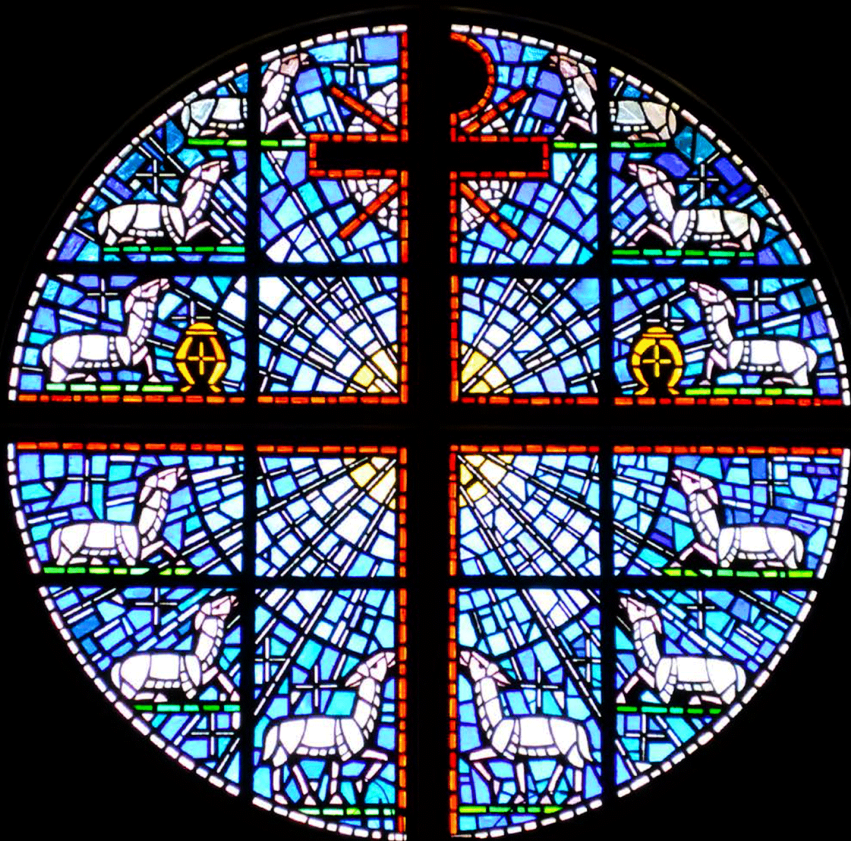


LENTEN 2021

DEVOTIONAL



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN NORTH PALM BEACH

Lent & Easter

The Lent tradition began in the 3rd and 4th centuries of the early church and is a 40-day season of preparation and repentance in anticipation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter day. In repentance, prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, and then Easter celebration, we follow Jesus to the cross, and rejoice in His resurrection. Following Lent, the Church celebrates Easter- not just on one day, but for a whole season! Beginning on Easter Sunday, the Christian community rejoices in Jesus' victory over death for a full 50 days.

Whether you are only beginning to explore the claims of Jesus, or have been a Christian for quite some time, Lent and Easter are perfect seasons to allow God to shape your life around the cross and empty tomb of Christ in fresh ways.

How to Use This Prayerbook

This prayerbook is laid out in an easy-to-use format; it will guide you day-by-day through the Lenten and Easter seasons. Each Monday through Friday, there is a simple pattern for prayer and Scripture reading, with prayers for the week and questions for reflection to guide you as you read, think, meditate, and pray. In addition, members of our community have written short reflections on the "I Am" passages in John, which our church is exploring this Lent. These are offered on the weekends, along with drawings based on those texts that have been created by the children and teenage students in our community.

-Jared Ayers

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021



Made of Dust

*“By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”*
(Genesis 3:19)

Opening prayer:

O God, who made us from the dust of the ground, open our ears to hear Your word. May it take root in the soil of our hearts and bear fruit. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 5-6

Think or discuss:

Which part of the reading stands out to you? How does it help you to connect with God?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Thursday, February 18, 2021



Opening prayer:

O God, who made us from the dust of the ground, open our ears to hear Your word. May it take root in the soil of our hearts and bear fruit. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 7

Think or discuss:

Which part of the reading stands out to you? How does it help you to connect with God?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Friday, February 19, 2021



Opening prayer:

O God, who made us from the dust of the ground, open our ears to hear Your word. May it take root in the soil of our hearts and bear fruit. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 8

Think or discuss:

Which part of the reading stands out to you? How does it help you to connect with God?

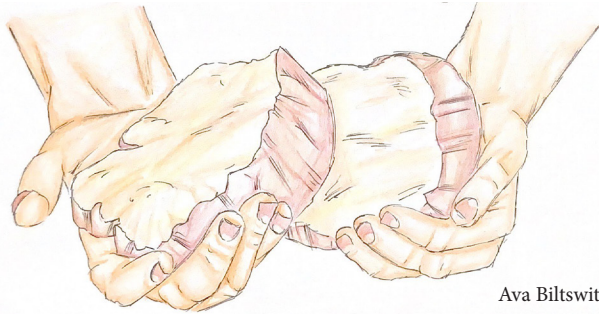
Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Saturday, February 20, 2021



I Am The Bread of Life



Ava Biltswitch, 8th grader

***“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry,
and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.”***

(John 6:35)

During this unique season of Covid 19 and the subsequent lockdown, many individuals have taken up new hobbies and shaped fresh interests. One such pursuit is the baking of bread. This activity lends itself well to a variety of metaphors relating to life. First, bread has long been considered the staff of life, because of its nourishing and sustaining qualities. In its making, bread takes the touch and labor of human hands. It gives the individual an opportunity to be involved in the process of making one's own food, while personally selecting and using the healthiest and purest of ingredients.

In the process of its creation, it goes through a journey of transformation dependent on time, temperature, and the active spark of yeast. The bread dough is mixed, pummeled, folded, formed and rested before it is baked, served and shared. The goodness to come is sensed by the alluring aroma flowing through the air.

When Jesus spoke to His followers and announced the first “I Am” statement in the Gospel of John, he did so in the context of having fed the multitude of five thousand fish and bread. Jesus fed people who knew bread, not as a luxury, but as the most basic of foods. Jesus, teaching to the gathered crowd the very next day, led them to the truth of being fed.

“You want to be with me because I fed you... you shouldn’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that I, the Son of Man, can give you. For God the Father has sent Me for that very purpose.” (John 6:27)

The perishable bread Jesus gave to the multitude gave temporary nourishment, but He was the only one who could provide nourishment and fullness for their souls. Jesus says, “***I am the bread of life***. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.” (John 6:35)

To a first century follower of Jesus, an “***I Am***” statement would have significant meaning since God revealed Himself to Moses with an “***I Am***” statement. (Ex. 3:14) We are able to refer to Exodus once again and capture the image of manna raining from heaven – ***the bread of life***, or the food that sustained the Israelites in the wilderness. And, of course, we cannot pass over the sacrificial words Jesus spoke after He blessed and broke a loaf of bread into pieces, and shared it with the disciples the night before His crucifixion – “Take it and eat it, for this is my body.” (Matthew 26:26)

As we make bread, eat bread, break and share bread, let us feast upon the precious and wonderful gift of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who can provide spiritual fullness for the soul, for He is the true ***Bread of Life***.

*Dear heavenly Father, Thank You for Your dear son Jesus, the embodiment of
Your compassion and care. We pray to continue to abide in Christ, so we may be nourished
by the fullness of His teaching and the power of Your inspired word. Amen.*

Annie Dougherty



Sunday, February 21, 2021



“I am the bread of life.”
(John 6:48)

When we look back at the Bible, we see that bread was an essential part of the Middle Eastern culture. When Jesus says “I am the bread of life,” He simply means that we are not satisfied or filled spiritually unless we know Him. As bread is essential for life, so is Jesus. He is not referring to physical life but eternal life because He is spiritual bread that brings eternal life. This statement is the first of the 7 “I Am” statements in John’s Gospel and it is important to note how it is the covenant name of God which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush. Jesus is making another claim to deity and speaks of self-sufficient existence which only God possesses.

When I read this statement it makes me think of eternity. The Bible tells us that there is nothing we can do to earn our way into heaven because we have all sinned. As sinners, we have desires that we cannot fulfill no matter what we do. That is where Jesus comes in. He can fulfill that desire in our hearts for righteousness. When Christ died on the cross, He took the sins of mankind upon Himself and made atonement for them. When we place our faith in Him, our sins are attributed to Jesus, and His righteousness is attributed to us. Jesus satisfies our hunger and thirst for righteousness. He is our Bread of Life.

***Dear God, We thank You for giving us Your righteousness
and providing us with the Bread of Life. Amen.***

Behailu Gooley (high school senior)



Monday, February 22, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O, Jesus, Bread of Life, feed us on Your word this week. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 9

Think or discuss:

How has Jesus fed you with His word today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Tuesday, February 23, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O, Jesus, Bread of Life, feed us on Your word this week. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 10-11

Think or discuss:

How has Jesus fed you with His word today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Wednesday, February 24, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O, Jesus, Bread of Life, feed us on Your word this week. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 12

Think or discuss:

How has Jesus fed you with His word today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Thursday, February 25, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O, Jesus, Bread of Life, feed us on Your word this week. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 13-14

Think or discuss:

How has Jesus fed you with His word today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Friday, February 26, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O, Jesus, Bread of Life, feed us on Your word this week. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 15-16

Think or discuss:

How has Jesus fed you with His word today?

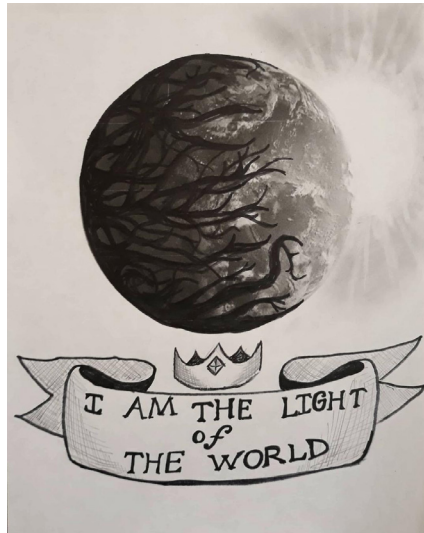
Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Saturday, February 27, 2021



I Am The Light of The World



Cade Crisafi, 9th Grade

***“When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said. ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”
(John 8:12)***

Have you ever been afraid of the dark? I was. I lost my fear after my Sunday school teacher gave me a small picture of Jesus. When the light was turned off, a glow-in-the-dark cross appeared. It reminded me that Jesus was always with me.

In Jesus' third sermon, He told the crowd that "I am the light of the world." John spoke about Jesus as "The true light that gives light to everyone. . ." (John 1:9.) A true light doesn't lead us astray or into danger. Jesus is the light we may trust wherever we are and whenever we are in any form of darkness.

During Lent we look at the darkness in the world caused by sin. However, it's more important to look inside our hearts to see our own need for the Light of the world to guide us. We are people of the light, so let's move out of the dark. Hold tightly to Jesus as He gives light to our paths. Rely on Him. He promised that His followers will never walk in darkness.

That is wonderful news!

*Dear Jesus, Thank you for bringing Your light to this world.
Please help me to see my own sins that You paid for on the cross,
and help me to live joyfully in Your glorious light. Amen.*

Ruth Sweetman

Sunday, February 28, 2021

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said. 'I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"
(John 8:12)*

Discovering...and an Admonition

Mrs. Supplee said, "I enjoy teenage boys, football, horses, golf and God!" That sounded pretty good for beginnings! This was said by a Sunday school teacher greeting me as a new member.

I had a caring and active Christian home, but our church Sunday school program was, at best, nominal. Hence, a cousin invited me to join his Sunday school group. He said Mrs. Supplee was a neat lady and led a great group of high school aged boys; in fact about half of our football team.

That was the real beginning of my pathway of faith. Mrs. Supplee and the gang rearranged my life's journey and helped me begin to see and experience the "light of the world." My teenage life had a new beginning of **Discovering**. It continues as the decades roll by.

Saturday's football plays and scores and other sports activities started each Sunday morning class. This was until she said "Okay, guys, Let's talk about the real scores of life," and off we would go into biblical discovery.

Practically every Sunday morning ended with her quoting 2 Timothy 2:15 which is etched on my brain. The words are:

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

And Mrs. Supplee would close by saying: “Okay, guys, perform your roles knowing you are behavioral examples to all who see you and ...don't screw up! The world and beyond is watching!”

So far, so good, Mrs. Supplee. Thanks so very much! ...and my Discovering continues.

Dear Lord, Thank You that those who teach the Bible to young believers share Your light and help them discover Your truth. Help us reflect Your light to the dark world around us as we walk in Your way. Amen.

William Smedley

Monday, March 1, 2021

Opening Prayer:

O Jesus, You are the Light of the World. May Your light shine ever more brightly in our hearts that all our darkness may be enlightened. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 17-18

Think or discuss:

How does the light of God's word encourage you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

Opening Prayer:

O Jesus, You are the Light of the World. May Your light shine ever more brightly in our hearts that all our darkness may be enlightened. Amen.

Read Luke 19-20

Silence

Think or discuss:

How does the light of God's word encourage you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Wednesday, March 3, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O Jesus, You are the Light of the World. May Your light shine ever more brightly in our hearts that all our darkness may be enlightened. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 21

Think or discuss:

How does the light of God's word encourage you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Thursday, March 4, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O Jesus, You are the Light of the World. May Your light shine ever more brightly in our hearts that all our darkness may be enlightened. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 22

Think or discuss:

How does the light of God's word encourage you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Friday, March 5, 2021



Opening Prayer:

O Jesus, You are the Light of the World. May Your light shine ever more brightly in our hearts that all our darkness may be enlightened. Amen.

Silence

Read Luke 23-24

Think or discuss:

How does the light of God's word encourage you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Saturday, March 6, 2021



I Am The Good Shepherd



Olivia Rykse, 7th Grader

"I AM the Good Shepherd."
(John 10:11)

Psalm 23

The greatest gift I received as a young child was from my mother. Each night, when she'd tuck me into bed, she'd read Psalm Twenty-three. Over the years, this Psalm has been a great comfort as I've walked the shadowed paths of life. I am reminded that the Lord is near, He cares for me, and continues restoring my soul from the many trials and traumas I've experienced.

In Bible times, kings were often called shepherds. When King David wrote this Psalm, God used His experience as a young shepherd to tell the Israelites of a greater Authority over them, declaring, “Yahweh is my Shepherd. . .” By this, he acknowledged the God* of Israel, the “I AM Who I AM,” as his Shepherd-King.

Jesus used similar language to identify himself when he proclaimed, “I AM the Good Shepherd.” He fulfilled the promise of Ezekiel 34. In that passage, God pronounced judgment against the shepherds, Israel’s leadership, for not caring properly for His people. He said, “. . . For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold . . . I myself will be the shepherd of My sheep . . . I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed . . .”

As we prepare to celebrate the risen Savior, it is encouraging to know that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, seeks us out and pursues His children with goodness and mercy. Our Shepherd-King took the rod of punishment we deserve. He died on the cross to forgive our sins and overcame death so we can live with Him forever!

*Yahweh’s name is most often translated as LORD, because it is considered too holy to be pronounced.

(See also Exodus 3:13-14; Ezekiel 34:11-16; Matthew 18:12-14.)

Sarah Keith



Sunday, March 7, 2021



“I AM the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me.”

(John 10:14)

“...the sheep listen to His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.”

(John 10:3b)

Since I married Freddie, a farmer and cattleman, I have learned some things (sometimes more than I need to!) about livestock. Freddie always says that sheep are truly “dumb animals.” If you go to a livestock auction and they are running sheep to the pens, some of the workers will play with the sheep by holding a cattle prod or cane about 10 inches off the ground. The first 4 or 5 sheep will jump over it and then it will be removed and all the rest of the sheep will jump in the same spot. They will always follow the leader.

I think about this picture and say “how stupid,” but then I realize, we too, are like these sheep! We will follow along, sometimes down the wrong paths and sometimes, thanks be to God, the good path.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11a). Follow Me and you will lay down in green pastures and I will lead you beside still waters. (Psalm 23:2) As the Good Shepherd, I will lay down My life for my sheep. (John 10:11b). Isn't this exactly what our Good Shepherd did for us? He laid down His life that we might be freed from the wages of sin and have life everlasting. My, my, how could we ask for anything more?!!

Dear Heavenly Father, our Great Shepherd, I pray that You will continue to lead us through paths of righteousness every day and that You will continue to bless us and may we be a blessing to You. In your Son's precious name. Amen.

Gail McGhee



Monday, March 8, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we are silly sheep and we need You to rescue us from trouble, care for our hurts and show us the way each day. Help us to follow You step by step each day this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 1

Think or discuss:

How does your Good Shepherd encourage you in this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Tuesday, March 9, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we are silly sheep and we need You to rescue us from trouble, care for our hurts and show us the way each day. Help us to follow You step by step each day this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 2

Think or discuss:

How does your Good Shepherd encourage you in this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Wednesday, March 10, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we are silly sheep and we need You to rescue us from trouble, care for our hurts and show us the way each day. Help us to follow You step by step each day this week. Amen

Silence

Read John 3

Think or discuss:

How does your Good Shepherd encourage you in this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Thursday, March 11, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we are silly sheep and we need You to rescue us from trouble, care for our hurts and show us the way each day. Help us to follow You step by step each day this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 4

Think or discuss:

How does your Good Shepherd encourage you in this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Friday, March 12, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, Good Shepherd, we are silly sheep and we need You to rescue us from trouble, care for our hurts and show us the way each day. Help us to follow You step by step each day this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 5

Think or discuss:

How does your Good Shepherd encourage you in this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Saturday, March 13, 2021



I Am The Gate



Lindsey Murray, College Freshman

***“I am the gate.”
(John 10:9a)***

Shepherds tending their flocks. . .

Even in the 21st century there are sheep and shepherds all over Israel. You don't have to go far to see a flock following a shepherd as they look for food, water, and shelter. Those of us fortunate to have traveled with Dr. Jim Martin on his study trips will never forget our Bible lessons involving sheep. One vivid recollection is a visit to a sheepfold---a primitive stonewalled enclosure around a shallow cave in the rocks. After roaming all day, the shepherd would bring his sheep to a sheepfold at night for rest and protection rather than making the long trek home. These were scattered all around the countryside. When all the sheep were inside, the shepherd slept across the only opening in the wall.

What a glorious example of our Heavenly Father...our Good Shepherd! Not only does He lead and feed us day after day, but He also protects us while we rest. Whatever shape our allegorical sheepfold is, our Shepherd is the guardian of it. He has literally given His body as our protection and salvation.

***“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.” As we head toward the Cross and Easter,
I pray that we always remember that the one who faithfully guards us is our Keeper of the Gate.”***

Joanna Robinson Hogan

Joanna's son, Tom Robinson writes:
by night. . .

While we were with Dr. Martin at the sheepfold, he told us about a fascinating possibility. From Jewish records we know that there were designated shepherds, in the surrounding villages of Jerusalem, whose flocks were raised specifically to become sin offerings sacrificed by the Levite priests at the Temple. Bethlehem would have been within this region.

Therefore, it is possible that the shepherds, who were among the first told about the birth of Jesus, were raising sheep whose entire purpose was to be sacrificed on the altar to atone for the Israelites with God according to the Mosaic Covenant. Could they have even imagined that the child's birth they were being told about would become the final and complete sin offering, the Lamb of God, who would permanently restore the fractured relationship separating humanity from our creator?

Dear Lord, We lift our voices in praise to You as the Lamb of God and as the Keeper of the Gate. We are grateful for Your final sin offering on the cross and for restoration of our relationship with you. May we sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." Amen.



Sunday, March 14, 2021



"Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep."

(John 10:7)

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.

He will come in and go out, and find pasture."

(John 10:9)

Jesus came for you and me. I am one of the sheep who needs His protection, guidance, provision, rescue and love. "All we like sheep have gone astray." (Isaiah 53:6). I, too, have gone off, thinking I know what I need, but He gently and clearly shows me the better way out or in. I am grateful for His forgiveness and sacrifice for me.

"His own sheep knew and responded to his voice. He led (not drove) them to fresh grazing, and guarded them from wild animals by lying across the entrance to the sheepfold at night, so becoming its 'door'" (or gate). Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible, page 542.

Often Scripture tells of animals in its lessons. We read about cattle, camels, the horse, sheep and goats, doves and sparrows. One of my favorite songs is "His Eye is On the Sparrow" (and I know He watches me) by Civilla D. Martin, Charles H. Gabriel, gospel composer, 1905. I don't have to earn God's love and care. He already knows, accepts and forgives me, because He is the great "I Am." God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." (Exodus 3:14), I believe He will lead me like all His sheep. He is the gate, and I think that gate is also the gate of admittance to heaven and eternal life, because of His sacrifice, not anything I have done. My faith is in Jesus.

Thank You, Lord, for bringing Jesus to us and to me, that we may know Your care and love, no matter what the day brings. As our adult children say, "I love You, too." I love You, Lord, through Jesus. Amen.

Alice Cochrane Swartout



Monday, March 15, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, You are the gate by which we enter into life and blessing. May we enter with joy and gratitude into life with You this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 6

Think or discuss:

How can God's word in this passage be a Gate to life for you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Tuesday, March 16, 2021



Jesus, You are the gate by which we enter into life and blessing. May we enter with joy and gratitude into life with You this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 7

Think or discuss:

How can God's word in this passage be a Gate to life for you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Wednesday, March 17, 2021



Jesus You are the gate by which we enter into life and blessing. May we enter with joy and gratitude into life with You this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 8

Think or discuss:

How can God's word in this passage be a Gate to life for you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Thursday, March 18, 2021



Jesus, You are the gate by which we enter into life and blessing. May we enter with joy and gratitude into life with You this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 9

Think or discuss:

How can God's word in this passage be a Gate to life for you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Friday, March 19, 2021



Jesus, You are the gate by which we enter into life and blessing. May we enter with joy and gratitude into life with You this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 10

Think or discuss:

How can God's word in this passage be a Gate to life for you today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world



Saturday, March 20, 2021



I Am The Resurrection and The Life



Briley Crisafi, High School Senior

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”
(John 11:25)

My story is a little bit different from some others. I always knew who Jesus was and what He did for me and for everyone reading this today. He died for us so we could go to Heaven with Him forever. And it doesn't get any better than that. God is our only hope, and I learned that in late July of 2019. I grew up going to church with my family just about every Sunday. When you're young, it is really hard to understand the pastors at your Church. I would always draw on all the papers, drawing a hand turkey or spider-man or even an animal. Anyway, as I got older, I wanted to accept Jesus into my heart. When I was about 8 or 9, I did accept Christ in my heart. But, I didn't produce fruit, I didn't know what I actually believed. I did pray to God every night and asked for help when I needed it. But we are on earth to bring people to Jesus to share His word. We are God's workers. And we work in Love.

So two summers ago, I went to a camp at my Church called Fun Arts Camp. It was the final day of camp and we always started each day with a talk from our youth pastor for that week. His name was Ben and he played an important role in my decision to follow Christ. Ben was on the stage that day and I had no idea what was about to happen. We focused on a verse in the Bible, and we focused on the words “Through Him.” Ben told all the kids to bow their heads and listen to what he was about to say. Ben said “If you are not a believer and want to believe, lift your head.” I did not lift my head. He then said “If you say you believe, but you don't feel like you actually believe, and want to make that decision, lift your head.” I hesitated, but lifting my head was the best decision I had ever made. Everything clicked. John 11:25 says, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die.” God gave me a new life and His resurrection and changed the way I believe and think. I never cried so much in my life. Those tears were for my happiness of becoming a child of Christ. I felt the Spirit of Christ flow through my body. If you can imagine what that was like, it was the best feeling you could ever get. I would do anything to have that amazing feeling again.

But now, I am a true believer. I know who Jesus is because that one moment, on that early Friday morning, it seemed as if I knew Christ my whole life, and I would never ever turn back. Later that day, Ben gave me a Bible. In the Bible, he gave me a note. The note said, “Wylie, This Bible is given to you out of love. It has transformed my life, because it tells of Jesus' power. Christ is our only hope and I pray that you have confidence about your decision to follow Christ. He has you in His arms and He will never let you go. Trust in Him always.”

My story isn't over yet and neither is yours. So today, go out and think about that note. Today, tomorrow, and all the days of your life, through Him.

Wiley Inman (7th grade)



Sunday, March 21, 2021



***“I am the resurrection and the life.”
(John 11:25)***

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important event in all of history. It is the centrality of the Christian faith.

When Jesus spoke to Martha, saying, “I AM the resurrection and the Life,” he was revealing that the resurrection and the life are one in the same. He was declaring that apart from the belief and faith in Christ Jesus, there is no eternal life. Jesus does not just Give Life to the believer, it is Jesus who IS LIFE and for that reason, death has no power over him. It is our loving and merciful Savior who then bestows upon the children of God that same power, that “Whoever believes in me, though he dies, YET SHALL HE LIVE.”

What an absolutely beautiful example of God’s love and favor to His children!

He tells us time and time again that He wants to spend eternity with us. He so loved the people of this world; you and me, our children, our families, our neighbors and even our enemies, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the supreme validation and affirmation that through a life of obedience to the Father, God the Almighty, we will be rewarded with the most beautiful of gifts; triumph over death, the resurrection of our souls, the ascension to Heaven and life eternal!

My Prayer for you brethren is this: May you have eyes to see and ears to hear of the great love our Lord has for each and every one of us and that through our faith and obedience in the Lord, ‘the I AM’, that death is defeated! Amen.

Marissa Johnson



Monday, March 22, 2021



Jesus, by Your triumph over death You have brought life to all of us who have been dead in our spirits. May we gratefully receive Your life in our souls this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 11

Think or discuss:
How does Jesus bring you new life as you read this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Tuesday, March 23, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, by Your triumph over death You have brought life to all of us who have been dead in our spirits.
May we gratefully receive Your life in our souls this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 12

Think or discuss:

How does Jesus bring you new life as you read this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Wednesday, March 24, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, by Your triumph over death You have brought life to all of us who have been dead in our spirits.
May we gratefully receive Your life in our souls this week. Amen .

Silence

Read John 13

Think or discuss:

How does Jesus bring you new life as you read this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Thursday, March 25, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, by Your triumph over death You have brought life to all of us who have been dead in our spirits.
May we gratefully receive Your life in our souls this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 14

Think or discuss:

How does Jesus bring you new life as you read this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.

Friday, March 26, 2021

Opening Prayer:

Jesus, by Your triumph over death You have brought life to all of us who have been dead in our spirits. May we gratefully receive Your life in our souls this week. Amen.

Silence

Read John 15

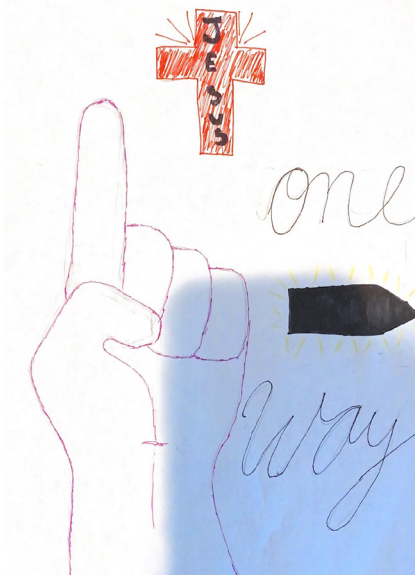
Think or discuss:

How does Jesus bring you new life as you read this passage?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.

Saturday, March 27, 2021

I Am The Way and The Truth and The Life



Sienna Johnson, 2nd Grade

Eliyanah Cohen, 7th Grade

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

(John 14:6)

“They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”

(2 Timothy 4:4)

As Christians, raising a family in a broken world is supposed to feel nearly impossible. I have always known that this world, as it appears, is not as it ought to be. I’m incredibly grateful to be part of a family who sees through the same lens and thus desires to continue to cling to the ideas presented in Philippians 4:8 “...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.” Seeking these elements of Truth caused me to “turn off” pop culture a long time ago. In fact, I remember a friend back in elementary school giving me the ashes of a popular boy band poster as a gift because she knew how unappealing it all was to me. Seeing through the slanted propaganda of the media didn’t just creep up this year, it has been a sort of poison to me for quite a while.

Conversely, I crave filling my eyes and ears (and those of my children) with things that are inspirational, innocent yet powerful and awesome. It doesn’t mean that I turn a blind eye to the truth; on the contrary, I believe in knowing and teaching it. I also believe that there is a time, a place and a season for all things. My kids need to know the truth; but I hope to be able to help explain it to them daily through a biblical worldview and not rely on a system that has declared evolution to be highly academic while creationism is treated like a myth. As parents, it is our job to feed our kids the good stuff. So in preparing our families for tomorrow, I encourage you to study yesterday. Together. Today.

Heavenly Father, I pray that You fan the flames of revival in our nation, starting with the hearts of Your followers who have been sleeping for too long. Help us to keep a holy Sabbath in our homes that would restore us and prepare us for every tomorrow. Thank You for holding our hands and being the way! In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Piper Crisafi

Sunday, March 28, 2021

“I am the way, the truth and the life.”

(John 14:6)

In this passage, Jesus is telling the disciples that by knowing Him, they also know the Father.

The way to the Father is through Jesus, because He is both God and man. This tells us there is a pathway to God in Heaven, through Jesus. In accepting Jesus and trying to live lives worthy of Him, we receive

that pathway. While I accepted Jesus at age 12, there have been times when I have felt close to Him and times when I moved away. Those days I moved away were, indeed, rockier, than the days in which I fully accepted Him and followed His path. I have learned to:

Trust Jesus. Each day, it is important to commit our trust to Jesus in showing us the path, the way, instead of taking off in our own direction. I have found that God has a much better plan for my life than that which I could envision.

Pray. Even while we are on earth, Jesus promises He will act on our behalf if we pray “in Jesus’ name” and according to His will. Prayer synchronizes our will with that of the Father and we can see and act according to His plan.

He is truth, because He is the fulfillment of prophecy and God’s promises. Jesus says He is the Law and the Word, equating Him with God, the source of truth. It is important that we:

Confess our sins. If we follow God’s Law and confess when we deviate from it, He promises to forgive us.

He is life. Jesus promised He goes to prepare a place for us in eternity, with Him. Our lives are intertwined with our Father in this life and for eternity through Jesus. We can believe these promises and look forward to Heaven.

The path to accepting Jesus can be instantaneous or lengthy, but the result is profound. To love and know Jesus, we are also knowing and loving our Father, the Creator of the universe, the Alpha and Omega.

Father, help us to know Jesus and thus You, more clearly, to love You more dearly and to act in accordance with Your plan for us in this life and for eternity. Help us to follow Jesus in love for others, shining Your light into other lives, while on this earth. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Meg Brown



Monday, March 29, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, You are the way, the truth, and the life. May we walk in Your way, know Your truth, and let Your life flow through us. Amen.

Silence

Read John 16

Think or discuss:

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Tuesday, March 30, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, You are the way, the truth, and the life. May we walk in Your way, know Your truth, and let Your life flow through us. Amen.

Silence

Read John 17

Think or discuss:

How can God's truth in this passage show you the way to life in Jesus today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Wednesday, March 31, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, You are the way, the truth, and the life. May we walk in Your way, know Your truth, and let Your life flow through us. Amen.

Silence

Read John 18

Think or discuss:

How can God's truth in this passage show you the way to life in Jesus today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, You are the way, the truth, and the life. May we walk in Your way, know Your truth, and let Your life flow through us. Amen.

Silence

Read John 19-20

Think or discuss:

How can God's truth in this passage show you the way to life in Jesus today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Good Friday, April 2, 2021



Opening Prayer:

Jesus, You are the way, the truth, and the life. May we walk in Your way, know Your truth, and let Your life flow through us. Amen.

Silence

Read John 21

Think or discuss:

How can God's truth in this passage show you the way to life in Jesus today?

Pray for ourselves, our families, our community and the world.



Saturday, April 3, 2021



I Am The Vine



Jacen Crisafi, 7th Grader

“I am the vine.”

(John 15:1)

As I sit in a pew every time I enter our beautiful sanctuary and gaze at our stained glass window, I am reminded “Who the Vine is.” As I look at the window, it puts me at peace as well as taking me to another place, another time, in an experience I never dreamed I would have.

I am forever grateful to First Pres, Lucky and Dr. Jim Martin for the privilege of traveling to Israel. Growing up, going across the world would never have entered my mind, yet there I was and loving every minute of it.

As I look at our stained glass window, it immediately takes me to a vineyard in Israel; it was an early, chilly, misty morning. The sun had not yet decided to get up. Jim read the passage from John 15 and began to explain the passage. The Vine is the main thing. Little twigs and branches that do not produce fruit are clipped away, so that the strength of the vine can pass on to the fruit bearing branches. It was interesting that he said, the “useless branches and twigs” were not really useless. They were placed like a hedge around the perimeter of the vineyard to prevent varmints from entering the vineyards. Was he saying, no one is useless? Some folks are used for one reason as others are used for another reason. Everyone has a purpose.

Jesus said, “If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” (John 14:7)

“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (John 14:8) Jesus is telling each and every one of us, that He is strong enough as our vine to bear all our needs. We just have to trust, love and know Him.

Betty Percy



EASTER Sunday, April 4, 2021



***“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you,
you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”***

(John 15:5)

In a previous Wednesday night class on Spiritual Formation, we studied the passage of John 15:4-11. We used the lectio divina (sacred reading) style to read and meditate on these eight verses. The theme for the study was “remaining” or “abiding” in Jesus. As part of the process of reading and meditating on this passage, we also journaled each day how we remained in Jesus.

The words spoke a great deal to me as I realized God was asking me to remain in Him with the promise that He would be in me. He wanted me to sit with Him, walk with Him, and to trust Him. He wanted me to recognize that I could not do anything without Him. The “fruit” that I would bear would be joy, peace, and strength as I remained in Him. I had to, and still do, consciously work hard at remembering to remain in God in the midst of activities and circumstances.

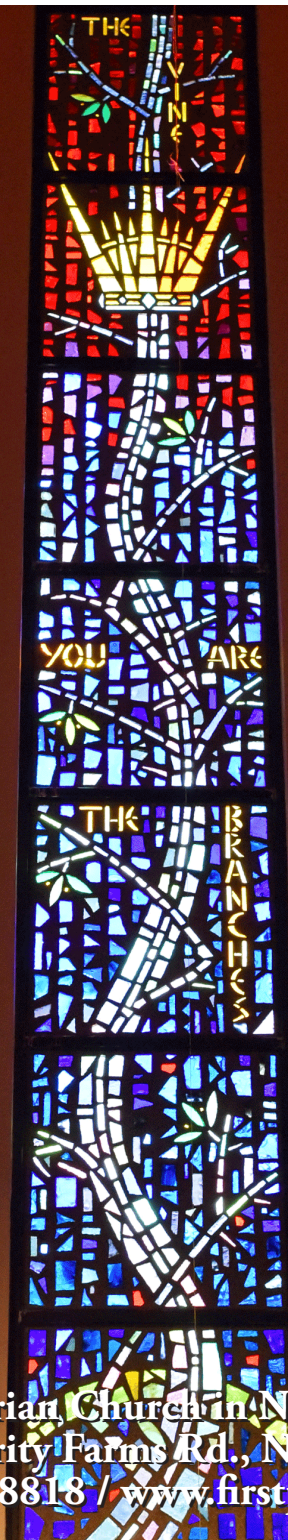
I realized, too, that I do not want to be a “branch” that doesn’t remain connected to God on the vine. I do not want to be cut off and thrown away! As I remain connected to God by prayer, reading His Word, sitting still with Him and trusting Him, He provides wisdom, discernment, strength, peace, and joy.

I felt God asking, “How can you live out your role as wife, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter, friend, coworker, mentor, or neighbor if you don’t sit still with Me? How can I use you to love and encourage others if you don’t remain in Me? How can you do anything without Me?

As I’ve learned to stay connected to God, I have become more aware of His presence and working in my life. The chorus of the hymn, “Like a River Glorious,” is so true: “Stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blest, finding as He promised, perfect peace and rest.”

*Dear God, thank You for the promise that as we remain in You, You will remain in us.
May we find joy in our connection as branches to You, our Vine. Amen.*

Catherine Hilliard



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