

Ash Wednesday – February 17, 2021

To You We Shall Return

“Mysterious God,
morning, noon and night
reveal your creative power;
around us the whole earth cries glory.
Your presence beats in our blood,
children of creation!
Yet we go on our way deaf to the larks
above the track,
looking down into the mud
and not up into the clear sky.
And, even then, we miss the myriad small signs of
hope: crocus opening its heart to the sun,
colors of sea-washed stones, rainbows in the mist.
We despair so easily.
We say: 'Where is God in all this?'
And we deny it has any meaning.
We say: 'God is dead.'
We cannot find or feel the pulse of your life in us.
We put our shaky faith in things we have made,
we give cringing power to the institutions.
We give up on ourselves, saying: 'We are no good.'
We live in a way that says: 'There is no God.'
And the song of creation
turns to dust and ashes on our lips.
Forgive us.
Dust we are - and to dust we shall return.
But, in Jesus, you chose to share our human frailty,
to enter into our mortality in all its mystery,
to redeem this handful of dust.
We are yours - and to you we shall return. Amen.”

~ Ruth Burgess

Submitted by Dawn Garrett-Larsen

Thursday – February 18, 2021

"Faith gives us an anchor
in the raging sea,
calm in the midst of chaos,
vision to know right from wrong,
and the courage to express it."

~ Copyright from Russ Berrie and Company

Submitted by Marie Oakleaf

Friday – February 19, 2021

“Look to this day, for it is life,
the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the realities
and truths of existence.
The joy of growth,
the splendor of action,
the glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory
and tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well-lived
makes yesterday
a memory of happiness of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.”

~From the Sanscrit

Submitted by Lu & Ron Krahl

Saturday – February 20, 2021

“Faith is taking the first step
even when you
don’t see the whole staircase.”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Submitted by Carla DeMeco

Sunday – February 21, 2021

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life. Amen.”

~ St Francis of Assisi

Submitted by Amy Ogden

Monday – February 22, 2021

Leviticus 26:6

“I will grant peace in the land,
and you will lie down
and no one will make you afraid.
I will remove wild beasts from the land,
and the sword will not
pass through your country.
The Lord gives strength to his people;
the Lord blesses his people
with peace.”

~The Holy Bible

Submitted by Rhonda Nyerges

Tuesday – February 23, 2021

“One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord,
across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed
two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.
After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times
along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.
This really troubled me,
so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most
troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the
most, You would leave me."
He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and
will never leave you!
Never, ever!
During your trials and testings,
when you saw only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you."

~ Author Unknown

Submitted by Nataalee Mullen

Wednesday – February 24, 2021

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

Lao Tzu

Submitted by Rhonda Nyerges

Thursday – February 25, 2021

BURNING THE OLD YEAR

“Letters swallow themselves in seconds.
Notes friends tied to the doorknob,
transparent scarlet paper,
sizzle like moth wings,
marry the air.

So much of any year is flammable,
lists of vegetables, partial poems.
Orange swirling flame of days,
so little is a stone.

Where there was something and suddenly isn't,
an absence shouts, celebrates, leaves a space.
I begin again with the smallest numbers.

Quick dance, shuffle of losses and leaves,
only the things I didn't do
crackle after the blazing dies.”

~ Naomi Shihab Nye, *Words Under the Words:
Selected Poems*

Submitted by Jim Malone

Friday – February 26, 2021

“The Christian is in a different position from other people who are trying to be good. They hope, by being good, to please God if there is one;—or if they think there is not— at least they hope to deserve approval from good men. But the Christian thinks any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him. He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us; just as the roof of a greenhouse does not attract the sun because it is bright, but becomes bright because the sun shines on it.”

~C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Submitted by Lorena Garmezy

Saturday – February 27, 2021

Sleeping in the Forest

“I thought the earth
remembered me, she
took me back so tenderly, arranging
her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds. I slept
as never before, a stone
on the riverbed, nothing
between me and the white fire of the stars
but my thoughts, and they floated
light as moths among the branches
of the perfect trees. All night
I heard the small kingdoms breathing
around me, the insects, and the birds
who do their work in the darkness. All night
I rose and fell, as if in water, grappling
with a luminous doom. By morning
I had vanished at least a dozen times
into something better.”

~Mary Oliver

Submitted by Jay Garrett-Larsen

Sunday– February 28, 2021

“No one is born hating another person
because of the color of his skin,
or his background,
or his religion.
People must learn to hate,
and if they can learn to hate,
they can be taught to love,
for love comes more naturally
to the human heart than its opposite.”

~ Nelson Mandela

Submitted by Debbie Lyon

Monday – March 1, 2021

“Lent is
a call to renew a commitment
grown dull, perhaps,
by a life more marked by routine
than by reflection.”

~Joan Chittister

Submitted by Marilyn DeSmith

Tuesday – March 2, 2021

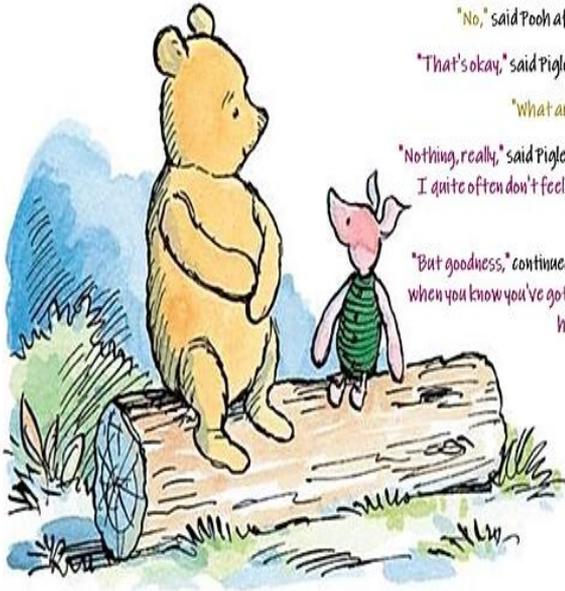
"I'd go out into a great big field all alone or in the deep, deep woods and I'd look up into the sky-up-up-up into that lovely blue sky that looks as if there was no end to its blueness. And then I'd just feel a prayer"

The quote is from Anne of Green Gables (one of my most favorite books ever) and it was written by L. M. Montgomery (Lucy Maud Montgomery). She is most typically referred to as L. M. Montgomery)

Submitted by Kelly Meath

Wednesday – March 3, 2021

Pooh & Piglet Together



"Today was a difficult day," said Pooh.

There was a pause.

"Do you want to talk about it?" asked Piglet.

"No," said Pooh after a bit. "No, I don't think I do."

"That's okay," said Piglet, and he came and sat beside his friend.

"What are you doing?" asked Pooh.

"Nothing, really," said Piglet. "Only, I know what difficult days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my difficult days either."

"But goodness," continued Piglet, "difficult days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you. And I'll always be here for you, Pooh."

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head his difficult day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little legs... he thought that his best friend had never been more right."

Submitted by Jean Landes

Thursday – March 4, 2021

Isaiah 43:2

“When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

~The Holy Bible

Submitted by Lin Case

Friday – March 5, 2021

“Look to this day,
for it is life,
the very life of life.
In its brief course
lies all the realities
and verities of existence:
the bliss of growth,
the splendor of action,
the glory of power.

For yesterday is but a dream,
and tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived,
Makes every yesterday
a dream of happiness.
And every tomorrow
vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.”

~ Sanskrit Proverb

Submitted by Cathy Brooks

Saturday – March 6, 2021

“Thank you God, for this day!
Thank you for my friends and family.
Help me to use today for good.
I am KIND.
I am CARING.
I will be gentle with my words and hands.
I will use my words
to encourage myself and others.
I am BRAVE.
I am HONEST.
I can do hard things.
Help me to remember,
I can do all things through Christ
who strengthens me.
I am LOVED and I am ENOUGH!
I am ready to go out and share my gift with the
world!”

Submitted by The Leasure Family

Sunday – March 7, 2021

“It isn’t enough to talk about peace.
One must believe in it.
And it isn’t enough to believe in it.
One must work on it.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Submitted by Betsy Gillim

Monday - March 8, 2021

“The great lesson is that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one’s daily life, in one’s neighbors, friends and family, in one’s backyard.”

~ Abraham Maslow

Submitted by Kathi Nacca

Tuesday - March 9, 2021

“May the sun bring you
new energy by day,
May the rain wash away
your worries,
May the breeze blow new
strength into your being,
May you walk gently through
the world and know it's
beauty all the days
of your life.”

~ Apache Blessing

Submitted by Laurie Stoutz

Wednesday - March 10, 2021

A Collection from Winnie the Pooh:

"You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes."

"Some people care too much. I think it's called love. "

Piglet "How do you spell love?"
Pooh "You don't spell it, you feel it."

"Sometimes said Pooh, the smallest things take up the most room in your heart."

"Rivers know this: There is no hurry. We shall get there someday."

"If a person you are talking to doesn't appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear."

"The things that make me different, are the things that make me, me."

"If there ever comes a day, we can't be together, keep me in your heart. I'll be there forever."

"Friendship, said Christopher Robin, is a very comforting thing to have."

"Organization is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it's not all mixed up."

"A little Consideration, a little Thought for others, makes all the difference."

"You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think"

"Good judgement comes from experience - and experience - well comes from poor judgement."

"Forever isn't long at all, Christopher, as long as I am with you."

~ A.A. Milne

Submitted by Linda Orrell-Fair

Thursday – March 11, 2021

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

As a child, I learned the poem: "Hearts like doors will open with ease to very, very little keys and two of these are thank you and if you please." It seems to me that courtesy is the first step on the way to the goal of Christian love. From courtesy the next natural step is respect for self and others. Through respect for others, an understanding of other's needs and goals is developed. With an understanding of other's values, compassion naturally occurs, followed by Christian love.

Perhaps this is a simplistic approach from courtesy to love, but here are a few examples of how it works. Will not a child, who holds the door for another, be an adult who allows a car to merge ahead of him or her? Will not a child, who makes friends with all children, be an adult who treats his co-workers with respect regardless of ethnic or economic background? Will not a child, who gives food to the Salvation Army, be an adult who contributes to the needs of the homeless? Will not a child who sees his church family united in serving others, be an adult who serves others?

Prayer: Dear God, give us knowledge and understanding as we seek to train our young people. Help us to show Christian love through our actions at home, at church, at work, in our community and in the world. Amen.

Submitted by Sharon Day

Friday - March 12, 2021

Reflections on Time

These past months have found us all focusing on staying healthy, and that has meant isolating ourselves, and limiting contact with family and friends.

The plus side is that we may have been able to find time for communicating in various ways with acquaintances near and far, reading, exercising, and dealing with projects which we have neglected.

I think many of us find ourselves losing track of the days, weeks and months, and wondering: Where has all of this "free" time gone?

As I've reflected on my relationship to time, a hymn which we sang in church often as I was growing up came to mind. I share it now, as we enter the Lenten season and set aside time for meditation.

It was written in the 1880's, with words by William D. Longstaff and music by George C. Stebbins.

Take Time to Be Holy

“Take time to be holy,
speak oft with your Lord;
abide in him always,
and feed on his Word.

Make friends of God's children;
help those who are weak;
forgetting in nothing
his blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy,
the world rushes on;
spend much time in secret
with Jesus alone.

By looking to Jesus,
like him you shall be;
your friends in your conduct
his likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy,
let him be your guide,
and run not before him,
whatever betide.

In joy or in sorrow,
still follow your Lord,
and looking to Jesus,
still trust in his Word.”

Submitted by Elaine Hilton

Saturday – March 13, 2021

“The way I see it
is that if you want the rainbow,
you gotta put up
with the rain.”

~Dolly Parton

Submitted by Gloria McAlpin

Sunday – March 14, 2021

Death Is Nothing At All

“Death is nothing at all.
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.
I am I, and you are you,
and the old life that we lived so fondly together
is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other,
that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak of me in the easy way
which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever
the household word that it always was.
Let it be spoken without an effort, without the
ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute and unbroken continuity.
What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind
because I am out of sight?
I am but waiting for you,
for an interval,
somewhere very near,
just round the corner.

All is well.
Nothing is hurt;
nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be
as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble
of parting when we meet again!”

~Henry Scott-Holland

Submitted by Hannah Morgan

Monday – March 15, 2021

“Home

no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbors running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.

no one leaves home unless home chases you
fire under feet
hot blood in your belly
it's not something you ever thought of doing
until the blade burnt threats into
your neck
and even then you carried the anthem under
your breath
only tearing up your passport in an airport toilets
sobbing as each mouthful of paper
made it clear that you wouldn't be going back.

you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land
no one burns their palms
under trains
beneath carriages
no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled
means something more than journey.
no one crawls under fences
no one wants to be beaten
pitied

no one chooses refugee camps
or strip searches where your
body is left aching
or prison,
because prison is safer
than a city of fire
and one prison guard
in the night
is better than a truckload
of men who look like your father
no one could take it
no one could stomach it
no one skin would be tough enough

the
go home blacks
refugees
dirty immigrants
asylum seekers
sucking our country dry
niggers with their hands out
they smell strange
savage
messed up their country and now they want
to mess ours up
how do the words
the dirty looks
roll off your backs
maybe because the blow is softer
than a limb torn off

or the words are more tender
than fourteen men between
your legs
or the insults are easier
to swallow
than rubble
than bone
than your child body
in pieces.
i want to go home,

but home is the mouth of a shark
home is the barrel of the gun
and no one would leave home
unless home chased you to the shore
unless home told you
to quicken your legs
leave your clothes behind
crawl through the desert
wade through the oceans
drown
save
be hunger
beg
forget pride
your survival is more important

no one leaves home until home
is a sweaty voice in your ear
saying-
leave,
run away from me now
i don't know what i've become
but i know that anywhere
is safer than here"

~ Warsan Shire

Submitted by Jesse Garrett-Larsen

Tuesday – March 16, 2021

"No one feels strong when
she examines her own weakness.
But in facing weakness,
you learn how much there is in you,
and you find real strength."

~ Pat Summitt, University of Tennessee Lady
Vols Basketball Coach

Submitted by Sue Hawkes

Wednesday – March 17, 2021

“May the blessing of Light be upon you.
Light without and Light within.

May the blessed sunlight shine upon you
and warm your heart till it glows

like a great peat fire so that
the stranger may come and warm himself
at it and also a friend.”

~ A Little Book of Irish Blessings

Submitted by Ron & Lu Krahl

Thursday – March 18, 2021

“God of Love, help me to take advantage of each opportunity I have to offer someone a helping hand, a kind word, a listening ear, or a pat on the back. Amen”

~ Helen Lesman (Heart Delights)

Submitted by Don Oakleaf

Friday – March 19, 2021

"Judge not a person by their family
because their family is not of their choosing.
But judge a person
by the company they keep
because the company they keep
is of their choosing."

Submitted by Connie Fredericks-Malone

Saturday – March 20, 2021

“Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
Life is beauty, admire it.
Life is bliss, taste it.
Life is a dream, realize it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is a promise, fulfill it.
Life is sorrow, overcome it.
Life is a song, sing it.
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is a tragedy, confront it.
Life is an adventure, dare it.
Life is luck, make it.
Life is too precious, do not destroy it.
Life is life, fight for it.”

~ Mother Teresa

Submitted by the Schneider Family

Sunday – March 21, 2021

Journey of Hope

For a few years we have contributed to a program that supports educational opportunities in central Asia - especially for girls. It is a dangerous area of our world without a guaranteed future of survival - let alone progress - in freeing young people to achieve their full potential. But the magazine of the organization is named *Journey of Hope*. How can anyone hope in those circumstances? So it seems extremely selfish for me to even consider the use of the word "hope" in my own life.

On the other hand if I don't embrace hope, haven't I wasted my unique position due to my privilege - as a male, as a white person, as a citizen of the United States? It seems to me that there are two kinds of hope: 1. the kind that I have no control over: "I hope it doesn't rain on our picnic tomorrow"; and 2. the kind that with some effort on my part I can bring about change: "I hope the local food bank has enough volunteers to sort the donations for distribution."

My favorite Bible verse is James 2:26: "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." (NIV) How about substituting the word "hope" in place of "faith" in this verse?

I'm writing this devotion in the hope that I will read it and even consider it! So thank you for indulging me!

Submitted by Jim Hilton

Monday – March 22, 2021

There is no night without a *dawning*
no winter without a spring –
And beyond the dark horizon
our hearts will once more sing.
For those who *leave* us for a while
have only gone away –
Out of a restless care worn world
into a brighter day.
all-greatquotes.com

Submitted by Daisy Case

Tuesday – March 23, 2021

“The Miracle of Morning”

“I thought I’d awaken to a world in mourning.

Heavy clouds crowding, a society storming.

But there’s something different

on this golden morning.

Something magical in the sunlight,

wide and warming.

I see a dad with a stroller taking a jog.

Across the street, a bright-eyed girl chases her dog.

A grandma on a porch fingers her rosaries.

She grins as her young neighbor

brings her groceries.

While we might feel small, separate, and all alone,

Our people have never been more closely tethered.

The question isn’t if we will weather this unknown,

But how we will weather this unknown together.

So on this meaningful morn,

we mourn and we mend.

Like light, we can’t be broken, even when we bend.

As one, we will defeat both despair and disease.

We stand with healthcare heroes and all employees;

With families, libraries, schools, waiters, artists;

Businesses, restaurants, and hospitals hit hardest.

We ignite not in the light, but in lack thereof,

For it is in loss that we truly learn to love.

In this chaos, we will discover clarity.
In suffering, we must find solidarity.
For it's our grief that gives us our gratitude,
Shows us how to find hope, if we ever lose it.
So ensure that this ache wasn't endured in vain:
Do not ignore the pain. Give it purpose. Use it.
Read children's books, dance alone to DJ music.
Know that this distance
will make our hearts grow fonder.
From a wave of woes our world
will emerge stronger.
We'll observe how the burdens
braved by humankind
Are also the moments that make us humans kind;
Let every dawn find us courageous, brought closer;
Heeding the light before the fight is over.
When this ends, we'll smile sweetly, finally seeing
In testing times, we became the best of beings."

~Amanda Gorman

Submitted by Dawn Garrett-Larsen

Wednesday – March 24, 2021

Be who you are
And say what you feel
Because those
who mind don't
Matter
And those who
Matter
Don't Mind.
Dr. Seuss

Submitted by Alicia Francis

Thursday – March 25, 2021

When my brother was in high school, probably in wood shop, he etched the Bible verse “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10) onto a chunk of wood to create a door stop for my grandmother.

Fast forward many years later- on a breathlessly quiet early morning, a few days after that much loved brother’s funeral, I was on my way to get the newspaper when the wind chimes played a few gentle tones. Who moved those chimes? A squirrel or a bird? I do not care-I choose to: “Be still and know”

I opened my ‘star’ word on Epiphany and found “center” as my word.

What a good word for me - a reminder for me to tune out the external chaos and quiet my internal distractions and:

“Be still”

“For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28)

Our being
“Be”

Submitted by Marty Daniels

Friday – March 26, 2021

WALK DON'T RUN

“Walk, don't run.
That's it.
Walk, don't run.

Slow down, breathe deeply,
and open your eyes because there's
a whole world right here within this one.
The bush doesn't suddenly catch on fire,
it's been burning the whole time.

Moses is simply moving
slowly enough to see it.
And when he does,
he takes off his sandals.

Not because
the ground has suddenly become holy,
but because he's just now becoming aware
that the ground has been holy the whole time.

Efficiency is not God's highest goal
for your life,
neither is busyness,
or how many things you can get done
in one day,
or speed, or even success.

But walking,
which leads to seeing,
now that's something.
That's the invitation for every one of us today,
and everyday, in every conversation,
interaction, event, and moment:
to walk, not run. And in doing so,
to see a whole world right here within this
one."

~Rob Bell

Submitted by Delana Hey

Saturday – March 27, 2021

“If you can’t fly then run,
if you can’t run then walk,
if you can’t walk then crawl,
but whatever you do
you have to keep moving forward.”

~Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Submitted by Alicia Francis

Palm Sunday – March 28, 2021

“Beautiful Savior!
King of creation!
Son of God and Son of man.
Truly I'd love Thee,
Truly I'd serve Thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows,
Fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flowers of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer,
He makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine,
Fair is the moonlight,
Bright are the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter,
Jesus shines purer,
Than all the angels in the sky.

Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of man.
Glory and honor,
Praise, adoration,
Now and forever more be Thine.”

~Joseph Augustus Seiss

Submitted by Denise Morphy

Monday – March 29, 2021

“Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous;
and give thanks
at the remembrance
of his holiness.”

~Psalm 97: 12

Submitted by Bill Blaker

Tuesday – March 30, 2021

Lent is a time of listening, of letting God speak to us. When Jesus needed to be close to his heavenly Father, he went alone into the wilderness.

This Lenten season we need God's quiet presence more than ever after months of distancing and uncertainty.

We pray for the overworked medical and emergency workers, the families, teachers, caregivers. We are concerned about health and the healing and forgiving we need as in Jesus' day.

“Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea -
Day by day his sweet voice calls us,
saying Christian follow me.”

We can find God's love and peace in our hearts through MUSIC.

We're thankful for our singing Pastor Dawn and the youth and all in our church who share their gifts of music.

You lift our spirits and inspire us. Heavenly music like Mozart and Faure's "Requiem" and the hymns we sing can now all be downloaded on our iPhones.

When we are anxious “Be Still my Soul”
calms us and God is with us as we seek Him
in “Nearer my God to Thee.”

People the world over sing “There’s a wideness
in God’s mercy.”

Twenty years ago our church welcomed a
persecuted family from warm west Africa to
snowy Canandaigua.

The mother, a pastor, sang our same hymn
tunes in her language from her well-worn
hymn book.

We shared and learned from each other and
attended their citizenship ceremony. (They are
well and we are blessed.)

Help us, O God, in troubled times.
“Precious Lord, take my hand.”

Submitted by Mary Lou Mees

Wednesday March 31, 2021

***“This is the day that the Lord hath made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.”***

King James Version, Psalm 118, Verse 24

Every Sunday, when I was a young child in Mrs. Ault’s Sunday School, Mrs. Ault would begin our worship gathering with this verse. I can still picture her standing in front of our group in the large Sunday School room, sitting in a semicircle around her, in the child sized chairs meant just for us.

I think of this as an inspirational verse. I try to remember it in the morning, the start of the new day. It especially helps for difficult days, with hardship or worry or sadness. It is good to pause and remember this verse and take that moment to think about the new day the Lord has given me and take that moment to try and improve my outlook, to be grateful that God has given me this day to see a new path, find new strength.

And throughout any day, just a glance out the window, or being outside with nature will bring this verse to mind. To see a beautiful fresh snowy scene, the green of fresh spring leaves, the morning sunbeams glimmering on the lake, or the full moon rise, I am reminded that this is

the day that the Lord has made. And I do rejoice at the wonder of it all.

In reviewing the psalm in my own King James Version, it both begins and ends with another familiar verse, “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth forever.” Those are certainly words of hope to remember at any time.

I hope Mrs. Ault would feel rewarded that this verse has remained with me all these years, and that it gives me comfort and hope, and that so frequently, it inspires wonder at this beautiful creation of God. I hope that reminding you of this verse will bring occasion for renewed hope and wonder for you.

Of note: I went online to check where to find this bible verse and found that I am not alone in thinking of it. There are songs, story books and much, much more, that I did not have time to even glance at, that are brought up by just typing in Google “This is the day.”

Submitted by Tarry Shipley

Maundy Thursday – April 1, 2021

“Hatching of the Heart:”

A Personal Maundy Thursday Story

I grew up in Rochester’s First Presbyterian Church, now a part of Downtown Presbyterian Church. I was a feisty, inquisitive child who broke the mold of first borns wanting to please.

I tried the patience of many adults including Sunday School teachers. With much later hindsight, however, I came to realize during these early years, I had been given the gifts of grace and loving acceptance.

The same pastor who nurtured my early church beginnings saw me through Confirmation Class. He too was patient. A stumbling block for me, in spite of cognitive explanation, was the Eucharist/Communion.

This continued into my adult years; in fact, it became quite stuck in my craw.

Fast forwarding to the early 1960s, Jim and I found ourselves back in Rochester where he practiced law for a brief time. We returned to First Presbyterian Church.

It was in that sanctuary during a Maundy Thursday Communion service that I had an epiphany, a light of understanding: the meaning and power of the Eucharist hit me full

force. It was deeply personal; I was at that
Passover meal with Jesus and his disciples. I
had ‘passed over’ to a new level of faith and life.

“Do this in remembrance of me” was no longer
‘out there’.

Rather, it had become snugly tucked within my
heart.

Then, as now, Holy Week still holds betrayal
and Good Friday but when the heart has
hatched* with the hallelujah of love, we know
the promise of Easter Sunday, will be soon to
come.

This Maundy Thursday, 2021, let us celebrate
the varied and unique ways, both ordinary and
dramatic, in which all our hearts can hatch into
the hallelujah of resurrection.

*Hatching of the Heart is a term first used by
Marcus Borg

Submitted by Mickey Ely

Good Friday – April 2, 2021

People are often unreasonable, irrational,
and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you
of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some
unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere,
people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating,
others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness,
some may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

Give the best you have,
and it will never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

You see, in the end, it is between you and God.

It was never about them anyway.

~ Mother Teresa

Submitted by Kathy Ward

Holy Saturday – April 3, 2021

Scripture states, “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh shall be opened”

~ Mathew 7: 7-8

Several years ago as I was reading about George Washington Carver, I was reminded that he was the famous American agricultural scientist whose lifetime of research resulted in a multitude of peanut products. This passage came to mind as I read the theme of his explanation for his discoveries --- “God put them here and I found them.”

Like Carver, as we examine this very moment in our lives, our next breath, minute, hour, day, and week rest in God’s open hands. Who knows the discoveries awaiting us if we too knock, ask, receive, seek, find and act.

Submitted by D. Guy Burns

Easter Sunday – April 4, 2021

“This is the day:
When tears are wiped away,
Shattered hearts are mended,
Fears are replaced with joy.

This is the day:
When the Lord rolls away the stone of fear,
Throws off death’s clothes,
Goes ahead of us into God’s future.

This is the day the Lord has made:
Death has no fear for us,
Sin has lost its power over us,
God opens the tombs of our hearts
To fill us with life.

This is the day – Easter Day!
Christ is risen!
Hallelujah!”

~ Ruth Burgess

Submitted by Dawn Garrett-Larsen