

Mosaic United Methodist Church



POWER OF THE CHRIST

Lent Devotion Journal

What is Lent?

Lent is a season of reflection, repentance, and preparation leading up to Easter Sunday. It spans forty days, not including Sundays, mirroring Jesus' time of fasting and testing in the wilderness before He began His public ministry. Throughout history, Christians have observed Lent as a time to turn toward God with renewed devotion—often through prayer, fasting, and acts of service.

At its core, Lent is an invitation. It invites us to step away from distractions and step into deeper awareness of God's presence. It invites us to recognize the wilderness places in our own lives—the struggles, doubts, and longings we carry—and bring them before God. It invites us to journey with Christ, through His ministry, His suffering, and ultimately, His victory over death.

Lent is not just about giving something up; it is about making space. It is about being intentional, slowing down, and preparing our hearts to fully experience the hope and joy of resurrection. Whether this season feels familiar or new, challenging or comforting, know this: the wilderness is not a place of abandonment. It is a place where God meets us, shapes us, and leads us toward new life.

How to Use This Booklet

This devotional is designed to walk with you through the season of Lent, providing a weekly reflection that invites you to engage with scripture, prayer, and spiritual practice. Each week of Lent focuses on a different theme, exploring how we encounter the power of the Christ. Each entry includes:

- **Scripture** – A passage to center your reflection.
- **Reflection** – A meditation on how the passage speaks into our Lenten journey.
- **Prayer** – A written prayer to help guide your response.
- **Exercise** – A simple spiritual practice to carry with you throughout the week.

In addition to the seven weeks of Lent, this booklet also includes special devotionals for:

Ash Wednesday – Marking the beginning of Lent with reflection and repentance.

Maundy Thursday – Reflecting on Jesus' servanthood and the Last Supper.

Good Friday – Entering into the weight of Christ's sacrifice.

Holy Saturday – Sitting in the in-between, waiting and trusting.

Easter Sunday – Rejoicing in the resurrection and the promise of new life.

You are encouraged to engage with each week's reflection in a way that fits your rhythm—whether reading and praying through it at the beginning of the week, revisiting it throughout, or discussing it with others. However you use this guide, let it be a space where you listen for God's voice, wrestle with deep questions, and prepare your heart for the celebration of resurrection.

Lent is a journey, and this booklet is an invitation to walk it with intention. May you discover new depths of grace, hope, and transformation along the way.

A Prayer for Beginning This Journey

Christ of quiet and unyielding power, as we step into this season of turning and remembering, we confess how easily we forget that Your strength is not in spectacle but in presence, not in force but in love that refuses to let us go. Meet us in our dust and doubts, in our healing and our harm, in our waiting and our longing, and form us again into people who recognize Your power at work in mercy, in forgiveness, in restoration, and in hope that outlasts death itself. Shape our hearts through these days so that when we reach the empty tomb, we will not only proclaim that You are risen, but live as people raised by Your life-giving power. Amen.

February 18, 2020

Ash Wednesday

Pastor Whitney

Scripture:

*“therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes.”*

[Job 42:6]

Reflection:

From dust we were made and to the dust we shall return. With these words we usher in another season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is a day of repentance, where we take a page from the Book of Job and repent in dust and ashes Job 42:6 “Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.” On this day, we take time to remember that we are mortal.

If we hear these words without the truth and assurance of Christ, they would be difficult words. However, we are with Christ. And because of that, these words now serve as a reminder that, even though we will one day die, through and because of Christ, we have hope in the resurrection.

The cross of ashes is an outward sign that shows both this repentance we seek and the hope we hold. The first time I saw someone with ashes on their forehead, I was in college and I remember staring at the person and thinking how odd it was for them to have something like that on their forehead. Throughout the day I saw more students and it was because of those marks that I started to think maybe there is something different out there. It would be years before I understood the grace and assurance of Christ and our eternal hope in that symbol on the head.

That hope allows us to enter this beautiful and precious season, where we celebrate the finished and redemptive work of Christ, by assuming postures of repentance of sins, confessing and reminding ourselves our need for a Savior, and holding close the hope that we find in Christ.

Ash Wednesday is a time when we admit before God our limits and that our time on this earth is brief. So however you will celebrate today, in a formal Ash Wednesday service, an imposition of the ashes early this morning, or privately in your home, let us use this first day of the Lenten season to remember those words spoken each Ash Wednesday, from the dust you were and to the dust you shall return, but hope remains.

Prayer:

God of grace and forgiveness, you have come to us when we have been unable to do the work of repentance on our own. You have come to us in the beauty of hope found only in you and in your actions. Today is a day we remember that we are not only recipients of that hope, but that in that hope we can come before you in repentance and confession. So may we do that now, with assurance of forgiveness and grace given freely with love, amen.

Exercise:

This exercise will only be for half the week and can seem harder than others because it does center around repentance, but it also centers around grace. Each day between Ash Wednesday and Sunday take a moment to repent before God, in whatever way you need to do so. But in that repentance don't forget the grace that flows so richly from God. Repent yes, but know when you do it is forgiven and not held against you and then feel the grace wash over you. Sit with it, sing with it, write how it makes you feel, but honor that grace.

February 22 - 28, 2026

Power of Healing

Pastor Whitney

Scripture:

"When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him, and there was a man with a skin disease who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be made clean!" Immediately his skin disease was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

[Matthew 8:1-4]

Reflection:

The healing power of Christ is woven throughout the Gospels. Jesus traveled throughout Israel for 3 years and we have so many scriptures of Jesus healing. Jesus healed women and men, healed children and healed those shunned by society and forgotten by others. Jesus didn't heal according to class lines or wealth scale, Jesus healed according to one principal, all people had worth. And because of that the only currency that Jesus dealt in, is the currency of grace.

In our scripture today Jesus has just come down the mountain, after giving his sermon on the mount in chapters 5-7 of Matthew. Crowds of people are following him, having just listened to him talk and preach about who they are called to be, how they are called to live with each other, and more importantly how they are called to love each other. And in Matthew 8, we catch a glimpse of this as Jesus as he heals a leper, the dying servant of a Roman centurion, a sick mother-in-law, people who were demon-possessed, and scared disciples.

Jesus shows through his healing of abundant love and grace and in Matthew 8:1-4 as he is coming down the mountain we find within these 4 verses, faith, compassion, and cleansing, as Jesus heals a leper who humbly asks him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean," to which Jesus responds, "I am willing; Be made clean," touching the outcast and instantly healing him. Because being an outcast was how this leper lived every day of his life. Stay away from me, no touching, no hugging, no closeness at all with anyone, for years of his life. And so, he comes and kneels before Jesus, just imagine the crowds. They're dispersing, they're scattering. Jesus is standing there and people are wondering why is he not dispersing, scattering?

But Jesus doesn't disperse or scatter. Jesus doesn't turn his back or flinch when the leper approaches and kneels before him. Instead, Jesus, with love and care, stretches out his hand and touches this man, probably the first touch he has felt in years or decades. And that touch, that one touch, this man is made well and healed. By reaching out and touching the man the healing power of Christ is made known on multiple levels. The man is physically healed, yes, but Jesus heals this man within the community he is from and restores the isolated and unclean, urging believers to approach him with humble trust and extend that same compassion to others.

Jesus's love heals in every direction—spiritually, physically, and relationally.

Prayer:

Father God, today we enter our first full week of Lent. As we do, we are reminded of your healing power, how it encompasses so much more than our physical healing, but you came to heal every part of our lives. We give thanks this morning that we, like the man in Matthew can kneel before you and ask to be healed, amen.

Exercise:

Asking for healing can be hard, because we know that just because we ask, doesn't mean we or the one who we are asking for, will receive it, but even with that, we know we are called, as children of God and followers of Christ, to ask. This week is a great opportunity for you and or you and your loved ones to talk about areas in which you have seen Christ bring about healing. Whether it was physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, or in another way. Talk about the impact it has had on your faith and invite those who are closest to you to either celebrate those areas of healing or join you as you continue to pray for it. Community restoration and healing is a huge part of Jesus's ministry on earth, so make sure this is done in community too.

Power of Forgiveness

Pastor Shuler

Scripture:

while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and, making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."]

[John 8:1-11]

Reflection:

John tells us that it was early in the morning. Jesus rises out of bed and immediately goes to the temple. John doesn't tell us if Jesus got a good night's rest, if He arrives there still groggy and tired, or if it's somewhere in-between. Regardless of how He arrives, I don't think any of us would ever like to start our day the way Jesus does here. Scribes and Pharisees immediately find Jesus in the temple, and bring to him a woman who has been caught in adultery. They tell Jesus the law: this woman should be stoned for the sins she has committed. Then, they turn it over to Jesus: "Now what do you say?" They ask Jesus, early in the morning, to act as judge, jury, and executioner. What a start to the day.

Jesus doesn't ask the scribes to go away. He doesn't tell them to do whatever they like. He doesn't even point to how ridiculous the whole situation is. Instead, as He frequently does in scripture, He uses this moment as a teaching opportunity about who He has come to be and who He expects us to be. He tells the scribes, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." The people gathered were ready to carry out the law. They were ready to stone this woman. But Jesus invites them to reflect. He invites them to reflect on where they have fallen short. He invites them to think about where they have broken the law, but also to think about where they have come up short in compassion, kindness, and empathy. He invites them to think about how they have been a part of damaging relationships. One by one, as they are all processing, they drop their stones and walk away until no one is left.

Hopefully this won't come as a shock to anyone reading this: At some point or another, we will all fall short of God's call on our lives. When we come up short, we do not worship a God who holds our sins against us. Instead, we worship a God through Jesus that invites us to confess and be forgiven for our sins. We worship a forgiving God, but also a God that expects us to forgive others and to even forgive ourselves.

As you read this, maybe there's something you need to ask forgiveness for. Maybe there's something you have yet to confess to God or there's someone in your life that you need to ask for forgiveness. Maybe there's someone in your life that has asked for forgiveness, and you have not given it to them. As people of Jesus Christ, we are called to remember that we have been forgiven. We are also called, in awareness of that forgiveness, to forgive others. We are called to be people who are not in the business of picking up stones, but heeding to the words of Jesus and putting them down. May the God we worship of forgiveness remind you that you are forgiven, and call you into the hard work of forgiving yourself and forgiving others by the mercy given to ALL of us.

Prayer:

Gracious God, you meet us in our mess, in our mistakes, in our shortcomings and call us not to judgment, but to grace. Help us be people who lay down the stones we carry toward others and toward ourselves. Remind us that we are forgiven, and shape us into people who forgive in return. Lead us always to mercy, compassion, and freedom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Exercise:

As this passage of scripture happens in the morning, I'd encourage you to put this into your morning routine this week. As you wake up, before you pick up your phone or jump into any of the tasks you have on your agenda that day, take 5 minutes of silence. Sit comfortably and breathe slowly as you ask yourself two questions: What stones might I be tempted to pick up today? Where might I need to pause before reacting?

As we reflect on our day before it even truly begins, let us be people who seek to lay our stones down. As you close these five minutes, take five deep breaths. As you inhale, say aloud, "Neither do I condemn you." As you exhale, say aloud, "Go in grace."

Power of Restoration

Pastor Whitney

Scripture:

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow, and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with compassion for her and said to her, "Do not cry." Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stopped. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" This word about him spread throughout the whole of Judea and all the surrounding region.

[Luke 7:11-17]

Reflection:

The compassion of Jesus Christ is on display in this story of restoration. In the raising of the widow's son, Jesus shows profound compassion for the brokenhearted, he displays his power as the Lord of Life who overcomes death, and is a mandate and call for believers to enter the pain of others; it shows Jesus halting a funeral procession, moved by a grieving widow, and restoring her only son, demonstrating that he brings life and hope into our deepest sorrows.

If you read this story you quickly think the restoration that happens is the son is restored to life and yes that is part of it, but that is not all the restoration happening in this story. She is a widow and he was her only son. With his death she has lost anyone to care for her. She is now a widow, someone who is going to be cared for through charity of others, or at least that is the hope, but in that time, it was not always the case. In one moment, she has lost her son, the means to care for herself, most likely her house, and her status. He was supposed to care for her as her husband has died too.

Power of Restoration cont.

Her grief is overwhelming, and so Jesus, with his disciples and followers watching, is moved by compassion, he knows he has the power to restore what she has lost. So he moved towards her grief and her heartbreak and says do not cry. And he touches the simple wood frame and says “Young man, I say to you, rise!” and with those words the power of restoration is on display for all to see.

Restoration in this story is multifaceted, just like it is in our lives. There are moments in our lives when we all we need is the compassion of Jesus or others to help restore our souls to a calm place, a place of peace. There are times in our lives when grief is overwhelming and we need the restorative power of compassion. That was what Jesus was teaching his disciples and followers in this story. That as followers of Christ we are called to step into the pain of others, not because we can fix it, but because we can offer compassion.

The story challenges us not to pass by, but to look, see, and draw near to the grieving and overwhelmed and allowing Christ's compassion to flow through us

Prayer:

God of all people. Thank you for the moments in our lives when you have offered your great and loving compassion to us. Thank you for the ways when we have been overwhelmed and exhausted from the pain, you have sent us those to sit in it with us and offer us compassion. May I be filled with your compassion so I too can step into the gap with others. Be with us we pray, restore us with your love, and guide us to be images of you in this world, amen.

Exercise:

This week find ways you and your family can offer compassion to someone else. Does someone you know need prayer? Does a family you know need a few bags of groceries? Has someone lost a loved one and they just need a friend? There are countless ways we can show compassion, I invite you to step into the need instead of around it this week.

Power of Miracles

Pastor Shuler

Scripture:

Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

[Matthew 14:22-33]

Reflection:

We do not have the privilege of living this life alongside Jesus as the disciples did. We do not have the fortune of getting to speak directly with Jesus in the flesh. We do not have the ability to ask Jesus questions, to watch Jesus as He speaks with others, and see Him walk about his daily life as the disciples did. As I read scripture, I find myself often jealous of what the disciples got to see, hear, and experience with Jesus in the flesh. My feelings of jealousy are the strongest when I read stories like the one we have this week in the Gospel of Matthew.

I am not jealous of being on a boat in the situation the disciples find themselves in. Battering waves? Far off land? With the wind whipping around in every direction? I get seasick and anxious just reading the descriptions in our passage today. I do think it would all be worth it to experience what the disciples see in this passage. They watch as Jesus walks out to them on water. They see something impossible come to life before their very eyes. Peter gets to join in on this too as Jesus commands him to walk out on the water toward Him, even though Peter doubts and starts to sink as a result. Through it all, the passage ends with everyone on the boat coming to the same conclusion after what they have witnessed together: “Truly Jesus is the Son of God.”

I wish that I could experience the miracles that Jesus performed on earth in person. I think we all might feel this way as we read through the Gospels. But just because we don't get to experience the miracles that Jesus performed in the Gospels in person doesn't mean that we don't get to experience the power of a miraculous Christ among us today. We still experience the miracles of love breaking through despair and hope rising in places that once felt lifeless. We experience the miraculous Christ when wounds are healed not just in our physical bodies, but in our hearts and communities. We experience the miraculous Christ when we feel belonging, when the broken are restored, and when we feel the courage to live differently. These miracles may not feel as spectacular as what we see in the Gospels, but they are no less real. Christ is at work here today, and we are called to be people who not only recognize the miracles, but seek to be in partnership with God through them.

Prayer:

God of miracles, open our eyes to the ways you still move among us. When we look for signs, remind us that you are already at work in love, healing, and hope for all people. Grant us the courage to trust you in the middle of raging waters, and the call to partner with you in bringing your miracles to life. Amen.

Exercise:

One of the best ways that we can be attuned to the power of miracles in our everyday life is by taking stock at the end of each day. This week, find a notebook/journal/couple of pieces of paper that you can write on as you wrap up your day. Each evening, answer these three questions: Where did I see love break through today? Where did hope show up unexpectedly? Where might healing be beginning to take root around me?

There may be some days where you find it hard to put pen to paper. There may be other days where you find yourself eager to start writing. Through whatever that day might bring, let us be people who take note of the miracles happening around us and how God might be calling us to be a part of them.

Power of Defeating Evil

erik henson

Scripture:

They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs, and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain, for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces, and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him, and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the region. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding, and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine, and the herd, numbering about two thousand, stampeded down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea. The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the man possessed by demons sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion, and they became frightened. Those who had seen what had happened to the man possessed by demons and to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus refused and said to him, "Go home to your own people, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and what mercy he has shown you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone was amazed.

[Mark 5:1-20]

Reflection:

There's A LOT to unpack in this text. Instead of digging deeply into literal translations of the Greek roots of this text, we're going to take a step back and embrace this scripture from a broad point of view. What we have is a story about embodiment and belonging. We don't know what behaviors the man with the unclean spirit engaged in prior to Jesus' arrival. We only see that he lived among tombs and had been put in shackles. We know that the man lived outside of the community. We also know, then, that this man lived outside the presence of compassion and caregiving. We know, from the man's own testimony, that he wishes to no longer be tormented. What we have in this text is a person who embodies what it is to be unclean. To be unwelcome to participate in religious ceremonies, and unable to be at peace living with himself.

The man with the unclean spirit is distanced from the community and from Jesus. The man recognizes Jesus, but cannot see what Jesus would have to do with him other than to bring additional torment. Unlike the community, Jesus brings compassion and mercy. Jesus begins by confronting the man's uncleanness. The unclean spirit is called out for what it is, and by doing this, Jesus shows the man who the man isn't. By releasing the unclean spirit from the man, the man can see who he is in the eyes of his Creator. Jesus uses His power here to liberate the man from a life of torment and solitude. We don't know what the man has done before this meeting, but we do know that Jesus is interested in how this man will be transformed because of this meeting. The power to defeat evil is the power to liberate those who struggle with unnamed afflictions.

Jesus knows our struggles, and He also knows who we've been created to be. Redemption for the man with the unclean spirit didn't mean reacceptance into the community that shunned him. Once the community saw what the power of Christ in action meant, they begged Jesus to leave, too. Jesus also refused to liberate the man into comfort or retirement. The man, formerly with an unclean spirit, was sent into mission to share his testimony about his encounter with God on earth. Jesus came and met the man where he was. Jesus saw him for who he could be and sent him out into the world to ensure God's will would be done and proclaimed. We're all struggling with something, even if you don't, or can't, name it. Jesus knows it, and Jesus knows you, too. Jesus' power to defeat the evils that haunt you in your darkest moment is the power to liberate you from what haunts you. Maybe instead of possessing a herd of swine, your tormenting spirits need a therapist, or a recovery program, an accountability group, a repaired relationship, or just distance from a community that has rejected you. Jesus has the power to defeat whatever evils haunt you. The question that you have to ask yourself is, "Am I ready to be liberated and sent out into the world to be the person Jesus knows I can be?"

Prayer:

Almighty and ever-gracious God, we are aware of the evil that haunts our world and our darkest moments. We come to you distraught and often hopeless in the face of the evils that persist, despite our best intentions. We ask that we would recognize You in the midst of our despairing moments. We ask that we would have the courage to be redeemed, to embrace a new reality, free of our struggles. As we move through this season of Lent, we ask that You would remind us that our penitence leads to liberation. That we are created in Your image, and that the evils of this world have no power in Your presence. Amen.

Exercise:

The actions of the man with the unclean spirit are never named in this passage. However, the first thing Jesus does in showing the man compassion is to confront the unclean spirit directly. This week's exercise is to confront what haunts us directly. To name the things that cause us to be separated from Christ. We will practice five "Whys?" this week. It's a mental exercise, so you don't need to write anything down or document the process for anyone other than yourself. Find some quiet time and identify one thing that causes you anxiety or unease, and then ask yourself, "Why?" When you have your first response, ask yourself why that might have been your first response. Repeat this practice of questioning yourself until you've answered "Why?" five times. Maybe you'll have some insight after three "Whys", maybe you'll need to keep digging beyond five "Whys." The process is intended to get you to confront what haunts you directly and to encourage some serious self-reflection on problems that are persistent in your life, and then consider what next steps you can take to take away whatever power they seek to have in your life.

Power of the Name

Pastor Shuler

Scripture:

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this: 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.' " They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna!"

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

[Mark 11:1-11]

Reflection:

Hearing our own names called in certain ways gives us different feelings. I have a group of friends that have always called me "Shu." When I hear someone call me "Shu," it brings me a sense of nostalgia and comfortability (even though it is a weird and rather lazy nickname). There's someone in my life who always greets me by saying my name three times in a row excitedly: "Shuler, Shuler, Shuler!" When he does this, it always makes me feel like he's excited to see me and that makes me feel appreciated. As a child, the worst thing that you can hear from a parent is when they say your full name. Whenever I heard one of my parents or relatives say, "Shuler Thomas Sitsch," I knew I was in trouble.

When I hear my full name pronounced, I get a feeling of fear and discomfort. Hearing our names, as frequently as we hear them said in our day-to-day life, can give us different responses based on how they are said.

In our Palm Sunday passage this week, the crowd welcomes Jesus into Jerusalem. The people are shouting together, but they aren't using the name Jesus. Instead, they say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" The people of Jerusalem had been waiting for centuries for the Messiah to come to this earth. With Jesus, they have finally seen that come to fruition. As they say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord," there is a sense of urgency here. There's also a sense of hope and of longing. There's this sense of expectation and anticipation: the one they had been waiting on for so long is finally here and has come to change everything about this world and life.

When we speak the name Jesus today, we feel this same hope and this same expectation. When we call on the name Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, we know that God is actively here with us. God is here with us in our struggles, in our joys, in our hopes, and in our sorrows. The power of the name of Jesus is found in the truth that it carries. Through Jesus, God has come near to us. When we speak the name of Jesus, especially as we enter into this special season of Holy Week in the Church, let us be people who believe that the presence of God is here with us when we speak the name. When we speak the name of Jesus—in worship, in prayer, in desperation, or in celebration—we are naming that God is present with us and God is never leaving us. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord indeed!

Prayer:

Gracious God, we thank you for the name of Jesus. We thank you for the name that brings us hope, presence, belonging, and love. Help us to be people who not only speak the name of Jesus out of habit, but people who speak it out of belief, trust, and hope. Remind us that through Jesus, you have drawn near to us. Through His resurrection, you have lifted us up from the weight of sin and shame. We thank you for the name of Jesus, and the power that it still brings to our lives today. Amen.

Exercise:

As we think more about the power of the name Jesus, let us all pay deep attention to how often and why we say the name “Jesus” throughout our week. Take notice throughout the week of how Jesus comes up in conversation. Become more aware of when the name is said causally, when it’s said positively, when it’s said negatively, when it’s said with intended meaning, and when it’s avoided altogether. In combination with being aware of the name Jesus, let us also experiment with speaking the name more intentionally this week in conversation, teaching, or reflection. As you say the name Jesus, ask yourself: What do I mean when I say the name Jesus? How does that meaning shape how I’m called to live?

Maundy Thursday

erik henson

Scripture:

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

[John 13:1-17]

Reflection:

It's clear from the first verse of our Maundy Thursday text that Jesus knows His death awaits Him. In the second verse, we are reminded of Jesus' commitment to loving ALL of His disciples through what time they had left together. In our third verse, it's made clear that Judas's deception and decision to betray Jesus preceded this final gathering. Instead of giving way to fear, anger, or resentment, Jesus decided to serve and set an example. Judas served himself, and Jesus washed his feet anyway. Jesus let everyone know that they would be blessed if they followed Jesus' example. Judas chose not to follow, but Jesus chose to make the offer anyway. Jesus set an example that taught us about more than just washing feet.

The "Maundy" in Maundy Thursday comes from the Latin word Maundatum. Maundatum means "command." Jesus gave the disciples a new commandment at the last supper. It's easy to read the passage and see the example of service. My prayer is that we look at the example Jesus sets in making the offer. Jesus knew Judas wasn't clean, but Jesus made sure Judas received the same offer to belong that everyone else received. Judas received the opportunity to be blessed despite the choices he had already made because Jesus made the commitment to love His disciple "to the end." Jesus knew Judas had betrayed Him, but He also knew that Judas' end hadn't been written yet. Jesus chose to have faith in Judas even after Judas sold out his faith in Jesus.

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." You've probably been lied to at some point. You've probably been insulted at some point. You've probably been rejected at some point. You can't live in this world and escape being hurt. And it's okay to be sad about it. It's okay to be angry about it. It's reasonable to be disappointed in people who fall short of expectations. Jesus set an example of inclusion and service. He didn't set an example of being taken advantage of. He didn't set an example of not holding people accountable.

Jesus set an example of being disappointed to death and still serving and holding space for those who didn't deserve His grace, but who received the offer anyway. We're called to love mercy and still act justly. Jesus didn't protect Judas from the consequences of Judas's choices, but Jesus did offer redemption and forgiveness for those choices. This is the example Jesus set. Jesus didn't tell us that we'd like it, but He did assure us that we'd be blessed for it. The power of the Maundy Thursday message is the power to walk humbly with your God.

Prayer:

Example setting God, we know from scripture that Your love for the world has been revealed in Jesus the Christ, Who loved us to the uttermost; at His last meal, He gave the new commandment: "...love one another. Just as I have loved you...By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples..."

So we stop and take the time this Lenten season to confess that our discipleship is sometimes weak, and we have failed to serve as Jesus served. We have failed to love one another as Jesus loves us. We have been content to proclaim our devotion to Jesus with our lips and then deny Him with our actions.

Merciful God, we ask that You empower us by Your Spirit to be steady and true to You in every time of trial. To remember that Jesus said: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world", showing us that "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end," showing that we are assured that the good news is this: In Jesus Christ, we are loved, and we are forgiven. All of us. Grant us each the courage and boldness to follow the powerful example of our Lord's last meal. Amen.

Exercise:

I encourage a little bit of exercise for today's exercise. If you are able, go for a walk. Take notice of signs in your neighbor's yards that might make you uncomfortable. Get your feet a little dirty and understand you need washing too. Spend some time in introspection as you take your steps and remember the example that has been set for you. Remember that it's a decision to love your neighbor as yourself. It's not always going to be the result of a warm and fuzzy feeling. Embrace that this is what it means to walk humbly with your God.

April 3, 2020

Good Friday

Pastor Whitney

Scripture:

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

[John 19:30]

Reflection:

Jesus' journey began in a stable in the City of David thirty some years before. Now on a hill in the holy city of Jerusalem, it was finished. He spoke it out loud, declared it for all to hear. He uttered a loud cry to his Father for the world to know, to feel, and never forget, Christ's work on the cross was complete. Done. Accomplished. Paid in full. When you think about the magnitude of what was happening in that moment, the darkest day in all of history. The day in which Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us, God in human flesh is beaten, has a crown of thorns shoved on his head, and is nailed to a cross. And it is done by the people he created and loved. That he loved yes, but who were also rebellious sinners and he did all of this willingly, according to the scriptures, to pay the price for all of their sin. Of our sin. My sin. Your sin. All the sins we've or will ever commit against God. The sins that we deserved eternal judgment for Jesus took upon himself. And because all of that, it makes these last three words in John's account of Jesus' crucifixion, so awesome.

I wish I could think of a better word. But I cannot. They are awesome in power and might. They are awesome in love and grace. They are awesome in truth and honor. They are awesome in the depth of pain and sadness. They are awesome words that describe an awesome God who on our behalf without us asking for it or deserving it, took on the wages of sin and death so we did not have to.

Maybe you have never heard awesome applied to Jesus's actions on the cross, but what Jesus did on that cross was awesome and it showed the awesome power of Christ. Because no one else could have completed what he did with those three words, and that is awesome. It is finished and we live today in freedom, from the penalty of sin. From the power of sin. It is finished. So be encouraged in a fresh way today with these words from Jesus on a cross.

Prayer:

Loving Christ, there are no words to adequately thank you for the gift you have given on the cross. You displayed awesome power and love for me when I did not deserve it, but you didn't hesitate so today I chose to be thankful. I will be thankful that I have freedom from the penalty of sin and am able to find hope in your awesome gift. Amen.

Exercise:

Today is a day of remembrance as we look at the cross and are reminded of what took place. Take time to let yourself feel whatever comes up, but I also invite you to remember that today is Friday, Sunday is coming. And you can listen to one of the greatest Good Friday messages by visiting: www.mosaicumctx.org/goodfridaydevo it is 3.5 minutes long, it is "It's Friday, but Sunday's Comin" and I listen to this multiple times during Lent and on Good Friday and I invite you to join me.

Holy Saturday

erik henson

Scripture:

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise, his disciples may go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

[Matthew 27:62-66]

Reflection:

Critics listen. Critics respond. Critics don't hold power.

The ruling religious elite and the Roman governor clearly knew Jesus' teaching. They gather together and quote Him. They gathered in fear of a dead man. Not because they believed in His resurrection, but because they knew how much power His message still carried. They sent soldiers to guard Jesus' corpse because they still feared Jesus' power after they put Jesus to death. Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees have used their political might to execute Jesus and scatter His followers, but it does nothing to alleviate their fear of Jesus. Even in the face of their apparent victory over their enemy, Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees have no power over their own emotions.

The ruling authorities didn't act out of ignorance. They knew the message of Jesus and feared the power it carried. They recognized the power to liberate, and instead of choosing redemption, they chose to crush it.

Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees listened intently to Jesus' teaching. Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees responded with every abuse available to them. Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees confused their impotence for importance. They sought control over a dead man, and found they had none. Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees lived in fear on Saturday while they thought they could keep our Christ in the tomb, and the disciples were scattered and sorrowing.

Pilate, the chief priests, and the Pharisees had no power on Saturday when things looked the bleakest for the disciples. Everyone knew Sunday was coming, but they had no idea what it would hold.

Prayer:

Almighty and ever-patient God, we know from scripture that Your grace is sufficient for us, for power is made perfect in weakness. May we take the time to recognize on this Holy Saturday, when things seem bleak, and the voices of the critics overwhelm us, that we can honor our weakness knowing that Your power resides in us. We pray for patience in times of darkness, and seek solace knowing Your power will make things right, and renewed, and that our hope finds new life in Your power. Amen.

Exercise:

I'm not a visual artist, and you don't have to be either, but we're going to do some drawing this week anyway. Get a piece of paper and your favorite things to write with. We're going to turn your paper sideways (landscape mode) and draw two rectangular frames next to each other. You can also fold your paper down the middle, or just draw a line separating the two halves, but the concept we're engaging in today revolves around reframing our inner monologue. We're practicing the art of separating the voice of our inner critic from our own voice. We're doing this to reclaim the power we sometimes forget that we have.

Critics listen, and critics respond. Your inner critic knows all of your anxieties and responds to those anxieties. Your inner critic, however, doesn't understand the power of what's coming. In the frame on the left-hand side of your paper, you can keep a list of thoughts driven by your inner critic, but only if you keep a list in the right-hand frame that denies the inner critic its power. If your inner critic says, "You can't go on." You respond with, "But I've already come this far." If your inner critic asks, "Why didn't you do better?" You respond with, "Because I've already done what is needed."

Your inner critic will argue, but your Sunday is coming. Your inner critic functions from a place of fear, but you operate from a position of power. Practice reframing your fears by putting them on paper. Learn how to hear your voice and stop serving the powerless critics.

Power of the Resurrection

Pastor Shuler

Scripture:

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers and sisters to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

[Matthew 28:1-10]

Reflection:

I am a processor. Whenever I receive new information, I usually need time in my own brain to process, think, weigh the pros/cons, and then offer a response. Sometimes, my processing takes a few brief minutes. Sometimes, my processing can take up to a week and beyond. As a processor, this story of the resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew is a LOT to handle for me.

Each time that I read this story, I try to place myself in the shoes of the women who experience it all. It begins with the women going to the tomb, in the middle of their own grief over the loss of their Savior and dear friend in Jesus. When they show up, they immediately experience an earthquake and are encountered by angels of the Lord, descending upon them from Heaven.

Then, they hear the news we celebrate on Easter each year: "He is not here, for he has been raised as he said." The angels tell the women that they should immediately go from this place to tell the other disciples. Here's where the processor in me struggles: What were they supposed to tell the disciples? Think about all they had just seen! Do they start with the earthquake? Do they fixate on being encountered by the presence of angels? Do they talk about Jesus not being in the tomb, and begin to wonder where He has gone? They were told to immediately go and tell of all that they had seen, but they had seen a LOT. They didn't have time to process it all before being called to tell new people an account of what all they had seen.

But friends, that's the beauty of this story. It's a lot to process. It's a lot to process to think about Jesus resurrecting from the tomb. It's a lot to process to think about how Jesus' resurrection means that we have been resurrected from the weight of our sin, shame, and guilt. It's a lot to think about how Jesus' resurrection has ushered us all into new life and life abundant. It's a lot to think about how Jesus' resurrection has shown us all the depth of God's love for us, even when we have done nothing to fully deserve it.

It's a lot to process, and yet it's the most core part of our identity as people of God. Jesus has come. Jesus has died. Jesus has risen. Jesus will come again. Friends, may the power of the resurrection always be hard for us to fully process. May the power of the resurrection continue to stun us out of the depth of God's love for us. May the power of the resurrection always surprise us, but continue to speak hope and light into the darkest of places in our world. May the power of the resurrection continue to ignite love within us for all people, and may we do all that we can to share that light with others.

Prayer:

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the power of the resurrection. We give you thanks that the resurrection is a lot to process, as your love consistently pushes past the boundaries of our expectations and what we know we deserve. May the hope of the resurrection not only spark freedom in us today on Easter Sunday, but in every day that we have in this life. We give you thanks for the power of resurrection, and the hope that permeates from it forevermore. Amen.

Exercise:

The women rushed to the disciples, not really sure of what to make of what they had just seen. Ponder this question: “What does the resurrection mean to you?” Without pondering for too long, find a space to write down a few sentences to answer that question. It doesn’t have to be perfect. It doesn’t have to be complete. Choose to let it be honest and vulnerable.

Throughout the year, keep that piece of paper. Each week, find time to add things to that definition of the resurrection and what it means to you. This exercise can remind us that the resurrection is something we’re called to process all throughout our lives. Even though we may never have a “perfect” answer, God calls us to wrestle, to glean, and to live into the resurrection with each day we have.

Small Group Questions

Read the scripture, devotion and prayer for each session then use these questions for discussion. Questions 9 & 10 each week are for personal reflection on the week ahead.

Week 1 - Power of Healing

1. What details in this healing story stand out most to you?
2. Why do you think touch is such an important part of this moment?
3. How does Jesus' willingness to respond challenge common assumptions about worth?
4. In what ways does healing go beyond physical change in this story?
5. Why do you think Jesus heals publicly instead of privately here?
6. How does this story reshape ideas about who belongs in community?
7. What does it mean that Jesus heals without hesitation?
8. How might compassion itself be a form of healing?
9. Where might Christ be inviting healing that goes beyond what we usually notice?
10. How could you stay attentive this week to quiet forms of healing around you?

Week 2 -Power of Forgiveness

1. What emotions do you notice in this scene as it unfolds?
2. Why do you think Jesus responds with silence before speaking?
3. What is powerful about Jesus shifting the focus back to the crowd?
4. How does this story challenge black-and-white thinking?
5. What does it say about God's character that no one is condemned?
6. Why might forgiveness be both freeing and difficult?
7. How does this passage redefine justice?
8. What does it mean to "lay stones down" in everyday life?
9. This week, what stones might you need to become aware of?
10. Where might grace be asking you to pause before reacting?

Week 3 - Power of Restoration

1. What parts of this story feel especially tender or human?
2. Why do you think Jesus is moved before he acts?
3. How does restoration look different from simply fixing a problem?
4. What role does compassion play in healing grief?
5. Why do you think Jesus stops the procession instead of waiting?
6. How does this story expand our understanding of loss?
7. What does it show about God's attention to overlooked pain?
8. Why might presence sometimes matter more than solutions?
9. Where might God be inviting you to notice grief more carefully this week?
10. How could compassion shape your responses in ordinary moments?

Week 4 - Power of Miracles

1. What details in this story make it feel intense or chaotic?
2. Why do you think fear and faith coexist in this moment?
3. What stands out about Peter's willingness to step out?
4. How does Jesus respond when Peter begins to sink?
5. Why do you think the wind is mentioned repeatedly?
6. What does this story say about doubt?
7. How might miracles look different today than in scripture?
8. Why is worship the final response in the boat?
9. Where might God be inviting trust rather than certainty this week?
10. How could noticing small "miracles" reshape your perspective?

Week 5 - Power of Defeating Evil

1. What emotions surface as you hear this story?
2. Why do you think the man recognizes Jesus immediately?
3. What does it mean that the man is restored to himself?
4. Why might the community respond with fear instead of celebration?
5. How does this story connect liberation with belonging?
6. Why do you think Jesus sends the man to his "own people" on mission instead of with him?
7. What does freedom look like in this passage?
8. How does naming something reduce its power?
9. This week, what might need naming before healing can begin?
10. Where might liberation lead to a new sense of calling?

Week 6 - Power of the Name

1. What feelings do crowds seem to carry in this passage?
2. Why do you think names hold such emotional power?
3. What does it mean to welcome Jesus without fully understanding him?
4. How does hope shape the way the crowd responds?
5. Why do you think the name of Jesus still carries power today?
6. How can repetition deepen meaning?
7. What expectations do people bring to Jesus in this story?
8. How might calling on Jesus be an act of trust?
9. This week, how might you speak the name of Jesus more intentionally?
10. What does it mean to believe God is truly present with you?

Week 7 - Power of the Resurrection

1. What part of the resurrection story feels most overwhelming?
2. Why do you think fear and joy appear together?
3. How does movement play a role in this story?
4. What makes resurrection difficult to process?
5. Why are the women sent before they fully understand?
6. How does resurrection change identity?
7. What does new life mean beyond Easter morning?
8. Why is hope often surprising?
9. This week, how might resurrection shape ordinary moments?
10. What does living as a resurrection people look like for you?



Easter Sunday

At Mosaic

April 5, 2026
6, 9, & 11 am