

Lenten Devotional 2026

Wabash First United Methodist Church



A Breakthrough Prayer for Lent

Bishop Julius C Trimble used to tell me and my colleagues - *“Little prayer, little power. Much prayer, much power. More prayer, more power!”* Lent is many things, but above all it is an invitation to connect with the Ultimate Power, our God. Together, we put a little ‘more prayer’ into our life, and watch for what our powerful God seeks to do.

Along with this devotional, I invite you to join in a Breakthrough Prayer practice to connect us with God’s powerful dream for our congregation. Every day before you go to bed, join the whole congregation in praying the Breakthrough Prayer above. Then the next day, watch for the opportunities God makes for us in answering our prayer.



Lenten Circle Group Plan

1 - Gather with your group. You can gather in a living room, a coffee shop, a restaurant, after a bike ride, on a walk, in a barn, at a church, online - you decide. Just make it regular, at least six times between now and mid-April.

2 - One person serves as Host (take turns each week). Host opens each gathering time with a prayer.

3 - If you have more than four people, divide into 2 or more groups

Check in:

What was the high point of your week?

What was the low point?

When did you notice God at work?

What is one thing you want prayer for next week?

4 - Either stay in your small groups or gather as a larger group (if applicable) to read the Scriptures and talk about the Sunday Transformational Practice questions.

5 - If you have extra time, talk about some of the practices, such as your fasting, praying the Breakthrough Prayer each night, worshiping, or other practice you have taken on for Lent. How is it going? What are you learning?

6 - Determine who is going to be Host next week.

7 - Host leads in praying the Breakthrough Prayer for Lent together.

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:12-13 NIV *“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.*

This scripture is a very comforting one: *“He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.”* We follow a God who is more patient with us than we could ever deserve. He loves us and wants us to see the best for us, which we can achieve by following Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

He asks us to always come back to Him, even after we may have strayed from Him for long periods of time: “Even now.” God gave Joel this message after Israel had rebelled against Him for a long time. We can take comfort knowing that God will always welcome us back if we: “return to Him with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” We must return to The Lord with genuine repentance in our heart and a desire to turn away from where we have been and he will always welcome us back with open arms.

Prayer: God, please guide me as I begin this Lenten journey thinking about your cross. Help me to return to you with all my heart every day, so that you can flow through me with your love for others. Amen.

Joseph and Abby Mitchell

Thursday, February 19, 2026

A Clean Heart

Psalm 51:10 – “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

During the season of Lent, we are called to “give up, forego, and repent” certain things that are sins or sinful in nature. One of those that tends to be challenging is to maintain a “clean heart.”

We may find it hard to forgive, to offer grace, and not pass judgment in challenging times with others. This is difficult for all humans as we tend to hold grudges or judge others, many times unfairly. Ultimately, these feelings become a burden on us, weighing us down and taking our focus off the good, the pure, the positive things in life and sharing our Faith with others.

The Psalmist writes, pleading to God to create a clean heart, because it is through Christ we can find a path forward to clean our heart of those feelings, the negative perceptions or thoughts, and ultimately find a way to forgiveness. If we can forgive, the burdens lift, the sun comes out and our Joy and Hope become infectious to those we come in contact with daily. In Christ, we find true Hope and Joy and our world needs more of that today than ever.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, this Lenten season, help us find Peace, Joy and Hope through the forgiveness Christ offers. Help each of us to find a way every day to work toward a “clean heart.” Provide us the space to take time each day to think about those issues that put some “dirt” on our hearts and give us the ability to “let them go.” We pray that You cleanse our heart, mind and soul. Thank you for blessing humans with the ability to forgive, to love and care for one another. During these challenging times, we pray that you remind us to show grace, peace and love toward others. In Jesus’ gracious name, Amen.

Howard and Kari Halderman

Friday, February 20

The Garden

Matthew 6: 33-34 *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore; do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Words by Rev. Doug Duerr inspire us: “Our God is always present and comforting when we pause and consciously enter the garden of our soul. And we listen to the comfort and connection of this magnificent universe.

In the garden of our soul, we are both the Gardener and the Steward of the sacred soul. We plant the seeds of our intentions, dreams, and aspirations with care. We till the soil with our hopes while nurturing it with faith.

Yet no garden and flourish without attention to weeds that inevitably appear. By weeding and getting rid of whatever is no longer needed, we can make space for new growth to ensure that our garden remains healthy and vibrant.”

“I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses...
And He walks with me
And He talkies with me
And He tells me I am his own.
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.”

Ken and Karen Purdy

Saturday, February 21

Daniel 9:3 *“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes.”*

The Bible does not mention the custom of Lent per se. However, the practice of repentance, fasting, and mourning in ashes is found in several scriptures such as the one above in Daniel. Early Christians felt that the importance of Easter called for special preparations, i.e., the 40-day period of fasting and spiritual devotion in preparation for Easter. The three pillars of Lent are Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. Self-reflection, simplicity, and sincerity are emphasized during the Lenten season.

I am a strong believer in knowing that God has a plan for me and I live by that belief. During this Lenten season, reflect through your prayers on your talents, your flaws, and how you can fulfill God's plan for you in today's world. Ask for repentance of your imperfections and for the strength and the will to overcome them. Imitate Christ's sacrifice on his 40-day journey through fasting or sacrificing a favorite habit. These efforts will help to ensure the joyous celebration of Easter.

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for this Lenten season in preparation for the coming of Christ's resurrection. Help us to live within Your plan for us through prayer, sacrifice and giving of ourselves. Amen

Susan Beckett

Sunday, February 22, 2026

First Sunday in Lent

The Meaning of the Cross: The Great Exchange

Isaiah 53: 5-6

5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.*

6 *All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

Transformational Practices -

Take some time today to think about the idea that on the cross, Jesus Christ exchanged his righteousness for our sin to satisfy the demands of justice, so that we can be in 'right relationship' or 'true and healthy connection' with God, others, ourselves, and the earth.

Questions for Lenten circle or personal reflection:

- What do you think about the idea that evil is caused by an entity - the Satan - who holds all creation hostage?
- What does this say about the power of evil vs the power of God?
- What does living in true and healthy connection to God mean to you?
- What is one evil you would like to see defeated? What is one action you could take to make something right?

Offer your own prayer of thanksgiving to God today.

Take time to worship (offer 'worth-ship' to God) whether with Wabash First, another faith community, with your friends/family, or with creation.

Monday, February 23, 2026

Temptation

Matthew 4:1-11 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. 2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. 3 The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."*

4 *But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

5 *Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,'*

and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

7 *Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'*

8 *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, 9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,*

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

11 *Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.*

Just as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, it shows he was human. And just like Jesus we will also be tempted. Like for pleasure, riches, power and many more things. That being said, we need to stay diligent in God's word, prayer and unconditional love for others. We need to give God our all, our time, to study his word and reflect on ourselves and how we are living and if it is pleasing to God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your Son, Jesus. Lord, please be with us, just as Jesus was tempted so will we, but strengthen us to resist temptation just as your Son did. Let us remember how Jesus dealt with the devil and his words to him "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only." Thank you, Father. We pray all this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Jody Short

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

We can afford to Love

1 John 4: 11-12 *Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

With the beauty of the snow, it is nice to go outside and look at the landscape and have a deep, clean breath. We, however, know that we can quickly go back inside when we are chilly or in the summer, escape the heat. That contrast likely makes it easier to appreciate.

There are so many in our world and our community who do not have that luxury. Everyday we hear of people fleeing, people looking for safety and shelter, looking for warmth. In our community we see tents by the river, cars and vans that provide a place of shelter, individuals walking the streets and hoping there is an open lobby at night or a secluded park bench. The beautiful outdoors may not hold the same appeal when there is no escape to a comfortable home away from the elements.

Jesus also was not always comfortable or had a place to lay his head. He knew what it was like. It is the heart of Jesus to seek and save the lost.

Is it difficult? Is it convenient? Is it comfortable? Might it be emotionally expensive? Just like we all are: difficult, not always easy to love; expensive. Yes, our homes may be full, our finances may be low and our hearts already broken. But still there are those among us who are lost and not seen and have not been shown or told about the love of Jesus and their worth as a child of God. Yes, the world will always be filled with the poor, the unseen and the lost, but the kingdom is built one home, one meal, one smile at a time and we should be there.

This next section I love so much and am giving credit to author Penelope Wilcock: “You know, there is a way of being with people that helps them come home whatever their circumstance may be. Maybe you cannot always mend a broken situation, but you can make them a home in your heart. By the choices you make and the person you become, you can

weave the fabric of welcome and reconciliation. It's the love that makes a building a home and not a prison and it's the love that sets people free instead of driving them away. With Jesus by our side, may we boldly seek where we can show His love. We can afford to love."

Prayer: Holy God, you tell us quite clearly that you are Love. Help us to make space today to show love, especially to those unseen. Open our eyes to your image in others. In Christ, Amen.

Angie Beauchamp



Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Fight the Good Fight

1 Timothy 6:12 *“Fight the good fight for what we believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses.”*

In this verse, Paul urges Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” and that faith is lived with intention and perseverance and is not against people, but anything that pulls our hearts away from Christ. The “good fight” is worth fighting, because its goal is faithfulness to God.

In 1981, the Canadian rock band, Triumph, wrote a song “*Fight the Good Fight*” related to this verse, which was one of their biggest hits. Many remember a portion of the verse/chorus lines:

“The Good Book says it's better to give than to receive
I do my best to do my part
Nothin' in my pockets, I got nothin' up my sleeve
I keep my magic in my heart

“Fight the good fight every moment
Every minute, every day
Fight the good fight every moment
Make it worth the price we pay
Every moment of your lifetime
Every minute and every day
Fight the good fight every moment
Make it worth the price we pay”

Prayer: Father, give me the strength to fight the good fight of faith. Help me stand firm when I feel weak and remain faithful when the road is hard. Teach me to trust You fully and to take hold of the eternal life You have given through Christ. Amen.

Mark Ford

Thursday, February 26, 2026

God = Love

1 John 4:7-8 NIV Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

My favorite Christmas hymn is *Away in the Manger* written by Martin Luther. Yes, I know this is a Lenten devotional and not an Advent devotional, but it is that little baby we sing of so sweetly that would become the ultimate sacrifice for my sin and yours. While the first two verses speak of that little baby, the third verse reminds me that while connecting with God's love myself, I must also reflect His love in my treatment of others.

The third verse is really a prayer. I hope you will pray this prayer with me during the Lenten season and beyond.

"Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me I pray." – Yes, Lord, I know that You are always with me and how much You love me, but sometimes I need that little nudge of a reminder in hard times or even when I become busy and complacent.

"Bless all the dear children in thy tender care" – I remember that we are all Your children, and I should love and care for each of them whether they be a newborn or one hundred years old. Whether they know that they are Your child or not. Not always easy, but we know that true love comes from You, that You are Love.

"And take us to heaven to live with thee there". – Help me to shape my heart to reflect Your heart. Helps me to remember and to reflect to others the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for me. It is only because of that loving sacrifice that heaven is even a possibility for me.

Prayer: Dear God of Love, help us during this Lenten season to grow in Your Love and to reflect Your loving nature to others. Thank You for loving us so much more than we can ever deserve. Amen.

Tammy Whitenack

Friday, February 27, 2026

Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13 *“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

7 *“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him 9 “Pray, then, in this way:*

Our Father in heaven,

may your name be revered as holy.

10 *May your kingdom come.*

May your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 *Give us today our daily bread.*[\[c\]](#)

12 *And forgive us our debts,*

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 *And do not bring us to the time of trial,*

but rescue us from the evil one.

Reading through this passage of scripture, it gives us a good look at how we should pray to God. I broke it into two parts. The first part is verses 5-8. This is the foundation of how we should pray. Meaning, we are told the way we can have the most vulnerable moment with God and only God.

The second part is verses 9-13, which we know as the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is a great ending to a prayer that I pray to God because it reminds me that God does miracles and will help me and whom I pray for, along with it being balanced with asking God for help so we can become the best Christians we can be. To add, I find the Lord's Prayer as a reminder that God is always with us and continues to forgive us, though we sin every single day.

As we go through Lent, let us open ourselves to prayer. A challenge that I am going to take on is being vulnerable with God through prayer. I

plan to pray on my knees with my arms stretched wide, asking God what I need to let go and what I should replace it with before Lent begins, along with praying to God on what needs work in my life during the Lenten period.

I challenge everyone who conquers this devotional to do the same.

Pray: when you are on a walk, at the gym, in the car, whatever that may be to you. Just take it as an intentional conversation with the Lord our God.

Take time to be focused, taking a step further in your faith by getting uncomfortable, and see what God has in store for you during this Lenten time.

Prayer: Make a list of things on a piece of paper that you want to take to the altar. Take a couple moments with your eyes closed and take a couple deep breaths and pray whatever comes to mind, and what you wrote down. End the time by reading Matthew 6:9-13, which is the Lord's Prayer.

Asia Miller



Saturday, February 28, 2026

Proverbs 17:22 *A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

We realize that during Lent, the prevailing thought is to give something up. One of the main detractors in our relationship with others, (includes family, employer, best friends, etc) is having a negative attitude.

So during this Lenten season give up those negative thoughts and actions. To help you with that, here are a couple of thoughts you can write out and tape to your mirror so that as you start your day, you have a reminder.

“A healthy and joyful attitude is contagious, but don’t wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier!!”

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows.” Helen Keller

“A positive attitude is not a destination. It is a way of life. “

Our prayer during this season of Lent is that you “give up” those negative thoughts and: BE POSITIVE and PASS IT ON !!

Prayer: God, thank you for giving us the possibility of cheerful hearts even in the midst of troubling times. Help us to keep our eyes on you. Amen.

Dave & Jane Mann

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Second Sunday in Lent

The Meaning of the Cross: Christ Lived It All

1 Corinthians 15:20-22 **20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. **22** For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Transformational Practices -

Think about the idea that Jesus Christ is the new Adam, living all the things that human beings have to live. Only unlike Adam, without sin. Christ did not overreach in greed as Adam and Eve did.

Christ did not 'trespass' the boundaries as Adam and Eve did. Christ 'hit the mark' of a good, whole and perfect human life in complete surrender to the Creator, even to giving up his life for his friends.

As we trust in Christ, our life is joined to his 'perfect' life, and we too get a 'do-over' that leads through death to abundant life.

Questions for Lenten circle or personal reflection:

- What does it mean to you that Christ 'got human life right as God intended?'
- What parts of life do you find difficult to imagine Jesus 'living through, though perfectly?'
- What in your life do you struggle to believe that someone like Jesus would understand?
- How do you connect with people who seem to shine more brightly with Christ's life?
- What are your thoughts and emotions about living in 'perfect submission?'

Offer your own prayer of thanksgiving to God today.

Take time to worship (offer 'worth-ship' to God) whether with Wabash First, another faith community, with your friends/family, or with creation.

Monday, March 2, 2026

Hope in the Wilderness

Romans 5:3-5 *“Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us...”*

Hope is often misunderstood as optimism - expecting things to turn out well. However, Paul’s hope grows out of suffering, not bypassing it. His kind of hope doesn’t come quickly. It trusts that God is still with us, even though the evidence is hard to see.

It is this kind of hope that we all need right now. We are going through perilous times in our country and in the world. We are overburdened with the potential destruction of a world order we have come to take for granted.

I have lived long enough to experience the pride of living in a country that welcomed “the tired, the hungry, the huddled masses yearning to be free.” That pride I experienced whenever I was in Paris and viewed the small Statue of Liberty facing West toward our nation, a symbol of shared values. I am distraught over what we are losing.

I feel that now we are wandering in a wilderness of doubt about who we are as individuals and as a nation, and innocent people are suffering. Many of those affected are demonstrating stamina in the face of great adversity while they reveal the character to stand up against their persecutors. The same can be said for the thousands of people who stand with them.

What we need now is to recognize the hope that God offers, asking us to trust that He is still at work. That is the hope that Paul offers.

Kathy Geible

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Endurance

Romans 15:5 *“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had...”*

In my twenties, I had the joy of living on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the little town of Ocean Springs. There’s a bridge over the Gulf of Mexico that connects to the neighboring Biloxi beachfront. When Hurricane Katrina wiped out the bridge, they built it back up and included an entire walk/run/bike lane. I was a pretty avid recreational runner and I immediately put it in my head that one of my goals would be to run the bridge from Ocean Springs to Biloxi and back.

To do this in the oppressive heat of summer, I’d need to get up super early. I set an alarm for 3:45am and headed out to tackle the bridge. To my surprise, I had the endurance to get to the Biloxi side pretty quickly. I told myself, *I’ll just keep going a bit further.*

Suddenly, I found myself standing in front of the beachfront Biloxi mall, about 5 miles from the base of the bridge...*how did I get this far? And now, I have to run back!* As I turned to start home, I asked God to give me the strength to beat the heat and humidity that would come quickly with sunrise. Each mile brought other runners or walkers who shouted out words of encouragement. It was just the push I needed to make it back.

The season of Lent and the winter months can feel a bit like, *how do we get back to the other side from the weariness. Can I make it?* I often need the reminder that I am not alone, just like I did on the day of my epic beach run. God will give me the endurance and encouragement—if I look for it and seek it.

So often, our WFUMC church family has been God’s encouragement to me which spurs me on to ask *how can I be that for others?* We’re not alone on the run, friends. May God, encourage you and give you the strength where you need it most today and in this season.

Prayer: God, You are our Sustainer. You desire to provide for us and to equip us. Help us to set our hearts and minds on you. Thank you for all the ways your encouragement and endurance shines through from your light at work in others and help us to strive to join in to be light and encouragement where those around us could use it most. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Stephanie Riebe

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Vulnerability

Matthew 26:39 Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, “My *Father*, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want. You, what do you want?”

According to AI, Lent topics center on spiritual renewal, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, alongside themes of repentance, self-examination, and preparing for Easter by following Christ’s journey through sacrifice and deeper devotion. Thanks, AI. I was not expecting to explore spiritual renewal. Prayer, yes. Repentance, yes. Spiritual Renewal...no. That requires vulnerability. In my head, spiritual renewal is about being honest with myself. It’s thinking about my prayer life, reflecting on how I treat others, examining my study habits, and accepting that I will always have room to improve.

As much as my own vulnerability makes me uncomfortable, Christ took vulnerability to a whole different level. In his prayer at Gethsemane, Jesus demonstrated his vulnerability by acknowledging his desire to get out of the situation and yet in the next breath setting aside his well being and asking God what he wants. What courage! Which leads me to wonder, do I have the courage to be vulnerable like Christ demonstrated vulnerability?

Let me be clear, Christ is the only one who needed to be vulnerable enough to take on the sins of the world. But I wonder, how would our world be different if we all had the courage to be more vulnerable with ourselves? If we could accept our thoughts, feelings, delights, and failures, would we be more likely to accept and value those of others? How would that impact our families, our children, our marriages, our community? Do I have the courage to be vulnerable with myself and God, treating myself with kindness, so that I could spread kindness to the world?

Prayer: Almighty God, you made us wonderfully, knitting together our thoughts from the beginning. Grant me the courage to be honest with myself so that I can be vulnerable with you. Amen.

Ann Higgins

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Psalm 146:5-6 *Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. 6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— he remains faithful forever.*



Outside our family room window is an empty nest. It's tucked deeply inside a large boxwood bush, invisible to any casual observer, but easily seen from our inside view. It is barren and uncared for amidst a cold winter, but soon the snow and ice will be gone. With the arrival of spring a pair of robins will once again appear and start sprucing up their home, awaiting the arrival of a new set of babies.

Soon Momma robin will lay two or three precious little blue eggs, which she will lovingly tend while Dad brings her daily food. Eventually sweet unfeathered babies will hatch. Now Mom and Dad together will take turns searching for food which they jointly supply until the little ones are old enough to fly on their own.

Each year we watch this miracle unfold as the bitter winter evolves into a much anticipated spring and new life. In the same way, God brings each of us through our own winter season of health issues, broken relationships, grief or despair into a spring of joy and new possibilities.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, that when we experience a hardship in life, you are always there to faithfully bring us through to happier times.

Sue Gray

Friday, March 6, 2026

Psalm 121 *1 I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come?*

2 My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

*3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.*

*4 He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*5 The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.*

*6 The sun shall not strike you by day
nor the moon by night.*

*7 The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.*

*8 The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.*

The large old wooden doors of our church could not be opened by a three year old child. But the vision of stained glass windows and Jesus holding a lamb were worth asking for help to enter. Then hymns sung by the whole congregation like “When Morning Gilds the Skies,” “Sweet Hour of Prayer,” or “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” filled the space with song. From that beginning my heart has been filled with music.

This week has been a difficult one for Steve and me with the death of Jim, Steve’s younger brother, and my upcoming hip surgery. We are thankful for family, surgeons, our church, and so much more. Change happens; just a part of living. I am also thankful for all the songs embedded in my memory.

Prayer: This weeks song that I’m singing over and over in my mind is Psalm 121:

*I will lift up my eyes to the hills,
From whence does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and Earth.*

Esther Keffaber

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Be still

Psalm 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God.”*

Lent calls us into stillness in a world that is constantly loud. We fill our days with noise, schedules, and worries, often without realizing how little space we leave for God. This verse does not ask us to do more, but to pause—to be still and remember who is in control.

Being still is not always easy. When we slow down, we may notice fears, doubts, or unanswered questions rising to the surface. Yet God meets us in that quiet. Stillness becomes a place of trust, where we learn to release our need to manage everything and rest in God’s presence.

As we walk through Lent, we are invited to practice small moments of stillness—turning off distractions, sitting quietly, and listening. In these moments, God gently reminds us that we are not alone, and that His love remains steady even when life feels uncertain.

Prayer Gracious God, Help me to be still and to trust You more deeply. Quiet my heart and my mind so I may know Your presence. Teach me to rest in You during this Lenten season. Amen.

Angel Hostetler

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Third Sunday in Lent - Daylight Savings Time Begins

The Meaning of the Cross: Greater Love

1 Peter 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

John 15:9-13 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

Transformational Practices -

Think about the possibility that Christ’s death was not so much a payment for sin to satisfy God’s need for justice but rather an ultimate expression of God’s greater love offered to inspire humanity to repentance and greater love for God, others, creation and self.

Questions for Lenten circle or personal reflection:

- What does Christ’s death on the cross say to you about God’s greater love for you?
- What is the connection between his offering his life and the way love is meant to work in the world?
- When have you experienced a love greater than you deserve? How did that love impact your life?
- Who is God inviting you to love as Christ loves you? What help do you need?

Look in the mirror. Remind yourself that God loves you with a greater love.

Take time to worship (offer ‘worth-ship’ to God) whether with Wabash First, another faith community, with your friends/family, or with creation.

Monday, March 9, 2026

A Time for Reflection

Matthew 11:28-30 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*



Lent is a time for reflection, self-examination, and spiritual renewal. As we journey through life, let us always be reminded of our need to rely on God. The noise and conflict in the secular world today can leave us feeling worried, fraught and in disagreement. But Jesus’ invitation is clear: “Come to me...I will give you rest.”

What does it mean to find rest in our world? It’s probably not about escaping from the world but about encountering God in the midst of our lives. With God’s help, we can find peace even in the noisiest of places. As we experience the world we know today, we should take a moment to simply pause, breathe and listen to Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, I am weary of the noise and discord in the world today. I come to You seeking peace. Help me trust Your presence and provision. Remind me that with all its drudgery, the world is still a beautiful place and Your gift of life is surely a treasure. Amen.

Mike Beauchamp

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

God does not forget us

Isaiah 44:21 *I the Lord, made you, and I will not forget you. (NLT)*

I sometimes forget things. Usually, names of people I don't see frequently. Other times it might be dates, times, passwords or where I put things. Since I know this, I compensate by making notes in my phone and calendar, creating to-do lists, having consistency where I put things, or just asking my wife. With our busy lives, it seems like we all have a lot to remember.

Through all this what I also seem to forget is that God has got this, whatever "this" is at the time. Whether it's something minor like remembering a name, or something much more monumental going on in our lives; God is in control. We should all trust him with showing us a path through.

I know God always remembers me. And he does this with mercy and grace. So whenever we encounter struggles, let us also take that time to remember him.

Prayer: Forgive me, God, when I forget to remember you. Amen.

Dan Ford

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Mark 4:30-32 *[Jesus] also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."*

Mark 4: 30-34 tells the Parable of the Mustard Seed, where Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a tiny mustard seed that grows into a large plant with branches, offering shelter, illustrating how God's kingdom starts small but becomes expansive and influential providing a home for many, offering a place of rest and shelter for people from all nations.

When the season of Lent arrives we sometimes feel overwhelmed with the idea of what can I give up that could possibly compare to Jesus giving up his Human life? As events happen in our daily lives we can feel the strain of trying to put our relationship with God before family and professional demands.

We are disappointed that we are not successfully giving something up or starting something new during the Lenten season. So instead of just giving something up for Lent (knowing that forgiveness awaits) perhaps we can look to the words of Jesus and the parable of the mustard seed.

Jesus offers a kind reminder to keep on the path despite being tired and imperfect. Jesus also offers encouragement to our souls and assures us that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed we can still grow our bond with God. The growth of our faith can happen if we just have an ounce of faith the size of the tiniest seed-the mustard seed. Lent reminds us to trust God and give time to expand our faith with small acts during Lent, such as meditation, prayer, fasting, etc. The goal is growth in our spiritual lives even if not perfectly done.

Prayer: Dear Lord, please watch over us and know that even though our acts start out the size of mustard seeds we have in our hearts a faith that will flourish and grow over time. Amen.

Dave and Sandy Haist

Thursday, March 12, 2026

John 18: 33-38 *Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him."*

Truth is one of the most important treasures in our life. We have to have meaning and a purpose. Finding meaning in life is like climbing Jacob's ladder, every rung goes higher and higher and the names of these rungs are humility, love, honesty, and faithfulness. When we accept Christ, an inner light is given. It is a real understanding of where meaning is found. Jacob's ladder reaches from where we are now to where we can climb. We can be set free by Christ.

The second truth is an influence on others and the next truth is our time. We all have time and it must be used wisely. There are some things we know to be true. Our most valuable assets are: our lives, our influence and our time. Our knowledge of what builds up and what tears down.

Prayer: Our Father, help us to use our time wisely in helping and building up others. Thank you for giving us our lives to build your kingdom.

from Ailie Cassiday's sermon on March 13, 1977 at Carnegie UMC
Submitted by Pat Cassiday

Friday, March 13, 2026

Giving and Grace

Philippians 4: 8-9 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

Oh Lord...
We humbly bow before our secret place...
and thank Thee for the bounty of Grace.
Teach us to value most, eternal things...
To find the happiness that giving brings.
To know the joy of misty, distant hills...
To know the joy that giving self fulfills...
...To realize anew with each new day...
The things we keep are those we give away.

By Mary Lou Green
Submitted by Kathy Doran

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Psalm 46:10 - *Be still and know that I am God*

Lent invites us into a time to slow down and turn our focus back to God. Be Still & Know - to calm our anxious hearts and trust in the God who has greater plans for us than we could ever imagine.

We can Be Still in a few different areas in our life. For example, Physically, we can take the time of Lent to rest, reset, and relax. Mentally, we can calm our anxious minds and be present in the moment. Spiritually, we can spend more time in prayer and grow closer in our relationship to God.

In our personal lives, *Be Still* has meant being patient in the waiting, letting go of the need for control, and being present in our current circumstances. *Know* has meant trusting in the plan God has for us in every season. It's knowing that God is a good God, even when life is not, and knowing that God is walking through every season of life with us.

This verse - Psalm 46:10 - started showing itself in a multitude of ways in our lives at the beginning of December during a time of hardship. We had experienced a miscarriage and felt our world turning into chaos and loneliness at the same time. But God kept reminding us of this verse in the forms of a sticker in the back of a phone case that has been there since 2023, a magnet that has been on our fridge for months, a makeup bag, and hearing the song *Be Still* by The Fray for the first time.

All of these encounters were God's way of showing us that He was with us in a time where it originally felt like He wasn't. When your thoughts consume you or you feel God is far from you during this time of Lent, will you take the opportunity to Be Still & Know that He is God?

Prayer; Dear God, When I become overwhelmed by worry and feel the need to be in control, help me to Be Still & Know that you are God. To trust that You have greater plans for me than I could ever imagine. Help me use this time to grow closer to you. Amen.

Jackson and Ally Beery

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Meaning of the Cross: Honor to God

Philippians 2: 1-11

Transformational Practices -

Take some time today to chew on the idea that the cross restores honor to God the Almighty. God's perfection requires perfect obedience from his creatures. We have disobeyed, thus bringing shame to our 'lord' who now rightfully demands compensation.

Since all we have comes from God and no matter how hard we try, we cannot be perfectly obedient, there is nothing we can give God to repay the debt of honor that we owe. Christ, on the cross, obeyed perfectly even when asked to die. His death compensates God's honor and gives us the 'merit' of his sacrifice.

Questions for Lenten circle or personal pondering:

- What do you think about the idea of sin as dishonoring to God?
- What does it mean to you to honor God?
- What does this view of the cross say about God?
- In what ways do you experience human disobedience?
- In what ways do you observe or experience suffering as a result of human disobedience?

Do something this week to give honor to God.

Take time to worship (offer 'worth-ship' to God) whether with Wabash First, another faith community, with your friends/family, or with creation.

Monday, March 16, 2026

Ephesians 5:1-2 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

He healed the sick and made the lame to walk.
He turned water into wine and fed the masses,
 Calmed the seas and raised the dead.
And they rejected Him.

He loved the children and blessed the poor;
Understood human frailty and elevated lowly women.
He supped with friends and restored an ear.
And they nailed him to a cross.

He prayed to His Father and saved a thief;
Remembered His mother and suffered without protest.
He gave His body and His blood.
And He forgave us all.

Then, Sunday came – glorious Sunday!
And women found an empty tomb.
Thomas became a believer, and Peter received love and grace.
And we all did, as well, on that glorious Sunday,
 One Easter many years ago and every day after.

This Jesus - our Lord and Savior, the Son of God.

Prayer: God and father of our Savior Jesus, have mercy on us today.
Show us the way to follow You today. Amen.

Phyllis Downey

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Colossians 3: 11-12 *Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

St. Patrick's Breastplate Prayer

A prayer that Patrick is reported to have prayed in the morning in order to remember to 'put on Christ.'

As I arise today,
may the strength of God pilot me,
the power of God uphold me,
the wisdom of God guide me.
May the eye of God look before me,
the ear of God hear me,
the word of God speak for me.
May the hand of God protect me,
the way of God lie before me,
the shield of God defend me,
the host of God save me.
May Christ shield me today.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit, Christ when I stand,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

“Worthy is the Lamb”

Revelation 5:12, 13 *In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”*

Each school year two of my choral ensembles sing at a local church for their worship service. My students enjoy singing for this service and worshipping together. One of the songs we are preparing this year is Phil Wickham’s “Hymn of Heaven.” As we were rehearsing the song, a student raised her hand and asked a question about the lyrics “worthy is the Lamb who was slain.”

What an opportunity to share the miraculous redemption story. As I began to explain the lyrics several students within the ensemble also chimed in with explaining what God through Jesus Christ sacrificed for us. What a blessing this rehearsal became sharing with this student the amazing hope we have in Jesus.

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain” is a profound declaration of praise which signifies Jesus Christ’s ultimate worthiness to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. It marks the heavenly scene in Revelation where the sacrificial Lamb is recognized for redeeming humanity. We owe so much to our Savior for His ultimate sacrifice to save us and give us a life of redemption and the hope of eternal life with Him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the ultimate sacrifice you made for me to live as a redeemed sinner, forgiven and blessed with grace and an eternal life with You. Help me to always honor and praise you for your presence in my life. Holy, Holy is the Lord. Amen.

Karol Evenson

“Hymn of Heaven” by Phil Wickham

How I long to breathe the air of Heaven-
Where pain is gone and mercy fills the streets
To look upon the One who bled to save me-
And walk with Him for all eternity

(Chorus) There will be a day when all will bow before Him-
There will be a day when death will be no more

Standing face to face with He who died and rose again
“Holy, holy is the Lord”

And every prayer we prayed in desperation-
The songs of faith we sang through doubt and fear
In the end, we’ll see that it was worth it-
When He returns to wipe away our tears

And on that day, we join the resurrection-
And stand beside the heroes of the faith
With one voice, a thousand generations-
Sing, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain’
‘Forever He shall reign’

So let it be today we shout the hymn of Heaven-
With angels and the saints, we raise a mighty roar,
Glory to our God who gave us life beyond the grave

Holy, holy is the Lord

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Who is your Guide?

Psalm 25:4-5 *"Make me know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day."*

Have you ever been texting on your "smart" phone when autocorrect steps in and changes what you are trying to say? That's exactly what happened to me. In fact, the text message I was sending was, "God is leading me in another direction." And without proofing my text first, I hit send. The recipient of my text received "Guide is leading me in another direction." Normally I find autocorrect to be a nuisance, less than helpful, but this time I paused to reflect. Yes, God is my Guide!

I seek God in prayer several times a day; before my feet hit the floor in the morning, while standing at the sink washing dishes, when a family member, friend or acquaintance shares a concern, before meals, while on the road driving, and before bed. This Lenten season, my goal is to walk closer with God through prayer and I invite you to join me.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come to You in prayer, seeking Your guidance. Help us to grow closer to You through prayer not only today, but every day until You call us home. May our faith in You be strengthened by our devotion to prayer with You. Amen.

Steve and Denise Packer

Friday, March 20, 2026

Compass Kids are kids who talk to God...

Jeremiah 29:12 *“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.”*

Be encouraged by some of the responses from our Compass Kids as they've lifted up their prayers to God. They encourage you to call upon God with this prayer pattern during your own conversation with God.

God, Thank You For...

- “My life, time with family, a home, Jesus, pets, my friends.
- Thank you for making us, for giving us hearts.
- Thank you for my ears.
- Thank you for my warm home and my teachers.
- Thank you for knowing me.”

God, we Praise you because you are...

- “Powerful, Smart, Magnificent, Good, Kind, Creative, Merciful, Generous, Everyone’s friend.”
- “God you are really, really, really special to me.”

God, I Pray For...

- “My friend who is hurting.”
- “For safe travels for adults who drive a lot.”
- “For good health for my family and all those I love.”
- “Good weather to come again.”

God, Help Me...

- “With my school work...especially with math.”
- “Help me to do well at school and to really listen.”
- “Help me trust you with my future.”
- “Help me to be someone who is patient and loving.”

Saturday, March 21, 2026

John 1:5 *“The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.”*

I'll admit- when we received the email from Pastor Lore asking if we would be willing to submit a Lenten devotional, my instant reaction was no way. I am no theologian and honestly struggle with regularly studying the Bible. How could we be qualified to offer any kind of meaningful reflection?! But I took a deep breath and decided we could try...so, for better or worse, here we are!

As I sit down to write this, the news in our country and world is filled with turmoil and unrest. My heart has been heavy over the past few weeks for the lack of humanity we are currently witnessing. Darkness feels like it is closing in. In the midst of this darkness, however, John reminds us that the light **always** shines brighter. I believe that through this brief verse, God is calling us not only to notice the light but also to physically BE the light. Love your neighbors well (all of them); extend grace; let the goodness of God flow through you to those around you.

How can you be an extension of God's light in your circles of influence today? Where and through whom do you see God's light shining? I asked my kids some of these questions and here are their thoughts:

Graham: I see God's light shining through my teachers, family and friends. I can help other students in my class understand math.

Maggie: I see God's light shining through the kindness of my friends. I can help my friends up when they fall down to show them that I care about them.

Caroline: I see God's light in my friends when we play together. I can show His light by praying for my friends when they are sick.

May you be blessed to be the light today!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, it's so easy to get drawn into the darkness of the world. Help us to seek you and your light first. Help us to be a beacon to others. Help us to choose the light over and over again. In your name we pray, Amen.

Daniel, Leslie, Graham, Maggie and Caroline Stauffer

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday in Lent

The Meaning of the Cross: The Scapegoat for Our Sins

Leviticus 16: 18-22 ...*When Aaron has finished reconciling the inner holy area, the rest of the meeting tent, and the altar, he will bring forward the live goat. Aaron will press both his hands on its head and confess over it all the Israelites' offenses and all their rebellious sins, as well as all their other sins, putting all these on the goat's head. Then he will send it away into the wilderness with someone designated for the job. The goat will carry on itself all their offenses to a desolate region, then the goat will be released into the wild.*

John 11:49-50 *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed."*

Transformational Practices -

Ponder the idea that Jesus died, not as a sacrifice, but as the ultimate, innocent victim of human violence, exposing our destructiveness, tribalism, hatred, and violence. In Jesus's death on the cross, God identifies with all the victims of human evil in all times and places.

Questions for Lenten Circle or personal reflection:

- How do you experience being a victim to evil?
- Who are the victims you see being blamed for problems in our society?
- What does it mean to you that in Christ, God is siding with the victims?

Do something this week to help someone who has been victimized.

Take time to worship (offer 'worth-ship' to God) whether with Wabash First, another faith community, with your friends/family, or with creation.

Monday, March 23, 2026

Recalculating the Heart

Matthew 6:34: *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."*

In a world that feels increasingly distant from God's original design, it is easy to let our "buckets" be filled with the noise of the world. We wake up and immediately reach for our phones, absorbing headlines of global unrest and local economic fears. Before we've even stepped out the door, our filters are clogged with anxiety, leaving us wondering: *Where is my faith?*

Lent is our season to "recalculate." Just as we use a GPS to find our way around roadblocks, we must look at the destination of our lives - eternity with Christ - and adjust our path. If we turn to Google for answers before we turn to God, we are seeking opinions rather than Truth.

When we look at the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, we see a God who provides. When we look at the upheaval in the world, we see a God who has remained faithful through similar storms throughout history. Our job isn't to solve every global conflict from our corner of Wabash County; it is to be a vessel of His grace right where we are.

The Challenge: What are you filling your bucket with today? If you fill it with the 24-hour news cycle, it will overflow with fear. But if you fill it with Scripture first, it will overflow with Joy-that "intentional, internal choice" that persists even when circumstances are difficult.

This Lent, let us strive to:

1. **Filter the Noise:** Trade fifteen minutes of media for fifteen minutes in the Word.
2. **Serve Locally:** Ask how God has equipped you to share your gifts and talents right here in Wabash.
3. **Pursue the Pursuer:** God is constantly pursuing you; use this season to pursue Him back.

Prayer: Lord, help me to worry less and serve more. Be my daily Guide and the filter through which I see the world. As I study Your faithfulness this Lenten season, empty my bucket of fear and fill it with Your Joy. Amen.

Jon Higgins

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Psalm 30:5 *“Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning.”*

I have a problem: I'm a worrier. It's not that I think I necessarily have more or less to worry about than the normal person. In fact, all told I know I have been extremely fortunate in my life with countless blessings I certainly don't deserve. Regardless, I find things to worry about, especially as I am winding down for the evening.

In my heart I know that worrying doesn't solve a thing and that it is a futile process. Nevertheless, here I am at midlife (ok maybe more than that- I mean 110 years old is a lofty goal!) still worrying. Oh - and telling a worrier not to worry is like telling a Methodist not to bring a casserole.

While I have not been able to cure myself of the worrying, I have clung to several verses including, Psalm 30:5, *“Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning.”* How true it is that after wrestling with either real or made-up troubles in the night, the morning brings hope and peace for the future.

So, I decided, if I am predisposed to worrying, why don't I do what I can about it? My solution? Turn those worries into prayers and those blessings into thanksgivings. (Phillipians 4:6-7) Bam! “Get behind me Satan!!” (Matthew 16:23)

There are many things in this life that don't make sense or that leave us with questions and worrying won't change them. However, being able to flip the script and turn my worries to prayer is empowering!

Prayer: Powerful God, thank you for reminding me that you are bigger than anything I may face. Keep my heart and mind fixed on You. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Tammy Keaffaber

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Psalm 46:10 *Be still and know that I am God.*

When my mother was in the hospital several years ago, a friend of mine who is a pastor visited us. She gave us this verse to help with anxiety.

When I walked into the hospital chapel to pray, this verse was in wrought iron at the front behind the altar. It was as though God was also giving it to me.

I wish that I could say that I always remember it when I am feeling anxious or afraid. Instead, I am apt to let my negative thoughts go into overdrive.

My daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter gave me a necklace which has the verse on it. It is a helpful reminder to put my trust in God rather than in my own feelings.

Prayer; Please God help us to remember to be still and know You and to listen for your voice. We can trust you and feel your presence. Amen.

Sharon Bair



Thursday, March 26, 2026

Choose the Light

1 Peter 1:8 (NIV) *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,*

Many people find joy in outcomes, yet our results do not define us. Unlike happiness, which is often circumstantial, true joy is internal. It doesn't rely on performance; it is rooted in love. Even in our darkest moments, joy remains a constant presence born of hope.

Though we may feel unfulfilled or lose our sense of spirit, joy can always be restored. This restoration takes time, but it begins by turning to God with our burdens. By trusting Him and investing in our relationship with Him, we find a joy that transcends our circumstances. Because we know His love remains constant even when life is difficult, we are called to share that same joy with those around us.

Prayer God, thank you for the times when you have given us joy. Today we pray for all those who are burdened and sad. Help us to join you in bringing joy to others when their lives are difficult.

Compass Youth

Friday, March 27, 2026

God's Timing is Always Better Than Mine

Isaiah 60:22 *I, the Lord, will bring it all to pass when it is time.*

Sometimes when I wonder why things don't happen when I want them to happen, I remember that my Sunday school teacher, (the late Chuck Leach) once quipped, "God, grant me patience and give it to me right now!"

Here are some examples in my life of God's timing being better than mine:

1. The timing of when my son was born. If it had been a year earlier or later, he might not have been the exact same person that he is today. I am so pleased with the person he has become.
2. The timing of when I met my dear second husband, Bill. We both were more "grown up," probably less selfish and more willing to give and take in our marriage.
3. The timing of when I moved to a smaller home recently. I was worried that it might be the wrong time of year to put my home on the market, but God had arranged for someone to buy my home at the same time that I found a smaller one.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for your timing in my life which is always better than mine and please continue to help me to understand that in the future.

Ellen Gamble

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

In these verses God is telling us that he wants to be in constant communication with us. How many times we go to Him in prayer when we want his help, and not as often when things are going well. He also reminds us that we should give thanks in all circumstances.

Think of the times you have asked for something in your prayers and wonder why they were not answered with outcome you asked for. In these times, we should not think that God has forsaken us, but continue to thank him for his many blessings.

I am thankful for my family, for my church family, neighbors, and friends who have been so kind and helpful to me that I feel I can never express just how grateful I am for their love and many kindnesses during my cancer treatments and beyond. Even now when I know my days are numbered, I feel God's presence and feel comforted.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for all the blessings you have given me. From the beginning of my life to the end, you are with me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen

Linda Gilpin

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Palm and Passion Sunday

The Meaning of the Cross: Christ the Victor

Hebrews 2: 14-15 *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he also shared the same things in the same way. [Jesus] did this to destroy the one who holds the power over death—the devil—by dying. He set free those who were held in slavery their entire lives by their fear of death.*

Transformational Practices -

One view of the cross sees all life as a cosmic battle between forces of evil and destruction and forces of good and connection. In this way of thinking, the cross and resurrection are linked together as the final victory over evil, human sin and death. In rising from the dead, Christ completely disarmed the powers of fear and evil and proved for all time that God is stronger than anything. Love wins! We are free 'for joyful obedience.'

Questions for discussion or pondering:

- How do you experience Christ as a victor?
- How does the Christ as Victor view contrast with the Christ as Victim view of the cross? Which resonates most strongly with you?
- When have you experienced victory over sin, evil, or death?

Prepare your home and calendar for Holy Week and Easter. If you are in a Lenten Circle, have a conversation about what comes next.

Take time to worship (offer 'worth-ship' to God) whether with Wabash First, another faith community, with your friends/family, or with creation.

Monday, March 30, 2026

Rejoice!

Matthew 28:19 *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

Several years ago I was sitting in a circle with 5 and 6 year old children talking about the Easter season when one child said that Jesus was not real or alive. Very quickly that conversation became student led when a classmate excitedly replied that was not true and that Jesus was real. He said he knew because his grandma had a picture of him hanging on her wall.

If only we adults could be as quick to share our faith as that child was to stand up for Jesus!

In my mind I immediately thought of the hymn "He Lives." Jesus does walk with us even when we are weary and gives us hope if we seek Him. He is always near and cares for us. He can live within our hearts. We can rejoice because He lives!

Prayer: Dear God, Help us to share the good news through our actions in this world that so desperately needs to know Jesus and have hope. Amen.

Carolyn and Cal Eichenauer

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Isaiah 30:18 *Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you, therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him.*

Psalm 27:14 *Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.*

It's tempting to try to control our circumstances, especially in the midst of trials. It's easy to become frustrated and become aware of our fears while waiting for God to act. In the time of waiting, we can be taking steps in obedience toward what He has called us to do by serving, worshiping, and praying.

God does not ask us to have the strength to follow His commands on our own. Isaiah 30:18 reminds us that God is compassionate and has our best interests in mind. This Lenten season we are reminded to wait on the Lord and His perfect timing.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for offering us the courage to wait on your perfect plans. Thank you for this Lenten season to help us quiet our spirit and seek other ways to spend our energy while we are waiting. Help us trust you even when we don't know what is ahead. We open our hands to you and release the things we cannot control. Please help us wait with grace and peace. Amen.

Zeke and Jenna Huls

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

What does God Require of Me? Giving Up or Giving Out?

Proverbs 21:3 *To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.*”

Micah 6:8 - *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Recently, the scripture for the Sunday morning service was from Micah 6. The choir sang an anthem titled, “*All I Ask of You*,” based on this same scripture. As is often the case, I found myself singing passages from the most recent choir anthem for several days after the Sunday service...”*no sacrifice can be enough to lay before my feet, for I desire compassion, not sacrifice...let justice flow like water and kindness fall as rain...walk humbly with your God.*”

Many people think of Lent as a time to sacrifice, or “give up” something that is important to them. It might be a favorite treat, beverage, food, or activity. Its purpose is to reflect on the time when Jesus fasted in the wilderness, as well as to redirect their focus toward God.

Scripture tells us that another way to deepen our connection with God is by doing what He has asked of us. He requires *JUSTICE* (treating people with equal dignity), *KINDNESS* (love in action), *COMPASSION* (help for those who are suffering), and *WALKING HUMBLY* with Him. Friendly words to a tired cashier can bring a smile and a sense of being appreciated. A nod and a wink to a parent dealing with a toddler meltdown in public can say “You’re not alone, I feel your anguish.” A card or a grocery delivery to a homebound person can say “let me help you.”

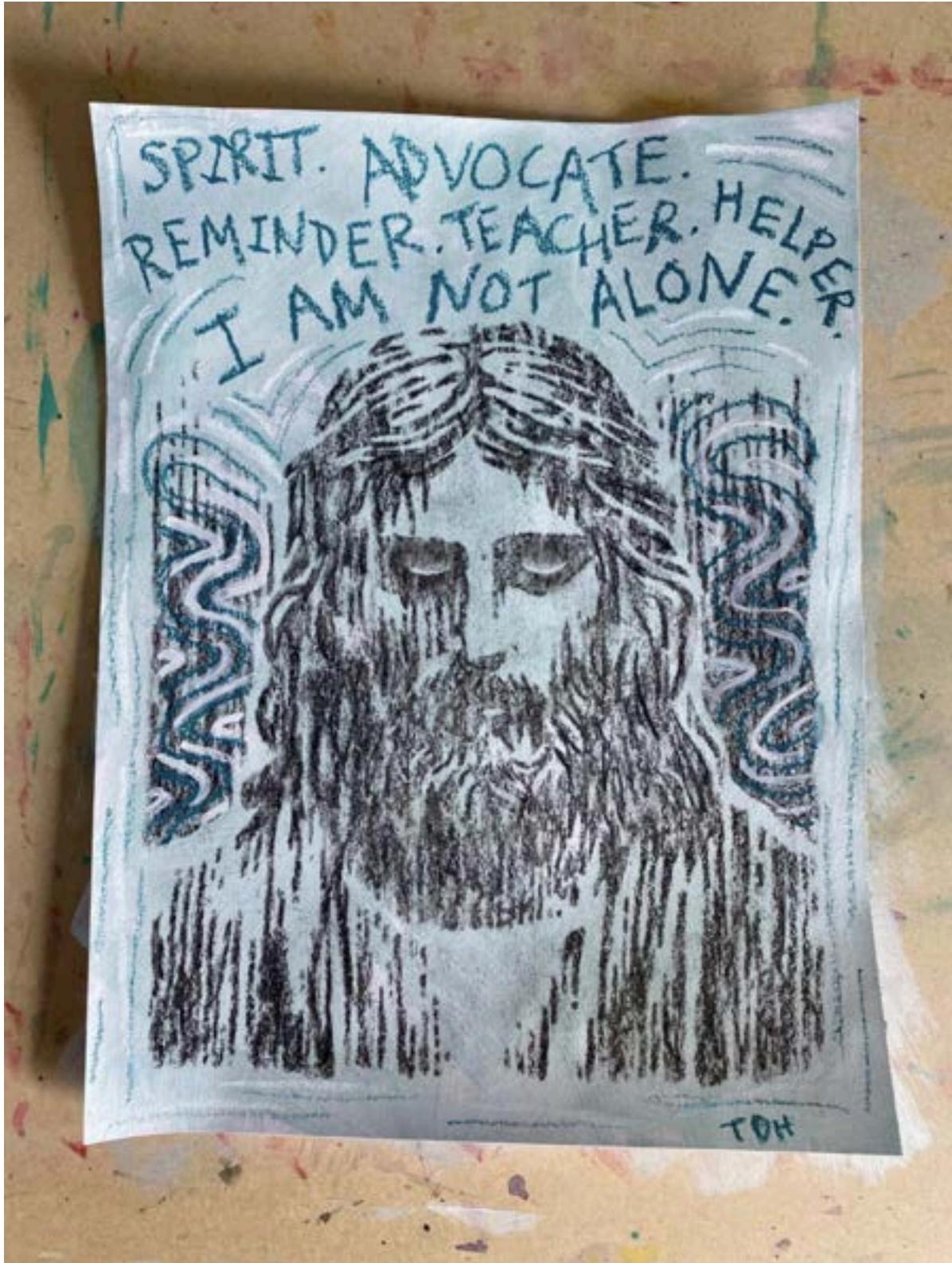
In place of (or even in addition to) “Giving Up” something for Lent this year, what if our walk with God was filled with “Giving Out” more kindness, compassion and justice through our words and actions?

Prayer: God, we want to be humble servants for you. During this Lent, help us to show justice to those who have been denied what is right, kindness to those who feel hurt, and compassion to those who are suffering, so that they might know your love. As we remember the sacrifice of your Son we seek to draw closer to you. Amen.

Susan Vanlandingham

Thursday, April 2, 2026

Maundy Thursday



ANOTHER ADVOCATE

John 14:15-31 – *Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit*

As Jesus comforted his disciples in the upper room the night before he was put to death, he promised them “another advocate.” Jesus was a fierce advocate during his short time on earth – helping and teaching his disciples, pleading the case of love and compassion, and speaking up against injustices.

Knowing his days of walking and talking with his disciples were coming to a close, Jesus promised not to leave them as orphans. Rather, he would send another to give them peace and remind them they would not be alone in their continued walk with God.

Despite being a children’s minister for 8+ years, I never saw myself as any kind of advocate until after our son was born and diagnosed with cystic fibrosis (CF). Even then, I felt unqualified to earn the term. Yet, I have lived the verb day in and out.

From that newborn diagnosis to now, I learned everything I could and am still learning. I asked what I’m sure is an absurd and annoying amount of questions at every appointment, and I still do. I did my best to teach others what I barely knew myself about the genetic, life-shortening disease – at first to answer the questions of family and friends who care and then to solicit support for research we hope will one day lead to a cure. A few years ago, I was even able to meet with representatives on Capitol Hill to advocate for policies that support Jensen and others living with CF. Turns out, the only qualification that matters is being able to give voice to simple truths, to make sure someone’s story has a chance to be heard. To be a helper.

Who needs you to be an advocate today? I can think of a whole list of relevant people groups, but I’ll let you reflect and find your own answer. You are capable, and you are not alone.

Prayer: God, may we be reminders of your peace to the world this week. Where our hearts are troubled, let us go forth without fear to advocate for love and against injustice. Amen.

Words and art by Tricia Hopkins

Friday, April 3, 2026

Good Friday

Matthew 27



A word from Ann Landers

On this Day —
Mend a quarrel.
Search out a forgotten friend.
Write a letter to someone who misses you.
Encourage someone who has lost faith.
Keep a promise.
Forget an old grudge.
Express your gratitude.
Take two minutes to appreciate the beauty of nature.
Tell someone you love them.
Tell them again.
And again.

Art by Andrea Zwiebel
Quote from Jane Hentgen

Reflecting

The winter is cold as I write
Like oppression with no end in sight
 Is this how they felt
 When together they knelt
'Round the babe who would make all things right?

Just a sliver of hope as a light
That is visible only at night
 Is this how they felt
 When together they knelt
With the man as he restored lost sight?

Clearly danger for power and might
Quite contentious and set for a fight
 Is this how they felt
 When together they knelt
In the garden as he prayed that night?

Death's despair, an extinguishing light
Mounting sorrow from the viper's bite
 Is this how they felt
 When together they knelt
'Neath the cross at the Golgotha site?

Disbelief, excitement and fright,
A resurgence of purpose alight
 Is this how they felt
 When together they knelt
Hearing news of the tomb at first light?

So with Christ I will face the dark night
His spirit of love is my light
 Is this how they felt
 When together they knelt
Poised o'er the world, God's love to ignite?

Saturday, April 4, 2026

Holy Saturday

The Hope of Easter

Romans 8:25 *“If we look forward to something we don’t have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently.”*

What does Easter mean to you? You probably know the story, and you might even be able to tell it in your sleep. But the truth is Easter is perhaps the most personal holiday on our calendar.

Before Jesus, there was no hope. All of the hardships and uncertainties of life had no answer. But God sent Jesus to live a perfect life in a broken world, pay the ultimate sacrifice that erased our debt, and rise victoriously from the dead to give us eternal hope. No matter what global or personal trial you face, there’s victory in Jesus.

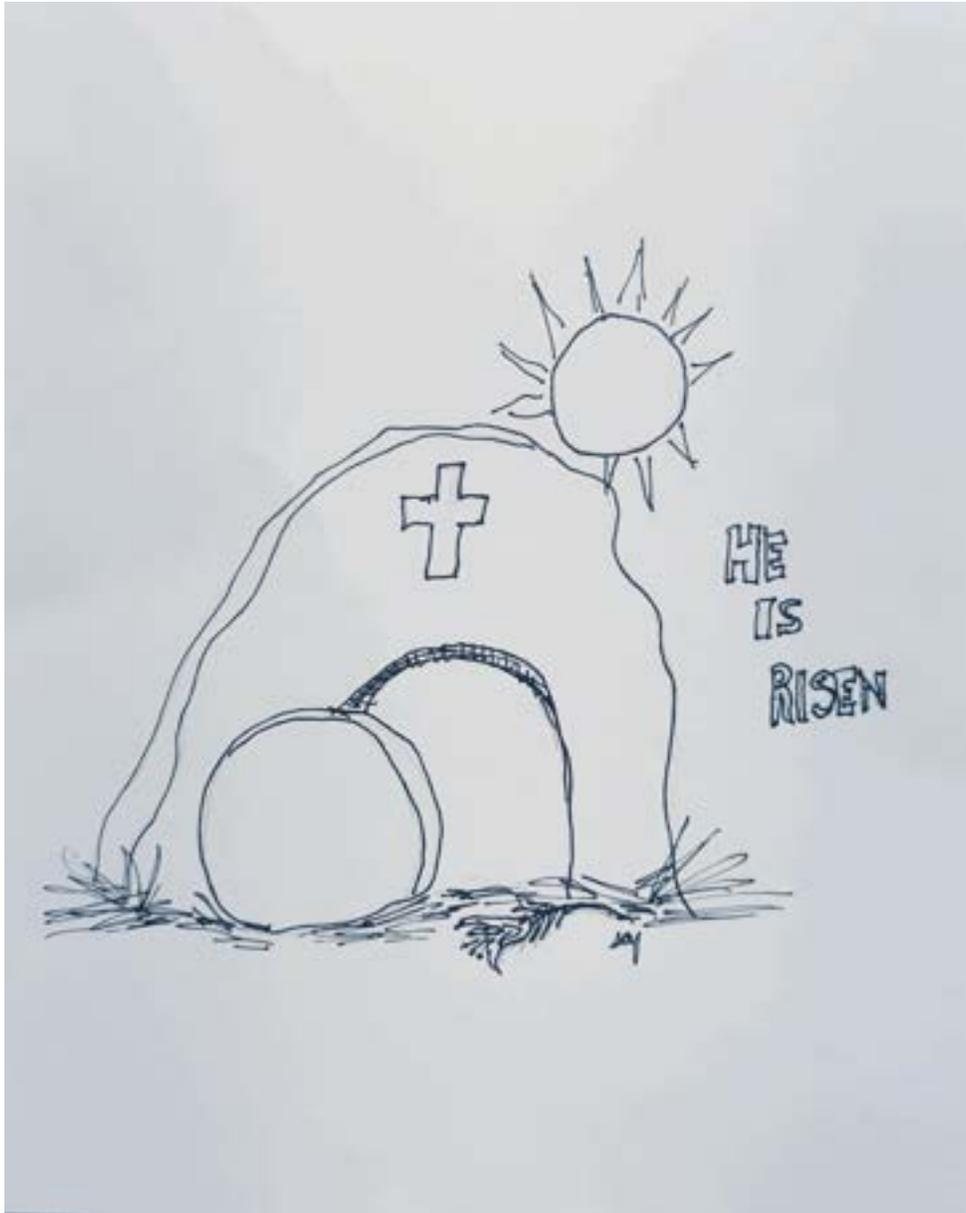
Don’t let this Easter be just another holiday. Make it personal and find hope for whatever you’re facing. That day isn’t here yet. We live in hope, and if we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. But as long as we wait, we experience joy and hope in the longing, as the Spirit carries and strengthens us in God’s love.

Prayer: Precious Father, thank you for filling our hearts with longing for you and the beauty of Your Kingdom. May that longing help to anchor our hearts. Amen.

Carolyn and Ed Gilbert

Resurrection Day, April 5, 2026

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*



Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, watch over our country, our world and our church. Keep us in your loving care. Amen.

Art and prayer by Sharon Young

Easter Monday, April 6, 2026

Do you recognize Him?

John 20: 10-16 *Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"*

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize it was Jesus.

"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!"

The story of Mary Magdalene at the tomb has been told over and over and yet it never gets old because it seems to continuously evolve even though it remains the same. Mary at the tomb – what is so special about this scripture and why does it seem to take on a life of its own every time I read it? Is it because of Mary's devotion and faithfulness to Jesus that she went to the tomb, while it was still dark? Is it because Mary, a woman who had been healed of seven demons, was chosen to spread the good news of the resurrection? Is it the story of hope? Is it story of her courage? Or something even deeper?

I can't help but wonder how many times Jesus has been standing right in front of me, while I asked the question, "Lord, where are you, why did you leave me?" How many times do we feel like the Lord has left us or not answered our prayers or seems so far away? During times of grief, anger, tragic life events, loss, things not going "our way," we often feel abandoned by our Lord. Yet in the midst of it all, He stands right in front of us, and we simply don't recognize Him. We allow the world, the circumstances of life, to make Him unrecognizable - until we hear His voice, just like Mary.

He was there all along, He always will be there, but do you recognize Him? Do you hear His voice when He calls your name? During this Lenten season, reflect on the story of Mary. Reflect on the times the Lord has been standing right in front of you but you didn't recognize him. Take time to slow down and focus on Him, have faith in Him and allow Him to be visible and present in your life.



Prayer: Heavenly Father, Like Mary, we stand at the tomb with heavy hearts, lost, searching, clouded by the world. Remind us during this Lenten season that You are already here, standing before us, calling our name. Open our eyes to recognize You with a faith that knows Your love and help us step into the light with a hope that comes alive in the depths of our hearts. Amen.

Teresa Harris

Our Marching Orders

Connect people to God and others through prayer, worship, study and involvement in the community.

Our United Methodist Vision

The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.

God is Love. Let Love Lead.