



# Entering a New Season

## Led by the Holy Spirit

Scriptures, Prayers, and Reflections  
A Devotional for the 2024 Lenten Season





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## **Our Mission Statement**

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.

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# A Word from the Ministerial Council

## The Holy Lenten Season

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For Christians, Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation in observance of the sacrifice of Christ, beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding the Thursday before Easter. As such, it is a time of self-examination and reflection. Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance for all Christians. In this season, we especially focus on strengthening our relationship with God and to growing as believers. We often choose to give up something or give more time in service to others.

In addition, February will highlight Black History Month, which will display the tremendous contributions that Black people have made to this country. Despite many challenges, we have kept the faith to overcome with God's grace. Fasting during Lent continues as a practice, symbolic of the reverent spirit of the Passion and celebration of the Resurrection.

The Ministerial Council recognizes all of the leaders of this great church and the countless unsung servants of God who have sustained us during this time of transition. Furthermore, we are grateful to this congregation for allowing the Ministerial Council to provide congregational care and spiritual leadership in worship. As we move forward together, we are reminded that God is unchanging and true to His word, He promised salvation and to be with us always. He keeps His promise forever and is worthy of our trust no matter the circumstances.

We acknowledge the serious challenges our society faces, from gun violence, to homelessness, to wage disparities, to inequalities in education and health care. We also are burdened by the soaring prices of food and gas and the daily cost of living. Meanwhile, our democracy is under siege, and the judicial system is exceptionally flawed. These issues have a disproportionate impact on people of color. But we must not lose sight that the Church has the moral and spiritual authority to employ God's power and grace to help bring solutions to all.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in our life changes everything for us. As we hear the Holy Spirit speak and allow Him to lead and empower us, we can have confidence that Christ lives in us. Therefore, having that personal relationship gives us the power to seek Him to guide us through any difficulties we may face. Let us keep this in mind as we use this Lenten devotional in the coming weeks as part of our devotions. We are thankful to the Deacon Board for compiling this spiritual tool each year.

Now, let us look to Calvary - knowing the power of the Resurrection is still working for us today (Philippians 3:10-14).

In His Service,

**Rev. Christopher O. Crawford**  
Associate Minister



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# A Word from the Chair of the Board of Deacons

## A Season

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### 2 Timothy 1: 6-7 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup>For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

### Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:”

### Genesis 8:22 (NIV)

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

At Nineteenth Street Baptist Church we are walking in a new season, or maybe I should say we are entering another season, and during this time we are continuing to be led by the Holy Spirit. The Bible clearly tells us that there will be seasonal changes as long as the earth endures. In the past year, one of our members shared a reading which echoed an Instagram post I had previously read (I like how God makes things so clear to us) and both ministered to my spirit. She shared that one of the things that separates us from the world is that we have faith in God and know that He will take care of us. Therefore, in the midst of the storm, we are confident that things will be okay. The post went on to say that anxiety/fear are signs that we are not totally secure in the knowledge that God will take care of us. Therefore, as Christians, when we travel through more tumultuous seasonal weather, we should be able to sleep through the night. Our spirits are secure in the knowledge that God will provide. He will take care of us. This does not mean that situations will always work out the way we want, but we do know that whatever occurs, He will be beside us, sometimes carrying us, but always leading us. God is faithful. John says, I have never seen the righteous forsaken. Entering this season, we will continue to ask God to lead us and submit ourselves to His guidance.

“Lead me, guide me along the way. Lord if you lead me, I will not stray. Lord let me walk each day with you, lead me, Oh Lord, lead me.” (From song, “Lead Me, Guide Me” by Doris Akers)

Amen.

**Deacon Shawn Davis-Wilensky**

Chair, Board of Deacons



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

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Dear Heavenly Father,

As we enter this new season, thank God for giving us this precious opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices of Jesus. He endured much pain so that we may live to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

As time moves on, let the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church Family not forget and continue to lift up and praise the Word of God.

May the Lord add a blessing to the reading of this word.

Amen.

Your Editors of the Lenten Season Devotional Booklet 2024

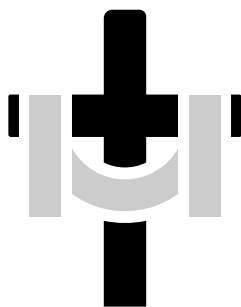
**Deacon Yvonne Bowman Dickson**

**Deacon Sandra Keaton Brown**

**Deacon Donza M. Poole**

**Deacon Deborah Lewis Thornton**

**Deaconess Evangeline Stevens**





## Lent – Day One

*February 14 ~ Ash Wednesday*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Proverbs 31:10-31 (NIV)

<sup>10</sup>“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. <sup>11</sup>Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. <sup>12</sup>She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. <sup>13</sup>She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands...”

<sup>25</sup>“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. <sup>26</sup>She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. <sup>27</sup>She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. <sup>28</sup>Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: <sup>29</sup>‘Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.’ <sup>30</sup>Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. <sup>31</sup>Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.”

### REFLECTION

I have chosen the Book of Proverbs 31:10-31. This scripture describes the strong woman of God and her unselfish manner going from day to day, caring for her family and home. This scripture was written over 2,000 years ago, but still applies today. During the Lenten season, I can imagine her sacrifices go even deeper as we anticipate the Day of Resurrection of Our Lord.

This scripture also reminds me of my mother with her close friends who, by their example, showed me the way by giving back.

### PRAYER

Precious Father God, look down and bless all these strong women and men of God who have used Your plan and given their lives to serve You, following the plan You have made for all of us. Allow our Lenten season to show the dedication and sacrifices these servants of Proverbs 31:10-31 gave all over the world. Amen.

**Deaconess Sharon Miller**





## Lent – Day Two

*February 15*



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### Wilderness Journey

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Deuteronomy 8:2-3 (NIV)

“<sup>2</sup>Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup>He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

#### REFLECTION

For just the fifth time in over 140 years, we find ourselves on a Wilderness Journey without a senior pastor in place at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church. In reflection, there is much the Lord would want to teach us during this Wilderness Journey. Testing us... Humbling us... Finding out what is in our hearts... As He did for the children of Israel, God will provide us the manna to get through the tests, and to complete the journey. Our budget(s) won't do it. Who is or is not a member won't do it. Visiting national figures won't do it. During this Lenten season, let us not miss the point of acknowledging that “Man shall not Live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4, NIV)

#### PRAYER

Lord, we acknowledge you as Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end; God the Father, God the Son, and the ever-present Holy Spirit. As we live in You and go through this Wilderness Journey, please provide Your Word(s) to feed, comfort, and build us into the church you want us to be. Let Your Holy Spirit abide in our hearts and minds, even change them if necessary, so that You get the praise and You get the credit and the world will know us as Yours. In the name of Jesus, the Christ, Amen.

**Deacon Gerald A. Young**



## Lent – Day Three

*February 16*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Galatians 5:16-18 (CEV)

<sup>16</sup>If you are guided by the Spirit, you won't obey your own selfish desires. <sup>17</sup>The Spirit and your desires are enemies of each other. They are always fighting each other and keeping you from doing what you feel you should. <sup>18</sup>But if you obey the Spirit, the Law of Moses has no control over you."

#### Ephesians 2:18 (CEV)

"And because of Christ, all of us can come to the Father by the same Spirit."

#### John 4:24 (CEV)

"God is spirit, and those who worship God must be led by the Spirit to worship Him according to the truth."

### PRAYER

Dear and Holy Christ, open our minds to what is righteous. As we read and study Your word, You guide us to the truth. Through our thoughts and in our words, we try to better do Your will. We live this life as best we can so that we may be with You in eternal glory. Help us Lord to do Your will and sing Your praises, so that we are open to the Holy Spirit. We pray that it keeps us from all harm, that it purifies our hearts from all anxiety. We ask this of the Holy Spirit, who will watch over us and protect us. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

### REFLECTION

Everyone has friends and everyone values these special friends who are always there when you need them the most. Each of us has a special friend in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to enable us to think God's thoughts. Our natural thoughts are self-centered. God calls us for self-giving. Something must take place that will bring our thoughts in line with God's thoughts. The Holy Spirit is intended to accomplish this.

The Holy Spirit enables us to love, to pray godly prayers, and to pray in God's strength for our weaknesses. The Holy spirit enables us to do God's work in God's way. God's way was answered in the Bible. Zechariah 4:6 (NIV) "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."

**Deaconess Pearl Sudduth**



## Lent – Day Four

*February 17*



### SCRIPTURE

**John 16:33 (KJV)**

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.”

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father we come seeking You as we enter this Lenten season – led by Your grace and mercy – guide US as a family of believers that the Holy Spirit will lead us to remember that You have overcome the world, and You will provide. Provide for us strength and vitality to hear You – to hear Your plans You have for us – and to walk in Your grace and grow in Your faith – Lead us by the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

### REFLECTION

This is a time to reflect on US – a time to reflect on this Lenten season – to use this time to grow in our faith as we think about all that Jesus Christ has done for us and ALL that He will do to make us strong – because He has spoken to us – that we may have peace in ALL that we will do as a church.

**Sister DeVera Redmond**

Pastor’s Aid Ministry



## Lent – Day Five

*February 18*



### SCRIPTURE

**John 14:26 (KJV)**

“But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things...”

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the Holy Spirit which is our helper. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. That spirit will direct us. Lord, give us the ear to hear and the will to obey. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

### REFLECTION

As we enter into the new year, may we all be guided by the Fruit of the Spirit. Your written word in the book of Galatians, lists all the fruit. If we want to bring glory to the Lord, let us do those things.

**Sister Joann Jacobs**



## Lent – Day Six

*February 19*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Isaiah 48:17-18 (NIV)

“This is what the Lord says... I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea.”

### PRAYER

Gracious Father,

As we enter into a new season led by Your Holy Spirit, we want to embark on a journey that will enable us to truly experience Your peace. First of all, we want to thank you for that gift of Your eternal love Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Our hope and anticipation are that as we give You our hearts, minds and souls, we will learn to love You in ways we would have never imagined and gain that perfect peace that passes all understanding. Holy Spirit, be our guide as we learn that to have that perfect peace, we must be obedient to the Word as You guide us through the hurts, disappointments and everyday chaos of life. Be merciful dear Father as we seek to trust a sovereign God.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

### REFLECTION

There are many lessons to be learned on the journey of life. And probably one of the most important is to understand how to have our inherited share of God's peace. God promised peace, according to Isaiah, when the exiles returned wholeheartedly to the Lord. The scripture above from Isaiah states that we can have peace like a river, if only we obey His commands. God did not say like a “stagnant pond.” A river is a moving stream of water. Think of the many rivers you have seen ... swirling white-water rapids, Niagara Falls, the wide Missouri. God's analogy of a river and peace demonstrates that peace can be had even though life twists, turns, and rolls over boulders and rocks. His peace is having tranquility of heart and mind while meeting the many bumps and unexpected turns on life's journey. The only thing God asks is that we remain obedient to His commands. How can we give God the opportunity to provide us with the living water of His Holy Spirit... a peaceful river in our souls? In this new season, let us pray diligently over the next 40 days that we begin a life of authentic peace by surrendering every part of our life and every concern of our heart to the all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of heaven and earth.

**Brother Bernard and Deaconess E. Louise White**



## Lent – Day Seven

*February 20*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 121 (NKJV)

"I will lift my eyes to the hills—  
From whence cometh my help?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
Who made heaven and earth.  
He will not allow your foot to be moved;  
He who keeps you will not slumber.  
Behold, He who keeps Israel  
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;  
The Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day,  
Nor the moon by night.  
The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;  
He shall preserve your soul.  
The Lord shall preserve your going out and  
your coming in  
From this time forth and even forevermore."

### PRAYER

Oh Lord, we are entering a new season led by the Holy Spirit. How adorable is Your name in all of the world. I praise You in the morning, I praise You at night, I praise You when everything is not right. Let us enter the new year looking forward to the future while learning from the past. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. My help comes from You who made heaven and earth. I ask this humble prayer in Your Son Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen, Amen and Amen.

### REFLECTION

God has given us great gifts:

His Son

Who died on the cross to save us from our sins.

Forgiveness

He will forgive us, if we forgive others.

The Holy Spirit

Who will lead us as we enter a new season searching for a new Pastor.

Eternal Life

On that great getting up morning He will call us to Himself.

**Deacon Yvonne Bowman Dickson**



## Lent – Day Eight

*February 21*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Matthew 6:34 (NKJV)

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

### PRAYER

Father, thank you for granting me strength not to worry about anything. Let me take life one day at a time, trusting You every moment. Thank you. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

### REFLECTION

God bless everyone now and in the coming new year.

**Sister Michann Williams**



## Lent—Day Nine

February 22



### 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.”

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, walk with me along the path You have chosen for me. It is hard at times, but I find peace in knowing that You will always be there. When I am scared and afraid at times, I know I just have to be quiet, because then I am able to hear You gently say “I am always by your side.” Amen.

### REFLECTION

My reflection is taken from *Ignite: 50 Days of Prayer that Will CHANGE Your Life*,  
By Matthew L. Watley:

“The principle of sowing and reaping is found throughout the scriptures. Whenever a seed is planted, it must germinate and grow before there can be any fruit, grain, or flower to be harvested. We must simply hold on in faith until the harvest is ready. Prayer is the key to holding on. Prayer provides nutrients and lifegiving water to the seeds of faith. Prayer rushes resources and reinforcements to the front line of battle.”

**Sister Carasundia Rivers**





## Lent – Day Ten

*February 23*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Ezekiel 34:26 (ESV)

“And I make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessings.”

### PRAYER

God grant me generosity of spirit. Let me not think solely of myself today but make the effort and take the time to touch another's life. Let me reach out to perform at least one kind act, to smile, to listen and to embrace someone. Grant that I may live this day spreading joy among my brothers and sisters in Christ, in the fulfillment of the Gospel's commitment to love one another.

### REFLECTION

Seasons express the changing stages of our lives as the way of life according to how God has arranged them. They have their beginnings and endings and are all to be lived out. We should expect this cycle and intentionally live each part of God's plan in our lifetime as followers of Christ.

If God is calling us into a new season, it should feel like we are stepping up to a deeper understanding of the Scripture and a higher level of relationship with God. This is truly a moment of great joy, a great honor to be called and to do what God has planned for us. The Holy Spirit directs us to move to the next place God takes us and wants us to be.

**Sister Virginia C. Lee**



## Lent – Day Eleven

*February 24*



### SCRIPTURE

#### 2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear [inadequacy or lack]; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind [boldness to overcome in faith].”

### PRAYER

Thank you, Holy Spirit, as we enter into 2024 with a peace that exceeds all understanding because of God’s love for us now and down through the years. Nineteenth Street Baptist Church Family, let us continue to have a posture of prayerful openness to the Holy Spirit. Forgive us our doubts and angst about what is going on in the community and the world. With listening hearts and loving spirits save us from second guessing the mind of God. The Holy Spirit knows it! Listen and be led by the Holy Spirit. So, teach me, Holy Spirit, to value this year, for it will never come again. In expectancy, I will use it to good advantage, not to squander it away. Amen.

### REFLECTION

We are reminded not to measure our time in years or days in trembling and frustration, but to rest in peace and rise each day to a deeper awareness to lift our eyes to the hills from whence comes our help. Our help comes from the Lord. Let the peace of the Holy Spirit give you peace within. Let this gift of peace convict our faith to seek contentment rather than worry and love rather than hate.

**Deaconess Mattie Gay**



## Lent – Day Twelve

*February 25*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Lamentations 3:22-24 (ESV)

“<sup>22</sup>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup>they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup>‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’”

### PRAYER

Father God, in Jesus’ name, I confess that this new season may be too much for me to handle on my own. [I am closing the chapters of the last year to allow for new ones to be written in this year.] I’m weak without You, [but I am clear that] Your grace is sufficient for me [to go through anything]. Cover me with Your grace [and mercy] Father and make Your strength perfect in my weakness. Amen.

### REFLECTION

A new year marks a fresh opportunity to center our lives around the goodness of God. I pray that as you begin looking toward what is to come you will make space to gain God’s perspective, ground your hopes and pursuits on His grace, and celebrate all that God has done and is doing [in your life]. May your time with God this [Lenten season] be filled with the loving presence of your heavenly Father.

**Deaconess Kyra C.M. Wooden**



## Lent – Day Thirteen

*February 26*



### 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.”

### PRAYER

Dear God, we ask Your blessings over our church during this season of transition, as we enter 2024 in the early stages of a pastor search. Help us to navigate this time with love and discernment, and to remain focused on the mission of our church to “profoundly experience, joyfully celebrate, and meaningfully share God’s grace.” Most importantly, Lord, help us to always be mindful of what You require of us – including, to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. These and other blessings we ask in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

### REFLECTION

With so much going on in the world around us and with our church being in the midst of a pastor search, the words in Micah 6:8 really resonated with me – especially its messages of love and justice.

Being without a pastor can be challenging and unsettling, at times. And these are certainly uniquely different times, as we join churches all over in forging a new path following the once in a lifetime COVID-19 pandemic. But we’re a historic church that has stood the test of time, including the earlier flu pandemic of 1918.

It is my prayer, as we navigate this current season of transition, that we grow both as a church body and in doing good and that we be uplifted and inspired by our history, not constrained by it.

The needs in this season are great – from food insecurity, healthcare inequities, and the shortage of affordable housing, to calls for social and environmental justice, protecting, in the words of historian John Hope Franklin, the “unvarnished truth” of Black history, and for me, especially, being good stewards of our historic Black churches, particularly, the buildings that house them. These are the structures that have long been places not only of worship, but also of refuge, learning, community, and the Civil Rights Movement, and are worthy of our care.

So, as we go through this Lenten season and season of transition, led by the Holy Spirit, let us remain mindful of what God requires of us – “to act justly... to love mercy and to walk humbly” with God.

**Deacon Donza M. Poole**



## Lent – Day Fourteen

*February 27*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

### REFLECTION

Doing good involves yielding to the Holy Spirit and exhibiting the fruit the spirit produces which is love, peace, joy, goodness, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, and self-control. When we operate this way, we automatically are good. This is the season to remain good! Allow your good to overshadow the woes of this world. It is our duty as believers to trust God, move according to God’s word, and share with others about the God that we serve. It is the season for us all to yield to the Holy Spirit and will of God for our lives. This is the season for others to look at your life and have a burning desire to serve the God of your salvation. Take a moment to survey your life; are you exhibiting the fruit of the spirit? If there are any places in which you could grow and evolve use this Lenten season to focus on being more like Christ.

### PRAYER

Lord, Thank you for Your unwavering love. As I navigate this life You have blessed me with, it is my heart’s desire to please You. I submit to You Father, allow Your Holy Spirit to lead and guide me. It is my prayer that Your other children would experience love, joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, and self-control through the way I live. Thank you for making the ultimate sacrifice so I may live. AMEN!

**Rev. James Harris Jr.**



## Lent – Day Fifteen

*February 28*



### SCRIPTURE

**Psalm 105:4 (NIV)**

“Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.”

### REFLECTION

Through prayer, we seek strength from the Lord; spiritual strength; strength to assist you in making choices, interacting with courtesy and goodwill, and discharge of duty. Prayer is an essential part of our relationship with Christ, giving us direct communication with Him. Let His presence soak into you as your thoughts focus on Him. He will equip you to face whatever the day brings. Give yourself space to be flexible. In Psalm 32:8 (NIV) He says, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”

### PRAYER

Dear God,

I praise Your name for Your loving care. Thank you for Your Son who gave His life for our transgressions and rose in victory over sin, death, and the devil. I give you all that I am and seek Your strength and guidance in all that I do. Lord, make me humble, patient, and obedient to Your will.

Please bless the members and the ministries of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, grant us strength to face each day and appreciate the blessings each contains, and give us victory over all challenges. Give us the grace to remain faithful to our commitment and find pleasure in serving You.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray.

**Sister Judith Neely**

Senior Ministry



## Lent – Day Sixteen

*February 29*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Acts 16:22-37 (NIV)

<sup>27</sup>The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul shouted, ‘Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!’ <sup>29</sup>The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup>He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ <sup>31</sup>They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ <sup>32</sup>Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.”

### PRAYER

My prayer is that we as believers of Christ dedicate ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit in 2024 by allowing God to use us in every way possible to do His will as we learn to love each other in the way that God has shown His everlasting love to us. In doing so we must strive to study HIS word and make every effort to share HIS word with others. We pray that God will help us to move forward as we show the world how we have been granted with HIS grace, peace and love. We pray that God will continue to cover us from the fiery darts of the devil and that we live according to how HE has prospered each and every one of us. We pray that as we follow HIM the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ will show the world how greatly HE is to be praised! Amen.

### REFLECTION

My reflections are based on how we should strive to be more like Paul and Silas as they lived out the life of Jesus they spoke about. They lived the meaning of Philippians 4:13 (ESV), “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Consider being placed in a Roman jail’s maximum security in chains with your hands and feet in stocks for charges that had no merit. Reflect on having the steadfast faith in God to pray and sing hymns of praise to God while the prisoners not only heard them but listened to them. Reflect on how God caused an earthquake to open up all barriers for all to escape. And no one left. We must reflect on the impact the jailer received from Paul and Silas that convinced him that all were still there and there was no need to kill himself. Moving forward let us reflect on how in the past we could have shown such a strong walk with God that we could encourage others to accept Christ.

But as we reflect on how we were and how we could have done better in our walk let us not forget how many were healed, how many hungry were fed and how many overcame financial challenges. Let us also reflect on how the love of God has brought souls to Christ and how our church has started to prosper. And finally, let us fully realize and reflect upon the meaning of being steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for we know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Prayerfully,

**Trustee Charlie Sprow Jr.**



## Lent – Day Seventeen

*March 1*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Ephesians 5:8-10 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup>For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup>(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup>and find out what pleases the Lord.”

### PRAYER

Dear God, I give Your Name all the praise, all the glory, and all the honor for You alone are worthy. We live in the light because of the selfless acts of Your only begotten Son, Jesus Our Savior. Help us to “watch and pray that we avoid temptation” and remove us from anything that prevents us from walking in obedience to Your Word. We give thanks for Your Holy Spirit and the guidance, direction, and strength that He gives.

This Lenten season we renew our covenant and commitment to live more like Jesus and less like us. As Your Word says, we seek to “Live as children of light and find out what pleases the Lord.” Help us Lord today and always. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.

### REFLECTION

More than 25 years ago, my Lenten period fasting consisted of avoiding certain food and beverages and was based on performing acts of sacrifice for the sake of tradition. I would diligently follow the calendar and mark each passing day until the fast ended. While I experienced the pangs of physical discomfort and denial, there was little to no time spent on reflecting on the sacrifice of the Savior, contemplating how my commitment to Christ could improve, and renewing my heart and mind in Jesus. Lent would come and go without any inward or outward change in me. But thanks be to God for the Holy Spirit, who continued to speak until I listened and turned my focus upon the renewing power and possibilities this time could bring. I began to reconnect and deepen my relationship with the Lord by prayer, meditation, Bible study, contemplation, and fasting. A passage from Psalm became a centering scripture and still moves my heart to this day. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit.” (Psalm 51:10-12, NRSV)

As I continue to pray for more in 2024, I commit to making Lent matter, by re-committing my heart and mind to the One who loved us so much that He gave His Only Son to save me and you.

**Rev. Lorise White Wolfe**  
Associate Minister





## Lent – Day Eighteen

*March 2*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 27:1, 4 (NKJV)

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? ... <sup>4</sup>One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in his temple.”

### PRAYER

Father God, I come now as humbly as I know how, just to say thank you Lord. Thank you for allowing us to be present with You in this 2024 year of great promise, and hope. We can rest in Your word as we trust You because we know You know us. You know us and yet You love us unconditionally. You Lord are our everything. Lord, You hold our hearts and You, we pray, are guiding our footsteps in everything we see, say or do. Please guard our thoughts, our tongues, our efforts, and energies so we may be beacons of light as we represent our being led by Your Holy Spirit in our daily lives. We ask You to please provide for those who are in need among us, the unhoused, and please heal our brokenness. Bless, heal and restore the sick and shut-in and the bereaved. Please provide for our elders and their caregivers, and our young and adult children, especially those who struggle to find Your light when they are lost or in a dark space. Those who have lost their jobs and are facing financial or troubling economic situations. We welcome Your sovereign Holy Spirit in our lives and ask, oh Lord, that You would allow Your Holy Spirit to rest, rule, and abide in and through us and our families, relationships, and friendships. For all of this and so much more, Lord we say thank you. I ask for a special covering over our church. Please show us/send us a pastor. Please create in us a church where people would enter and know they have found a safe space for worship. Let us be that reflective light collectively that people would see us and want to experience the Christ we serve. Please lift, encourage, restore, refresh, and revive the ministerial staff and those that govern us here at Nineteenth Street. Father, we will praise You all our days. I ask this prayer in the matchless name of Jesus. Amen!

### REFLECTION

Losing my mother in February of 2021 was a real challenge. Life! What a learning experience it has been and is. Our Grief Ministry, under Rev. Townsend and Deacon Yvonne Dickson, was a godsend for me. Even though I thought I had so much together and a clear understanding, I gained a tremendous resource in our Grief Ministry. I was able to keep going and move forward while trying to maneuver so many daily challenges that arise out of varying levels of loss. Often it went well beyond grief. But never was I alone. We grieve not as those who have no hope. Amen. Yet we do grieve. I knew God was my light and salvation. My strength and shield. Jesus was/is with me. I had to believe with my all. And so, I do. God is with me always. I know I am a walking miracle.

I challenge you to trust God on purpose, with hope! Let us enter this new season led by the Holy Spirit! Let's approach our lives as true believers with all the expectation of healing, wellness, progress and success. Welcome Holy Spirit! We are in His presence. Live inside of me. Amen!

**Sister Roxanna Bilal**



## Lent – Day Nineteen

### *March 3*



#### SCRIPTURE

##### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>"To everything there is a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven:

<sup>2</sup>A time to be born,

And a time to die;

A time to plant,

And a time to pluck what is planted;

<sup>3</sup>A time to kill,

And a time to heal;

A time to break down,

And a time to build up;

<sup>4</sup>A time to weep,

And a time to laugh;

A time to mourn,

And a time to dance;

<sup>5</sup>A time to cast away stones,

And a time to gather stones;

A time to embrace,

And a time to refrain from embracing;

<sup>6</sup>A time to gain,

And a time to lose;

A time to keep,

And a time to throw away;

<sup>7</sup>A time to tear,

And a time to sew;

A time to keep silence,

And a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup>A time to love,

And a time to hate;

A time of war,

And a time of peace."

#### REFLECTION

This is a very thought-provoking scripture. It tells us as believers that there is no time in life where our Lord and Savior is not involved. He lets us know that there are many seasons in life; birth, death, marriage, financial hardships, and adversities. He lets us know that nothing ever stays the same in life. He lets us know when it is our time to change. Most of all He reminds us that His love for our spiritual growth is continuous and everlasting.

#### PRAYER

Father God, let us wait on Your time to show us the way to proceed in this confusing and troubling time of Your church. Strengthen us to know that this is our season for growth, patience, and understanding on the stabilization of our church and church family.

Lord, these blessings we ask in Your name.

Amen.

**Deacon Sandra Keaton Brown**



## Lent – Day Twenty

*March 4*



### 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

In this new season I pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us in wisdom and purpose of God. Let us bring light and hope to our church.

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for our blessings. We pray Father for our families and our church. We give You all the honor and praise from every mouth of confession, from every tongue of worship. Bless the Lord, oh my soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Amen.

**Deaconess Margarette Blakemore**



## Lent – Day Twenty-One

*March 5*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Acts 2:1-2 (NIV)

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.”

### PRAYER

As we enter this Lenten season, open our hearts and minds to the movement of Your Holy Spirit among us. Help us to come together in unity, to be one in purpose and spirit, allowing Your presence to lead us into a new season of growth and transformation. May we be receptive to Your guiding hand and open to the changes You wish to work within us.

Amen.

### REFLECTION

Lent is a time of reflection and preparation, a journey toward the renewal of our spirits. It's a season where we seek a deeper connection with God, a time to let go of distractions and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us.

The story of Pentecost reminds us of the power of unity. The disciples were gathered together, united in heart and mind, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them. It was in their togetherness that they experienced the profound movement of God. Similarly, in our lives, when we come together in unity—putting aside differences and standing as one body in Christ—God's Spirit moves in remarkable ways.

This Lent let's contemplate the significance of unity and the role it plays in our spiritual journey. Often God's greatest work happens when we stand together, bound by love and faith. It's not just about individual growth but about how we grow together as a community of believers.

As we embark on this Lenten journey, may we be inspired to seek unity, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us into a new season of transformation. Let's embrace the power of togetherness, knowing that God moves mightily when we are united in purpose and spirit.

**Kenneth Peagler**  
Minister of Music



## Lent – Day Twenty-Two

*March 6*



### SCRIPTURE

#### John 14:26-27 (NKJV)

“<sup>26</sup>But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. “<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

### REFLECTION

This passage provides assurance that the Holy Spirit; the Comforter, is real and is here to be with us! Jesus tells His disciples that He would no longer be with them, and He was going to be with the Father. He also tells them that the Father will send the Holy Spirit and He will teach all things to the disciples and to us as future believers. The Holy Spirit will clarify the message and my God will send the Advocate, the Helper, and/or the Comforter to be in us. Our church will grow up as a body of believers when we “walk in the Spirit,” as we grow, learn, and praise Him for all of His goodness and blessings.

### PRAYER

Most Gracious and Loving God, lead us into a glorious unity in the Body of Christ here at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church. Transform our lives daily as we come to know You through Your Word and Your Spirit. Help us to realize that the life we live for You is one that when we walk in the Spirit; we will walk in more: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, generosity, and self-control.

By the Holy Spirit working in us it will increase our efforts to bring souls to Christ and leave all worldly behaviors behind. Help us as we pray and ask for guidance on the selection of a new pastor; one You have in store for our church. Let the new leader know You as we are also walking in the Spirit and learning to know You as well. We pray all of this in the name of the Father and His Son Jesus. Amen, Amen, and Amen.

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



## Lent - Day Twenty-Three

*March 7*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Acts 5:29-32 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup>But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men. <sup>30</sup>The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. <sup>31</sup>Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup>And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

### PRAYER

Father God, thank you for Your love, sacrifice, covering and plan for my life. Thank you for all that You are, all that You have done and all that You will do to specifically orchestrate each and every moment of my life. Thank you, Lord for equipping me with Your Holy Spirit that leads me with discernment and directs me to You through prayer and Your Word. I ask that You continue to guide my feet and light the pathway that You have purposed for me according to Your will and glory. Give me strength and wisdom to stand on Your Word when faced with all that contradicts It. Condition my heart and mind to not lean to my own understanding but always stand still and position myself where I can hear from You. This I know by Your Word will protect me and add blessing to my life in a way that will bring blessings to all connected to me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen!

### REFLECTION

"There is safety in your obedience." This is the mantra God gave me to tell my daughter as a young mother who had to work and trust her safety with sitters and sometimes, herself. Explaining to her how important it was, that she be where I told her doing what she was supposed to, was critical to her safety. I had to ensure (at the young elementary and middle school ages she was at the time) that she knew that any changes she took upon herself to insert into her activities without me knowing and approving first - were not only disobedient, but unsafe and would make it difficult for me to cover and protect her. As her mother, I knew that I was positioned to do this. The Holy Spirit led me in all things concerning her and I often knew that she needed extra attention, guidance, and assurance.

I saw a direct correlation to my own life. I began to see times when I was tempted to step out of who I was in Christ, and it would put me in danger of suffering consequences that I may not have experienced if I would have called on the Holy Spirit at that time and followed Jesus' instruction and direction for my life. In the passage shared (Acts 5:29-32) when Peter and the other apostles were challenged to follow man instead of Christ, they called out to the enemy, that they KNEW it was better to follow God instead of man. They even presented solid evidence of God to inform that they were witnesses to God's greatness and knew who exactly it was they were serving. That is the response to anything presented to you outside of God's will and plan. We must know that the Holy Spirit is a reward of following Christ. It is also the way in which this walk is possible. Hallelujah! When I step lively with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, I step sure. I step righteously. I step protected. I step VICTORIOUS. What a mighty God we serve!



## Lent – Day Twenty-Four

*March 8*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Lamentations 3:22-24 (KJV)

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I will hope in Him!’”

### PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, I know that I’ve been born of the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit, and am indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That is why asking You for a fresh work of the Spirit in my life is an easy thing to do. Your quintessential generosity gives us grace and more grace, and still more grace! Hallelujah, many times over!

Father God, I ask for a fresh stirring and filling of Your Holy Spirit. Open the eyes of my heart to see more of Jesus. Dazzle me with His delights; buckle my knees with His beauty; put me face-down on the ground from a renewed awareness of His glory and grace; grant me jaw-dropping wonder and awe, in response to Jesus’ majesty and the mercy of Jesus, and the perfection and completion of His work for us. Grant me the power of Jesus’ love—a love that surpasses knowledge; the only love that is better than life; the one that is enough. May the love of Jesus be the most compelling and propelling force in my life; turning my whining into worship; my timidity into fearless faith; small dreams into a kingdom vision; my hesitation to risk much, into a life of gospel adventures.

By the kingdom-advancing, Christ-exalting power of the Holy Spirit, I thank you, Father God, for instructing, guiding, teaching, storing in me the joy of Your incomparable salvation, and being with me as I enter this new season in the Lord. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

### REFLECTION

Ain’t God Good? How many times have you heard or even said yourself these very words? Like most of you, this is my constant meditated mantra giving reverence to our Lord and Savior for everything that He provides. Personally, I’ve been through some grueling health issues during the past several years. However, through the prayers of friends and family, and the knowledge, comfort, and presence of the Holy Spirit, the fresh calendar year brings desperate hope for things to be better.

Again, I ask, “Ain’t God Good?” The Holy Spirit continues to favor me with new beginnings as I assume new responsibilities. The call to become sensitive to the winds of change is breathed throughout our lives. God does not desire for us to dwell in the past or the former things. Rather, He wants us to be in tune with His Spirit in the present, with an awareness that He is actively moving in our lives and situations. I thank God for the overarching support and love of the Holy Spirit. By God’s favor, great love, and blessing, I enter a new season led by the Holy Spirit.

**Deaconess Brenda Lightening-Tolbert**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Five

*March 9*



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### Seasonal Growth as a Plan of Salvation

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Genesis 8:22 (NIV)

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

#### REFLECTION

This is a “last quarter of 2023” scripture that transcends time, but one that I have come to embrace because of God’s faithfulness toward me.

This past year, a year of ups and downs, I have gone through what I have deemed a “complete metamorphosis” as an individual. Many real-life scenarios—nothing too earth shattering—came out of the blue for me. Some of these scenarios appeared as a result of natural progression—if you will. Others came as complete surprises. Here I was pondering, “is this really happening” or, in a few cases, “why do things like this happen to me?” Remarkably, I made the assumption that I knew quite a bit about life—well enough to navigate these scenarios and some surprises. New Year’s Day 2024, I looked into the mirror—during a “new season in my life (just a milestone birthday-smile)” only to say “Wow, the things I thought I knew about life.”

With that, and as governed by Genesis 8:22, we move into “a new season led by the Holy Spirit.” What I have learned, and continue to revisit daily, is that we each have very different perspectives when it comes to the “Plan of Salvation.” We hear from the Lord in different ways. We see things differently—signs and wonders. We go through seasons—sometimes individually or collectively. We even confess our faults in ways that make no sense—even as we seek to protect our own self-worth and determination.

References: The Holy Bible; <https://truthfortheworld.org/steps-of-salvation>

#### PRAYER

So, my prayer for you, and me, is that we approach each day as another opportunity to experience “a new season led by the Holy Spirit.” That way, we will understand nothing to be by accident, but to be “orchestrated or allowed by God with great purpose and intentionality.” May God continue to lead us (Nineteenth Street) to new solutions in our real-life scenarios and to use our “complete metamorphosis” to God’s glory. Continue to experience the richness of God’s love and the modest example of Christ in your sowing and harvesting. Amen.

**Deacon Kenyatta A. Hobson**





## Lent – Day Twenty-Six

*March 10*



### SCRIPTURE

#### 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!”

### PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for Your goodness and Your mercy. As we embark on a new season, let Your light shine full force so we can see Your glory. Most holy and gracious Father, we thank you for Your irrepressible love, we adore You for Your unlimited patience, we bless You for Your inexhaustible kindness. This new season we ask that You allow the Holy Spirit to reign over us. We promise not to misuse our talents, time, and treasures. Forgive us if we did so in the past. Amen.

### REFLECTION

The spiritual meaning of a new beginning helps us as a church to continue to move forward. It is about letting go of the past and moving forward. Signs, seasons, days, and years are physical shadows pointing to Christ who is the spiritual reality of all of them. That is, Christ is the real light to the people in this world enabling us to have many new beginnings. By seeing the spiritual significance of the new year, I believe we will be able to have a spiritual new beginning in our Christian life, led by the Holy Spirit. We will make this new year the most meaningful one yet.

**Deaconess Evangeline Stevens**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Seven

*March 11*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 56:1-13 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup>“Oh, God have mercy on me, for the people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long.  
<sup>2</sup>I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me.  
<sup>3</sup>But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.  
<sup>4</sup>I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can immortals do to me?  
<sup>5</sup>They are always twisting what I say. They spend their days plotting to harm me.  
<sup>6</sup>They come together to spy on me – watching my every step eager to kill me.  
<sup>7</sup>Don’t let them get away with their wickedness in your anger, oh, God bring them down.  
<sup>8</sup>You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle You have recorded each one in your book.  
<sup>9</sup>My enemies will retreat when I call you for help. This I know: God is on my side!  
<sup>10</sup>I praise God for what he has promised: yes, I praise the Lord, for what he has promised.  
<sup>11</sup>I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mortals do to me?  
<sup>12</sup>I will fulfill my vows to you, Oh God, and will offer a sacrifice of thanks for your help.  
<sup>13</sup>For You have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence. Oh God, in your life-giving light.”

### REFLECTION

Psalm 56 reminds me of the deluge of lies that are constantly broadcast across the multimedia, day in and day out. The news can be daunting. If allowed, the constant mental absorption of negative information can waylay the steeliest mind, if there is no relationship with God.

I am grateful for the Lenten season because it gives all of us a chance to focus on our spiritual growth and to develop a stronger connection with God. As Psalm 56:11 says, “I trust in God so why should I be afraid?”

### PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, please guide my thoughts as to what is true and just. Allow me and those around me, in my community and beyond, to be advocates of righteousness and disavowers of misdeeds and lies. Grant us understanding, unity, and peace.

**Deacon Deborah Lewis Thornton**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Eight

*March 12*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Jeremiah 1:5 (ESV)

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

### REFLECTION

“Still My Child”

(Song by Mary Mary)

He had many of bad habits / He was trying hard to break / And every time he thought it got better / He would make another mistake

Though he knows he's far from perfect / He is trying to live right / He ask me to ask you Father / Would you hear his prayer tonight

He said tell him that I really need Him / And I really wanna change / The next time you talk to God / Would you please mention my name / Would you tell him that I really love him / And all though it's been a while / Ask him for me am I still His child

I know the answer to your Question / Yes the Father still loves / But sometimes when you have children / You don't always like what they do / So when you go to your Heavenly Father / Say Lord I LOVE You / And when you ask Him for forgiveness / This is what he'll say to you

He'll send a message in the wind / When the bird sang a song / And when you went to sleep last night / I told the moon shine all night long / Just want you to talk to me / And I know it's been a while / And to answer your question you are still / My child My child

### PRAYER

May the Lord bless and keep blessing you now and forever. Amen.

**Trustee W. R. Hyde Jr.**



## Lent – Day Twenty-Nine

*March 13*



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### Keep It Moving

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Philippians 3:13-14 (NKJV)

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

#### REFLECTION

One of the things that keeps so many people from going forward is their unwillingness to forget or set aside things from their past. Many are unwilling to forget their prosperity, position, and possessions to fully follow Christ.

Paul, no doubt, had all these things. He was a Pharisee and a man of prominence, and it can be assumed that a good life was attached to these things. But Paul considered them waste in comparison to living for Christ. Today, too many of us may have worldly attachments that keep us from serving Christ, and we may need to learn to forget them just as Paul was willing to do.

We also must learn to be willing to forget our pains and problems. We cannot go forward in our walk with Christ until we are willing to lay aside some hurt, offense or problems. Like a computer that has locked up because it cannot resolve a problem, we too often get stuck on a recent difficulty we can't seem to get over. The result is a heart that is not focused on Christ, a spirit unable to pursue right things, and an attitude that lacks grace and peace.

In 2024, let's not be held captive by life injuries. Forgetting is often the prerequisite to going forward. As we follow the example of the Apostle Paul and echo his words of “this one thing I do,” let's not miss the truth, that to reach ahead and press forward it is necessary to forget some things and keep it moving.

#### PRAYER

Dear God, as we enter this new year, give us the spirit of Paul, to press forward for a prize. Let us realize that there is simply nothing to be gained by going back to past hurts and refusing to get over them. However, by forgiving and pressing forward, we gain a greater Christlikeness. As we keep moving, we gain strength, maturity, understanding, and patience. We grow in wisdom and faith and give both our offenders and us the opportunity to learn from the past and be better in the future. Amen.

**Sister Violetta Graham**



## Lent – Day Thirty

*March 14*



### Didn't You Know?

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Jeremiah 32:15-17, 26-27 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup>“For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.”<sup>16</sup>After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord:<sup>17</sup>“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”

<sup>26</sup>Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: <sup>27</sup>“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”

#### REFLECTION

The biblical passages from Jeremiah 32:15-17 and 26-27 invite us to reflect on Jeremiah's trust in God's ability to bring about restoration even amid insurmountable challenges. In the face of imminent danger, Jeremiah found himself confined in a royal prison for delivering a message that King Zedekiah was unwilling to receive. The Babylonians closed in on Jerusalem, and the prophet's circumstances appeared grim. Yet, within the depths of uncertainty, God revealed a plan - a cousin would approach Jeremiah, asking him to redeem (purchase) their family's land. The prophetic revelation was accompanied with a command to engage in the transaction and a divine promise: “Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land” (v. 15).

As we consider Jeremiah's prayers, let us connect our theological imagination with today's concerns.

Lord, nothing is too hard for You. We recognize Your help in ages past, encompassing blessings, and enduring love. We, Your people, have fallen short of keeping Your word and honoring our covenant with You. We sing songs of lament. Hearts are downcast. Our faith falters. Please help us understand how we will come back from this thing.

Hear the Lord's timeless response:

“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” (Jeremiah 32:27, NIV) May this reflection inspire a deepened trust in God's power and an unwavering hope for restoration. Our faith is rooted in the unshakeable truth that nothing is too hard for our God who orchestrates redemption and restoration, even in the face of adversity and uncertainty.

#### PRAYER

O Sovereign Lord, Creator of all, we acknowledge the fullness of Your power, love, mercy, and grace. In the solemnity of Lent, we humbly seek Your guidance. Let us remember nothing is too hard for You. May this season be a time of spiritual renewal and a deepening of our faith and commitment to following the path You have laid before us. Amen.

**Minister Stephanie Thomas-Gordon**



## Lent – Day Thirty-One

*March 15*



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### "I Almost Let Go"

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

#### REFLECTION

Isn't it funny, in a tragic way, how we sometimes treat God like a gumball machine. We pray when we want something, expecting God to dispense whatever we ask for. The only time I'd prayed, at all, since learning the Lord's Prayer when I was a child, happened in the late 1980's. I sat on the floor of my basement apartment with a bottle of pills and uttered a fervent prayer. "God, PLEASE, do not let me wake up." But I did wake up in the morning feeling disappointed and angry. It was another, sadly, ordinary day. I went to work and never, until just now, ever uttered a word about my actions.

I had only asked Him for one thing, and He'd said no. I went back to ignoring God, as I was sure that He was just as happy to ignore me. I did not know on that unhappy night, that 30 or more years later, I would come to know and appreciate God. He had a plan all along. No longer in that basement apartment. No more debilitating depression. I can only explain it by proclaiming God. The God that loved me all along. The God that knew that I would come through the fire and storms to share my story with someone that needs to know that they are never alone.

I've gotten acquainted with Jesus Christ. I strive to allow the Holy Spirit to be my guide and to subject my human self to His will.

During those years of "separation" God blessed me, in spite of my ungratefulness. I never inventoried the many breaths I've effortlessly taken in my 68 years. I didn't bother to credit God for my good health, ability to write creatively, or for my career. I barely appreciated my family, and rarely acknowledged that God surrounded me with loving and supportive friends. I've never been food insecure, or unhoused. I've been kept safe. I've traveled, been able to serve the least of these, and know the peace that truly surpasses all understanding.

Friends and family led me to different churches. The key was having the Holy Spirit lead me to God.

#### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank you. Thank you for Your love. Thank you for Your care. Thank you for Your innumerable blessings. Thank you for the opportunity to come before You with a contrite heart. A heart that knows that You never punished me by giving me what I deserved, but instead gave me far more than I had a right to expect. If I wake up with You in paradise tomorrow, Lord, grant my family and friends the peace of knowing that I believed, I trusted, and that You are my reward. Amen.

**Sister Monica J. Reeder**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Two

*March 16*



### SCRIPTURE

**John 15:26 (KJV)**

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

### PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, as the Spirit guides us by Your godly discernment, let us replace our sinful ways with godly, loving ways. And if we believe that the Holy Spirit can revive our souls again and lead us into a New Season, we can inspire a new Nineteenth Street Baptist Church built on love, in the resurrected Jesus’ name I pray. Amen!

### REFLECTION

Let our church be revived again as we are led by the Holy Spirit!

Quoted from Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. “Having to go to bed so often frustrated with the chilly winds of adversity about to stagger me, sometimes I feel discouraged and feel my work is in vain, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. In Gilead, there is a balm to make the wounded whole. If we believe that, we will build a new Memphis.”

And if we can believe this, let our souls be revived again to go forth as a loving church.

**Deacon Yvonne Gowdy**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Three

*March 17*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Isaiah 43:16-19 (NLT)

<sup>16</sup>I am the Lord, who opened a way through the waters, making a dry path through the sea. <sup>17</sup>I called forth the mighty army of Egypt with all its chariots and horses. I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned, their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick.<sup>18</sup>But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. <sup>19</sup>For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”

### REFLECTION

What is a Promise? According to Wikipedia, a promise is “a commitment by someone to do or not do something. As a noun promise means a declaration assuring that one will or will not do something. As a verb, it means to commit oneself by a promise to do or give. It can also mean a capacity for good, similar to a value that is to be realized in the near future».

God’s Promises. As we are entering a new season led by the Holy Spirit, God promises that He will make a pathway through the wilderness and create rivers in the wasteland. What is your wilderness? What is your wasteland? What is it that you cannot bear? As you imagine being lost in your spiritual wilderness, or your physical wasteland, reflect on God’s promises to us. He promises to make a way out of no way, to create a path through the wilderness, to create rivers in the dry wasteland. He also promises to never leave or forsake us. All He asks in return is that we obey His Word.

### PRAYER

Our God, our Father, You are our Creator, the everlasting Lord, our Deliverer, our Waymaker. You gave Your only Son for our Salvation, that is how much You love us. If You never do another thing for us, what You have already done is more than enough. Having created us in Your image, we desire to be more and more like You. Thank you for making a way where there is none that we can see. Thank you for fighting our battles for us and not letting us be consumed by our enemies. Thank you for forming a hedge of protection around us and giving us hope and purpose. Where would we be without You? I ask You now to continue to keep us close to You. Continue to be the light on our path as we journey through life.

Guide us and direct us in the ways You would have us to go. Not our will but Thine alone. Give us the strength to follow Your commands, to do what is right, and be obedient to Your Word. As we enter a new season led by the Holy Spirit, keep our ears open to hear Your voice, our eyes open to see Your face, and our hearts open to receive Your Word. Let us love one another and be kind in all situations. Let us help our brothers and sisters so they will see You in all that we do. Let everything we do be for You and lift up Your name. All this we ask in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We will continue to praise You and give You all the glory. Amen.

**Deacon Deborah Crain-Kemp**





## Lent – Day Thirty-Four

*March 18*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Galatians 5:22-26 (NIV)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the spirit, let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other.”

### REFLECTION

I don't know about you, but oftentimes, I find myself being led to doing things and going places that I did not necessarily intend to go—helping or being a blessing to someone. Let me explain. I can remember as though it was yesterday, (although, many years ago), after a long and tiring day at work, I had to go to the laundromat. While sitting in my car on that chilly and drizzling Friday evening, I had planned on going to Chick-fil-A to get a cup of my favorite ice cream to enjoy and then go to the Safeway to pick up a loaf of bread. Exactly in that order, and as soon as my task was done. However, when the task was done, instead of making a right turn at the light headed northbound towards downtown Silver Spring to get the ice cream, I was certainly led by the Holy Spirit to make a left turn southbound—expediently towards the grocery. Although, I knew what I really desired at that moment, yet also realized that I was to be obedient and go with the flow of the Holy Spirit.

When I entered the parking lot, I was led not to park in any of my routine spaces, which were available; instead, I pulled into another parking space. To my amazement, as I was truly startled, a woman soaked by the rain seemed to appear out of nowhere—approached me. First, she kept on apologizing for the way she surprised me. Nevertheless, she then made an appeal for the balance of money she needed to pay for her rent; otherwise, she and her daughter would be put out of their room that night. Therefore, I reached into my pocket and gave to her what she needed to cover the rent balance and a little more.

There have been numerous times when I have reflected on how blessed I am when the Holy Spirit does His amazing work through me. By allowing me to display the fruit of the Spirit that day, I did not sense any feelings of regret for not getting what I wanted, instead I was thankful for being able to show God's love by sharing His resources with her. Although, I have often wondered if she had been praying for help and challenged God—if He's real by answering her prayers. Either way, I am still grateful for the power of the Holy Spirit and how He allowed me to be a blessing by fulfilling God's will in that instance. And, as this new season unfolds, it is my hope that I will continue doing more.

### PRAYER

Thank you, Abba, Father for Your everlasting love for me. Please help me to never grow weary in doing good. I also thank You for my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and God, the Holy Spirit, who abides within me. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.

**Deaconess Sharon Tucker**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Five

*March 19*



### SCRIPTURE

#### I Corinthians 2: 6-12 (NIV)

“<sup>6</sup>We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup>No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understand it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>However, as it is written: No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him” <sup>10</sup>but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.<sup>12</sup>We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

### PRAYER

My Prayer for us in this season is found in the Book of Ephesians, Ephesians 3:16-19. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen us with power through His Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And I pray that each of us, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. It is in the Matchless, Marvelous, and Majestic Name of Jesus Christ that I render this prayer. Amen.

### REFLECTION

The text is tailored to teach us that God has prepared great things for those who love Him. We cannot know these things unless they are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. Our finite mind cannot understand these things unless God’s Spirit reveals them. Imagine, it is noted that human wisdom has no way of accessing God’s wisdom. Paul quotes the Old Testament Scripture Isaiah 64:4 and Isaiah 65:17 in 1 Corinthians 2:9 intimating that the message that has been written cannot be discerned or cannot be revealed by way of human reasoning. The message is beyond the scope of what eyes have seen and beyond what ears have heard, and beyond what has entered the hearts of men. The Apostle Paul desperately wants his readers to grasp the understanding that it is by the Holy Spirit that God’s message is revealed. Without this revelation, we as Believers cannot fathom how much God the Father, our Creator, Ruler and Maker of All Things loves each of so much that He, out of His great love for us, sacrificed His only begotten Son, that we who believe may have an eternal resting place with Him. In this season, let us be reminded of the words that Isaiah penned, “that no eye has seen, ear has heard, or human heart has ‘imagined’ what God has prepared for those who LOVE Him.”

**Minister Donna Miller**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Six

*March 20*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Romans 14:17 (NRSV)

“For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

### REFLECTION

In ages past as it is in today’s culture, the evidence of riches and royalty has often been associated with food and drink. Wine and feasting (think expensive meals at Gordon Ramsey’s level) are often indicative of one’s ability to afford merriment, leisure -- the finer things in life. But here, the writer of Romans, traditionally thought to be the Apostle Paul, offers a different image of royalty.

The kingdom, also called the kin-dom of God, is better known by its righteousness, its peace, and its joy in the Holy Spirit. In this season of fasting and prayer, in this “new season led by the Holy Spirit,” may we be known by our heritage of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit and by our daily actions, interactions, and character of righteousness, joy, and peace in the Spirit.

The kingdom/kin-dom of God is not physical food and drink. It is both the reign of God and the family God in the Holy Spirit. This is Christ Jesus’ food, “to do the will of [God] who sent me and to complete [God’s] work.” John 4:34 (NRSV)

Kingdom, kin-dom, Church, people of God, as we lay aside what the kingdom is not (physical food and drink) this Lent, may we allow and become what it is.

### PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for this opportunity to learn and see what the kingdom of God is really like. Help us to be the righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy our communities need and to experience the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit they have to offer as created beings made in Your image. May the kingdom (reign) and the kin-dom (holistic family) of God truly come in this season as a result of experiencing the righteousness, peace, and joy. You bring in the Spirit right to us. In Jesus’ name, I thank God who is a Spirit (John 4:24 NRSV), Amen and *Äsé*.

**Minister Siera Grace Toney**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Seven

*March 21*



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### Expectation is Faith at Work!

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 8:24-26 (KJV)

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

#### REFLECTION

In this Holy season of Lent, we are reminded of God’s promise of salvation with the Power of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, He was obedient unto death. But He also had every expectation that God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit would raise Him from the dead. Someone posited that Jesus’ agony and tears were not because of the suffering He knew He would endure, but because He knew He would be separated from the Father. While the Bible doesn’t offer a clear explanation on that point, we do know one thing for sure: Jesus knew His purpose and promise - that God would raise Him from the dead. He finished His earthly work with this expectation. We should be reminded of the power of the Resurrection because it is available to us today. Even if your dream seems dead and some prayer you have been holding in your heart seems unanswered, you can rest assured that the power of the Resurrection will bring it to life (meaning manifestation) in the fullness of time if it is in keeping with God’s Word. Don’t give up! After you have waited, suffered, endured for a little while, God will manifest in answered prayer if you continue in expectation and don’t give up!

#### PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for reminding us that nothing is too hard for You. Even that which seems hopeless, or dead reminds us of the possibility for the newness of life. Thank you for reviving our hope and expectation - even for dreams we forgot or gave up on. Forgive us for doubting what we could become as Your Children and Your Church. Help us be strong witnesses for Jesus. Awaken in us a desire to have an impact and to prevail in prayer with expectation for the good of the Kingdom. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen!

**Rev. Robin Turner**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Eight

*March 22*



### SCRIPTURE

#### 2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear [inadequacy or lack], but of power, and of love and of a sound mind [boldness to overcome in faith].”

### PRAYER

Thank you, Holy Spirit, as we enter into 2024 with a peace that exceeds all understanding because of God’s love for us now, and down through the years. Nineteenth Street Baptist Church Family, let us continue to have a posture of prayerful openness to the Holy Spirit. Forgive us our doubts and angst about what is going on in the community and the world. With listening hearts and loving spirits save us from second guessing the mind of God. The Holy Spirit knows it! Listen and be led by the Holy Spirit. So, teach me, Holy Spirit, to value this year, for it will never come again. In expectancy, I will use it to good advantage, not to squander it away. Amen

### REFLECTION

We are reminded not to measure our time in years or days in trembling and frustration, but to rest in peace and rise each day to a deeper awareness to: “Lift our eyes to the hills from whence comes our help. Our help comes from the Lord.” Let the peace of the Holy Spirit give you peace within. Let this gift of peace convict our faith to seek contentment rather than worry and love rather than hate.

**Deacon Billy F. Gay**



## Lent – Day Thirty-Nine

*March 23*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Mark 11:25 (NLT)

“But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.”

### PRAYER

Thank you for letting me live one day at a time. Praise You for allowing me to enjoy one moment at a time and allowing me to cheerfully accept hardship as a pathway to peace. Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would like it. Trusting that He will make all things right If I surrender to His will. That I may be reasonably happy in this world and supremely happy in the next. Amen.

### REFLECTION

Maybe this time, Lord. I know last year when I felt hurt, I sometimes hurt others because I was wallowing in my own fears and pain and I didn't think to surrender everything to You and Your will. I didn't delight in Your love and celebrate each day for the present of the present it is and was. Let me wake each day to give thanks for what You've given me and appreciation for what You've taken away.

**Brother Jon Kemp**



## Lent – Day Forty

*March 24-~ Palm Sunday*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Isaiah 43:16,18-19 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup>This is what the Lord says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, ... <sup>18</sup>Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. <sup>19</sup>See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

### PRAYER

Dear Lord, teach us to trust the path that is laid out before us. Teach us to trust Your will. We know You’ve called us to serve You, but we are not always sure of what to do next. We want to be led by the Holy Spirit as we move into our new season, so we can live out the special purpose You have for us. We seek You today and ask for Your good Spirit to guide us.

Teach us how to slow down and take a break from the noise of the world to hear You clearly. Help us discern Your voice above all others and trust where You lead us. When we get impatient, thank you for reminding us to seek the fruits of the Spirit, including patience and faithfulness. We know You are with us, and we will continue listening as You direct us to take the next step. Thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to lead us. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.

### REFLECTION

“God often uses circumstances to show us when a season is ending. Once we recognize that change is happening, we start praying about it and listening to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will show us when to speak and when to be quiet. As we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He gives us the wisdom to know what steps to take. He also gives us discernment in the situation and understanding of what needs to be done and said. He is the One that guides us spiritually through change, so an increased time in God’s presence will be necessary. A time for prayer, where our spiritual eyes and ears must be open to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He will tell us when to withdraw, break camp, and relocate to a new spiritual territory or when to stay.” (From [www.hearttreasure.net](http://www.hearttreasure.net), “Moving into a New Season with the Help of the Lord.”)

Oh, how important it is to hear God clearly. How else can we “get it right”? So often we don’t “get it right” because we are bombarded by the sounds of the world, pulled in so many directions, by so many “things.” How much simpler life would be if we just slowed down enough to give God His time. Let this be the beginning, in this new season, for us to be patient, faithful and intentional in our God-time, prayer-time, and listening-time. We will all come out on the other side — blessed!!

**Sister Shirley France**



## Lent – The Holy Week

March 24 – March 30



### The Holy Spirit and The Color Purple

#### SCRIPTURE

John 19:2 (KJV)

“And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe.”

#### REFLECTION

Much has been written about the significance of the color purple as it relates to nature and spirituality. Purple is a combination of the deepest red and brilliant blue. The purple color family ranges in color from the lighter purple color of lavender and the ethereal soft pale purple of the lilac bloom to the deep richness of plum, grape, and vibrant eggplant. This beautiful color became more popular in contemporary society because of the book *The Color Purple* written by Alice Walker. It was made into a movie in 1985 that became controversial because of its subject content. A recent release (2024) has again brought it to the forefront for newer as well as older generations. Rarely found in nature, purple is not found on the color spectrum, and is represented by the color violet in the rainbow. Purple has been connected to royalty since before the birth of Jesus. Purple in Old Testament Scripture was associated with wealth and spiritual power. God chose purple as one of the colors for the coverings and curtains of the Tabernacle. “The place where God dwells.”

In New Testament Scripture, the color purple has spiritual meanings that encompasses suffering, faith, obedience, and transition. Jesus was adorned with a purple robe on the way to His crucifixion. This was to signify that He considered Himself “King of the Jews.” Accusers used the sacred cloth as a mockery to His being the Royal King. Of course, they rejected Him as being the King of Kings. Thus, the color represents obedience, repentance, faith, death, resurrection, and transition. Jesus was obedient to God until the end. He repented of His grief and foreboding. His ultimate faith in God, His death and resurrection are the reasons we can declare, “In him I live and breathe, and have my being.” Jesus ushered in a new season to all who would believe. His death, resurrection and ascension would also bring about a great transition. He knew a void would be left because He would no longer be in the flesh. So, He promised a Comforter.

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it sees Him not, neither knows Him. But you know Him because He dwells with you and shall be in you.” John 14:15 – 17, NKJV.

The Holy Spirit is always with us and in us. As we transition from one season to another it is imperative that we lean on the Holy Spirit for wisdom, guidance, and direction. The pillars of Lent, giving, praying, and fasting allows us to focus on God and not ourselves. We are not alone.

(Cont.)



During this Lenten season of prayer, fasting and giving, wear purple and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Feel the power that encompasses, deep suffering, which Jesus endured on the cross. But also walk in the power of resurrection, of the newness of life, and a new season of change, growth, and discipleship. For God knows the plans He has for the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church and for each of us. Praise be to God!

#### **PRAYER**

Merciful, gracious, faithful, loving God, we thank you for Your creation, for all the colors of the rainbow, especially purple. God, we know that You are with us because of the Holy Spirit that lives within. Help us, we pray to be obedient, to listen and to follow the urging, teaching, and guiding of the Holy Spirit. We know that it is for our intended good. We thank you for this season, its challenges, victories, and blessings. To You O God be glory, majesty, dominion, and power. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Rev. Dr. Cheryl Coleman Hall**



## Lent – The Holy Week

*March 24 – March 30*



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### Love As God Loves

#### SCRIPTURE

##### Romans 12:9-13 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup>“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. <sup>11</sup>Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor in serving the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

<sup>13</sup>“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

#### REFLECTION

We live in a culture that absolutely adores radical individualism. However, the Bible has called us to action in loving and serving others. The scriptures are clear! God wants us to love and honor others above ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-39) As Christians, we are to honor others because they have been created in God’s image, because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and because they have a unique contribution to make to Christ’s church.

Many of us have learned how to pretend to love others—how to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. We may even be skilled in pretending to feel moved with compassion when we hear of others’ needs, or to become indignant when we learn of injustice. But God, calls us to real and sincere love that goes far beyond pretense and politeness. Sincere love requires concentration and effort. It means helping others become better people. It demands our time, money, and personal involvement. No one individual has the capacity to express love to a whole community, but the body of Christ certainly does have this ability. Therefore, let us as a church family commit our lives to the task of Kingdom building. “Whosoever will, let them come, in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (Mark 8:34-38; John 3:16)

The Apostle Paul reminds us that he is strong when he is weak, because when he is weak, God’s grace is most powerful. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) Consequently, the message for the child of God is: “We can do all things through Christ who gives us the strength.” (Philippians 4:13)

Life can present us with many challenging situations. Some of us have more difficult problems than others, but we all usually get our share sooner, or later. Some of us when trouble comes, use it as an occasion for finding new resources, so we can meet the situation and live victoriously in spite of it.

Jesus is our example of God’s love for all eternity. Today, the church is encountering new dangers, new burdens, new testing. We can quit; we can grow bitter; or like Paul we can seek God’s guidance in times of uncertainty. He is the source of our strength. We will find that character comes by testing, and even a cross can be a road to victory.

God will identify who we are to serve, if we ask in prayer, attend church regularly and commune faithfully with other believers. We are also to trust the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit to give us the courage, wisdom, and strength to do what may appear at times to be impossible; to love and honor others above ourselves.

(Cont.)

## PRAYER

Father God, help us to know that in every situation when we call upon Your Holy name in trust and faith, You become our friend, help, and guide through every situation. For there is nothing too impossible for those who believe in the reality of Your forgiveness, love, power, and mercy. Help us to love our neighbors as You have loved us. We thank you for all Your blessings and the many resources You have created. Help us to focus less on material gain and ourselves, but help us, in the strength of Your Holy Spirit, to love and honor others above ourselves.

Teach us O Lord to learn that night brings out the darkness and stars, but a life spent in Your service is phosphorescent. With You Lord in our lives we are able to illuminate dark places like stars in the night, which lighten up the darkest night. Men and women are then able to see You and Your love, new hope, and forgiveness of their sins. Amen!

**Rev. Reginald Townsend**



## Lent – The Holy Week

*March 24 – March 30*



### SCRIPTURE

#### Luke 24:1-5 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup>“Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. <sup>3</sup>Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup>And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. <sup>5</sup>Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead?’”

### PRAYER

Eternal God, may we continue to seek You for who You are, not who we expect You to be, or who You used to be in our lives. Forgive us when we try to define You by our limited experiences and understanding instead of the reality of who You are. Lead and guide me according to Your will and Your way, even when I don’t understand Your will and Your way. Renew my faith and give me a fresh understanding of You, O Lord. Help me embrace the new ways in which You work and the new things You have in store for me. Amen.

### REFLECTION

These women were on a mission. When someone dies, the Jewish custom is to anoint the body with spices and oils before wrapping the body in the burial cloth. When Jesus’ body was taken down from the cross, there wasn’t enough time to do this ritual and bury Him before the Sabbath started. Because they wanted to honor Jesus, they still wanted to perform this ritual and waited until after the Sabbath was over to do it. Their mission was honorable. However, Mary, Johanna, and the other women were on the wrong mission.

They were looking for the corpse of Jesus. The angels asked, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” Here’s the problem with looking for a dead Jesus. A dead Jesus cannot teach. A dead Jesus cannot heal. A dead Jesus cannot prophesy. A dead Jesus cannot bring forth new life. A dead Jesus cannot transform. A dead Jesus cannot save. Instead, what they should have been looking for is the Living God, Jesus the Christ.

But when the angels asked, “why are you looking for the living among the dead,” everything shifted. Now they were put on the path to look for the living God. But if you want to look for the living God, you need to know where to focus your attention.

Leaving the tomb didn’t just mean physically walking out of the tomb, but metaphorically shifting our expectations as well. Because of the angel’s admonition, Mary and the disciples stopped defining Jesus by the circumstances that used to exist. They might not have understood what was happening “now,” but they stopped focusing exclusively on what happened “then.” Three days ago, Jesus was crucified. Seven days ago, Jesus was riding into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey with everyone loving Him. Previously, He fed the 5,000 and raised Lazarus from the dead. If their memory was stuck at what happened three days ago, or seven days ago, or what Jesus did in the past, they wouldn’t have been looking in the right place for Jesus’ current work, which was overcoming death and restoring the fellowship between God and humankind.

(Cont.)

Where are you looking for the Living God? If your testimony about what God has done in your life is stuck in the past, you're not looking in the right place for the Living God. If you keep going back to the "good old days" when church was "good," your money was "right," or things were just "better," you're not look for what Jesus is doing today. Instead, you're looking for Jesus in the wrong place. Memories are great, but memories alone do not give you an abundant life. Memories can be wonderful and meaningful, but they aren't the living water that Jesus told the woman at the well about. Memories alone don't give you the strength for today and the bright hope for tomorrow. Memories don't save. When the Hebrews escaped Egypt and Moses was leading them across the desert to the Promised Land, God dropped manna from heaven every day so they wouldn't starve. The memories of yesterday's manna could not feed you today. Yesterday is dead and gone. We have to stop holding on to yesterday's blessings so tightly that we miss today's blessings. Stop looking for Jesus in the past and embrace the new thing He is doing in the present.

Where are you looking for the Living God? To find Him, we've got to go back to the cross. We're not looking at Jesus on the cross as a sign of defeat like Mary did, or the eleven remaining of His disciples, or His followers. For them, when they were watching Jesus die on the cross, they were also watching their hopes and dreams die right along with Him. But Jesus is not bound by the limitations of our experience or our imagination.

We know that the cross wasn't the end of God's work, it was God moving us to a new level of relationship. Without Jesus dying on it and being resurrected on the third day, we would not be able to have close, deep, intimate fellowship with God.

This passage presents us with a choice. We can stay in the tomb with the memory of Jesus, or we can leave the tomb and seek the vibrant, active, Living God, the God that overcame death, has all power, and brings transformation and abundant life. Where are you looking for the Living God?

**Rev. Leslie Wiley**

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





## **Entering a New Season Led by the Holy Spirit** **Scriptures, Prayers, and Reflections**

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