

LENT 2021



# Lenten Devotional

**NEW HOPE**

United Methodist Church

# Important Dates

Ash Wednesday - February 17, 2021

Palm Sunday - March 28, 2021

Maundy Thursday - April 1, 2021

Good Friday - April 2, 2021

Easter Sunday - April 4, 2021

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**Join us in-person or online for worship**

Ash Wednesday @ 6:30pm

Palm Sunday @ 9:00am & 10:30am

Maundy Thursday @ 6:30pm

Good Friday @ 7:30pm

Easter Sunday @ 9:00am & 10:30am

**[findnewhope.com](http://findnewhope.com)**

OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE  
MORE AND BETTER  
FOLLOWERS OF JESUS  
CHRIST

*New Hope*

“

# Ash Wednesday

Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading: Psalms 103:13-17

The Lord is like a father to his children,  
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.  
For he knows how weak we are;  
he remembers we are only dust.  
Our days on earth are like grass;  
like wildflowers, we bloom and die.  
The wind blows, and we are gone—  
as though we had never been here.  
But the love of the Lord remains forever  
with those who fear him...

## Reflection:

When Daniel was in high school, he really struggled to wake up in the morning. I did everything I could to get him up, from playing loud music to pouring water on his head (desperate times call for desperate measures!) I was really worried he would go off to college and never wake up for classes. In a last ditch effort, I bought what Amazon declared was the loudest alarm clock available. It was called the Sonic Boom. One of the reviews said it was like the Russian army invading your bedroom in the morning. The first morning it went off, the whole house shook and Richard and I sat up immediately in our bed on the other side of the house. No living thing could sleep with the Sonic Boom to wake them from their slumber.

Today is Ash Wednesday. Many of you have asked what the purpose of Ash Wednesday is for us as Methodists. I like to think of Ash Wednesday as an alarm clock for our tired, routine lives. In the midst of a global pandemic, internet church services, and loss of connection, we have been coasting spiritually. We need a spiritual Sonic Boom to wake us from our deep slumber and remind us how short these lives really are! Are we using our one and only life in a way that brings glory to God? Are we right with God? Are we putting value in things with eternal value? What changes do we need to make to reorient our lives toward God and away from the things of this world? For what do we need to repent?

Ash Wednesday reminds us how fragile and temporary our lives in this world truly are. As we place the ashes on each forehead in the sign of the cross, we say, "From dust you have come and to dust you will return." All of us will return to dust. But God and God's love are eternal. I don't know about you, but I need that reminder.

## Prayer:

Lord, Thank you for loving me. Wake me up from my spiritual sleepiness so that I can be fully focused on you. During this season of Lent, help me to be fully aware of your presence in my life. I want to be closer to you! I'm sorry for how I have messed up over and over again.

Forgive me, Lord. I know this life is short. May I use my days to glorify you and you alone. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

# Ash Wednesday

Becky Jordan

Scripture Reading:

Exodus 32:11-14   Joshua 10:12-14   1 Kings 18:42-46   Acts 4:30-31

## Reflection:

According to the Oxford Dictionary, juggernaut means, " a huge, powerful, and overwhelming force or institution." Moses prayed like a juggernaut in Exodus 32, as an intercessor when the Israelites worshipped a golden calf and God's anger burned against them, wanting to destroy His chosen people. Years later, his successor Joshua, leader of Israel, mighty military and prayer warrior, prayed in chapter 10, petitioning God to make the sun stand still over Gibeon and the moon to remain over the Valley of Aijalon in a battle the Lord had promised victory to Israel. Elijah earnestly prayed to God high upon a mountain top for rain which would end the three-year drought and display His power. In Acts 4, Peter and John ardently prayed for the Lord to work mightily through them with signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. Old Testament leaders and prophets and apostles of the New Testament had access to the same God who still sits upon His throne desiring to hear and answer the prayers and petitions of his children.

During this time of Lent, let us lift our prayers and petitions as the biblical juggernauts who preceded us. In Isaiah 43:19, we read, "Look; I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert." (HCSB) God has given this verse to various members of New Hope over the past three years. Let us fervently seek God's will for New Hope and align our direction with his master plan in our lives, in New Hope's mission and ministry which we undertake in our community, our country, and the world – the master plan evidenced in His Word time and time again.

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I cry out to you for only Your Voice and Your Direction. You have told me You are doing a new thing. You brought me to Mt. Precipice and reminded me again of Your Word. Give me eyes to see, ears to hear, wisdom to discern, and boldness to step out in Your Strength. In the Name Above All Names I humbly offer my prayer, Amen.

Psalm 96:1-2

Sing a new song to the LORD!  
Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!  
Sing to the LORD; praise his name.  
Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

I Will Sing a New Song  
by Howard Thurman

The old song of my spirit has wearied itself out.  
It has long ago been learned by my heart;  
It repeats itself over and over,  
bringing no added joy to my days or lift to my spirit.

I will sing a new song.  
I must learn the new song for the new needs.  
I must fashion new words born of all the new growth  
of my life - of my mind - of my spirit.  
I must prepare for new melodies that have never been mine before,  
that all that is within me may lift my voice unto God.

Therefore, I shall rejoice with each new day  
and delight my spirit in each fresh unfolding.  
I will sing, this day, a new song unto the Lord.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading:     Phillippians 4:6

*Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

## Reflection:

My Facebook timeline popped up a memory this morning describing a list of what I called “trials” that occurred all in one day at the time. Those trials seem trivial now in the light of what the world is facing with COVID-19 and all the actions being taken to battle the pandemic. We have a lot to worry about, but let’s turn that worry into prayer!

An important element to prayer is to fill it with trust in and praise for our Lord. The ability to fill our words and actions with trust and praise, especially in times of adversity, sets us apart as Christians and, by doing so, serves as witness to the world.

## Prayer:

Lord, Let us never forget we are Yours and You deeply care for us. Grant me Your peace as a sign to others that You are in control no matter what.

# Daily Devotional

## Sunday "Little Easter"

Every Sunday in Lent is considered a "little Easter," a time to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and spend time praising God. So, in keeping with this, our Sunday devotionals will be traditional Easter hymns. Take a moment to sing these with your family or by yourself. If you like, listen to the song on your computer or phone. But be sure to spend time rejoicing and praising God for our new life in Jesus Christ.

### Crown Him with Many Crowns

By Matthew Bridges, 1852

1. Crown Him with many crowns,  
The Lamb upon His throne;  
Hark! How the heav'nly anthem drowns  
All music but its own!  
Awake, my soul and sing  
Of Him Who died for thee,  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity.

2. Crown Him the Lord of love!  
Behold His hands and side—  
Rich wounds, yet visible above,  
In beauty glorified.  
No angel in the sky  
Can fully bear that sight,  
But downward bends His wond'ring eye  
At mysteries so bright.

3. Crown Him the Lord of life!  
Who triumphed o'er the grave,  
Who rose victorious in the strife  
For those He came to save.  
His glories now we sing,  
Who died, and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring,  
And lives that death may die.

4. Crown Him the Lord of heav'n!  
One with the Father known,  
One with the Spirit through Him giv'n  
From yonder glorious throne,  
To Thee be endless praise,  
For Thou for us hast died;  
Be Thou, O Lord, through endless days  
Adored and magnified.

# Daily Devotional

Read and pray over the Scripture from John 17. Then, spend some time in prayer, using the prayer from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as your guide. How do we need to seek unity as the people of New Hope? How might we become more unified with our Christian brothers and sisters from other cultures, races, and denominations? Ask God to show you those places deep within you that are resisting unity, peace, justice, and wholeness.

*John 17:20-21, I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*

A Prayer from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind;  
in whom to dwell is to find peace and security;  
toward whom to turn is to find life and life eternal,  
we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men;  
that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them,  
Thy saving health unto all nations.

We also pray for Thy holy Church universal;  
that it may be so guided and governed by Thy Spirit,  
that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth,  
and hold the faith in unity of spirit,  
in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

Finally, we commend to Thy Fatherly goodness all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed in  
mind or body.

Give them patience under the suffering and power of endurance.

This we ask in the name of Jesus.

Amen.



# Daily Devotional

## Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:6-7

*Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

### Reflection:

A lot of parenting involves learning patience. When my son was an infant and toddler, he instructed me in patience through battling sleep. I held him, rocked him and sang to him, but if I were not completely relaxed, he sensed it, would not relax and postpone sleep. I had to not only take time to hold, rock and sing, but I had to have patience with him through the process. This patience could not be faked. He could always tell when it was not genuine. Impatience crawls under the skin and seeps out somehow, revealing a missing inner peace no matter what the face attempts to show.

Parenthood is one of the most anxiety-ridden roles in life that comes to my mind. The worry related to it can be so oppressive. My child can be quite accident prone. He has had a concussion from a mere slip on wet pavement in our driveway, and he once shut his thumb in a door jam, resulting in losing his thumbnail, bleeding that was difficult to stop, and a chipped bone.

So, what did I do for personal peace and genuine patience in such challenging parenting moments? I pray. I breathe deeply and clear my mind as best I can. When singing, I sing Christian music, focusing in on the words. I move my mind from other distractions and busyness and instead count my blessings. All of these are forms of prayer. Whatever forms you use, pouring out in conversation with God releases anxiety and realizes peace.

“Have no anxiety about anything” sounds like the perfect “get out of jail free” card when it comes to worry. Of course, just like you have to draw that card in a game of Monopoly, you have to take action to have no anxiety. Think about how thankful you are in a game of Monopoly to pull that “get out of jail free” card out of the deck. That is when to be thankful, at the moment of prayer.

### Prayer:

Lord, Please grant me self-control to practice techniques for patience in those situations where impatience likes to creep in and steal my peace. Remind me of the blessings I have. Thank You for always hearing and answering!

Daily Devotional  
Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading: I Thess. 5:17

*Never stop praying.*

*Also take a moment to read some of Jesus' teachings on prayer:*

*Matthew 6:5-15, 7:7-11, Mark 11:23-26, Luke 11:1-13, Luke 18:1-14, John 15:7.*

**Reflection:**

In Acts 4, when Peter and John were arrested and released, they prayed for boldness. When Peter was arrested again the church offered "constant prayer" for him (Acts 12:5). In fact, they prayed all night long (we stay up worrying all night long, they prayed all night long). When the seven were appointed in Jerusalem to care for the widows, they prayed about it (Acts 6:6). When the church in Antioch first sent out Paul and Barnabas to preach, they prayed about it (Acts 13:3). Peter was in prayer when the vision concerning Cornelius was revealed to him (Acts 10:9; 11:5). Paul and Silas were praying while in the middle of a Philippian jail (Acts 16:25). When Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the churches they planted, they prayed about it (Acts 14:23). Not, please Lord, bless our decision which we already made, but truly guide our thoughts, actions, and decisions. The early believers prayed often and they prayed persistently. Paul writes in I Thess. 5:17, "Never stop praying."

What's interesting to me is that they prayed persistently even when they didn't get the "results" they wanted. Stephen and James were martyred but that didn't stop the early Christians; they still prayed persistently for Peter. They must have been frustrated and grief-stricken, but they kept praying boldly nonetheless.

Prayer is not simply about getting the results we desire. There is no special prayer formula. We tend to think prayer + faith = results (love, healing, relationships, peace). But that just isn't how it works. God answers prayers. We can trust in that. But he doesn't always answer the prayers the way we want him to. And probably a more important point --- a BIG part of prayer is about what God is doing in us when we pray. Prayer is essentially an act of submission. When we pray, we are saying, "God, we need you. You are Lord of this world and we are not. You are in control. We are not. We yield to you." And there is something that happens within us when we do that.

Sometimes, our prayers are answered swiftly, just the way we want. Other times, the answer we receive isn't exactly the way we imagined. Sometimes, we don't get to see the answer on this side of eternity. But Jesus tells us to pray boldly, persistently, and with determination. Paul says to pray continually. Why? Because persistent prayer changes our heart. We draw closer to God. Through the process of regular, persistent prayer, we begin to look more like Jesus. And isn't that the point?

**Prayer:**

Dear God, Thank you for always listening to my prayers. Give me the strength and courage to pray boldly and continuously, and change my heart in the process. Lord, I submit to you. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

# Day 8

Today, read the Lord's Prayer through slowly, with your eyes following the words but your heart directing them to God. Praying it aloud will help.

Next, read the prayer through again, this time making it very personal. "My Father in heaven . . . Give me today the food I need . . . forgive me my sins . . ." While we can never forget the prayer is corporate and concerned with others too, it's fine to speak personally to God through it. Again, don't rush. Pray slowly and deliberately.

Finally, now take one more reading of the prayer, but this time linger on each line, inviting God to bring specific people, situations and responses to mind as you pray.

Matthew 6:9-13,

Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,  
may your name be kept holy.  
May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us today the food we need,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.  
And don't let us yield to temptation,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

# Daily Devotional

## Paul Brooks

Scripture Reading: Psalm 3:3-5

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

*But you, Lord, are a shield around me,  
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.  
I call out to the Lord,  
and he answers me from his holy mountain.  
I lie down and sleep;  
I wake up again, because the Lord sustains me.*

### My experience:

In the morning, I had tested positive for COVID-19. As a chronic asthmatic, I had reason to be concerned. Barbara's negative test had not come back yet, and she was worried for us both, but we knew we must quarantine in the house. She was most worried that I would sleep alone and she wouldn't know if I slipped into a crisis. I put on a brave face with her: "I'll be fine. I have my phone; I'll call you if I need you." But alone in my bed that first night, I was scared. I didn't want to fall asleep. And so I prayed. And prayed. And prayed. And God answered me.

As I prayed, I felt a blanket of comfort wrap around me. It brings tears to my eyes to remember it. I felt a peace that I cannot put into words, settling my soul. I knew that no matter what happened, I was going to be fine. My eyes grew heavy, my heart quieted down and I mercifully drifted off to sleep. When I awoke the next morning, I was refreshed and thankful. I was confident that I was in the Lord's hands. The Lord sustains me!

### Prayer:

Almighty and most merciful Father, your love and compassion for us surpasses anything we could ever hope for. Though we have erred and strayed like lost sheep, you never leave our side. Through Jesus, you restore us in your sight. Through the Holy Spirit, you comfort and guide us in your ways. Pour down on us the continual dew of your blessing, that we may truly please you. Let us give thanks to you in all circumstances, and always keep our trust in you. Through our mediator and advocate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1-8

*And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Vindicate me against my adversary.' For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily.*

### Reflection:

I highly dislike “push notifications” on my devices because they are, well, pushy! I love to create checklists, but allowing my device to essentially do this for me and continually nag me about what it (or the various app creators) deems most important, creates a lot of stress for me. I feel tied to my phone with a list that never seems to get completely checked off and somehow missing what is important. There doesn't ever seem to be a rewarding sense of accomplishment, but more of a burden of never feeling good enough. Fortunately, I can select which apps and features “allow” push notifications, so I choose to limit them a great deal.

God, on the other hand, allows all the “notifications” I throw at Him come through and be marked as important. Whether I put in one or one hundred requests (prayers), He gets the notification. He hears me and sees me every time. He doesn't get stressed out or irritated by them, because He's already known and completed them every time.

### Prayer:

Lord, Thank You that no worry is too insignificant to turn over to You in prayer and that Your perfect love dispels all need for fear and anxiety.

# Daily Devotional

## Sunday "Little Easter"

Every Sunday in Lent is considered a "little Easter," a time to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and spend time praising God. So, in keeping with this, our Sunday devotionals will be traditional Easter hymns. Take a moment to sing these with your family or by yourself. If you like, listen to the song on your computer or phone. But be sure to spend time rejoicing and praising God for our new life in Jesus Christ.

### He Lives

By Albert Ackley

1. I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today  
I know that He is living, whatever men may say  
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer  
And just the time I need Him He's always near.

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way.  
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart,  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.

2. In all the world around me I see His loving care  
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair  
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast  
The day of His appearing will come at last

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way.  
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.

3. Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, Lift up your voice and sing  
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King  
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find  
None other is so loving, so good and kind.

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way.  
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.

# Daily Devotional

## Julie Hamilton

Scripture Reading:     Philippians 4:6

*Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6*

### Reflection:

Each year as Lent approaches I begin considering what I might “give up” for this season. As Christians we accept this time of reflection and preparation for Easter as a period of sacrifice, a symbol of the great love Jesus demonstrated as he went to the cross and bore the weight of our sins. We look for areas in our lives where we can lessen or omit something that isn't good for us, like sweets, coffee, fast food, watching too much tv, and so on. Even in this modern world where we can quickly search the internet for lots of ideas for how to tackle the sacrifice of Lent, I had never considered giving up something less tangible, like worry. I mean if you think about it, it fits the bill, right? It isn't good for me, it keeps me from the things of Christ, it is a useless waste of valuable time I could devote to kingdom work, and it is down right exhausting. But giving up worry doesn't feel sacrificial, in fact the idea of not worrying sounds liberating.

As I have thoughtfully considered the idea of “giving up” worry, I have come to a simple conclusion; though the outcome may be liberating, the journey of Lent may be one of the hardest ever. It's not like the cup of caffeine charged coffee I can watch swirl as I pour it down the drain; it is inside me, ingrained in my imperfect human brain. It's a part of how I plan, how I interact with the world, how I handle stress, even how I define the control I have over the everyday. I'm powerless against it, yet I somehow feel completely out of control with just the thought of it being absent. It's mine. It's part of who I am, right?

The Bible tells us over and over again (300 plus times) that God doesn't want us to worry. He didn't design us that way and he doesn't want that for us. But the Bible doesn't just say, “don't worry”, it also tells us what to do when worry tries to take hold. Pray with gratitude to a loving Father who will gladly remind us He is in control of every detail of our lives. It is all in His hands.

### Prayer:

Father God, lead me. Show me those things that prevent me from being all you have designed me for. Love me Father, when I press you away with my fears and worry and forget YOU ARE IN CONTROL. In this time of remembrance may I be washed with the knowing that your sacrifice was made so that I might live fully and abundantly for your kingdom.  
Amen

### Night Prayer

by Rev. John Williamson, from A New Zealand Prayer Book

Lord, it is night.  
The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.  
It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done;  
let it be.  
The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives  
rest in you.  
The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
all dear to us,  
and all who have no peace.  
The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys,  
new possibilities.  
In your name we pray. Amen.

#### Reflection Questions:

- Is there a word or a phrase that stood out to you? Why was it meaningful?
- What do you need to release that has been left undone?
- What fears do you need to lay down and lay at the foot of the cross?



# Daily Devotional

## Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:23

*And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.*

### Reflection:

Have you ever met someone at an event or while out someplace, and then sought out a chance to be alone with them? When you get away from others, activities, noise, etc., you can talk and get to know each other better. Alone time together helps build relationship. Even when you're not new to each other, alone time together helps sustain relationship. One way couples work at this is through "date nights."

Jesus went off alone to pray. But it's not that He was completely alone. He was alone with God!

I am never alone. God is always with me. Going off "alone" to pray is just getting to a time and place that's quiet and away from distractions where I can talk with and focus on the Lord to build and sustain my relationship with Him. Take advantage of the moments where you just happen to have some time alone with the Lord, but also be intentional about scheduling "date night" kind of moments with Him too. While corporate prayer and worship are important, so is alone time together with God!

### Prayer:

Lord, Thank You that I am never truly alone! Thank You that when I get a chance to "get away" from others, that I can be alone with You. Help my relationship with You grow stronger with continuous prayer.

# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Roberto Chaple

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 40:3

*A voice of one calling: In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

### Reflection:

Lent is a season of preparation that seems to be more relevant than ever this year. The domino effect generated by the pandemic feels like a true desert as many mourn the loss of dear ones or walk on top of their chattered dreams. But perhaps we tend to put too much blame in this current crisis and forget that our materialistic lifestyle has given us false hope in a control that we actually never had. It is in the midst of these tensions that Lent is great time to tune-in our expectations, because our responsibility before God will never go beyond preparing the way for Him and walk ourselves in it. Even though we know this biblical truth, we always tend to celebrate achievements and get frustrated when things don't happen as "we" planned. In times of pain and uncertainty, may this season be a loud and clear reminder that faithfulness is our greatest achievement.

### Prayer:

Dear God, as we prepare to celebrate your amazing Love and Power, help us abandon ourselves for the sake of others as you did. Help us prepare the way for you so others can know and follow You. It is in your Holy and Mighty Name we pray, Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Carole Valdespino

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 29:11

*And he told them a parable, to the For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.*

### My Story:

Twenty years ago, as a one-year-old, my grandson was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Although it was intended for the exiles in Babylon, this is the Scripture we prayed for him as an individual. Surgery was performed and the doctors hoped that the tumor would not return, but it did return a year later. As we continued to pray fervently he was treated with chemo, but he developed a severe allergy and it was necessary to discontinue therapy altogether. Imaging was ordered to provide more information for continued treatment. Options were limited, and we continued our prayers, trusting in God. The images showed absolutely no trace of the tumor! We ascribe that miracle to God's work in his life. Today he is a bright, healthy young man with a heart for God, and I am a grandmother with a heart overflowing with gratitude to our Lord for this blessing and so many others. I thank God for his Word which provided this scripture.

### Prayer:

Gracious Heavenly Father, thank You for all the blessings You shower on us—the ones we realize at the time, the ones we realize later and the ones we never even notice. We acknowledge that we are not worthy of this bounty and accept it with gratitude and awareness of our need for You. We love You for all that You are and all that You do. In the precious name of Jesus we pray that You will continue to guide us in becoming the sons and daughters you want us to be. Amen.

Spend some time praying the following prayer.

What images or feelings are brought forth as you say these words?

What Scripture verses come to mind?

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.  
And kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.  
And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord,  
by the light of the Holy Spirit  
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.  
In the same Spirit  
help us to relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Sunday "Little Easter"

Every Sunday in Lent is considered a "little Easter," a time to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and spend time praising God. So, in keeping with this, our Sunday devotionals will be Easter hymns or songs. Take a moment to sing these with your family or by yourself. If you like, listen to the song on your computer or phone. But be sure to spend time rejoicing and praising God for our new life in Jesus Christ. Today's song is newer than some of the others but one of my very favorite praise songs. Reflect on the powerful words.

### What a Beautiful Name

By Hillsong Worship

You were the Word at the beginning  
 One with God the Lord Most High  
 Your hidden glory in creation  
 Now revealed in You our Christ  
 What a beautiful Name it is  
 What a beautiful Name it is  
 The Name of Jesus Christ my King  
 What a beautiful Name it is  
 Nothing compares to this  
 What a beautiful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

You didn't want heaven without us  
 So Jesus, You brought heaven down  
 My sin was great, Your love was greater  
 What could separate us now?  
 What a wonderful Name it is  
 What a wonderful Name it is  
 The Name of Jesus Christ my King  
 What a wonderful Name it is  
 Nothing compares to this  
 What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

Death could not hold You  
 The veil tore before You  
 You silenced the boast of sin and grave  
 The heavens are roaring  
 The praise of Your glory  
 For You are raised to life again.

You have no rival  
 You have no equal  
 Now and forever, God You reign  
 Yours is the kingdom  
 Yours is the glory  
 Yours is the Name above all names

What a powerful Name it is  
 What a powerful Name it is  
 The Name of Jesus Christ my King  
 What a powerful Name it is  
 Nothing can stand against.  
 What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus  
 What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus  
 What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1

*And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.*

## Reflection:

Recently, my family went to the second session of a new dog training class. We ran late, forgot Rocky's harness and leash, and were all tired and more than a little discombobulated. Class went less than spectacular. I barely held back tears on the way home. Later that night, I couldn't sleep. My mind kept wandering with ideas how to prepare for class the following week to avoid disaster and make up for the poor performance.

Then I realized how much I have to be thankful for: my son's maturity in getting in the car after class and apologizing for acting so loopy, my husband's willingness to help and attend this class, his initiative to solve the forgotten harness and leash issue by stopping at a Petsmart along the way, and that we have a happy and healthy and eager-to-please dog.

As I realized one class-night-gone-crazy did not outweigh our many blessings, it occurred to me the best preparation for the following week I could do, was pray, leaving it in God's hands. We still practiced "homework", laid out stuff to go beforehand, and made sure to leave home earlier, but other circumstances did not stress me out the same. Did we have a perfect performance with no issues? Certainly not! But I enjoyed the time much better.

Praying about everything, especially even the smallest thing, if it is something that may worry me, is simply treating God as a friend. Praying about my activities is showing a deep desire that I want His involvement in my life, my whole life. As much and more than any friend, God wants to listen to whatever I have to say. Nothing is the "wrong" topic!

## Prayer:

Dear God, Thank You for wanting to be a part of my whole life and that no part of my life is too small or insignificant or unrelated to speak to You about.

# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 23

*Psalm 23,  
The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

### Reflection:

It is hard to tell the exact occasion of the writing of the 23rd Psalm. We know that King David was older, as the text suggests he had both enemies and had experienced hardship and prosperity. Possibly, the 23rd Psalm was written while David was at Mahanaim, as he contemplated how the battle was going between his forces and those of his son, Absalom, during the civil war caused by Absalom's rebellion. David would certainly have been grief-stricken and heartbroken. And yet, in the midst of some of the darkest circumstances of his life, there is no doubt where his life finds its center. His center, his protection, his comfort, and his hope come from the Lord and the Lord alone.

When life is uncertain or difficult, I find it helpful to pray over the 23rd Psalm. I picture King David in the midst of his troubles. I think about all the people over the course of history who have prayed this powerful psalm. Then, I actually picture myself being led by still waters and lying in a pleasant, bugless green pasture. I visualize each line of the psalm, praying it over and over again. It helps me center myself in God, becoming fully immersed in his comfort and protection.

### Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for your comfort and protection. Thank you for being present with us in the good and the bad, in the mountain and the valley. Help us center ourselves in you and fill us with your amazing peace. Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Guy Weatherly

Scripture Reading: John 10:27

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."*

### Reflection:

A few years ago, I purchased a pre-owned car that was engineered to respond to verbal commands. After it was synced in, you were supposed to be able to tell the car to do something and it would acknowledge and do it. I was so excited when I took it out for the first time. It was on a hot Florida day when the heat was radiating from the scorching pavement.

I leaned over and said, "Turn the climate to 71 degrees." It spoke back, "Now turning the climate to 81 degrees." I spoke louder, "Turn the climate to 71 degrees." It responded again, this time saying, "Now turning the climate to 84 degrees." This time I bent over the dash board and in a loud voice shouted, "TURN THE CLIMATE TO 71 DEGREES!" Then it said, "This system is not programmed for temperatures above 84 degrees."

It was at that moment I heard God speak, "Now you know what I feel like when I am talking to you." Busted.

When we decide to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit "syncs" us in. We can hear His voice when we are lost, we can hear His voice when we are hurting, we can hear His voice when we say "Here am I Lord, send me." All that He requires from us is to simply listen.

Listening is a simple thing but it is so hard to do in our noisy world when we are thinking about other things and listening to other voices. It may require us to do impossible things like turn off the tv and push back the distractions enough so we can hear Him!

This 40 day season of Lent is an opportunity to listen for His voice - not only for ourselves but for our Church.

" My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27



# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:2 Matthew 7:11  
Ephesians 3:16-19

*Habakkuk 3:2, LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.*

*Matthew 7:11, So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.*

*Ephesians 3:16-19, I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.*

### Reflection:

Real revival is always birthed in and sustained by prayer. That's why passionate, continuous prayer must be more than a church program; it must become a lifestyle of seeking God. When we pray for a spiritual awakening, we want to pray that God fills us with his Holy Spirit in a new way and that we become renewed in a powerful way. But awakening is more than simply becoming a little bit closer to God, it's truly become alive again. It's resurrection within us, within our church, within our community.

Spiritual awakening involves looking in to our own lives (turning from sin), looking up to God (asking for his presence and power), and looking out to those around us (uniting to spread the hope of Christ). Let's believe that God will do extraordinary things as we turn, pray, and unite with one cry for spiritual awakening here at New Hope.

### Prayer:

Lord, we pray for spiritual awakening within each of us. Give us each a spirit of humility and a fervent desire to grow in our walk with you. If we are comfortable, make us uncomfortable. If we are complacent, give us passion. If we are selfish, give us an incredible love for your people. Speak to us as individuals, Lord, and help us be willing to listen and obey.

We pray for spiritual awakening here at New Hope, in this community of faith. Renew us as a church, Lord. Let your Spirit be so evident here that people notice it as soon as they walk on our campus.

Where we are divided, Lord, help us be unified. Heal any wounds that are present so that as a body of believers, we can grow together, worship together, live out our faith together in ways that yield fruit for your Kingdom. Give us a fervent desire to make NEW WINE, to be willing to take risks. Speak to us as a congregation, Lord, and help us be willing to listen and obey.

We pray for spiritual awakening in our community, Lord. Help us be part of something new, something amazing, a movement of God right here in Brandon, Florida. Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Shari Gillis

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter: 3:18-22

*Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.*

*So he went and preached to the spirits in prison—those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood. And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

*Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.*

### Reflection:

I am a mother of two adult children. I love them dearly, and I believe I would do anything to insure their lives are fulfilling and safe. But I do not have the power to really make that happen. They are adults, and they make their own choices.

God loves my children even more than I do. Only God can truly guide their lives.

God sent Jesus to show us the way, and then took our upcoming sins to the cross and suffered for them. That is a gift that in my motherhood, I cannot do.

### Prayer:

Almighty Father, with my whole heart, I thank you for the gift of salvation, for myself and the worldwide family of Yours. May your grace and glory shower down upon this family of Yours. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Debby Cumbie

Scripture Reading: Acts 16:23,25

*After they had given Paul and Silas a severe flogging, they threw them into prison. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

### Reflection:

#### Nothing Can Silence The Song

There is something deep and powerful about music. It can motivate. It can praise. It can spark gratitude, peace and joy in a way that few things can. It is no wonder that music is so intricately woven through the history of our faith.

As we read the passage above from Acts, we see how Paul and Silas were so convinced that they would not die, but live, that – even in prison, even in the middle of the night – they sang. Nothing can silence the song of love.

I am reminded of a song that has been so much on my heart lately that I find myself singing it over and over, silently in my head. I sing it as my prayer many times every day. If Stuart, our Tech Arts director, were recording this as a mission video, I would sing it for you; but I think that the words to the song are impactful enough to touch your hearts and minds during this season of Lent. I know that the lyrics will linger long after this singer is gone! Truly, nothing can silence the song of Love!

So I close with the words to “Looking Through His Eyes” as our prayer:

“Let me see this world, dear Lord, as though I were looking through Your eyes.  
A world where people don’t want You Lord; but a world for which You died.  
Let me kneel with You in the garden. Blur my eyes with tears of agony;  
For if once I could see this world the way You see, I just know I’d serve You more faithfully.  
Let me see this world, dear Lord, through Your eyes when men mocked Your Holy Name.  
When they beat You and spat upon You, Lord, let me love them as You loved them just the same.  
Let me stand high above my petty problems, and grieve for people, hell bound eternally;  
For if once I could see this world the way You see, I just know I’d serve You more faithfully.”  
Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Sunday "Little Easter"

Every Sunday in Lent is considered a "little Easter," a time to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and spend time praising God. So, in keeping with this, our Sunday devotionals will be traditional Easter hymns. Take a moment to sing these with your family or by yourself. If you like, listen to the song on your computer or phone. But be sure to spend time rejoicing and praising God for our new life in Jesus Christ.

### Crown Him with Many Crowns

By Matthew Bridges, 1852

1. Crown Him with many crowns,  
The Lamb upon His throne;  
Hark! How the heav'nly anthem drowns  
All music but its own!  
Awake, my soul and sing  
Of Him Who died for thee,  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity.

2. Crown Him the Lord of love!  
Behold His hands and side—  
Rich wounds, yet visible above,  
In beauty glorified.  
No angel in the sky  
Can fully bear that sight,  
But downward bends His wond'ring eye  
At mysteries so bright.

3. Crown Him the Lord of life!  
Who triumphed o'er the grave,  
Who rose victorious in the strife  
For those He came to save.  
His glories now we sing,  
Who died, and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring,  
And lives that death may die.

4. Crown Him the Lord of heav'n!  
One with the Father known,  
One with the Spirit through Him giv'n  
From yonder glorious throne,  
To Thee be endless praise,  
For Thou for us hast died;  
Be Thou, O Lord, through endless days  
Adored and magnified.

# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Tom Bridges

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:31

*For those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk and not faint.*

### Reflection:

This is my favorite passage in the Old Testament for a few different reasons. One is the imagery of soaring high, on wings like eagles. I served in the 101st Airborne Division, and our nickname is the Screamin' Eagles. Since that time, I've been fascinated by the incredible power, strength, and beauty of the eagle.

The passage also holds special meaning for me, as it helped me get through a tough situation. When I was in Airborne school, I got the flu the night before a critical run had to be completed. If I did not complete the run with my class, I would have to repeat the entire week's training (trust me, I did NOT want to repeat a week of grueling training). That morning, I was sweating profusely, and didn't see any possible way I could keep pace with my class for the 3 mile run. But as I started, I began saying the words of this verse over and over. As my left foot hit the pavement, I said: "Run and not grow weary" and as my right foot hit the pavement, I said (under my breath) "Walk and not faint."

It was only the power of God that got me through that morning. I was sick as a dog. But I leaned on the power of prayer, on the power of Scripture, and on the power of the Holy Spirit, and God was good. And God still is!

### Prayer:

Lord, Help us to lean upon you for strength; may we run and not be weary, may we walk and not faint.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Luke 5:16

*But he [Jesus] withdrew to the wilderness and prayed*

## Reflection:

Withdrawing involves an intentional moving away from something or somewhere. In Jesus' case, He removed Himself from the hubbub of the "multitudes" gathering to listen to Him and looking for healing (verse 15). He was getting away from His daily grind. The verse indicates an intentional move not only away from one place, but also to a specific other place: the wilderness.

I don't know about you, but the word "wilderness" doesn't make me think of quiet and calm. While it might be isolated from people, there are still possibly animals and other elements of nature and place that might be, well, "wild." Sometimes a house full of children and pets with a lot going on can be thought of as its own sort of wilderness (it's certainly wild, at any rate). Sometimes a city is described as a wilderness - the cement jungle. What is your wilderness? To pray, remove yourself from the daily grind. Face whatever wilderness is available. Jesus didn't get on a plane to head to some beach, lake, city or jungle. He went to the desert, because that is what was right there where He was.

Don't neglect, make space. One morning I sat at the table with my Bible and prayer journal. My son asked if I would play a game with him, to which I replied, "as soon as I finish my Bible study time." He was still in the next room bouncing and playing - being the little wild thing he is, but I turned my focus on the Lord and had some quality time to get my day started right.

## Prayer:

Lord, Help me realize that I don't need to search for peace to pray, but to pray for peace. You give me the place I need to be and here it is that I will pray. Grant me Your peace that passes all understanding, no matter the wilderness I face.

As you reflect on this prayer today, also read Ephesians 6:10-18.

### The Prayer of St. Patrick: Morning Prayer

I arise today  
Through the strength of heaven;  
Light of the sun,  
Splendor of fire,  
Speed of lightning,  
Swiftness of the wind,  
Depth of the sea,  
Stability of the earth,  
Firmness of the rock.

I arise today  
Through God's strength to pilot me;  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to guard me,  
God's way to lie before me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
God's hosts to save me  
Afar and a near,  
Alone or in a multitude.

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

I arise today  
Through the mighty strength  
Of the Lord of creation.

# Daily Devotional

## Elaine Connor

Scripture Reading: Ps. 91:2

*I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust."*

### Reflection:

How many of you were ever caught in a snow blizzard? They can be terrifying, as you cannot see even an inch around you. The snow flakes are mesmerizing too. Everything together means that a blizzard can be confusing and it's easy to lose your sense of direction. When I was a child in the 1950's and 60's, we had terrible blizzards in upstate N.Y. The snow would pile up to the second story of our farmhouse. Daddy had to milk the cows and the cow barn was about 150 feet away from the house. When he heard a blizzard would hit us, he got out a very long and sturdy rope which he tied between the house and barn. He would hold tight to the rope and it would safely lead him back to the house during a storm.

God is like that rope. He is strong, trustworthy, protecting, an ever-present help and guide to us. We just have to hold on to him, never take our focus off of him, and to always remember to thank him.

### Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your love, care, and guidance. Thank you that we can trust You in all our circumstances. It is in Your Strong Name, Lord Jesus we pray. Amen.



# Daily Devotional

## Suzanne Mohammed

Scripture Reading:     Phillippians 4:6

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

### Reflection:

Early in my walk with God, I was sitting in church service and during prayer time, I opened my eyes. A few pews ahead of me to my left, I noticed a woman close to my age silently praying with such conviction, emotion, and passion. Her face and body language made it evident she was having a deep personal conversation with God. Another time, during a casual conversation, a friend was cooking and a bowl was about to fall off the kitchen island, but she caught it and immediately praised God. I wanted what these women had - a prayerful relationship with God. So now I just keep talking to God about everything and praise Him even when I miss catching the bowl. Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.

### Prayer:

Thank you, God, for sending your son Jesus who made a relationship with you possible. Thank you, Heavenly Father, that you are with us through thick and thin. We praise you for who you are: a loving, faithful Father, full of grace and mercy. Please continue to put Godly people in all our paths to guide us and draw us closer to you so we can know more and more of Jesus. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Paul Lancaster

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:10

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

### My Experience

As a college student majoring in American History, I was very excited about my future. I had been a volunteer coach for baseball and football throughout my college years. As a history major, the plan was to complete my degree and start a teaching and coaching career.

During this time, I worked for a local heavy construction company in Tampa. Through the years my knowledge and value to the company increased as did my compensation. By college graduation time, I was making appreciably more money in the construction industry than I could make as a beginning teacher and coach.

I felt an emptiness inside; my passion and purpose were gone. A nagging question continued to haunt me. "God, you know I wanted to teach and coach so why do you have me stuck in this position in construction?" I struggled with this question for years. Finally, I received an answer from God. The answer -- 'Teach and Coach'.

What did this mean? As a maturing Christian with a family, I desperately prayed for God to give me an answer that I could understand. The words I received from Him were again, "teach and coach". This time His words stirred my heart. My purpose and passion returned. I realized not only could I teach others the skills I had learned through the years in construction but more importantly, I could mentor them in the ways of Jesus through Bible studies, small groups and accountability groups.

I finished my construction career in 2018 but my work for Jesus continues.

### My Prayer

Father God, thank you for using all of us to do good works in your name. Help us to be bold in our faith and humble in your service. Lord melt us, mold us, fill us and use us when and where you need us; give us a purpose and a passion for making more and better followers of Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Sunday "Little Easter"

Every Sunday in Lent is considered a "little Easter," a time to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and spend time praising God. So, in keeping with this, our Sunday devotionals will be traditional Easter hymns. Take a moment to sing these with your family or by yourself. If you like, listen to the song on your computer or phone. But be sure to spend time rejoicing and praising God for our new life in Jesus Christ.

### The Solid Rock

By Edward Mote, 1834

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27

1. My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

#### Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

2. When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.

3. His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.

4. When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found;  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: James 1:5 James 4:3

*James 1:5, If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him.*

*James 4:3, You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passion.*

## Reflection:

At various points in the writing of my own email devotional, I have that perhaps I'm doing it "wrong" or that I'm somehow unsuccessful because I don't have a regular timetable for publication, such as once a week.

One season of Lent, I considered a goal of sending out a devotional each day. Then it occurred to me that I was attempting to give the Spirit a goal, telling God He should inspire me daily! Instead, I made my goal to pray for my writing daily. I prayed, "God, I give it up to You whether You send inspiration and opportunity to write for You today."

Through this daily prayer, I did not produce daily devotionals, but I followed through with a discipline of praying about it daily, turning my writing over to God in prayer daily, and writing when inspired by the Holy Spirit.

## Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness! Help me remember and keep in constant communication with You, as Your line is always open.

# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:18-20 John 15:19-20

*Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

*John 15:19-20, The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.*

### Reflection:

On this day, let's spend time in prayer for our Christian brothers and sisters around the globe who are being persecuted for their faith. We shy away from sharing our faith, simply for fear of rejection or embarrassment. They, on the other hand, often practice and share their faith, knowing that being caught could mean severe consequences. Pray for boldness, for courage, for comfort, and for openings so that the Gospel can be shared. May their courage inspire us to be bolder in our interactions and encourage us to listen more closely to the Spirit's promptings throughout our days.

### Prayer for Persecuted Christians

O God of all the nations,  
the One God who is and was and always will be,  
in your providence you willed that your Church be united to the suffering of your Son.

Look with mercy on your servants who are persecuted for their faith in you.  
Grant them perseverance and courage to be worthy imitators of Christ.  
Bring your wisdom upon leaders of nations to work for peace among all peoples.  
May your Spirit open conversion for those who contradict your will,  
that we may live in harmony.

Give us the grace to be united in truth and freedom,  
and to always seek your will in our lives.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Reflect on this Scripture from Colossians and then read the poem attributed to Mother Teresa. How do you struggle with this? What do you need to ask God for today so that you can remember it is, really, truly, only about an audience of one?

*Colossians 3:23-24, Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.*

### Do It Anyway

By Mother Teresa

(This version found written on the wall in Mother Teresa's home for children in Calcutta)

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

Forgive them anyway.

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

Be kind anyway.

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

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

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

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

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

Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Psalm 138:3

*On the day I called to you, you answered me. You made me strong and brave.*

## Reflection:

I do not like public speaking. One time, I was on my way by plane to where I'd be giving a business presentation. I practiced it by reading it over and over silently to myself. My anxiety and airsickness tried to take control, so I put the speech write-up down and picked up my Bible instead.

I decided to pray and give the outcome to God. I was directed to Psalm 138:3 and keep it close for similar situations. It's a reminder that when I call to God, He answers. But I have to do the calling – or, in other words, the praying! It's also a reminder that strength and bravery are not things I have to come up with on my own. God is the one who gives strength and courage!

## Prayer:

Lord, Thank You for always lifting me up, and giving me strength and courage when I call out to You in need.

# Daily Devotional

## Jeff Sheffer

Scripture Reading: John 11:41-43

*So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"*

### Reflection:

Leading up to this moment in which Jesus raises his friend Lazarus from the dead, things were contentious for Jesus. He had several confrontations with people, even those who had seen him do miracles, yet find other reasons to not believe he is the Messiah sent by God. Not only do they not believe, but they are plotting to kill him.

I don't know about you, but I often get in the way of God's work in my life. I get wrapped up in working on and fixing the problems I face that I tend to forget whose I am. I love the adage that says "work as if it all depends on me and pray as if it all depends on God". If you are familiar with this quote you know it is credited to St. Augustine and that I worded it wrong. Prayer comes first. But I quoted it the way that most often reflects my own actions. Honestly, sometimes not only do I work first, I omit the prayer.

I could easily fit into the crowd surrounding Jesus as he raises Lazarus. Jesus says out loud for all to hear, "Father, Thank you for always hearing me..." This verse serves as a good reminder to me to pray because Jesus is the Messiah and the Holy Spirit that dwells in me is my connection to the power, might, and glory of the Father.

This season of prayer that pastor Vicki is leading us into is so important to New Hope and I don't want to get it backwards. Would you join me in flipping the adage to start with "Pray as if it all depends on God"?

Holy Spirit, You are welcome here  
Come flood this place  
And fill the atmosphere  
Your glory God  
Is what our hearts long for  
To be overcome  
By Your presence, Lord

### Prayer:

Father, Thank you for hearing me. Let my thoughts and prayers be acceptable to you. Lord, my prayer is not that you hear us, my prayer is that we hear you. Lord, let your Holy Spirit increase in our lives. Speak to us and guide us in the way that you would have New Hope move forward to reach and win more people for the glory of your kingdom. Amen.



# Daily Devotional

## Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5: 14-17

*Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.*

*So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

### Reflection:

The Apostle Paul, who wrote this Scripture, is saying, "I know personally that God's love can change people!" Because of Christ's death on the cross, his old way of life – his angry, Christian-hating, law-obsessed way of life – it died up on that cross with Jesus. Now, he has an intimate relationship with a life-giving Savior. He became a different person when he received new life in Jesus. In fact, Paul went from a man who persecuted and stoned Christ-followers to one of the strongest, most amazing Christian missionaries of all time. He was made new. This was great news.

Even better news is that Paul is saying and we can be made new too. We also can experience transformation in Jesus Christ. No matter who we are or what we've done, when we say yes to Jesus, our old life dies and a new life begins. Remember, when we say yes to Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Living God, comes and makes a home within us, transforming us from the inside out. This doesn't mean we just try a little harder and we become a better person. No, we become new people!

And yet, as we walk further on our faith journey, life gets messy and difficult. Sometimes, it feels like our "newness" has worn off. We don't feel new anymore. In my own life, as the pandemic has worn on, I simply felt tired and heavy burdened, not new! What God has taught me is that I have to be very intentional about staying connected, walking hand in hand with Jesus through prayer, reading Scripture, and daily worship. Being made new is not a one-time experience. I need God's renewing power every, single day! I need to constantly, continuously be reminded of who and whose I am. I am made new and transformed, a new creation, and a child of the one true King!

### Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for your amazing love and sacrifice. Thank you for salvation and the newness and transformation that can only come from you. Jesus, I need you. Fill me anew today so that I can be renewed and refreshed by your grace and power. I want to live like a new person, one who is totally and fully focused on you. In Your Name, Amen.

# Daily Devotional

## Sunday "Little Easter"

Every Sunday in Lent is considered a "little Easter," a time to celebrate the Lord's resurrection and spend time praising God. So, in keeping with this, our Sunday devotionals will be traditional Easter hymns. Take a moment to sing these with your family or by yourself. If you like, listen to the song on your computer or phone. But be sure to spend time rejoicing and praising God for our new life in Jesus Christ.

### Because He Lives

By Bill and Gloria Gaither

1. God sent his son, they called him Jesus  
He came to love, heal and forgive  
He lived and died to buy my pardon  
An empty grave is there to prove my savior lives.

Because he lives  
I can face tomorrow  
Because he lives  
All fear is gone  
Because I know he holds the future  
And life is worth the living  
Just because he lives.

2. How sweet to hold a newborn baby  
And feel the pride and joy he gives  
But greater still the calm assurance  
This child can face uncertain day because he lives.

Because he lives  
I can face tomorrow  
Because he lives  
All fear is gone  
Because I know he holds the future  
And life is worth the living  
Just because he lives.

3. And then one day I'll cross the river  
I'll fight life's final war with pain  
And then, as death gives way to vict'ry  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know he reigns.

Because he lives  
I can face tomorrow  
Because he lives  
All fear is gone  
Because I know he holds the future  
And life is worth the living  
Just because he lives.

# Daily Devotional

## Jeff Brant

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23:4 Psalm 33:20-21  
Psalm 150:6

*Psalm 23:4, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*Psalm 33:20-21, We wait in hope for the Lord, He is our help, and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.*

*Psalm 150:6, Let everything that has breath, Praise the Lord!*

### Reflection:

From my earliest memories of reading the Bible, I remember other believers of the faith telling me that if I read anything in the Bible, read the book of Psalms. It seems to speak to you. I found that to be very true. I can relate and find great comfort, hope, and encouragement, in all the books of Psalms.

The mega themes of the books speak about praise, God's power, forgiveness, thankfulness, and trust. These are all the things I need to hear on a daily basis, to give me hope for the new day, as each morning begins. The scriptures above are some of my favorites. I enjoy and live for singing His praises, as in Psalm 150. I trust in His help in all I am about to face in a new day, as in Psalm 33.

And Psalm 23, I was advised many years ago, to recite over and over again whenever I was fearful, anxious or scared about what I was about to face. Throughout my life, I have found that it really works. As I recite that Psalm, over and over again, saying it out loud, a great calm, or peace, floods over me, and I am able to deal with the challenge at that moment. I encourage you to do the same. I have found it something I will always do, throughout the rest of my life, to help me get through whatever it is I need to, with the confidence that the Lord is with me!

### Prayer:

Dear Lord God, continue this day to be the Good Shepherd you have promised to be for us, each and every day, and through each and every circumstance. Protect us, guide us, deliver us, and give us the confidence to show others, the joy, peace and comfort we receive by trusting in you! Amen.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:17,

*Pray constantly*

## Reflection:

Have you ever thrown coins in a fountain, raised your feet off the floorboard of the car when crossing a railroad track, held your breath while traveling through a tunnel, and kissed the clock when all the digits were the same number (for example, 4:44)? All of these were fun games I played as a kid to occupy otherwise idle moments. All were accompanied by making a wish, which was thought to come true if the given procedure had been followed.

There were plenty of wishes to not come about, but that didn't keep me from the fun of playing the game.

Nowadays, I take such opportunities as a reminder to pray. I offer up a prayer request for whatever is my greatest wish or concern at the moment. Whether prompted to by reflexes from a childhood practice or just because something important is on your mind, turn every wish into a prayer.

## Prayer:

Lord, please help me instill practices in myself to constantly remember to pray and "have a word" with You. May it be as fun as childhood games, a long-lasting impression and bring joy!

# Daily Devotional

## Carina Lopez-Ramos

Scripture Reading:

Psalms 6

*O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger,  
or discipline me in your wrath.  
Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;  
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror.  
My soul also is struck with terror,  
while you, O Lord—how long?  
Turn, O Lord, save my life;  
deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.*

### Reflection:

At times, I have a hard time saying, "I'm sorry." Actually, I do say "I'm sorry, but ..." My acknowledgment of how I have hurt someone or disappointed someone is often followed by my excuse as to why it happened. However, I don't think I'm unique in this. Perhaps you may too, have a hard time saying it. The psalmist expresses deep sorrow for his sin, asking God for help and forgiveness. Both his body and his soul feel overwhelmed with terror. David realizes he is experiencing the consequence of his own sin. He cries out in physical and spiritual pain, knowing that God's discipline is justified for the ways he has disobeyed God.

David's confession before God is anchored in his confidence that God will forgive. He calls out for God's deliverance, convinced that God will hear and answer because of God's steadfast love. Despite the situation in which David finds himself, he knows that he will not permanently abide in terror and distress because of God's unfailing love. "Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer" (v. 8–9). As we enter this Lenten season, we can say, "I'm sorry" before God. When we confess before our merciful Lord, we are assured of God's forgiveness. Instead of saying, "I'm sorry, but" we can say, "I'm sorry because of your steadfast love and forgiveness!" What a wonderful God we serve! What a wonderful God who still accepts us with all our flaws, with arms wide open.

### Prayer:

Father God, we confess before you our sins, our brokenness, our mess, and our lives. We all need to experience your abundant mercy. We are not perfect Lord but please help us each and every day to come before you to say, "I'm sorry" with a sincere heart and no explanation. Thank you for your grace. We pray this in Jesus's name, Amen.

# Daily Devotional

Julie Burroughs

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:12

*In these days he went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God.*

## Reflection:

No matter when or where we are, mountains stand remote, somehow removed from congestion and busyness characteristic of valleys below. They are majestic in height, drawing our attention and encouraging the expenditure of effort required to climb.

Once on a mountain, you experience a different environment than below. You breathe different air and respond to exertion differently. You have a different perspective not just of the ground below looking down from above, but also of things above and the mountain itself.

While prayer can and should happen anywhere and everywhere, it is good to sometimes get away from everyday tasks, take in a new perspective and quietly spend time talking to God alone.

“And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people...” Luke 6:17

Following mountaintop experiences, it's also good to come back down to share with others the hope and joy you found there.

## Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness! Help me remember and keep in constant communication with You, as Your line is always open.

## John 17, A Prayer of Jesus

After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

“I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

“My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

“Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

“O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.” [Amen.]

# Daily Devotional

## Augustine Nobles

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Ephesians 6:18  
Colossians 1:9

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

*Ephesians 6:18, And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

*Colossians 1:9, For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.*

### Reflection:

Prayer was obviously a high priority for the apostle Paul, who wrote the letter to the Colossians. Some of the most beautiful prayers ever written are found in his letters. Paul's prayers are magnificent, not only because of their content but also because he was so diligent in prayer. He prayed "continually" for others and always thanked God for them.

It's true that some people are simply more interested in prayer than others. But God wants prayer to be a top priority in everyone's life. God wants us to experience prayer as a delight, and not a duty. Let us ask God to help us develop a passion for prayer and make it a cherished habit.

### Prayer:

Lord, I know that prayer is always a blessing, but it's easy for me to neglect it. Help me to make it a top priority. Please increase my desire and my opportunities to spend time with you. Dear God help me to be devoted to prayer. Help me to connect with you in whatever way I can. Use me to help others grow in prayer as well. In Jesus name. Amen



# Happy Easter!

## Pastor Vicki Harrison

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:6-7 Matthew 28:5-6

*Luke 24:6-7, He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.*

*Matthew 28:5-6, Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.*

*Now, sing with joy and passion as we praise our risen Savior today!*

### Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Charles Wesley, 1739

1. Christ the Lord is ris'n today, Alleluia!  
Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
Sing, ye heav'ns, and earth, reply, Alleluia!
2. Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!  
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!  
Once He died our souls to save, Alleluia!  
Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!
3. Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids His rise, Alleluia!  
Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia!
4. Soar we now where Christ hath led, Alleluia!  
Foll'wing our exalted Head, Alleluia!  
Made like Him, like Him we rise, Alleluia!  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!
5. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!  
Praise to Thee by both be given, Alleluia!  
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!  
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!
6. King of glory, Soul of bliss, Alleluia!  
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!  
Thee to know, Thy pow'r to prove, Alleluia!  
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

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