ. Even when something may seem impossible it is Christ who makes the path clear. In the gospel reading, we read about the impossible case of the paralytic being healed and walking home, carrying the very same bed which his comrades had delivered him on.

As you go through this day and each day, remind yourself of the God's limitless power to make what is impossible, possible. When faced with decisions or challenges, let us allow Christ to cast-away our fear and ask, Lord, what wonders have you in store for me in this coming season?

**June 3, 2022**

**Friday in Easter 7**

*Scripture: Psalm: 102, OT: Jer. 31:27-34, NT: Eph. 5:1-20*

*Gospel: Matt. 9:9-17*

*Reflection by Emily Chatfield-Lusto*

### **Ephesians 5:8-11**

*“Therefore, imitate God like dearly loved children. Live your life with love, following the example of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us. ... You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light. ... Everything that is revealed by the light is light. Therefore, it says, Wake up sleeper! Get up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

When I was a child and read the Bible, I would approach understanding it the way I learned to spell or add or read geography. Anything mysterious would trouble me and most of it was mysterious. Sixteenth-century English was beautiful but obscure. When would I understand? What was the Spirit saying to me? Often I had no answers.

Today, I'm more learned than my eight-year-old self, yet when I look to my learning to tell me what the Bible is saying to me, I still find my shoulder pushing at the door of understanding. Apparently knowledge will never open that door for me. But when I pray, when I grow still and listen, God's light shines and I understand what I need to understand.

An instruction to “live my life with love and follow the example of Christ” is not difficult to understand. What's difficult is praying that the light will keep shining on me when I slip again toward the darkness, when in a moment of anger, frustration or selfishness, I choose not to live with love. Then I need to remind myself to 'Wake up, sleeper! Get away from the dark' and ask Christ to light my way.

***What practice or habits do you follow that shine the light of Christ on the way you live?***

**June 4, 2022**

**Saturday in Easter 7**

*Scripture: Psalm: 107:33-43, OT: Ezek. 36:22-27, NT: Eph. 6:10-24*

*Gospel: Matt. 9:18-26*

*Reflection by Madison Owen*

### **Psalm 107**

"God turns rivers into desert,  
watery springs into thirsty ground,  
fruitful land into unproductive dirt,  
when its inhabitants are wicked.  
But God can also turn the desert  
into watery pools,  
thirsty ground into watery springs,  
where he settles the hungry."



Photo of Seven Falls in Tucson by Michael Fitzsimmons

It is our last day of Eastertide, and our Psalm reminds us of the 40 days we spent in the desert during Lent. But we also get glimpses of the resurrection, of God taking what was dead and turning it into life.

Many of you know that I spent a year after college in Tucson, Arizona where I lived and worked in intentional christian community at Beloved in the Desert, Episcopal Service Corps. I often spent my days off hiking in the Sonoran Desert, a landscape that is totally different from these Appalachian Mountains. The desert was a dry, hot place, but it was not a barren "wasteland", as the psalmist later describes. I went into the desert starving for community, and what I found there was an abundance of God's love flowing like watery springs.

**When in your life have you experienced spiritual deserts or felt far from God? When have you felt the closest?**

## **GRACE CHURCH IN THE MOUNTAINS, EPISCOPAL**

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### **Worship Times**

#### **Sunday**

8:00am & 10:30am in person and live stream

9:15am Adult formation in person and on Zoom

Children's Sunday- 1st Sundays @ 10:30 am

Taize Service - 1st Sundays @ 7:00 pm

The Gathering Contemporary Service & Fellowship - 3rd Sundays @ 5:00 pm

#### **Wednesday**

12:00 pm Eucharist + Healing Service