

Lenten Season Devotional

# *Sacrifice & Service*

A PATHWAY TO PURPOSE

**Scriptures, Reflections, and Prayers**

A Devotional for the 2026 Lenten Season

**19<sup>th</sup> Street**  
Baptist Church





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## **Our Mission**

The mission of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church is to profoundly experience, joyfully celebrate, and meaningfully share God's grace.

We do this through Christ-centered worship, biblical instruction, prayer, nurturing fellowship, and caring acts that are reflective of our love for God and one another.

We, through the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaim the Gospel and Jesus Christ to all people while supporting the work of missions in our church, our community, our country, and the world.

## **Our Vision**

We exalt the hope, power, and glory of Jesus Christ through ministries that transform lives, churches, and communities.

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# Introduction to 2026 Lenten Devotional

## Sacrifice & Service: A Pathway to Purpose

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Lent has always been more than a season on the church calendar. It is a forty-day-plus journey in which we slow down, look honestly at our lives, and listen more deeply to the voice of Christ calling us onward. In the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) when Jesus invited His disciples with the simple yet disruptive words, *“Follow me,”* or *“Come, follow me,”* He did not lead them toward comfort, status, or ease. He led them on a journey shaped by humility, surrender, service, compassion, sacrifice, and ultimately, resurrection hope. This devotional is an opportunity to walk that same path.

“Sacrifice & Service: A Pathway to Purpose” is not merely a theme that describes the way Jesus walked during His earthly life. It is the pattern of life He invites us into each day. It is a way that descends before it rises, that releases before it receives, that listens before it speaks, and that loves even when love is costly. Yet it is also a way filled with promise. For every sacrifice we make, service we perform, and steps we take with Christ leads us more fully into the life He came to give, the life that shines beyond the tomb.

As you journey through these reflections—written by members of our Nineteenth Street Baptist Church family—may you find space to breathe, to repent, to hope, and to be transformed. May God meet you in the wilderness moments and form in you the heart of Christ. And may this Lent become not only a season you observe but also a path you walk for and with purpose; one that leads you to the foot of the cross and onward to the joy of Easter morning.

May the grace and peace of Christ go with you as you take each step on the pathway to purpose.



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## Abbreviations for Bible Translations

The following Bible translations are referenced in the devotional:

<b>AMP</b>	Amplified Bible
<b>BSB</b>	Berean Standard Bible
<b>CSB</b>	Christian Standard Bible
<b>ESV</b>	English Standard Version
<b>HCSB</b>	Holman Christian Standard Bible
<b>KJV</b>	King James Version
<b>NIRV</b>	New International Reader's Version
<b>NIV</b>	New International Version
<b>NKJV</b>	New King James Version
<b>NLT</b>	New Living Translation
<b>NRSV</b>	New Revised Standard Version
<b>NRSVUE</b>	New Revised Standard Version Undated Edition





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# A Word from the Pastor

## The Quiet Way of Lent

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**“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 6:1, NIV).**

Beloved Nineteenth Street Baptist Church family, God’s grace and peace to you.

For the first time, as Pastor and people, we step together into the holy season of Lent. As we begin these forty days, Jesus reminds us that true sacrifice happens beneath the surface. It is the quiet surrender of ego, the unseen discipline of prayer, and the steady commitment to serve without needing credit. Lent calls us to trade performance for faithfulness and appearance for authenticity.

Lent begins quietly. It does not start with applause or public recognition, but with an inward turning of the heart toward God. In Matthew 6, Jesus speaks directly to how we are to enter this season. He warns us against performing righteousness for others and invites us instead into a private, honest relationship with the Father who sees what is done in secret.

<sup>16</sup> When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:16-18, NIV).

This Scripture and Matthew 6:1 matter as we start Lent because they reset our focus. Lent is not about being seen as spiritual; it is about being formed by God. Jesus assumes that we will pray, fast, and give—but He challenges the why behind our actions. Sacrifice that is done for attention loses its power. Service that seeks approval misses its purpose.

This passage also connects service to purpose. When our sacrifices are offered to God rather than displayed for others, they shape us from the inside out. God uses what is done in secret to form hearts that are ready to love openly and serve generously. Purpose is not found in public praise but in obedience to God’s call.

At the start of Lent, Jesus invites us to enter this season with humility and intention. As we fast, pray, and give, we are reminded that God sees us fully—and meets us faithfully in the hidden places.

Eternal God, as we begin this Lenten journey together as Pastor and people, draw our hearts toward You. Help us to seek You honestly and serve You humbly. Teach us to offer our sacrifices quietly and our service faithfully, trusting that You see and know all things. Shape us during this season, that our lives may reflect Your purpose and Your love.

**Rev. Kevin Lamár Peterman**  
**Senior Pastor**



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# A Word from the Chair of the Board of Deacons

## Transformation

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**“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good, and acceptable and perfect, will of God.” (Romans, 12:2 KJV).**

Dear Nineteenth Street Baptist Church Family,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we as a church enter this solemn season of Lent, we must recognize that we are called to move beyond simple outward traditions and embrace a profound, inward renewal. Transformation at church is not just about new programs, new leaders, or new members—it is about renewed hearts, revived faith, and a people willing to be shaped by God. When the Holy Spirit moves, the church shifts from maintenance to mission, from routine to revival, and from duty to calling. True transformation shows up in how we love, how we serve, and how we live our lives every day, not just Sunday morning.

This reminds me of one of the songs that truly ministers to me: “He is Preparing Me” (Daryl Coley, 1995). God is transforming us from who we are, to who we have been called to be.

From fear to faith; from silence to witness; from subsistence to service; from sitting on the pew to ministry; from officer to servant leadership; from tradition alone to purpose. This is not just a season of change; it is a season of becoming who God called Nineteenth Street Baptist Church to be. We must submit ourselves to the will of the Almighty with the assurance that He will steer this Ship of Zion in the perfect course in a time such as this.

He is preparing and transforming us. And, for this we give thanks. Amen.

**Shawn Davis-Wilensky**  
**Chair, Board of Deacons**



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# A Word from the Chair of the Board of Deaconesses

## Walking Together With Purpose

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**“Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.” (Psalm 119:35, NKJV)**

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, I extend grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am delighted to address you during this sacred Lenten season and invite you to reflect on Psalm 119:35 alongside this year's devotional theme, “Sacrifice & Service: A Pathway to Purpose.” These words remind us that our walk with God is both intentional and joyful, a journey shaped by His loving guidance.

As a congregation, we walk this path together. Our purpose as believers is found in glorifying God, being reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ, and growing daily to become more like Christ. When we follow His example, our lives reflect God's love, our service blesses others, and our witness shares the hope of the gospel.

As we journey toward the cross and prepare our hearts for resurrection hope, may we walk purposefully delighting in God's ways and trusting that He is faithfully guiding each step we take. This pathway calls us to live with faith, diligence, and discipleship. Faith invites us to trust God's leading in every season. Diligence encourages us to serve with care, compassion, and commitment. Discipleship reminds us that following Jesus is a daily practice, learning from Him, walking with Him, and allowing Him to shape our hearts. Through this journey, we are sanctified and set apart for God's holy purpose.

So, I offer a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking our loving and gracious God for calling us to walk in His ways and for giving us purpose through Jesus Christ. And as we journey through this Lenten season, I'm praying to our Father to guide our steps and draw our hearts closer to Him. I'm asking God to strengthen our faith, deepen our commitment to serve, and help us grow as faithful disciples. Let us allow our walk to bring glory to God and reflect His love to all who we encounter. Thank You, Father, thank You Jesus, lead us as we follow the path You have set before us, and may grace abound to all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Grace and peace unto you always,

**Maureen A. Young**  
**Chair, Board of Deaconesses**



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## A Prayer for Our Church as We Enter This Lenten Season

Heavenly Father, we come to You with a sacrifice of praise. We come to You with humble hearts recognizing what Christ has done for us on the cross.

Lord, as we begin this Lenten season, we thank You for Your love and mercy that leads to purpose. You have given us new life and hope through Jesus. We praise You for Your faithfulness, for always being with us, and for guiding us each day.

Thank You for forgiving our sins and giving us a fresh start. Thank You for Your blessings—our families, our friends, and every good thing in our lives. We are grateful for Your protection and for the strength You give us when we are weak.

Help us to draw closer to You during this season. Teach us to love others the way You love us. Fill our hearts with kindness, patience, and understanding. Let us remember the sacrifice Jesus made and help us to follow His example.

We give You all the glory and honor, Lord. Thank You for hearing our prayer and for all You have done and will do in our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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### 2026 Lenten Season Devotional Team

**Deacon Yvonne Bowman Dickson**

**Deacon Donza M. Poole**

**Deaconess Maureen A. Young**

**Deacon-elect Mario Ashby**

**Deacon-elect Roxanna Bilal**

**Deacon-elect Violetta Graham**

**Deacon-elect Dennis Nelson**

**Sister Ferlandia M. Townsend**



## Lent – Day One

*February 18 – Ash Wednesday*



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### Discovering and Living Out Divine Purpose

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Ephesians 2:10 (CSB)

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.”

#### REFLECTION

God's act of salvation is not solely about ensuring our future with Jesus in heaven. He did not place us on earth simply to exist or to seek comfort. For those who follow Jesus Christ, God's purpose goes much deeper. He saved us and placed us here so that He could work in us, for us, with us, and through us. We are called to be good for something—to be His workmanship. We are crafted for a divine purpose: to do good, advance God's kingdom, bring glory to Jesus' name, honor Him through our daily lives, and positively impact those around us. The chaos and disruption of the world should not control our actions or define how we manage our lives in our areas of influence. Jesus' life demonstrates that God is a serving God and that sacrificial service is the essence of our character. Jesus calls us to give our whole selves, not just a portion of our time, money, or good deeds. He desires all of us, fully and completely. Jesus did not come to torment our natural lives, but to transform us entirely. Superficial change is not enough. He seeks complete renewal. Service is the action and sacrifice is the cause and together they form a meaningful life dedicated to others. Each of us has a unique purpose: to become like Jesus, using our gifts to serve and build His kingdom on earth. Our meaning is found in Him, and we discover this purpose by knowing God personally, following Jesus, and serving others in love and obedience. My purpose has been a journey involving relationship, spiritual growth, reflection, and service to others. This is where I find the deepest meaning in God's design for my life. I owe God a life that is a living sacrifice, where I find true fulfillment and connection in His plan. It is in this space that my light shines the brightest for God's glory—offering hope to others. By aligning myself with a higher calling and moving beyond self-interest, I will be transformed.

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father. I come before You seeking cleansing from pride and selfishness. Grant me a heart to serve others as You have served us. Empower me to look beyond my personal needs and interests. Enable me to respond to others with compassion, strength, and grace, following Jesus' example. Instill in me a spirit of gratitude and a steadfast commitment to pursue justice and peace in all things. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Sister Virginia C. Lee**



## Lent – Day Two

*February 19*



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### Surrender

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

#### REFLECTION

Romans 5:8 speaks to my heart because there was a time when I did not feel like I belonged in church. I grew up in the streets and lived a hard life, and for a long time I believed that my past disqualified me from God’s presence. Yet this Scripture reminds me that while I was still a sinner, broken, struggling, and far from Him, Christ died for me. That truth changed everything.

As I began working at the church, I realized I was surrounded by people who were sinners just like me, but they had embraced Christ and allowed Him to transform their lives. Romans 5:8 assured me that God’s love was not reserved for perfect people, but for people like us, flawed, yet willing to surrender. Through the influence and example of believers, I felt God calling me to give up my old way of life.

The journey was not easy. I wrestled with doing the right thing because I knew that surrendering to God meant everything would change. There were moments when I wanted to return to my old life, but God’s love kept drawing me forward. Over time, I learned to surrender my will and allow God’s will to rule my life. Now, I see Him ordering my steps, revealing my purpose, and shaping me into who He has called me to be. God has shown me that my purpose is to serve. I remember my grandmother and my mother speaking this over my life, telling me that I would be a servant of God. He has continually sent people into my life to confirm and reinforce His plan. Today, I am in preparation to serve God’s people as a deacon. I desire to testify to what God has done in my life so that someone else may be encouraged, restored, and drawn closer to Him. Romans 5:8 reminds me that we all bring something to the table. God can use anyone who is willing to surrender. When we truly surrender, God comes in to clean us up—but we must first open the door and let Him in.

#### PRAYER

Father, I come before You with a heart of gratitude and surrender. Thank You for loving me even when I was still a sinner, and for proving Your love through the sacrifice of Your Son. I give You my life, my past, my present, and my future. Order my steps, strengthen my faith, and use me to serve Your people and glorify Your name. I surrender completely, trusting that You who began a good work in me will carry it to completion. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Deacon-elect Dennis Nelson**





## Lent – Day Three

*February 20*



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### God Wants a Living Sacrifice

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

#### REFLECTION

Sacrifice in Scripture is not merely about giving something up; it's about giving ourselves over completely to God. Romans 12:1 calls us to a life of total surrender; offering our souls/spirit, bodies, minds, and wills as living sacrifices. 1 Peter 2:5, ESV, reminds us that we are “living stones” being built into a spiritual house, called to be a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

God's call for us to be living sacrifices is a call for us to dedicate and commit every part of ourselves. Deuteronomy 6:5, NKJV, says “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” When we surrender ourselves fully to God, our praise, prayer, giving, and service flow naturally from a devoted heart. I confess that I am still growing toward that level of surrender. It is because of my sinful nature that I am prone to distractions and influences of worldly ways of thinking. Like Paul in Romans 7, I sometimes struggle to understand myself. I want to do what is right but find myself doing what I hate. This inner conflict reminds me of my continual need for God's grace and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

As I press toward the higher calling of God in Christ Jesus, I trust the Holy Spirit to mature my faith and shape me into a more faithful worshiper. Earnestly, I strive to offer God true worship by living a surrendered life; I encourage you to do the same. Place yourself fully on the altar and allow God to transform you into a living sacrifice that brings Him glory.

#### PRAYER

Holy Father, help us to worship You not only with our words, but with our lives. Transform our thinking, renew our hearts, and strengthen our obedience. Where we struggle within ourselves, empower us by Your Holy Spirit to walk in victory and faithfulness. Shape us as living stones in Your spiritual house and use our lives as offerings that reflect Your glory. As we press toward Your higher calling, help us to mature in faith and remain fully surrendered to Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Deaconess Maureen A. Young**



## Lent – Day Four

*February 21*



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### A Work in Progress

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Psalm 9:10 (NKJV)

“And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.”

#### REFLECTION

I am learning daily to put my trust in God. Each day brings new opportunities to surrender my fears and reminds me that I am never walking alone.

I admit to being one who worries. But God has shown me over and over that He is in control and that worrying is a waste of time and energy.

Even in moments of uncertainty, I can feel His steady presence guiding me and calming my heart. God loves me, and if it is His will my prayers will be answered in His time, not mine, so I am learning to be patient and faithful.

I am discovering that waiting is not doing nothing—it is trusting that God is working even when I cannot see it. For God knows me and knows I am a work in progress.

#### PRAYER

Thank You, God, for knowing me and loving me. Help me to trust You more each day. Quiet my anxious thoughts and strengthen my faith. Bless our church, unite us in love and purpose, and guide us to be a light to others. Watch over those in need, draw them close to You, and remind us all that Your plans are good and Your timing is perfect. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

**Sister Michann Williams**



## Lent – Day Five

*February 22*



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### Scripture Has the Answers

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Isaiah 58:6 (NIV)

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

##### John 13:13-15 (NIV)

“...<sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

##### Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

##### Micah 6:8 (NIV)

“...And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

#### REFLECTION

The theme of our Lenten season this year reminds me of my family’s practices during the 40 days before Easter. Growing up in a dual-denomination household, Lent allowed us to honor both Baptist and Catholic traditions. Following my Catholic father’s practice, we refrained from eating meat six days a week and joyfully feasted on fish on Fridays. Honoring my mother’s Baptist roots, we attended Maundy Thursday services at First Baptist Church, where we washed the feet of other church members, a ritual reenacting Jesus’ act of humility and hospitality toward his disciples. As a child, I didn’t grasp the deeper meaning of these rituals. Too often, I participated in rituals because I was expected to, without asking why. But Scripture answers the question of why.

Isaiah reminds us that fasting is not an empty ritual but a purposeful act; John shows Jesus modeling humility by washing His disciples’ feet, reversing social norms, and teaching that leadership means service; Mark clarifies Jesus’ own purpose; and Micah summarizes our charge and purpose. Today, these lessons are more urgent than ever. In a world marked by division, inequality, and self-interest, Lent calls us to rediscover our purpose, as well as the purpose behind sacrifice and service. Sacrifice is not about deprivation for its own sake. It is about creating space for compassion. Service is not a mere gesture. It is a commitment to justice and love. Whether feeding the hungry, advocating for fairness, or simply offering kindness, we embody Christ’s example when we commit to authentic and purposeful sacrifice and service.

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, this season, help us to move beyond mere ritual and embrace the deeper call—to sacrifice, to serve with intention, and to live with purpose.

**Sister Linda R. Moore**



## Lent – Day Six

*February 23*



### Willing Vessel: Finding Purpose Along My Journey

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”

##### Proverbs 31:8 (NIV)

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...”

#### REFLECTION

On January 1st, I returned home after weeks in the hospital with pneumonia and more than three months in a rehabilitation nursing facility. It was a season I never anticipated, yet one that God clearly used to deepen my faith and expand my understanding of service. During my recovery, I lived those words daily. Physically weakened, I nonetheless experienced God’s sustaining presence in powerful ways.

One of the most profound lessons I learned is that when we offer ourselves to God as willing vessels, He determines where and how we are used. I learned that obedience often leads us into places we would not choose for ourselves—but places where God’s work is already unfolding. Every person involved in my care came from a different part of the world. Their diverse backgrounds, accents, and stories reflected the breadth of God’s creation. In that environment, I saw firsthand that compassion transcends culture and language. His care was evident through many hands and hearts.

As I healed, God also revealed a responsibility beyond my own recovery. My roommates often struggled to advocate for themselves. Some lacked strength, others clarity or confidence. God placed me in a position to speak up on their behalf. It was not always welcomed or convenient. Advocacy, I learned, is a form of love in action. In moments when my body felt weakest, God reminded me of His promise of His sufficient grace. Even in confinement, God provided purpose. Even in uncertainty, He revealed His nearness. I returned home not only restored, but transformed—grateful, humbled, and more aware than ever that God can use us anywhere. Healing, I discovered, is not only about physical recovery, but also about surrendering to God’s ongoing work through us.

#### PRAYER

Lord, make me a willing vessel. Use me wherever You place me, even when it feels uncomfortable or unexpected. Give me courage to speak up, humility to serve, and faith to trust Your purpose in every season. Amen.

**Sister Rhonda Glaudé<sup>†</sup>**

<sup>†</sup> In memoriam. We are thankful for these words of inspiration from our beloved Sister Rhonda Glaudé, who died on January 31, 2026.



## Lent – Day Seven

*February 24*



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### The Day Before

#### SCRIPTURE

##### 1 Corinthians 6:19 (AMP)

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within you, whom you have [received as a gift] from God, and that you are not your own [property]?”

##### Matthew 6:8 (NKJV)

“... For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

#### REFLECTION

I fractured my tooth last week. My immediate thought was to get to a dentist and have it repaired quickly, using any funds left in my 2025 dental package. I prayed and asked God to show me a dentist who could do exactly what I needed to have done. I was seen by a dentist who informed me that I needed surgery on two teeth and that there was an opening in two days to have the surgery. Without giving it any thought, I jumped right on it and said yes to having surgery in two days. I had not prayed about it. I just said yes.

Shortly thereafter I remembered that I'm on a blood thinner and asked the dentist if two days was a long enough time to wait before having the procedure since I'm taking a blood thinner. He remarked, “It should be.” I was not very comfortable with the response I received from the dentist. I was thinking that having surgery in two days was too soon since I'm on a blood thinner. I was troubled. Then, at 5:00 p.m., the day before the procedure, the dentist's office called and postponed the surgery. I immediately thanked and praised God for looking out for me in spite of me.

#### PRAYER

Thank You Father for loving and keeping us. Lord, You love us better than we love ourselves. We are so very grateful for the gift of Your all-encompassing love. Please help us to put and keep things in our lives in the right perspective. We are to pray without ceasing and before everything else. Help us incline our ears to hear Your voice. We must hear from You, we belong to You, and we must honor and take great care of Your property, us. We must not be careless with that which is Yours. We must do everything as unto the Lord! This is not a selfish care; it is necessary, as unto God!

**Deacon-elect Roxanna Bilal**



## Lent – Day Eight

*February 25*



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True Strength—God Living and Working in Us

### SCRIPTURE

#### Philippians 4:12-13 (NIV)

“<sup>12</sup> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup> I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

### REFLECTION

Paul was able to rely on his Savior Jesus Christ while he was in jail beaten and tortured. It is amazing what God can do in our lives. Yet, Paul withstood all he received because he was a follower of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He believed that he had to show others he stood firm in his beliefs. Reading this reminds me that true strength does not come from our circumstances, but from Christ living and working within us. It challenges me to ask whether I trust God with the same confidence when I face difficulties, even far smaller than Paul's.

### PRAYER

Lord, I come to praise Your name, to hold You up in love and adoration because You are worthy to be praised. Lord, we will enter Your Church to worship and leave to serve You by serving others. Let us hold fast to this year's Lenten theme and make sacrifice and service a pathway to purpose. Praise the Lord.

Deacon Yvonne Bowman Dickson





## Lent – Day Nine

*February 26*



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### The Lord Is My Shepherd

#### SCRIPTURE

**Psalm 23:1 (KJV)**

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

#### REFLECTION

The Lord is my Shepherd; Jesus is my friend!!

What we decide to do for God should reflect our faith walk. Deciding to follow Jesus and confess Him as my Lord and Savior was easy for me because of the example of a praying mother. The Civil Rights Movement showed our people how to work together and sacrifice for the common good. Through non-violence, in a turbulent world, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement showed the world how to sacrifice, serve, and find that pathway to purpose through faith and trust in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Praise the Lord, Amen!

#### PRAYER

Our Father in Heaven, thank You for Your faithfulness towards us, for loving us and guiding us through uncertain times. Thank You for continuing to see Your people through. May we never give up, in Jesus’ name, Amen!

**Deacon Yvonne Gowdy**



## Lent – Day Ten

*February 27*



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### God Walks With Us

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Isaiah 43:2 (NIV)

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

#### REFLECTION

When we take the time to contemplate various experiences in our lives, those times when we just didn’t know how we would make it through—we must recognize that Isaiah 43:2 was operating in our lives. We may have experienced a physical or medical crisis, a financial crisis, an emotional overload, hopelessness, depression, pain felt in a relationship, concern for our child’s well-being, wringing of our hands over conditions and evils in the world that we feel helpless to change, or any of the innumerable circumstances we have faced and will continue to encounter in our lives.

When we felt alone and weary, when we just didn’t have the strength to pull through, in these, our own waters, rivers, and fires, we did not drown. We were not consumed by flames. Still, we stand today as proof that indeed we were not alone. Through no means of our own did we survive it. We take time today to acknowledge and proclaim that we know that it is our Heavenly Father Who has stayed with us and kept us afloat, provided protection from being burned when we surely could not do it for ourselves. When it seems that the world is on fire, we marvel at God’s power in all things and even so, God’s constant walks with us, protecting, loving, and guiding us, holding us as precious. In these chaotic times today, may we know for sure that God is our strength and protection in all things that may come our way. May we seek God’s guidance and increase our awareness of God’s unwavering covering of us, God’s love, and fierce protection of us. Let us be grateful to God for giving us Jesus Christ so that we can have faith. May faith be our bridge to knowing. May we pray under all circumstances.

#### PRAYER

Holy Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your on-going protection of us as we encounter challenges and actions of evil intent designed to harm and destroy us. We especially thank You for the countless times You surround us with Your love, favor, grace, and protection while we go about our lives unaware and unfocused on these gifts You so generously heap upon us. We worship You and praise Your holy name for the things You have done! May our light of praises to You shine brightly, drawing any who see it closer to You, glorifying You. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

**Sister Phillis Walls Cooke**



## Lent – Day Eleven

*February 28*



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### The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Psalm 27:1 (NIV)

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?”

#### REFLECTION

During this Lenten season, Psalm 27:1 has been a source of strength and reassurance for me throughout my life’s journey. “The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?” These words remind me that even when life feels uncertain, God remains constant, guiding and protecting me through every season of life.

There have been many moments in my life when obstacles seemed overwhelming. I have faced challenges that tested my faith, my patience, and my understanding of God’s plan. At times, the road ahead was unclear, and I questioned how things would ever work out. Yet, looking back, I can see that God was present every step of the way—strengthening me when I felt weak and carrying me when I could not go any further on my own.

Sacrifice and service have been central to my walk with God. There were times when obedience required letting go of comfort, personal plans, or expectations I had for myself. Servicing others, even when it was difficult or inconvenient, became a pathway through which God revealed my purpose. In giving of myself, I learned that God multiplies what we surrender to Him. Service was not always easy, but it shaped my character and deepened my faith.

God has also been faithful to my family. There were situations that seemed like things were not going to come out right—emotional strains, unanswered prayers, and moments of deep uncertainty. From a human perspective, the situation looked hopeless. Yet God worked behind the scenes, opening doors we did not expect and providing in ways only He could. My journey has shown me that when we place our trust in the Lord, He turns uncertainty into assurance and trials into testimonies. God has truly been my light, my salvation, and my stronghold.

#### PRAYER

Lord You are our light and salvation, so we will not fear. Guide us in sacrifice and service, leading us into the purpose You have prepared for us.

**Sister Ferlandia M. Townsend**



## Lent – Day Twelve

*March 1*



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### God's Promises

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

#### REFLECTION

Lent is a time of reflection and renewal of our spirits. It’s a season to seek deeper connection with God and let the Holy Spirit lead us. Let us come together in unity, putting aside differences and standing as one body in Christ. Let us walk in the Fruit of the Spirit, as we grow and praise our good Lord for all His goodness and blessings. May this reflection inspire a deeper trust in God’s power. Our faith is rooted in God’s promises.

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we give You all the honor and praise. Thank You for all the blessings You have bestowed upon us. Lord, help us to grasp the awesome impact of Your resurrection on our lives. Lord, teach us the simple yet profound secret of abiding in Thee. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

**Deaconess Margarette Blakemore**



## Lent – Day Thirteen

*March 2*



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So Loved

### SCRIPTURE

**John 3:16 (NIV)**

“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.”

### REFLECTION

From time to time, I have been asked to share my favorite passage of scripture. Far too often, I would respond hurriedly with the first one that comes to mind—having an admiration of so many. However, lately I’ve been more intentional with my response by leading with—it depends, focusing on the one that’s birthed in my spirit. In this instance, John 3:16—one of my favorite verses, speaks volumes of sacrifice and service.

God displayed His immense love for the world by sacrificing His beloved Son—Jesus the Christ. Jesus, on the other hand, through His love and obedience to His Father, surrendered His will and laid down His life for us. An ultimate ransom for our sins and offering eternal life to all who believe in Him. This was a selfless act by Jesus, the way He conducted His earthly ministry of service—loving, healing, protecting, teaching, forgiving, and offering hope to countless numbers of people. Without a doubt, Jesus’ example of how a Christian should live—offers us a pathway to a purposeful life.

### PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for Your everlasting love and having us in mind when You sacrificed Your beloved Son—Jesus. Through Him we are given salvation and promise of eternal life without condemnation. We love and honor You because You are worthy. Please help us to be mindful of those who do not know You and offer them mercy and kindness even when we think that it’s not warranted—displaying Your love so that You get the glory. Forgive us for our sinful ways and for often grieving the Holy Spirit. Please, bless and heal all who call upon Your name—worldwide! In the matchless name of Jesus we pray, Amen!

**Deaconess Sharon E. Tucker**



## Lent – Day Fourteen

### *March 3*



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### God Gives Continually

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”

#### REFLECTION

Galatians 6:9 causes us to ponder over what it means to do good and what is the reward for doing so? That scripture is the signpost that leads our paths to understanding what God is requiring of us. In obedience, I can begin by sacrificing my own selfish desires to honor our heavenly Father by seeking recognition or rewards from those around me. My actions using my spiritual gifts should demonstrate the many ways I am trying to bring Him the glory and honor by walking worthy of my calling as required by the Word. In my actions, I want to make my life count for something; following the model of humility lived by Jesus, I must be about serving as opposed to being served. Remembering that however much I think I am sacrificing by serving and doing the Master's will, I need to just pause, reflect on Paul's message to the Galatians, and think how God is continually giving me far more than I can ever give to Him in return.

#### PRAYER

My Heavenly Father, I thank You every day for Your blessings, grace, and mercy throughout my entire life. Like the hymns of praise, each morning at dawn, I look at Your amazing handiwork as I witness the coming of a new day bringing those brand-new mercies You promised that keeps me “from growing weary.” Help me live each day serving and sacrificing in appreciation for Your kindness, Your unfailing faithfulness in covering me as a loving Father. I just want to thank You for all the times—the unplanned situations You have seen me through that made me boldly say out loud ... look at God! Make it impossible for me not to share my testimony of salvation and the One who is the center of my joy with any and everybody who knows me. I ask You Lord for grace to constantly and generously serve others in my church, my community, and wherever. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

**Deaconess E. Louise White**





## Lent – Day Fifteen

*March 4*



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### Christ Made the Ultimate Sacrifice

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Ephesians 1:9-11 (NLT)

“<sup>9</sup> God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. <sup>10</sup> And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. <sup>11</sup> Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.”

#### REFLECTION

To understand sacrifice and service we must understand the eternal purpose of God creating us. The Word makes it plain that we were created to serve God and in serving Him we are committed to service through worship. We worship God through Christ; thus, we are rendering to God the real act of service. In eternity God planned a will. This will was hidden in Him; hence it was a mystery. In His wisdom and prudence, He has made this hidden mystery known to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. It was the pleasure of God's heart to make the mystery of His will known to us.

God made the ultimate sacrifice on the cross and during this Lenten season we should take the time to seriously honor the Savior by sacrificing our time and talents and giving back to Him what He so rightfully deserves. When we consider the richness of God's grace and how it makes us an inheritance to Him and qualifies us to inherit all that God is ... I can truly say that God has supplied all my needs and I will continue to make sacrifices to honor Him.

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I want You to know that I love You and I want to render to our Father the real service, which is to carry out His eternal purpose for the satisfaction of His heart. Lord Jesus, at this moment, I open my heart for the fulfillment of Your divine plans. These things I utter in Your name. AMEN. Bless God for His mighty works!!

**Trustee Charlie Sprow Jr.**



## Lent – Day Sixteen

*March 5*



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### Serving Selflessly

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

#### REFLECTION

Following Jesus means selflessly serving and demands that you give up time, attention, material resources, and your life as a “living sacrifice.” You give up personal comfort to shift perspective and become a vessel of God’s love when others need it. We may have to replace rash judgment with profound empathy. Service is an act of worship that moves from busyness to a heavenly purpose. Paul writes in a letter from jail in Colossians 3:5 that the old life is put to death with the earthly desires as they are considered idolatry. As Christians we are raised [up] to a life with Christ with our hearts set on heaven, minds fixed on things not of earth to share God’s glory. Such sacrifice is the expectation of us.

Service and sacrifice are the ultimate acts of faith, trust, and obedience determining our destination of a purposeful and godly-driven life. It is a determination, prayerfully, that rises to meet our desires to reach a positive outcome. Further, the Bible teaches us a transforming pathway to reach a good purpose; that is, by renewing our minds and developing new attitudes like Christ. As students of the Word, we can develop new thinking patterns. Proverbs 4:23 cautions us, however, to guard our hearts vigilantly. We are to “walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:2, NIV). Purpose is my cross-faith connected to a resurrection-faith embedded in a saving-faith that is founded upon a Christ-faith. Lastly, the pathway to purpose is emphasized by Apostle Paul, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27, NIV).

#### PRAYER

Father God, thank You for the ultimate act of service and sacrifice to love us so much that You allowed Your Son to die at the cross to redeem us from our sins. Your purpose for our salvation was in this act of such love! It quickens my heart and boggles my mind that You loved me so. I love You, Lord, that You took upon Your shoulders the weight of my sin. This example of utter trust and total obedience of Jesus makes me question if my own meager worship, love, service, and sacrifice are meaningful for the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

**Deaconess Mattie B. H. Gay**



## Lent – Day Seventeen

*March 6*



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### Serving With a Loyal Heart

#### SCRIPTURE

##### 1 Chronicles 28:9-10 (NKJV)

“<sup>9</sup> As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. <sup>10</sup> Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.”

#### REFLECTION

David, the man of God's own heart gives power to our theme of “sacrifice and service.” These elements are also necessary for us to accomplish God's purpose as well as what we have for our lives. David wanted to build a sanctuary that would house the Ark of the Covenant and a place for people to worship. After all of David's planning and preparation for building the temple, God makes it very clear to him that he would not be the builder of the new tabernacle because he had been a man of war and had shed much blood. His son Solomon would be the builder. David's commitment, advocacy, and leadership for Solomon continued after he had been told by God that he would not be the builder. David said to all who were assembled, “My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the Lord God.” (1 Chronicles 29:1, NKJV) These attributes are invaluable when we are working with our youth in training and leading them to the Father. David's plan is carried out for the temple because he brought the people together to make sacrifices, to give and fulfill God's purpose. Jesus Christ is from the lineage of David and is God's choice to fulfill the promise of our eternal salvation. God beforehand sacrificed His only begotten son for us so that we might live eternally with Him. David had profound conversations with Solomon and provides excellent guidance for us today. Solomon's primary responsibility was to seek the Lord, worship, and serve Him. David told Solomon: Know the God of your father intimately; serve Him with a loyal heart and a willing mind; seek the Lord, and He will be found. For the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of our thoughts. Be strong and do it!

#### PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your servant, David. He has given us what it means to sacrifice and serve for it leads to completion of a task You have for us as well as to accomplish tasks we have for ourselves. Help us to seek You daily and serve with a loyal heart and a willing mind. Help us to be strong and do the work for You. Amen and Amen.

**Deacon Johnnieque B. (Johnnie) Love**



## Lent – Day Eighteen

*March 7*



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### Faith in Action

#### SCRIPTURE

##### 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

#### REFLECTION

Without faith it is impossible to please God. I have experienced that having strong faith means being active, not sitting back bemoaning life and waiting for a change. It means loving and believing in ourselves and using the transforming power of God’s Holy Spirit to move our lives forward. True faith also requires courage, choosing trust over fear even when the path ahead is unclear. When we act in faith, we align our steps with God’s purpose and allow His grace to work through our willingness to move forward.

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I come giving you all the glory and praise. I thank You Lord for the strength, courage, and wisdom You continue to give me so that I may continue to grow in serving You with integrity, and faithfulness, and to love as one should as we continue in our daily walk with You. This I ask in Your precious name, Amen.

**Deaconess Jean D. Jackson**



## Lent – Day Nineteen

*March 8*



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Created for This: Living a Life of Sacrifice and Service

### SCRIPTURE

#### Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

### REFLECTION

Sacrifice, service, and purpose are key words in our Lenten focus, so I reviewed their meanings, to understand God’s ultimate plan for my life. Here are the meanings I landed on from my AI search results.

- Sacrifice - “Often involves giving up something prized (time, comfort, self) for something else, sometimes born from necessity or a deeper call.”
- Service - “An active, helpful behavior that flows from love or compassion, an overflow of one’s being.”
- Purpose - (biblical definition) “God’s intentional plan for creation and individuals, rooted in His sovereign will to redeem and restore, meaning you are part of a sacred design, not an accident, involving serving Him, others, and aligning with His will for ultimate fulfillment and meaning through Christ.”

These definitions help us to understand the kind of life God wants us to live. And He wants us to live our lives with passion and commitment. We are not to be just on the receiving end of God’s graces, mercies, and goodness; but we are to be doing for others as Christ did and in turn, finding fulfillment in so doing. When we make sacrifices to serve others, we are moved into our purpose. Our actions become intentional. And guess what? We are a continuing work in progress as we move into our purpose. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that is why we were created.

### PRAYER

Dear God, we pray that You would remind us that we are all a part of caring for Your people. We ask that You give us a fresh vision for Your purpose for our lives. May our spirits, hearts, and minds be like Yours to make carrying out Your will greater than our own will. Fill us with confidence based in who You are and help us to trust You with the outcome so we can have courage to step out into what You are calling us to do. Help us to exemplify sacrifice, service, and purpose. We pray that You would draw us closer to You so that we are focused on Your divine vision. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Sister Shirley France**



## Lent – Day Twenty

*March 9*



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### Carrying Grace: Bearing One Another's Burdens

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Galatians 6:2-4 (NKJV)

“<sup>2</sup> Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.”

#### REFLECTION

Galatians 6:2-4 reminds me that genuine service arises when we help shoulder each other’s difficulties, particularly during life’s unpredictable challenges. Navigating the grief from loss—first a sibling, then a cousin-in-law—and supporting friends through similar trials has deepened my appreciation for being truly present. Every act of kindness, no matter its size, tangibly reflects faith and love and transforms sacrifice and service from obligations into chances to live out Christ’s law with compassion.

Recognizing that the direction of God’s plan is often uncertain, I find myself reflecting on my role and aspirations within my faith journey. Life can take unexpected turns, prompting reflection on appropriate responses and guiding principles. In early 2025, following the conclusion of a work contract, personal circumstances shifted with the passing of a cousin-in-law. This period offered me the opportunity to assist a first cousin with various tasks, including technology setup, medical appointments, and grocery shopping. Increased availability facilitated more regular support, culminating in shared experiences such as her visit to the cemetery. Helping a close friend who was coping with an aging parent drew upon personal experience with similar situations. This support extended through the loss of her mother at year’s end. These encounters with grief and change—losing loved ones and standing by friends in hardship—have given me valuable perspective on the importance of showing up for others. Each gesture of kindness, regardless of its scale, serves as a substantive demonstration of faith and compassion. These instances illustrate how acts of sacrifice and service are not merely duties, but opportunities to embody Christ’s teachings with empathy.

#### PRAYER

Father God, thank You for the many blessings You provide to me and my family daily. Continue to strengthen me to live selflessly and serve others through acts of kindness. Help me to live in grace showing Your love to others. Help me to see opportunities to serve in my daily life and to give my time, effort, and resources to do all things for Your glory. Amen.

**Sister Judy Brandon**





## Lent – Day Twenty-One

March 10



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### Justice, Mercy, and the Walk That Matters

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Micah 6:8 (NIV)

“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.”

#### REFLECTION

Micah 6:8 has become a guiding scripture in my life because it speaks plainly, yet powerfully, to what God truly requires of me—not extravagance, perfection, or public recognition, but a faithful life shaped by love, justice, mercy, and humility. Over time, I have come to understand that living out this verse often demands sacrifice, especially when service requires me to put others before myself and trust God beyond my own conscious understanding and spiritual awareness. The prophet Jeremiah helps to clarify this verse when he reminds us that if anyone is in the Lord, “They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:8, NIV). The streams of water represent God’s Word or presence, providing constant spiritual nourishment to God’s elect.

Serving God with humility and sacrifice has reshaped my perspective on life. I am constantly reminded by the Word of God that purpose is found not in control, but in trust. Pastor Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, provides helpful insights in understanding the meaning of purpose for the Christian. He asserts that knowing God’s purpose for creating you will reduce your stress, focus your energy, simplify your decisions, give meaning to your life, and, most importantly, prepare you for eternity. Micah 6:8 reminds me that sacrifice and service are not mutually exclusive burdens, but joint pathways to purpose. When I choose justice, love, mercy, and humility, even at personal cost, I align my life with God’s will. Through faithful service shaped by sacrifice, I have found deeper meaning, stronger faith, and a clearer sense of purpose for living. This purpose is rooted not in what I achieve, but in how faithfully I walk with God and serve others along the journey.

#### PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, grant us compassion for all those who suffer, that our vocations would affirm the dignity of the systematically excluded and oppressed. Keep us from shallow callings that are only concerned with the self. Keep us from discernment that only draws us into our own interior worlds. As we make sense of our callings, may we do so with an unflinching awareness of the exterior world—the weeping of our neighbors—so we would understand our vocation in relationship to those around us and their needs. We ask these and all other blessings in the wonderful, marvelous, saving name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Rev. Reginald Townsend, Associate Minister**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Two

*March 11*



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### The Purpose Found in Serving

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

##### Matthew 16:24 (NIV)

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.’”

#### REFLECTION

Jesus’ entire life was marked by humble service. Feeding the hungry and washing feet, He showed love through simple yet powerful acts. By touching the outcast, He revealed compassion without limits. Ultimately, through the complete sacrifice of giving His life for us, He made it possible for us to have life and have it more abundantly.

We learn from Him that our purpose is not about elevating ourselves above others, but rather how available we can be to others. To follow Jesus and to love others as Jesus loves us, we are called to live with humility, compassion, and openness to serve.

#### PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Give me a heart that serves willingly, hands that act faithfully, and eyes that see the need of others. Let my actions be guided by love and may every act of service bring glory to Your name. Let me discover my gifts, deepen my faith, and grow in Christ-like character. Teach me to see sacrifice not as a loss, but as obedience. Shape my heart to serve as You serve. Use my life for Your purpose and let my love reflect Your glory. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

**Deaconess Evangeline F. Stevens**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Three

*March 12*



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### From Fear of Dying to Faith in the Impossible

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Mark 10:17-27 (NIV)

“<sup>17</sup> ... ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ... <sup>20</sup> ‘Teacher,’ he declared, ‘all these I have kept since I was a boy.’ <sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. ‘One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ ... <sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but not with God, all things are possible with God.’”

#### REFLECTION

When I was a child I woke up in the middle of the night crying and my mother Mary came to me to see what was wrong and to comfort me, her only child. I told her I was crying because I didn’t want to die. At the time I wanted to, I guess, “inherit eternal life!” What my mother said to me was of little comfort even though it did stop my crying. Looking back I don’t understand why, but her words were, I think, even now, rather chilling though honest. She said very gently and honestly: “Honey you are going to die, someday.” That’s not what I wanted to hear. What I would have preferred to hear, was “Not today you won’t!” in her most emphatic voice. Or, “you are joyful, healthy, safe, strong, and protected experiencing ease in your life.” I wanted a declaration of life and living. My mother, however, didn’t traffic in fairy tales or dishonesty. She told it like it was, so to speak. She was a very straight shooter.

I don’t remember how I got back to sleep; I just know I did. I slept, very restlessly, but sleep I did and still do to this day. That’s why I need the Sunday sermons, to have spiritual food to eat throughout the week. I wish to be a man with whom God can make the impossible possible.

#### PRAYER

The light of God surrounds me. The love of God enfolds me. The power of God protects me. The presence of God watches over me. Wherever I am God is!

**Brother Jon Crain Kemp**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Four

*March 13*



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### Aligning My Life with His Will

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

#### REFLECTION

The referenced scripture is not just on our home bathroom wall; it is inscribed in my heart to carry me from one day to the next. I give praise to the LORD for my accomplishments, my successes; and ask for His forgiveness for my shortcomings. It reminds me daily to stay humble and dependent on His guidance, trusting that His grace is sufficient for every challenge. In every moment of joy or struggle, I seek to align my thoughts and actions with His will, knowing He walks with me always.

#### PRAYER

God, I always pray for Your favor and blessings on my household of faith, my family, friends, even strangers, and all those You place in my life. I lift up Your attributes and offer praises to You, in Christ Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, for both the good and the challenging moments in my life. I have accepted that my life is not my own; it is a gift, a loan from my Father who is in heaven and whose presence surrounds all creation. Amen. Halle Yahweh!

**Deacon Kevin Little**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Five

*March 14*



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### A Life That Says Yes

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Luke 1:45 (ESV)

“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

#### REFLECTION

Mary’s words, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,” (Luke 1:46, HCSB) echo deeply in my own life. Like her, I have come to know that everything begins with trusting God’s plan, even when I do not fully understand it. Through faith, I am learning to become a more faithful believer and servant of the Lord, surrendering my own plans so His purpose can unfold in me.

God has drawn me into community with others who are doing His work, reminding me that faith is not meant to be lived alone. Through these connections, I see His goodness more clearly—how He has already carried me through challenges, how He is guiding me now, and how He will continue to provide and lead me forward.

Each day, I desire to welcome God more fully into my life: in prayer, in service, in gratitude, and in trust. Like Mary, I want my life to say “yes” to Him continually, rejoicing in the Savior who has been faithful to me and who remains present with me every day.

#### PRAYER

Lord God, I thank You for calling me into faith and for drawing me closer to You each day. Like Mary, I desire to trust Your plans for my life, even when I do not fully understand them. Teach me to say “yes” to You with humility and courage, and to serve You faithfully with all that I am. Thank You for the goodness You have already shown me, for the work You are doing in my life now, and for the promises You continue to unfold before me. Help me recognize Your hand in every season and give me a grateful heart that proclaims Your greatness. Bless the connections You have placed in my life—those who are doing Your work and walking in faith alongside me. Strengthen us to encourage one another, to serve together, and to be witnesses of Your love. I desire You in my life daily. Remain at the center of my thoughts, my choices, and my actions. Guide me by Your Spirit, deepen my trust, and use me for Your glory. I place my life in Your hands, rejoicing in You, my Savior. Amen.

**Sister Lori A. Fultz**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Six

*March 15*



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### Finding Purpose Through Humble Obedience

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Micah 6:8 (NIRV)

“The Lord has shown you what is good. He has told you what he requires of you. You must act with justice. You must love to show mercy. And you must be humble as you live in the sight of your God.”

##### Micah 6:8 (NKJV)

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”

#### REFLECTION

As we prepare to celebrate the risen Christ, it is also a time to contemplate His sacrifice and resurrection and to reflect on our personal walk with God. Across this country, many people are struggling with rising health care and housing costs, food insecurity, and the fear and instability caused by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and deportations. In our hearts, how do we reconcile God’s love with the injustices we see around us? One way is to show Christ’s love by donating our time, talent, and resources to those who are less fortunate, suffering, and displaced. God’s presence radiates through the actions of His people, especially where injustice exists. Let’s renew our hearts and commit to walking in humble obedience to God’s Word.

#### PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,

We live in a busy world, constantly bombarded with information (sometimes unreliable) that causes mistrust and confusion. Help us to know Your truth and equip us with boldness and conviction to speak out against injustice, to walk in humility, and to love our neighbors. We pray that our church continues the legacy of ministering to those who are deeply affected by the current climate of our country. Lord, make us instruments of Your peace. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

**Sister Tanya Agurs-Collins**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Seven

*March 16*



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### God Is at Work in Our Hardships

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 5:3-4 (NIV)

“<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

#### REFLECTION

These days, we don't have to look far to see that everyone is facing some kind of hardship. Sometimes, we only need to look inside our own homes to find higher utility and grocery bills, medical challenges, and family struggles. For others, it might be stress at work, or maybe not having a job at all. Honestly, it feels like we're all living the same life, doesn't it?

But here's what gives me hope: God sees and understands every struggle we face. Not only does He see them, but He also works them out for our good. I won't pretend that the pressures of life are easy to bear, but God's Word assures us that our suffering is never wasted. In God's economy suffering produces something; it produces perseverance, what I like to call “stick-to-it-ness.” Perseverance shapes our character, and character gives birth to hope. Hope is the confident expectation that God has us right where He wants us, in His will.

So, my brother and sister in Christ, be encouraged. Your sacrifice and suffering are not in vain. They are leading you toward your purpose in the Lord.

#### PRAYER

Dear Lord, hear my prayer in this moment. You know my heart feels overwhelmed by the issues of life, but I turn to Your Word for comfort and guidance. You remind us that we can rejoice in our sufferings because they serve a greater purpose. So today, we choose to count it all joy, knowing You are building us stronger and better. You are laying a firm foundation so we can stand strong in You. Thank You for Your care and concern for us, Your people. We love You with all our hearts, and we thank You in the matchless name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Deacon-elect Mario Ashby**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Eight

*March 17*



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### The Gospel Equation: Redeemed for Good Deeds

#### SCRIPTURE

**Titus 2:14 (NRSVUE)**

“He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.”

#### REFLECTION

Equations help us to solve problems by representing relationships. The defining feature of a mathematical equation is the equal sign. What is on the left side of the equal sign must have the same value as what is on the right side of the equal sign. For example,  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Gospel equations, on the other hand, are said to be simple mathematic formulas used to illustrate spiritual concepts. Let us rewrite the Lenten devotional theme as an equation,  $\text{Sacrifice} + \text{Service} = \text{A Pathway to Purpose}$ . Not only does sacrifice include relinquishing one's will for the will of God, but it also considers the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the gift of salvation. And because of that sacrifice, and the acknowledgement that we owe it all to Jesus Christ, we attend to His Word to serve, to care for others, to take care of the sick and the shut-in, to feed the hungry, to set the oppressed free, to clothe the naked, and to set at liberty those who are bruised (Luke 4:18), and to preach and teach the Word of God.

The Scripture from the book of Titus asserts that through Jesus' sacrifice we have been redeemed back to God and set free from sin. This transformation changes our hearts and desires. We are therefore eager to do good works through service which exemplify God. God has called us unto God's self for a purpose. And we are to be glad to do His will. Coming to God and going for God. Amen.

During this Lenten season let us reflect on this equation, “ $\text{Sacrifice} + \text{Service} = \text{Pathways to Purpose}$ .” Are all sides of the equation of equal value in our lives? Are we sacrificing our time, talent, and treasure for God's purpose? Are we offering sacrifices of worship, prayer, and study to enhance our Christian discipleship? Are we truly serving in the world as Jesus instructed in the Gospels? What pathways (a way of achieving a specified result) are we creating?

#### PRAYER

O God during this season of purpose, bless the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church family, our pastor, fellow clergy, officers, and members in a special way. Our prayer is that through the equipping of the Holy Spirit we will continue to strive to sacrifice and to serve in ways that show forth God's divine purpose in our lives and the lives of others in the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Rev. Dr. Cheryl Coleman Hall, Associate Minister**





## Lent – Day Twenty-Nine

*March 18*



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### When Sacrifice Becomes Love in Action

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Matthew 16:24-26 (NIV)

“<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?’”

#### REFLECTION

Our Lenten theme, “Sacrifice & Service: A Pathway to Purpose,” emphasizes the importance of self-sacrifice in following Jesus. I normally fill my days with plans and purposes of my own making and responding to required responsibilities, lots of busy work. But when the phone call came about my daughter-in-love’s cancer diagnosis, everything stopped. In that moment, Matthew 16:24-26 became more than scripture on a page, it became the blueprint for how I would walk through this valley with her and our family. This wasn’t about giving up some abstract notion of self—it was about setting aside every agenda, every busy schedule, every personal plan the moment she needed me. And I discovered something beautiful: I was never too tired, never too busy, never too focused on my own life to answer her call. Sacrifice stopped feeling like loss and became what it always was—love in action.

Leading with love means being present, giving without counting the cost, sharing our strength when others are weak, caring for them. Whether it’s our biological family or others, when God calls us to serve His people, the answer must always be “yes”. In caring for my daughter-in-love, I haven’t lost my life—I’ve found it. I’ve discovered that true purpose isn’t about what I accomplish on my own timeline, but about being available when God calls.

#### PRAYER

Loving God, forgive me for the times I’ve clung so tightly to my own life that I’ve missed the life You’re offering me. Give me the courage to lay down my need for control, my fear of losing what I think I need. Help me see that every act of service is sacred ground, every sacrifice an invitation into Your purpose for me. When the world tells me to grasp and gather, remind me that Your kingdom works differently—that in giving, I receive; in serving, I discover who I truly am. Show me where You’re calling me to love beyond my comfort, to serve beyond my convenience, to sacrifice so that Your kingdom can grow larger in me and through me. May I find my truest life not in saving it, but in offering it back to You and pouring it out for others. Lead me on this pathway of sacrifice and service and let it become the road to the purpose You’ve intended for me. In Jesus’ name, who showed us the way by giving everything, Amen.

**Deaconess Brenda Lightening-Tolbert**



## Lent – Day Thirty

*March 19*



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### Serving From the Heart as an Act of Worship

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)

“<sup>6</sup> In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. <sup>7</sup> If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. <sup>8</sup> If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”

##### Romans 12:1 (NLT)

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice--the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.”

#### REFLECTION

I struggle with whether my sacrifice of service is enough to please God. We all have a public life, a private life, a family life, and a spiritual life. In every area, we want to surrender to God and let it be known that we are serving Him. We also have to be mindful of whether what we are doing is in service to God. Our actions on our jobs, in our family, friendships, acquaintances (casual or situational), and amongst complete strangers, are times when we can ask ourselves, am I serving God?

Service to God can take place in all aspects of our lives and can lead to discipleship to others. We bring others to Christ because they turn to us during difficult times. We also demonstrate love, peace, and joy when we are serving God. I believe my strengths of service are encouraging, showing kindness, hospitality, and being available to help whenever I can. I don't have any special talents but love what is genuine, authentic, and true. Serving from the heart, in any capacity is pleasing to God. He has given us so many ways to serve in His kingdom and we need to examine ourselves, pray, and take time to understand and learn what He wants us to do because our service is another way that we worship God!

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I come to You seeking Your guidance and direction on how You desire me to use the gifts You have given me to serve. I just want to do Your will. Guide me to serve You in a way that truly worships You and is helpful to someone else and/or the body of Christ. Allow me to be honest with myself in my service. Help me God to manage my time, skills, and resources to glorify You. Let my service be without stress or strife and that my weaknesses can be balanced with someone else's strengths. Your will be done. I ask it all in the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

**Sister Kim Ferguson**



## Lent – Day Thirty-One

*March 20*



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### When Uncertainty Calls for Faithful Service

#### SCRIPTURE

##### 1 Peter 4:10-11 (NIV)

“<sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

#### REFLECTION

It is in seasons of uncertainty that our servant hearts must be sharpened most, our sacrifices matter most, and our clarity of Christian purpose be most true.

#### PRAYER

Dear Lord,

We know that it is in our darkest hours that You remind us to live again in, through, and for You. Through our practices as disciples and our acts and sacrifices as evangelicals, may we honor Your will for our lives. Through service to others may we fortify Your kingdom, remove new walls of Jericho, and offer kindness, hope, and love to a world rife with division and need. Amen.

**Sister April Massey**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Two

March 21



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Serving With Purpose, Living With Meaning

### SCRIPTURE

#### Matthew 20:28 (NLT)

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

### REFLECTION

Many years ago, I read a book that changed my perspective on life as a Christian, *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Rev. Rick Warren. The subtitle of the book asks the question, “What on earth am I here for?” It showed me how to examine and improve my Christian walk.

Rev. Warren breaks down God’s design for human life into five distinct purposes:

- Worship: A lifestyle of loving and pleasing God through every action.
- Fellowship: Building unselfish relationships within a church community.
- Discipleship: Growing toward spiritual maturity by reflecting the character of Christ.
- Ministry: Serving others using your unique SHAPE (Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experience).
- Mission: Sharing God’s love and your “Life Message” with the world.

(Warren 2002)

Grounded in scripture, these five purposes guide us toward spiritual maturity. Choosing service over self is a powerful act of worship. Whether we are building community, deepening our prayer life, or sharing God’s love, each act of obedience honors Him and brings us closer to His heart.

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love and for giving the ultimate sacrifice of Your only begotten Son so that we may have eternal life. Grant us the strength, wisdom, and grace to fulfill Your purpose for our lives here on earth. With the passing of each day, let us become more and more like Jesus. Let us be of service to others and share the good news of eternal life with others. Let us worship You with every word we speak and every action we take. We ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Deacon Deborah Crain-Kemp**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Three

*March 22*



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### Cultivating What Time Cannot Erase

#### SCRIPTURE

**Isaiah 41:13 (KJV)**

“For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.”

**Isaiah 58:11 (KJV)**

“And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”

#### REFLECTION

I used to be quick to toss away the old year and latch onto the new. Then, one year it occurred to me that there really is nothing to be gained in this exercise. Now, I sift through what the years have garnered me. For example, I savor the wonderful memories made with those who have passed on. As painful as 2025 was, there was plenty of work that was done in it, to make 2026 enjoyable or at least endurable.

Albeit, I can't actually erase time. However, the act of mentally or vocally discounting an entire thing is a slippery slope that I hazard, if I cyclically tuck away the last year and embrace the next, only to dispatch that year at the stroke of midnight, for the next year. This habit renders my worship and gratitude meaningless rituals, which greatly displeases God. Rather, I acknowledge and maintain the same garden that throughout the years, though laboriously demanding, sustained me—through God's grace. Now, I deliberately carry into the next year the beauty that was afforded me from previous years: the produce and the flowers. I uproot the weeds and choking vines and churn the soil. Yes, I faithfully endeavor to cultivate my garden! These sacrifices of time and other resources are exemplars of how God deals with me; I know, He does not tuck me away at year's end, or month's, or week's, and certainly not day's. God tarries with me continually. God is with me, in the garden. So, I struggle to keep it evergreen.

#### PRAYER

Great Provider, thank You for Your help and our days, for keeping us close and mercifully and graciously sustaining us up and through 2025 and throughout 2026 and beyond, according to Your love and bounty. We are not You; we are imperfect. Therefore, remind us that only earnest effort will yield a beneficial harvest, to keep our hands and hearts busy cultivating our garden, for the nourishment of my family, church, friends, and communities. Amen.

**Sister Julie Pulley**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Four

*March 23*



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### Planning with Purpose, Walking by Faith

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)

“In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.”

#### REFLECTION

We all have plans and goals; this is healthy and prudent. Humans are smart, intelligent, wise, witty, and caring. We are also mean, selfish, spiteful, conning, cunning, and can be downright evil. We Christians plan for godly lives, church growth, career advancement, school promotion, increased evangelism, authentic church worship, etcetera. We plan, and plan, and plan. For God knows the plans He has for you, plans for you to prosper and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). So, God is on our side and also has plans for us.

Church Family, I pray that you continue to plan, strategize, meet, future cast, set up Zoom meetings, budget meetings, and conference calls, but I implore you to also leave space for the Lord\God\Holy Spirit to establish your\our steps. In the hearts of humans, we plan our course, but the Lord establishes our steps.

#### PRAYER

Lord, help us to be proper stewards of the time, talent, and treasure You bless us with. We want to walk, as You would like us to walk. Give us the knowledge and patience to see how You want to order our steps. Open our eyes and hearts, so that we may follow a Godly Pathway. We ask for Your direction, in the name of the One who died that we might be saved, Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Deacon Gerald A. Young**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Five

*March 24*



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### Jesus Paid It All

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Isaiah 53:4-5 (NLT)

“<sup>4</sup> Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.”

#### REFLECTION

The penalty for sin required a blood sacrifice. God had His Son be the sacrifice. Jesus the Christ was the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Even though He asked God the Father to “take this cup away from me,” He chose to be obedient by saying, “nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done.” (Luke 22:42, NKJV).

Jesus the Christ was able to come down from the cross, but because of the love and respect He had for His Father and the love that He had for us, He chose to be obedient. He paid a debt that we could never pay.

#### PRAYER

Almighty and gracious Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and took all of our sins with Him to His grave. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Now we should live our lives in following the paths of Jesus’ love and forgive one another. We honor and praise You because You are worthy to be praised. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

**Deaconess Emerita Martha Ward**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Six

*March 25*



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Committed and Connected

### SCRIPTURE

**Acts 17:28a (NIV)**

“For in him we live and move and have our being.”

**Joshua 1:9 (NIV)**

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

### REFLECTION

God created us because He loves us and wants us to have a relationship with Him. We are connected to Him because He made us in His own image. He blew into us the breath of life. We are His offspring. All our help comes from God.

After all that God has done to connect us to Himself, we should strive to commit to one another. Through the love of God, we should commit to studying His word, and walking in obedience. He was committed to saving us even unto His death on the cross. A committed Christian life can be full of challenges, sorrows, and tough decisions. But even during hardships, God tells us to be strong and courageous, remain committed and connected to Him. He is faithful.

### PRAYER

Thank You, Father, for the gift of life, love, and purpose. Anchor my heart in unwavering commitment to walk faithfully in the path You’ve set before me, to honor my word, and to serve with humility. Strengthen my connection with those You have placed into my life. Let my relationships be rooted in trust, always led in kindness, and guided by understanding. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Deaconess Pearl Sudduth**





## Lent – Day Thirty-Seven

*March 26*



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### A Life of Service Through Sacrifice

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 12:1 (NRSV)

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

#### REFLECTION

Sacrifice and service are not acts of loss but rather acts of alignment, as expressed in Romans 12:1. A “living sacrifice” means choosing faithfulness over convenience, obedience over comfort, and service over self-interest. Genuine service stems from a surrendered heart. By sacrificing our time, talents, and testimonies, we discover our unique purpose and honor it without taking it lightly.

Sacrifice transforms our priorities, while service provides focus for our purpose. When we serve others out of love, we reflect Christ, who taught us that true greatness is achieved through humility, compassion, and selfless love. Our purpose is not found in the possessions we acquire, but in those we serve and in the extent to which we offer ourselves for God’s glory and the well-being of others.

#### PRAYER

Gracious and Eternal God,

We thank You for inviting us to a life of service through sacrifice. You set the ultimate example for us when Jesus Christ laid down His life so that we could live. Teach us what it truly means to be living sacrifices: holy, surrendered, and ready to serve wherever You lead.

Eliminate all fear, distraction, and the selfish desires that seek to offer only for ourselves. Grant us willing hands, obedient hearts, and attentive spirits. May our work heal others, honor Your name, and clarify our calling. Help us give our best as we travel down this path of sacrifice and service that You are shaping us for, aiming towards a greater purpose.

We surrender ourselves to You anew. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

**Deacon-elect Vialetta Graham**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Eight

*March 27*



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### Lending to the Lord: Discovering Purpose in Giving Back

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Proverbs 19:17 (NIV)

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.”

#### REFLECTION

There is no need to speculate that the past couple of years have been difficult ones. Somehow, and after a period of self-discovery, I realized that my own difficulties were parallel to several people that I know. We, simply, had not compared notes ... Just before the holiday season, I volunteered with a group of colleagues, and we had a wonderful conversation about helping people. This was an excellent opportunity to share perspectives on the “purpose” of giving back and its intersection with service. Some people consider regular church attendance or volunteer service with a church auxiliary as acts of “service” or as a way to give back. Others will go deeper to identify their devoted acts as a personal “sacrifice” to God.

The humility in being part of communities of faith or helping those in need (giving back) have a way of anchoring our “purpose.” So, in your giving, in your serving, and in finding your niche within the “Body of Christ,” work with a great degree of patience and confidence. Just as I have come to know, you will find your community and the “a pathway to purpose.”

#### PRAYER

Lord, as we continue to work toward Your will for our lives, give us the patience that we need to honor that will. When we ask what Your will is for our lives, place us in a clear position to hear from You—even as we “sacrifice and serve.” We ask this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Deacon K. Alginard Hobson**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Nine

March 28



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### Love

#### SCRIPTURE

##### 1 Corinthians 13:1, 5 (NIV)

“<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal... <sup>5</sup> It [love] does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”

#### REFLECTION

Purpose is defined as “the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.” (*Oxford Languages*, Oxford University Press, <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>.) Do you ever wonder, as David did in Psalm 8, why God is mindful of us? That’s each of us individually, you know—confirmed by God’s knowing every hair on my/your head. (Luke 12:7). Rev. Robin often reminds us to use the Bible to confirm the Bible.

I was challenged in doing this devotional. I was dealing with church hurt and it was difficult to depersonalize my first four drafts. Don’t worry. I was hurt for someone else. About 4 a.m., God gifted me a new poem. He moved what troubled my heart onto paper (my personal purpose). He is ever mindful of me, even in the wee hours! It is wonderful to be loved and cared for by God and His people. But, what about the people we don’t love? What of the flawed people who come into His house looking for the light of the Lord? We see their inconvenient behaviors as a problem. We see their needs as excessive and never ending. We don’t always love them as God instructs. Be very clear, as the scriptures say, we are created to love. Consider for a moment that their purpose is to challenge our notion that we are holy by pushing us to be loving in all circumstances. Remember that God knows every hair on their heads too.

A line, in my new poem, is about our rejecting Misty Copeland because she dances in the back of the church. There is a Jewish concept *tikkun olam*--our obligation is to make the world a little better than we found it. We can do that by extending God’s love to everyone. We are pieces in the greatest, largest, and most intricate, tapestry ever. Without each other, the church is not complete. 1 Corinthians 12:27, BSB, says, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it.” This applies even when I am unlovable and dancing in the aisles.

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me. Thank You for purposing me to love others as I love You. And, as I vow to love You with my mind, body, and spirit, I will with the help of the Holy Spirit love others. God give me strength, have mercy, and make me a reflection of Your magnificent light. AMEN.

**Sister Monica Reeder**



## The Holy Week – Day Forty

*March 29 ~ Palm Sunday*



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### Serving Without Losing Sight of Love

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Galatians 5:13-14 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. <sup>14</sup> For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

#### REFLECTION

It all comes down to this—“Love your neighbor as yourself.” It’s a wonderful command but one people can lose sight of, often unintentionally. We see examples everywhere—at the extreme, from the dehumanizing treatment of those seen as others, increasingly prevalent in our nation now, to the more subtle failures that might be characterized as a sort of benign neglect.

Opportunities to “serve one another humbly in love” are all around us. And perhaps that’s the challenge. When I take account of how well I’m fulfilling this command, I can feel a little ambivalent about how I’m doing. I wonder whether I’m doing enough, especially when I look beyond financial giving as a show of love, to how I’m doing with the giving of my time. Let’s take my church service. Often, I’m so focused on what I’ll call the logistics of serving—attending planning meetings and setting up for the program or event—that it can feel as though I haven’t really served in that love-your-neighbor-as-yourself kind of way. With some church programs, the reason for doing them can even get lost in the ceremony of doing them.

Now and then when serving, I have to remind myself of the reason I’m serving, while also accepting the fact that service often involves a lot of time and effort. And that’s okay, because I love to serve, including the logistics of serving. But I also know that serving one another humbly in love doesn’t necessarily require a huge investment of time or doing a big service project. It’s also taking a moment to talk to a church member or visitor on Sunday morning, it’s helping someone to a seat in the fellowship hall, it’s calling someone you haven’t seen at church in a while to make sure they’re okay, it’s stopping to buy the homeless newspaper from a brother or sister trying to rebuild their lives, it’s treating people from all walks of life as you would want to be treated. And for me, it’s checking in with myself, now and then, to make sure that in my service life, I haven’t lost sight of the why—I haven’t lost sight of the one command.

#### PRAYER

Gracious God, thank You for the love You have shown us through the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to remain focused as we seek to return that love through serving one another humbly in love, always keeping Your command that we love our neighbor as ourselves. These blessings I ask in Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Deacon Donza M. Poole**



## The Holy Week – Day Forty-One

*March 30*



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### The Lord Will Provide

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Genesis 22:1-14 (NIV)

“...God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’ ... As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, ‘Father?’ ‘Yes, my son?’ ‘...but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ Abraham answered, ‘God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ And the two of them went on together. ...Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’...‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘...Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.’ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram... He ...took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ...So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide.”

#### REFLECTION

There are few stories in Scripture that cut as close to the bone as this one. Abraham is asked to give up what he loved most his promised son, Isaac. God’s request seemed to threaten the very future He’d promised him. Yet Abraham obeyed, trusting that God could be trusted, even when everything was on the line. Sacrifice isn’t just giving something up. It’s surrendering what we love most, and placing it in God’s hands, believing that He knows what He’s doing. It’s service, an act of worship that stretches us, refines us, and draws us closer to our purpose. God didn’t let Abraham lose Isaac, but He did let Abraham walk all the way to the edge of surrender. God wants to know how bad you want it. God wants to know if you really trust in Him. The journey revealed what was in Abraham’s heart and showed him, and us, that God truly provides.

What is the thing you’re holding most tightly? What might God be inviting you to lay on the altar in service to Him? Is it comfort, ambition, a relationship, a dream, or something else? Sometimes, the pathway to our God-given purpose lies right through the things we’re most afraid to release. Reflection Question: What are you willing to sacrifice as a service unto God so that you may reach your God-given purpose?

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You see my heart and know the things I hold most dear. Give me the courage to surrender everything into Your hands, trusting that You are good, and that You provide. Help me to serve You with open hands and a willing spirit. Show me what You are asking me to lay down, so I can walk fully in the purpose You have for me. Thank You for being faithful, for providing, and for loving me enough to call me deeper. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Rev. James Harris Jr.**  
Youth and Young Adult Pastor



## The Holy Week – Day Forty-Two

*March 31*



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### Passing Through the Valley

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Psalm 23 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup>“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup>He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. <sup>3</sup>He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. <sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. <sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.”

#### REFLECTION

Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane reminds us that dark moments are part of life on this side of eternity. Yet for the believer, there is comfort in knowing that these moments are only shadows, overcome by the grace of God. The language of the Lord’s Prayer reassures us that even our darkest seasons—no matter how long—are just shadows. God assures us that we can endure because He will not give us more than we can bear.

In physics, shadows represent areas where light is blocked or absent, but they are always subject to light. In fact, without light, no shadow can exist (John 1:5). The same is true spiritually: all shadows are subject to the Light. We are called to focus on God in these moments and not be overtaken by the shadows. As the psalmist declared, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me” (Psalm 23). Shadows reflect only part of the truth and often exaggerate circumstances, making them appear more ominous than they truly are. They may seem larger than life, but they are always smaller than the Source, for our God is preeminent. By faith, we know that Light prevails over darkness in every form—whether sickness, sadness, deceit, rebellion, doubt, or spiritual opposition (Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 10:5). If we trust God and do not faint, we will face life’s trials courageously and walk victoriously in the Light. Even in the valley, God is a present help. He provides, protects, and gives peace, for Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33).

#### PRAYER

Dear Lord, as we face life’s toughest tests and experience turmoil on the political landscape, let us be reminded that no shadow can separate us from You nor diminish Your power. Even when we are weary or tempted to doubt, we know You are with us and give us a way of escape. You are preeminent over every spirit and situation. Thank You for protecting and providing for us as only You can. Thank You for securing the victory through the precious blood of Jesus the Christ. And it is in His name that we pray, Amen!

**Rev. Robin Turner, Associate Minister**  
**Intercessory Prayer Ministry**



## The Holy Week – Day Forty-Three

*April 1*



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### When Praise Becomes Our Offering

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Hebrews 13:15 (NIV)

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.”

#### REFLECTION

Lenten season and sacrifices go hand in hand. Giving up something (i.e., sacrificing) during Lent is common, and we are able to do it with various levels of success. The author here in Hebrews 13:15 is asking us to offer God a different sacrifice, one of praise, through Jesus Christ by openly professing His name. So, here is another way of sacrificing, that is to openly praise and profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. For those of us baptized believers, this doesn't seem like a sacrifice at all, but there are times and places that we believers would be sacrificing the protocol of the moment (think work, or otherwise in public) to profess Jesus as Lord. But this is what we are called to do, that is to offer God a sacrifice of praise stating that Jesus is Lord. “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” (Hebrews 13:16, NIV).

#### PRAYER

Lord, show us those moments when we might sacrifice our quietness, peace, or comfort for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This scripture commands us to continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise by openly professing the name of Jesus. Prepare us to do just that, even in those moments where our family, friends, co-workers, even our enemies, or enemies of the Gospel do not want to hear about a Savior that can take away the sins of the world. We thank You for hearing our prayer and ask for You to show us how to profess Christ to a dying world. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

**Deacon Gerald A. Young**



## The Holy Week – Day Forty-Four

*April 2 ~ Maundy Thursday*



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When Love Gives All, God's Ultimate Sacrifice

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### SCRIPTURE

**John 3:16 (KJV)**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**Hebrews 13:16 (NLT)**

“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.”

### REFLECTION

Just imagine giving your child away so that others may live to have everlasting life. It is hard for me to comprehend. Yet I know the power of God Almighty. The loving act of God makes me think about our forebearers and what they did to protect their children from suffering the fate of enslavement. When I hear or read John 3:16, I pause and ask myself could I ever, as a human, even come close to making such a sacrifice.

Just thinking about what God sacrificed tells us how great our God is. On a personal level the word sacrifice says to me that I am giving up something beyond my personal desires for the benefit of others. The time or personal acts of services that I have done and will continue to do by God’s grace, can’t compare to His countless blessings. I should dare not to even think of making such a comparison. However, as the good Lord blesses me and as stated in Hebrews 13:16, I will make every effort to do good for those in need.

### PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, I thank You for all the many blessings that You have given me during this life. I ask You to continue to instill in me the desire to sacrifice and do good. Lord, I ask that You permeate and decimate the strain of hatefulness and greed that surges amongst the minds of many. I honor You and give You praise. In the marvelous name of Your Son Jesus.

Amen!

**Deacon Deborah Lewis Thornton**





## The Holy Week – Day Forty-Five

*April 3 ~ Good Friday*



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Jesus Shows Us a Path of Serving Others

### SCRIPTURE

**Mark 10:45 (NRSV)**

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

### REFLECTION

Lent invites us to take an honest look at our lives—our habits, our priorities, and what it means to follow Jesus. In a culture that celebrates being first and getting ahead, Jesus shows us a different path: sacrifice through service. When Jesus spoke these words, His disciples were arguing about who was most important and who would get the best positions. They were focused on status. Jesus’ answer was clear: greatness isn’t about moving up—it’s about bending down to help others.

For us at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, this message matters. We live in Washington, D.C., a city built on power and influence. But the gospel reminds us that God’s work often happens quietly: feeding the hungry, mentoring youth, visiting someone who’s sick, advocating for justice, and showing up faithfully for one another. Sacrifice during Lent isn’t only about what we give up. It’s also about what we give to others. Service takes time, patience, and humility. It means letting our plans get interrupted by someone else’s need. It means choosing faithfulness over convenience.

Jesus didn’t sacrifice Himself just because. He did it to show us what love looks like. When we serve, we’re doing the same—showing others who God is. As we walk toward Easter, the question becomes personal: Where is God calling me to serve? At church? In my neighborhood? In this city? This Lenten season can shape us into people who follow Christ by practicing self-giving love—trusting that God brings new life from every faithful act.

### PRAYER

Loving God, You sent Jesus to serve, not to be served. This Lenten season help us let go of our need to be important or comfortable. Teach us to see people the way You see them and to love like You love. Give us courage to serve others, even when it’s inconvenient, and hearts that stay open to the needs around us. Make Nineteenth Street Baptist Church a witness of Your love in this city and beyond. We offer You our time, our gifts, and our lives. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Brother Kenneth Peagler**  
Minister of Music



## The Holy Week – Day Forty-Six

*April 4 ~ Holy Saturday*



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Servant King, Holy Savior: Embracing Jesus' Sacrificial Love

### SCRIPTURE

**Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)**

"[J]ust as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Revelation 4:8a (NKJV)**

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

### REFLECTION

As we conclude this holy season of Lent, let us remain deeply aware of the profound sacrificial love that God has shown us. He sent His only Son, Jesus, from heaven, who willingly gave His life to redeem us from the bondage of sin and death. In Revelation 5, Jesus is declared the only one worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for He is the sacrificial Lamb whose blood has redeemed us for God. On the cross, Jesus completed His earthly mission—prophecy was fulfilled, and the debt of our sin was fully paid. As we shift our focus to the resurrection, we are called to celebrate our Almighty King and proclaim His holiness, majesty, power, faithfulness, wisdom, and sovereignty.

Considering Jesus' example and sacrifice, let us commit ourselves as believers to serve others with humility and sacrificial love. Just as Jesus came not to be served but to serve, may we dedicate our lives to meeting the needs of those around us, putting others before ourselves, and offering our time, resources, and hearts for the sake of His kingdom. May our acts of service reflect the love and grace we have received, and may we strive daily to follow in Jesus' footsteps, serving sacrificially for Him.

### PRAYER

Gracious God, our Father, we come before You in awe of Your deep and immeasurable love for us. We thank You for sending Jesus, who humbled Himself to serve and gave His life as a ransom for us. Transform us by Your Spirit to be true servants, following Jesus' example in humility and love. Help us to see those around us with Your compassion, and move us to serve others sacrificially, just as Jesus did. May our words and actions glorify You and draw others into Your presence. Remind us daily of Jesus' victory on the cross, and the hope we have through His resurrection. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**2026 Lenten Season Devotional Team**





## **Sacrifice & Service: A Pathway to Purpose** Scriptures, Reflections, and Prayers

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Nineteenth Street Baptist Church

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