

# His Mercy is More

2022 Lenten Devotional



**UNIVERSITY**

LUTHERAN CHAPEL

ANN ARBOR · MICHIGAN



**Thank you to everyone who contributed to this devotional.  
May all of us experience more of His mercy during this  
Lenten season.**

**Editors,**

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What language can I borrow  
To thank you, dearest friend,  
For this your dying sorrow,  
Your mercy without end?  
Bind me to you forever,  
Give courage from above,  
Let not my weakness sever  
Your bond of lasting love.

*(O Sacred Head, Now Wounded—v. 5)*

Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022

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Lamentation 1:1–22

**The Lonely City** | Pastor Marcus Lane

**Sermon Note:**



Psalm 121

## Help From The Cross | Pastor Gabe Kasper

Perhaps the most common question people ask about God is, “If God is all good and all powerful, how can He allow evil and suffering to occur?” Why do kids get terminal illnesses? Why do pandemics persist? Why does abuse continue seemingly unchecked?

And the reality is, there is not an easy answer to this question. Of course, there are silver linings we can point out. Of course, God works all things for good. Of course, God brings about redemption in even the darkest of situations. And yet, the question remains: Why allow it in the first place?

The Scriptures don’t give us an airtight answer to this question. But they do give us the resources to cry out to God in the midst of the pain and suffering of this world. The Scriptures invite us to trust in the goodness of God no matter what. In Psalm 121, the Psalmist says, *“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”*

We all experience moments where we lift our eyes up and cry out, “Who is going to help me!?” And the promise of God is that He will help. The God who made the heavens and the earth is the same God who hears your cries in the midst of whatever suffering you may experience.

It is during Lent that we recognize that God is not a God who is removed from our suffering but a God who moves towards us in moments of pain. On the cross we see a God who enters into our agony not only to help us, but also to bring us to Himself. We don’t always understand why bad things happen, but we can always look to the cross and see the One who endured affliction that we might know that we are never alone.

### Reflection:

Has there ever been a time in your life where God met you in your pain?

John 1:1–8

## God Can Use Anything to Lead Us to Jesus | David Carlson

John 1:1 (with the addition of John 1:14) is probably my favorite passage in all of John 1:1 is among my favorite Scripture passages. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* Did I love this passage before I learned that John’s literal reference in John 1 was to the logos? I hope so.

It was some time after I had chosen a sociology career that I began to consider the significance of logos in my professional life. Those of us who serve as stewards of one of the sciences, social, natural, or otherwise, are exhibiting a kind of faith that truth can be known if one asks the right questions, employs the right methods, collects the right data, and yes, employs the correct logic (logos). When I learned that the Word in John 1:1 is the English translation of what John called the logos, the light dawned. God can use anything to lead us to Jesus.

My primary interest is in global Christianity. An excerpt of Philip Jenkins’ *The Next Christendom* documented church history in the following way. The First Church was that of Peter, Paul and the apostles, the Church of Acts, or as Jenkins called it, the Church of the East. In the 4th century, a Second Church, or Church of the West, emerged. This was the Church of Rome, later of the Reformers, centered in Europe, then in North America, and it formed the center of Christendom until the mid-20th century. The Third Church, or Church of the South began emerging in Africa at the turn of this century. Noting that there are now more Christians in Africa than in Europe and North America combined, Jenkins comments that this Third Church resembles the Apostolic Church more than it does the later stages of the Second.

Central to the emergence of the Third Church has been careful attention to Bible translation vocabulary. A crucial shift has been missionary translators using indigenous words for a transcendent god, if there is such a word, to refer to Jesus. John 1 in Lakota, for example, would read like this: “In the beginning was the Great Spirit and the Great Spirit was with God and the Great Spirit was God.... And the Great Spirit became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The impulse behind this translation shift is clear. Don’t get caught up in theology. Just introduce seekers to Jesus in their heart language, and let the Holy Spirit do the rest. It seems to be working.

### Reflection:

What words do you use to say who Jesus is?

John 1:9–14

## **Exploding Grace** | Ken Huner

This is truly fascinating! The word “grace” (χάρις—charis in the Greek) appears four times in the first chapter of John’s Gospel but nowhere else in the book afterwards. Why is that? John chapter one is the prologue to the rest of this Gospel. Throughout the rest of the book, John presents seven miraculous signs that are recorded (I call them “Messianic Epiphany Miracles” even though it is Lent!) and expounds upon this idea of exploding Grace. Each of these signs portrays Jesus as the final fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies and motifs. The grand finale of God’s outpouring of Grace has arrived in His Son, Jesus, the Messiah!

Author Karoline Lewis put it this way: “Once the Word becomes flesh, the rest of the Gospel shows you what grace tastes like, smells like, sounds like, feels like. That is, Jesus’ signs show you, but do not tell you what abundant grace is.... [I]t is one thing to say, Jesus is the source of grace; it’s quite another to have an experience of it.” And John’s Gospel explodes with the experience of grace in the person of Christ.

During Lent, we are often encouraged to give something up. As important as this practice may be, it might be even more beneficial to add something to our Lenten season. And I would suggest adding the idea of reading each of the seven miracles John records, then reflecting on how God’s Grace has powerfully arrived in Jesus Christ. (Oh yes, and don’t forget the eighth miracle—His resurrection!)

But don’t stop there. Start reflecting on how God’s grace has intervened in and impacted your life. Reader beware. Profound joy, even tears of joy, may well flow and be exhibited to others.

### Reflection:

In what moment of your life have you experienced God’s exploding grace? During this Lenten season, how can you focus on God’s grace in your life and share it with others?

Sunday, March 6, 2022

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Lamentation 2:1–22

**The Anger of God** | Pastor Gabe Kasper

Sermon Note:



Psalm 122

**True Confidence and Hope** | Carley Fletcher

Psalm 122 describes a poet, likely David, who went to Jerusalem, the place God had chosen to reveal His glory to the Israelites.

I am first struck by verse 3: *“Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together—”* because this verse embodies the culture and environment that I look to foster and experience in every gospel-centered church. This Church is the new Israel in which believers are bound together by Jesus who transcends every culture, language, and time. Christ is, of course, this Church’s cornerstone. Isn’t this amazing!!

This confidence of being bound together is only reinforced by verse 5: *“There, thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David.”* We have a God and Father who knows all things and is above all things. We have a loving Heavenly Father who is perfectly just and faithful. Even though the Bride of Christ, the Church, has not yet been made perfect, I draw further confidence and hope from reading that our God of Justice has established His thrones of judgment where all wrongs of history will ultimately be made right.

The last paragraph of Psalm 122 is specifically a prayer for the peace of Jerusalem. Having been a believing daughter of God for over 30 years, I have experienced in the world, cultures, denominations, and churches the division, fighting, and politics that can demonize and demoralize the body of Christ. But in this Psalm, we are given a picture of the wholeness and health or Shalom that only God can provide. While I cherish gospel-centered churches, my ultimate confidence and hope is fixed on Jesus. Jesus has and will provide the complete Shalom that is everlasting within our houses, churches, and souls.

Reflection:

In a culture of fear and anxiety, what is your highest hope? What is your source of peace and comfort in the midst of struggle and turmoil? When we daily hear messages about what we “should” be afraid of, what does God warn us about?

John 2:12–22

## **Burning Passion** | Nate Zuellig

This Scripture passage is, and has been for some time, one of my favorites in all of the Gospels because of the unique portrait it paints of our Messiah. Most of us imagine Jesus the way He is portrayed in many of the popular images of Him: serene, peaceful, and dignified; perhaps holding a child or lamb in His arms and smiling with a sun bursting through the clouds behind Him. These are wonderful images that speak a good deal of truth about the heart of our God, but they fail to capture one critical aspect: His burning passion.

In the Gospel of John, the Cleansing of the Temple is the first thing Jesus does after being persuaded by His mother, Mary, to perform His first public miracle, the turning of water into wine at the wedding at Cana in Galilee. The first thing! At the wedding, Mary tells her son, “*They have no wine,*” to which He replies, “*My hour has not yet come,*” effectively saying, “Mom, you know what happens if I do that. Come on.” After He reluctantly gives in, the cat is out of the bag.

Next stop? The Temple at Jerusalem during Passover, the largest Jewish festival of the year. So far, only a select few know who Jesus really is. Now, Jesus steps out into the public scene to make Himself known to many more. And how does He do it? The way one would expect the Lion of Judah to do it: with a consuming zeal for His Father’s house, erupting with the wrath of the Lord that exacts justice for the poor and smashes every obstacle between God and man.

Most of us have an image in our minds of what a holy man or woman looks like: a monk, a nun, a Jedi, a yoga instructor. Unfazed, calm, collected. We feel that we should put on that face in church, or during prayer. But our Messiah, whom we ever aspire to imitate, calls us to passionately pursue the things of God and to fight for the good of those who need help.

### Reflection:

Are you boldly fasting, believing in the good fruit that comes from discipline, or is it more of a bother than a blessing? What things (passages, songs, causes) can help get you fired up for God, and how can you incorporate those into your Lenten devotion to inspire a more passionate pursuit of Jesus this season?

John 3:1–8

## How Can These Things Be? | Suzanne Vivacqua

How many times have you met Nicodemus? If you're reading these devotionals, chances are, lots of times! Nicodemus addresses Christ as "Rabbi," and says, *"We know you are a teacher from God,"* indicating that he is not alone. There are other Pharisees who believe the same. Nicodemus has seen the miracles of Jesus which the Pharisees understood to be the mark of the Messiah. It is even possible that Nicodemus believed Jesus was, in fact, the One.

What is it that he wants to ask Christ? We don't really know as the text does not record his question, only Jesus' response, *"Truly, truly I say to you unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* It seems Jesus knew what Nicodemus was pondering, along with the rest of what was in his heart.

Nicodemus is active in the life of the Church. He is educated, respected by others—a leader. But Jesus says, in essence, "You think you see me, but you need something more than a teacher—you need a life-giver. You won't understand who I am until you see that sin has lodged itself into the crevices of your heart. You cannot escape it; you cannot cover it with moral goodness. Only I can come and create in you a new heart."

Jesus knows that Nicodemus cannot see the things of God. Even with all his religiosity, he lives in the way of the flesh. Nonetheless, Jesus invites this Pharisee to be born again. It is with this new heart that the things of God can be seen. Without it, you see a teacher, you see your benevolence, your morality. You may even see your faith. But you cannot see the kingdom of God.

### Reflections:

Are you looking to Christ to be your life-giver or merely your teacher? How may reflecting on the gravity of sin help you embrace what it means to be born again?

John 3:9–15

**Go Blind for Christ** | Nathan Janke

One of my favorite movies is *The Polar Express*, not only because Tom Hanks plays every character, but also because of its applicable theme: seeing is not always believing. The plot involves a young boy who boards a train, *The Polar Express*, on Christmas Eve, on a journey to see Santa Claus. The boy experiences riding over a frozen lake, being stopped by a herd of caribou, and conducting the train. However, he denies any of what he is experiencing to be actually occurring because he does not BELIEVE. Can you believe that?

In John 3:9–15 Nicodemus reminds me a little bit of that boy. A “teacher of Israel,” Nicodemus is listening to Jesus talk about salvation. However, he seems confused, and Jesus picks up on this: *“If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”* Jesus is teaching on how you can be saved through Him, and although Nicodemus is seeing and talking in person with Christ, the very one through whom he can be saved, he is having trouble BELIEVING. “Seeing is not always believing.”

Christ commands us to look past our sight and follow him “blindly,” meaning, with our hearts. We are saved through Christ, and if we put our trust only in what we see, we will only see earthly things. If we turn with our hearts to God, we will be able to see the heavenly blessings that Christ puts in our lives.

So, focus on closing your eyes and focusing your heart on Christ during this Lenten season. Rather than exclusively focusing on the weird man serving coffee on the top of the train, or the hot chocolate being served out of an impossibly engineered machine, take the time not just to believe in Santa Claus, but instead to rest and believe in the supernatural, unexplainable love and salvation that Christ brings you.

Reflection:

How can you shut out the world and focus on wholly trusting in God’s plan even when we cannot see it?

John 3:16–21

**A Simple Reminder** | Liz Komurka

In September 2021, God shared a beautiful blessing with my husband and me in the form of our daughter, Natalie Grace. Of course, she has been the source of much cuteness (as when, adorably, she grabbed her feet for the first time). She has also evoked unexpected feelings, feelings that make me stop because something familiar has been illuminated, and it is as if I am seeing it for the first time.

The other day, we were reading Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*. It tells a lovely story of a tree sacrificing herself for the love of a boy. As I read the book aloud to Natalie, I struggled to choke back tears. For the first time, I realized that the essence of the story is the gospel! A tree (a she, naturally) sacrifices all she has to support the boy she loves, and the boy, at every phase of his life, finds unconditional love and support throughout, whatever it requires from the tree.

Whatever was asked of the tree, she made sacrifices to do for him until (spoiler) all that remained was a stump. Even then, (another spoiler), when the boy-turned-old-man returns, she offers that stump as a place for him to rest his aged body. How could I have missed this before? Something so familiar was illuminated, and it felt as if I were reading it for the first time.

John 3:16 is nothing if not familiar. It is on billboards, posters, city walls, and even tattoos. It is so familiar that there is perhaps nothing new to be said about it. I would like to simply remind you of what it says. And I beg you, please read these words slowly and deliberately.

The One, True God, Creator of all Heaven and Earth, the Stars and Universe, sent His Son—His Only Son—to this world for you, my dear reader, for you. Jesus was sent neither to shame you nor to condemn you as too far gone. No, whatever you have done or have not done, Jesus was sent for you, to rescue you from sin and restore you to His Father, God. By taking on your sin as His own, Jesus paid the ultimate price to bring you into amity with God so that you may not be shamed by your shortcomings, but instead, freed to follow after Jesus and receive eternal life with God our Father in Heaven, while we await His glorious and triumphant return.

Reflection:

Jesus came for you, the specific “you” reading these words. In what ways do you struggle with being deserving of such grace?

John 3:31–36

## Trusting Relationships | Sarah Trent

One of my favorite family phrases comes from my daughter. “Let’s just keep coming back to each other,” is her refrain. We have had our disagreements over the years, and this saying helps us sort out what would otherwise separate us. We remember the love we share and want to have for each other, holding close the value of our relationship in our hearts.

I remember a time I let my life lessons and circumstances, rather than Scripture or the Lord Himself, inform my belief about Who God is. Then I came to a crossroads in my heart where I stopped relying on my own resources and began again to search Scripture to rediscover who God says He is. There, I found the truth of my daughter’s words, for throughout Scripture, God says, “Return to Me.” In other words, “Let’s just keep coming back to each other.”

Today’s passage reminds me of the simplicity of this truth: *“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who puts his trust in the Son has life that lasts forever.”* And Proverbs 4:23 tells us, *“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”* Trust in the Son, He who has eternal life, and guard your heart to keep this truth vibrant and alive. No matter how far we may go away from Him, God keeps inviting us to come back. God is true. I love Him, with all my heart. What about you?

### Reflection:

Is joy added to your heart when you recall God’s constant invitation to draw close to Him?

Sunday, March 13, 2022

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Lamentation 3:1–16

**The Rod or Wrath** | Pastor Gabe Kasper

Sermon Notes:

Psalm 123

**Patience Waits for Mercy** | Monica Heissenbuettel

Are you tired? Like really tired? The kind of weary, bleary-eyed, worn-out, jet-lagged, can't-get-caught-up-on-your-sleep tired? The tired that seeps into your being, into your soul, and makes you wonder if things are ever going to get better? I'm not writing about the tired that comes from staying up too late studying for a test or preparing for a presentation. I'm not referring to the tired that comes from being out with friends late and then having to be at work or class in the morning or staying up with a sick child or tending to a newborn. The kind of tired that I'm thinking of comes from feeling discouraged, disappointed, neglected, and despondent. This kind of tired feels like it's never going to go away.

It sometimes feels like we've been struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic for years. It sometimes seems like we're never going to know what it feels like to return to some semblance of normalcy. It sometimes feels like our trust in God is being mightily tested, and yet our eyes turn to Him. We cry to Him for mercy!

In today's reading (vv. 1–2) the word “till” captured my attention. It implies patience. Patience is sometimes called “long-suffering.” The New Oxford American Dictionary defines “long-suffering” as “having or showing patience in spite of troubles, especially those caused by other people.” Circumstances try our patience, test our perseverance, and can sometimes lead us to feel a sense of despair. In vv. 3–4 the Psalmist cried out to God for mercy, for relief from the weariness of waiting.

As attentive servants of our Master Jesus, we often have to wait for the good that comes in His perfect timing. He knows what is best for us. He knows what we need and when we need it. In seasons of waiting, we can be looking to Jesus, *“the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of God”* (Hebrews 12:2). Our Master gives us His patience, His endurance, and His assurance that *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”* So we can confidently say, *“The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”* (Hebrews 13:5b–6).

Mercy comes in our Master's good time. Let's keep our eyes fixed on Him!

Reflection:

What makes you tired? For what are you waiting? How can Jesus help you wait patiently in Him?



John 4:4–15

## Nourishment From Living Water | Kyle Gontjes

After an exhausting day, how do you find nourishment and rest? Is it a cup of scrumptious tea, an endorphin-inducing run, the warm embrace of your faithful pet, or quiet time?

In today's reading, we encounter Jesus on his journey from Judea to Galilee. Weary, Jesus stopped in Sychar, a town in Samaria. While his disciples went to buy food, Jesus sought rest beside the well. Upon noticing an approaching Samaritan woman, Jesus asked for a drink. While the woman did not explicitly deny His request, she replied with a surly temperament. This was natural due to historical and religious animosity: Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus replied that if she knew of His identity and authority, she would have asked Him for the gift of *"living water."* While those that drink earthly water expectedly regain thirst, those that drink *"living water"* will be nourished and thirst no more. As envisioned in Jeremiah 31:25, we are promised that Christ *"will satisfy the weary soul,"* such that *"every languishing soul"* shall be replenished!

The use of nourishment with discussions of Christ's promises is refreshing. I particularly appreciate Louis Berkhof's reflections on the representation of the activity of faith as hungering and thirsting. He noted in *Systematic Theology*, "[I]n eating and drinking we not only have the conviction that the necessary food and drink is present, but also the confident expectation that it will satisfy us, just as in appropriating Christ by faith we have a certain measure of confidence that He will save us."

Amidst the darkness and affliction exemplified in Lamentations 3:1–18, we are reminded that Christ's compassionate love is our source of eternal nourishment. However, when we rest our hopes upon earthly pleasures, no matter how satisfying they might be, we encounter obstacles during our quest for true nourishment and rest. Let us rejoice! Christ's love is our source of eternal nourishment that, unlike graffiti on an overpass, never fades.

### Reflection:

How do you find spiritual nourishment? Are there practices that bring you closer to cherishing Jesus' gift of *"living water"*?

John 4:16–30

## **Moving Past Banter to Relationship** | Margaret Baker

In considering this favorite passage, I was reminded of a recent sermon on Mark 2:23–28. In those verses, the Pharisees chastised Jesus and His disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath. As Pastor Gabe pointed out, their aim was to engage Jesus in a heated discussion about Sabbath rules, and as in other such confrontations, to somehow trap Him. Far from entertaining this kind of Rabbinical banter, however, Jesus responded instead by reinforcing His identity as Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath.

The Samaritan woman also tries desperately to divert her conversation to the theological and away from the personal.

“Sir,” the woman said..., “*Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem*” (v. 20). Just like those Pharisees in the grain field, she is in the presence of the Lord of the universe (!) but reacts by distancing herself with theology. Then when Jesus’ somewhat cryptic answer veers away from her desired conversational trajectory, she utters one last-ditch statement that she hopes will end this uncomfortable exchange.

“*I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us*” (v. 25). There, she has done it. How can this stranger possibly respond? Yet of course, He does. And in one of Scripture’s most mic-dropping moments, Jesus reveals His full identity to this outcast Samaritan woman: “*I, the one speaking to you—I am He*” (v. 26).

Certainly, those uninterested in truly seeking Christ will fall back on the diversionary tactics utilized by the Pharisees and the woman. Doesn’t it feel so much more comfortable to smugly retreat to endless philosophical questions rather than take Jesus’ claims seriously? But Christians, too, can fall prey to these tactics. We can spend all our time in pure academic study of His Word and neglect sitting at His feet to bask in His presence and drink from His living water. He is the burden sharer. The Bread of Life. The One for whom our souls long. Jesus wants to spend time with you.

### Reflection:

How can you spend time with Jesus today?  
Sit with a cup of tea and talk with Him.

John 4:31–38

## **The True Harvest** | Amy Robson

Although the disciples don't verbalize their questions about the Samaritan woman, He explains anyway. Similar to the water object lesson to the woman at the well, He uses the disciples' concern about food for theirs. Characteristically, Jesus uses the physical as a metaphor for the spiritual: He says, *"I have food to eat that you know nothing about... My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work."* Just as Jesus opened the eyes of the Samaritan woman earlier in the chapter, He wants to do the same for His disciples. While water and food provide temporary satisfaction, eternal life and the Father's work will satiate our souls.

Jesus, knowing the suspicion the disciples feel regarding Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman, tells a parable. While in the physical realm, there are still four more months until harvest, Jesus exhorts his disciples: *"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest."* Jesus is actually answering the disciples' unspoken questions: the woman is exactly whom He came to reveal Himself to. Although the disciples don't know about Jesus' "food," the Samaritan woman, having met the Messiah, does. And as she returns to town, through her testimony about Jesus, she will sow God's word and many will be gathered as believers.

Jesus intentionally traveled through despised Samaria and conversed with a single woman of questionable character because He wanted to reap the harvest that was ripe and demonstrate to His disciples that His kingdom doesn't conform to human standards. She was ready to meet the Messiah and eagerly begin the Father's work. Unlike the disciples, who are stuck on the physical—did someone bring Him food?—the woman forgets her water jar and races to the harvest where she tells the people who have rejected her about Jesus.

He is not concerned who sows and who reaps—He just wants all his disciples to do the will of the Father. We can reap what another sowed, and we can sow and not be anxious about the results. Our food is to do the will of the Father.

### Reflection:

Prayer of St. Patrick: May the Strength of God pilot us, may the Power of God preserve us, may the Wisdom of God instruct us, may the Hand of God protect us, may the Way of God direct us...as we seek to do the Father's will. Amen.

John 5:1–14

## Do You Want To Be Well? | Will Cannon

Jesus exhibits profound compassion and unmatched power in this passage.

First off, He is walking into a pool surrounded by empty superstition that has turned the invalids gathered there against one another. Instead of supporting and helping one another to get healed, we find a dog-eat-dog environment where people are striving to reach the bubbles in the water first. Instead of walking in and flipping tables, Jesus moves toward those in need. (Table-flipping will come later for those who don't think they have need!)

He finds this man who has placed all his hope for healing in these “miraculous” bubbles. Jesus doesn't ask him if he hates his infirmity or if he is frustrated with being paralyzed—He asks a deeper question, “*Do you want to be well?*” This question gets at this man's desires rather than fueling his self-loathing. The man replies with an excuse that continues his fixation on his vain hope for the bubbles to heal him.

Without reprimanding this man for his lack of faith, Jesus tells him to “*Get up, take up your bed, and walk.*” Jesus heals this man's immediate need in his power and compassion. This, however, is not the end of the story.

Later on, Jesus finds this man in the temple and says to him, “*See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.*” Sin no more—that is a tall order. This interaction shows the depth to which Jesus is bringing about healing. Jesus is not only interested in helping the crippled walk or the blind to see, He is interested in bringing those who are dead to life. Ephesians 2 tells us that we are all “*dead in the trespasses and sins*” but in Christ, “*we have been made alive!*”

When Jesus asks us “*Do you want to be well?*” how do we respond? Let us not make an excuse about not finding healing in this world, or get caught in self-pity with the areas of our lives that we feel paralyzed in; let us stir our desire to live lives set free from sin and death!

### Reflection:

Where do you need healing in your life? Have you met Jesus approaching you there? How do you respond to Jesus' question, “*Do you want to be well?*” What deep desire and hope animates your life? Present those to Jesus as the man in this passage did. Recognize the gift of true life offered to you in Christ. Thank Him for the freedom you have to “*go and sin no more.*”

John 5:19–24

## **The Ultimate ‘How-To’ | Elizabeth Jahn**

It would seem as though everyone loves a good “how-to” book or instructional video. There are entire cable networks and sections dedicated to self-help books in bookstores and libraries. And yet, how often do we still try to venture off on our own without seeking or following directions? The longing for direction in our lives can be a frustrating pursuit.

Even Jesus didn’t act without seeking the will of His Father. *“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself, He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all He does. Yes, and He will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed”* (vv. 19–20). Jesus earnestly sought His Father’s will through prayer and studying the Scriptures.

The love of God the Father towards you is just as strong. He seeks to guide each of us as well! His love is so great that He sent His only Son to walk among us and take up a cross to conquer death and offer us life! Imagine what amazing things are possible when we seek God’s will for our lives. Nothing is too big or too small.

### Reflection:

Are there times when you try to go your own way? Are there ways that you can seek the will of the Father?

Sunday, March 20, 2022

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Lamentation 3:19–39

**The Steadfast Love** | Pastor Marcus Lane

Sermon Note:

Psalm 125

## **Can We Trust God?** | Norma Polk

If you're like me, panic often sets in at exactly the times that it's most important to trust God. Although I know that God is trustworthy, that knowledge gets stuck in my head and fails to make it to my heart. Doubt appears, and I ask myself, "Can I really trust you, God?" But if I read God's Word, like today's Psalm, I'm quickly reminded: of course I can trust Him! God assures us in His Word that He surrounds us and protects us, now and into eternity! What an awesome promise!

Jesus tells us that we need to trust like a child, "*Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 18:3). In fact, we ARE children of God. Through baptism in the name of the triune God we have been adopted into the family of God. The death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, allows us to become children of God. Just like children trusting their parents, we can also trust our Father in Heaven.

If you are like me, you need a constant reminder to trust Him. And that means hearing the Word of God regularly. St. Paul wrote, "*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*" (Romans 10:17). I find that daily reading of the Word of God enforces the habit and ability to trust God more everyday, even when I initially panic and question whether I can trust God or not. When we read and meditate on the Word of God, we hear His promises and we also get to know our Lord Jesus and learn about His character, including His trustworthiness.

When we trust in Him, we won't be swayed by our fickle minds, "*Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever*" (v. 1).

Yes, we can trust Him! Peace be with us!

### Reflection:

What can you do this week to beef up your ability to trust Him? Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you a renewed trust in God's faithfulness as you read His Word.

John 5:31–45

**True Testimony** | Amy Robson

Jesus had just healed the man at the pool when the Jewish leaders accused Him of breaking the Sabbath and committing blasphemy. Instead of dismissing them and speaking to a more receptive audience, He graciously attempts to reveal the truth to them. He does this by playing their “game” during this informal court hearing. Despite the fact that He has not been charged, He follows the Law of Moses by citing two other witnesses that can attest to the fact that He is the Son of God. He becomes His own defense attorney.

Since they don't believe His testimony, He reminds them of the testimony of John the Baptist, whom many of them had followed. John proclaimed to the Jewish leaders: *“I have seen and I testify that this is God's chosen one”* (John 1:34). While Jesus says that He doesn't need human testimony, He mentions John for their sakes, since they seem to value human testimony over God's Word.

In accordance with the Mosaic Law, Jesus then introduces the third testimony, the most significant: the testimony of God the Father. He has proven through the miracles He's performed that He was sent by the Father. However, they cannot believe the works because they don't believe His Word. Although the Jewish leaders have diligently studied the Scriptures, which point to Jesus, they've completely missed Him.

After presenting His defense, He assumes the role of prosecuting attorney. Of all the things He could say about his persecutors, He accuses them of not having the love of God in their hearts. Despite their study of God's Word, they do not know Him. Instead, they seek glory from people, rather than from God.

Ironically, these Jewish leaders who believe in the law will ultimately be accused by Moses who wrote about Jesus throughout Scripture. In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses says, *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.”*

While they value their intellect and laws, Jesus is interested in their hearts. Jesus as judge rightly concludes: *“...since you do not believe what [Moses] wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”* (John 5:47).

Reflection:

Do I study the Bible to just increase my knowledge or to know and follow Jesus more personally?



John 6:1–15

**King of the World** | Todd Baker

What does it mean for someone to be king? Or to look at it through a more American lens, president? Keep that in mind throughout our reflection for today.

In verse 15, the followers of Christ seek to crown Him as their earthly king. It can be easy for us to look back on this as foolish thinking, but let's pause and think about it for a moment. His followers believed that Christ came to be an earthly and temporal ruler to save them from the oppressive rulers of the day. They sought solace and peace from the pains of this world just as we all do today. Sound familiar?

True peace cannot be found for them in a temporal replacement of the king, but it can be found in the all powerful salvation given to us in Christ. Even though it may be hard to see and feel at times, the peace and salvation from Christ is far more powerful and everlasting than any peace that can be provided by our fellow man. Even if that fellow man is an earthly king or president.

Christ is more than just a ruler of the world in one time and place. He came to be ruler of all our lives throughout all time. He is Lord and Savior for Jew, Gentile, male, female, white, Black, Palestinian, Mexican, vaccinated, unvaccinated, and any other possible designation that has existed throughout history. Let's rejoice this Lenten season that Christ is king over all of our lives.

Reflection:

Do you get tempted to seek salvation or peace from earthly rulers instead of Jesus? Who is the king and ruler over all the world? What is the difference between an earthly king and our king Jesus?

John 6:16–24

**Searching for Jesus** | Kim Huner

The events of these verses happen the evening and day after Jesus has fed the 5,000+ crowd using a lunch of five loaves and two fish. Afterwards, Jesus sends the disciples ahead by boat to Capernaum, while He escapes to be alone and pray. During the night, the disciples battle the wind and waves until Jesus walks beside them and after they take him into the boat, he calms the waters. In the morning, realizing that Jesus and the disciples have gone, the crowd follows them to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

How often have I gone searching for Jesus? All of my life I have been a Christian, and yet, there have been moments, and at times, long moments, when Jesus seemed distant, even missing. My sense of peace and hope are clouded, my guilt and shame are screaming, my faith and strength are ebbing. The wind and waves of life become all-consuming and I sink into despair. Where is my Lord, my Savior?

That night, Jesus knew the disciples were struggling, and he approached them walking on the waters of the sea. (This always makes me chuckle because he scared them to death). And, as they took him into the boat, he calmed the wind, the waves, and them.

Likewise, Jesus knows when I am struggling, sinking, screaming and lost. He finds me, and comforts me, lifts me up, and calms my fears. For while I am searching for Jesus, He is there walking beside me. I just forget. I need to be still and pray, lean in, and let His love and grace seep into my soul.

Jesus is forever walking beside us. Maybe even on water, if you happen to be in a boat.

Reflection:

During life's storms, how does Jesus calm you?

John 6:25–35

**Jesus the Bread of Life** | Anna & David Dickhudt

Thanks to the hard work and service of volunteers, we enjoy food and fellowship over meals as a special part of our community at ULC. By the grace of God, few of us have experienced food insecurity, where we do not know where our next meal is coming from.

In Jesus' day, food insecurity was not uncommon, so it was no wonder crowds followed Jesus after his miracle of feeding more than 5,000 people with a few loaves and fishes. But in the midst of satisfying their bodily hunger, the crowd missed two important points: Jesus had performed a miracle, and He had been sent by God, His Father.

Jesus knew the crowd's thoughts and patiently redirected and continued to teach and point them to Himself. He then declared, *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty"* (John 6:35).

How about us? Do we take the daily provision of food and shelter for granted or do we appreciate the miracle of these provisions as gifts from our heavenly Father? Are we making use of the "food security" which we enjoy to then shift and focus our attention on Jesus and His Word? *"For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"* (John 6:33).

Reflection:

What is our response to Jesus' words? *"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on Him God the Father has placed His seal of approval"* (John 6:27).

John 6:36–43

## **The Father's Will** | Emily Knickelbein

Have you ever thought about what you would wish for if you were Aladdin and had the opportunity to have three wishes granted by a genie? I know I have. Maybe I would choose to have a dream house or car, maybe free college since I'm a student, or maybe something like never getting ill. Whatever it is, I think as human beings we are often centered towards our own needs and desires.

As a student, I am continually asked what I want to do with my life, or what I want to study, or what I want my job to be in the future? These types of questions don't just stop there. As time goes on, the only difference is that the questions change. Maybe the question is where do you want to live, or when do you want to retire, or how many kids do you want? It's not that these questions are necessarily bad; however, as Christians, we are called to answer all these questions not in light of our own will, but in light of the Father's will for us.

It seems a bit odd that we would live our lives according to someone else's desires, but isn't that precisely how the Son lived His life? Jesus came down to earth to fulfill the promises of the Father and to give us eternal life according to the Father's will. We see this in verses 39 and 40 as Jesus says, *"And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those He has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."* Jesus is telling others how He intends to live his life as not His own but for His Father and in doing this He has the grace and willingness to suffer the immense pain of death through the crucifixion of the cross. Jesus' acceptance of the Father's will that results in death is what gives us eternal life.

In the same way, like Jesus, we are called to do the will of the Father. As the Son loves the Father, so the Father loves the Son and us, His children. How great the Father's love that He would give His only Son to take on the suffering of humankind, so that you and I can live with the hope of eternal life. The Father's will is perfect, and I pray that I would have the grace and willingness like Jesus to let the Father's will come before my own. In doing this, my life can be lovingly transformed by the Creator of the Universe.

### Reflection:

What is the Father's will for your life? In what ways do you put the Father's will over your own?

Sunday, March 27, 2022

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Lamentation 3:40–60

**The Call to Repentance** | Pastor Marcus Lane

Sermon Note:

Psalm 130

**Unfailing Love** | McKinley Schmitz

I can already feel my world changing again. Are you familiar with the feeling? This feeling of knowing that this niche you have worked so hard to carve out for yourself will soon no longer fit your needs? I understand that everyone goes through these periods, but I wish my age group did not have to go through so many. I feel as though I have just graduated and moved on with my life. Now I have to prepare to do it again?

As I start to become overwhelmed with change and the passage of time, I hear these words: *“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits and in His word I put my hope”* (v. 5). The waiting, the unknown of what is coming next or the direction your life will take can eat away at you. There is no true peace that does not come from His Word, His love, and His forgiveness.

*“O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with Him is full redemption”* (v. 7). As we come closer and closer to Holy Week, join me in throwing off the fear and doubt. I tend to hold onto these because I cannot fathom being without control. As sinners we place blinders on ourselves, blocking out all the ways God has shown us that He is walking this journey with us. We are not alone, and we do not need to rely only on ourselves.

Join me in placing these at the foot of the cross and repent from crippling self-reliance. To sit in our waiting with hope and understanding of God's love, is (of course) much easier said than done. For me, it is a constant battle—the letting go while still desperately trying to hold on.

As my comfortable niche is quickly shifting again, I find comfort in the Constant: the love of a Savior willing to lay down His life for my redemption. What can be more reassuring?

Reflection:

What are some things you struggle giving away to God? How can you make progress with that process?

John 6:46–59

## **Offended by Jesus?** | Becky Johnson

Offensive language and Jesus? We are very aware of the offensive language that we hear all around us. As Christians we know that Jesus called us to “*speak the truth in love*,” so we work hard at not jumping into the fray or causing unnecessary offense. Yet is Jesus offensive? Does He make us uncomfortable when He speaks so bluntly about eating flesh and drinking blood? Some of His followers verbalized that this was a hard teaching. Others took offense and no longer followed Jesus. Why? Eat my flesh. Drink my blood. Some may have been offended initially as this sounds cannibalistic. Yet, it is clear that this was not what Jesus was saying. Jesus is saying that salvation—eternal life—does not come from within ourselves. It comes from outside of ourselves.

In the Garden of Eden, God instructed Adam and Eve to refrain from eating the fruit of only one particular tree. If they ate from the fruit of that tree, they would die. And eat they did. Sin, sickness, and death were the result. Now Jesus says that He is the bread from heaven which anyone may eat and not die. The solution for their eating from the forbidden tree is to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. Huh? The solution is not to earn God’s favor by keeping the Law (which we cannot do). The answer is not to cover our sin by putting on a virtuous outer façade (like leaves to cover nakedness). We need something much more radical! Jesus gives us Himself to eat and drink. He comes inside of us. This is intimate, personal. God, Himself, invites us to feed on Him. The solution comes from outside of ourselves, but then, amazingly, comes to reside inside of us.

Acknowledging our complete inability to keep the Law or to earn eternal life is hard, if we are honest. By nature, we want to fix things ourselves. But God’s love is so intimate, so sacrificial, so complete. He does not simply fix us from afar; He invites us to feed on Himself.

Each week as we gather around the altar, we hear Jesus’ invitation afresh: “*Take and eat; this is my body. Take, drink; this is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.*” Jesus’ resurrected presence hidden in simple bread and wine. Are we offended by our dependence on this meal? Or do we rejoice that God wants us to feed on Him?

### Reflection:

As you commune this week, consider afresh the amazing invitation to receive eternal life as we eat and drink God’s love made manifest in Jesus.

John 7:1-5

**Eternal Trust** | Jenna Wyly

“The most expensive thing in the world is trust; it can take years to earn and just a matter of seconds to lose.” Or at least that’s what the old saying says. As humans, we seem to walk a fine line with those whom we trust. We trust Google until it shows statistics that go against our opinions. We trust the weather forecaster, until we look up at the sky and don’t see any chance of the four inches of predicted snow. We trust our friends until we hear one rumor that they said something negative behind our backs. We trust the CDC until they come out with new statements that directly contradict their last ones. We trust our authorities until sexual allegations surface. We trust our parents until we realize they are imperfect humans just like us.

Something that we can take the smallest amount of comfort in is that we are not alone in our battle with trust. Even in the Bible when Jesus was in Galilee, His own brothers did not believe in Him. They questioned why Jesus did not go back to Judea and show the disciples the work He had been doing: *“For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. For not even his brother believed in him”* (vv. 4-5).

The difference between the lack of trust by Jesus’ brothers, and the lack of trust shown in the other examples above is that Google, the CDC, the weather forecaster, our authorities, our parents, and our friends have all made mistakes or been wrong before; Jesus never has. He lived a perfect life filled only with fulfilled and true promises. He even took up the cross we deserved just to earn our trust.

Why then is trusting God so hard? Maybe it’s because we are accustomed to the feeling of relying completely and trusting in someone and then being totally let down. We need to segregate God from everyone else in our mind; He is not a human, and He is not a corporation. He has never lied or been wrong. The Bible says, *“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man”* (Psalm 118:8). God has worked to earn our trust and has never done anything to break it. May we strive together to let God sit in a higher place in our minds, a place where full devotion and unquestionable trust is a given.

Reflection:

Are there areas in your life in which you feel like you have a hard time trusting in Christ? What steps can you take to grow your trust and lean fully on Him?



John 7:21–24

**Jesus and Hillsong** | Janette Haak

In January of 2020, before everything shut down for round one of COVID, we were enjoying a month-long vacation in Australia. Several Sundays we were able to attend worship at the original Hillsong church. (Yes, I might have been crying tears of joy). One of the sermons reminded me of this verse from John.

In the sermon I heard at Hillsong, the pastor reminded us that we are Jesus' apprentices. We need to emulate Him and not be rushed or in a hurry. In the passage the pastor was discussing, Jesus has just completed several miracles. He then speaks to the Pharisees, trying to get them to think logically, instead of just relying on tradition. To them, miracles seemed like an interruption, but to Jesus, the very miracles themselves were the purpose. Were the Pharisees so rushed they did not take time to really understand what Jesus had done?

The pastor went on to say that Jesus also spent time in silence and solitude to hear from His Father. The pastor explained, "Isolation increases pain; solitude increases your relationship. Solitude makes us spend time reflecting."

Lent is to be a time to reflect and seek the Lord. If we are to truly emulate Jesus and be His apprentice, we need to spend time in solitude.

Reflection:

Do you find yourself in isolation? Spend time reflecting on miracles big and small that Jesus has done in your life. Talk about them with your family or journal about them as a reminder of what Jesus can do in and through you.

John 8:1–11

## Hidden Sin & Humble Reminders | Tony Creeden

At face value, this account from John seems like a typical Pharisee trap. With the frequency of these kinds of accounts it's easy to gloss over interactions like this in the Gospels and see nothing more than a "gotcha moment" from Jesus. I encourage you, however, to take a closer look. Instead of looking at the narrative and addressing what's in the text, stop for a moment and look at what is missing from the text. Specifically, who is missing.

The Pharisees draw attention to the woman, dragging her into the streets like an animal and publicly humiliating her to make a point. But where was the man who was caught in adultery? Isn't he equally guilty of the same stonable offense? Where is he? In the simplest terms, the man isn't there because few people in society cared much if a man committed an act of adultery. Most times the man would get no more than a few looks of disapproval, but he could still live what many considered a "respectable" life. This is why it may not have even occurred to the Pharisees that they should bring out the man. What did they need him for? This woman would do just fine to set the trap. What they miscalculated is that the man's absence *did* occur to Jesus.

Quickly reading the situation, Jesus places a surprising and unexpected counter-challenge before the Pharisees. Referencing Deuteronomy 17:7, Jesus essentially says, "Go ahead. You witnessed the crime and clearly desire it to be punished with such severity. Let the one of you who hasn't ever committed a sexual sin of your own be the first to commence with the execution." *Thud.* Stones fall to the sand. Like the absent adulterous man, they too were likely guilty of the same sin, but got away with it. With Jesus' response they quickly realized something we should all take time to ponder: The only difference between you and the publicly disgraced sinner is either you didn't get caught, or if you did, you hid it well or got away with it.

Throwing stones is easy because most of the time we forget that if others knew what we know about ourselves, there would be no shortage of stones headed our way. Furthermore, He reminds the Pharisees of a truth we would all rather forget: God knows. You and I can hide it from everyone, but we can't hide our sin from God. Whether we want to admit it to ourselves or not, we are all in the same mess of sin.

After this humbling realization, everyone walks away and Jesus is left alone with the woman. Humiliated, broken, and likely ashamed, the woman remains face

to face with God. Would He choose a stone to throw? Would He be her executioner? No. He simply responds to her presence saying, “No one left, huh?” “No one, Lord,” she mutters sheepishly. Jesus replies to her as He speaks to us all, “Neither do I condemn you; go and from now on sin no more.” For the woman, and you, sin is never the end of the story.

### Reflection:

How might the recognition of our own sins make us better equipped to address the sins of others? How might a refusal to recognize our own sin make us a poor representative of the Gospel?

Saturday, April 2, 2022

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John 8:27–32

**Who Is Lord?** | Ashleigh Creeden

More than any other Gospel author, John emphasizes who Jesus is and Jesus’ testimonies about Himself. While I may not know specifically why He chose to write his Gospel in this way, I do know that it has profound significance.

During Jesus’ ministry, Jewish leaders questioned Him at every opportunity, despite being provided with countless opportunities to understand. They were vastly knowledgeable about Scripture and knew it inside and out; they knew and understood their Jewish laws; and they knew of God and of the coming Messiah. The head knowledge was certainly there. Of what, or of whom, they lacked understanding, was Jesus. Here, after another round of back-and-forth, Jesus explains that after He is “lifted up,” they will know that He is from the Father. Jesus is explaining, yet again, that He is God.

The implications here are huge. Jesus goes on to say, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* In this one statement, there is a distinction here bigger than the Jews could comprehend. That is, “the truth” is more than mere knowledge about Christ; it is *Christ Himself*. Understanding that He is one with the Father, that He is Lord of all, changes lives.

This Jesus is not only a man who came to preach nice messages. He is not only a guy who did some astounding miracles. He is Lord, and He came to share

salvation and redemption with the world. That truth is life-changing. That truth will set us free.

It is easy to point fingers at the Jewish leaders, but do we live as if Jesus is Lord? Do we hold that life-changing truth at the center of our lives— that Jesus came, as man and God, specifically to save you, to redeem you, to forgive you. Is that Jesus Lord of your life? Is that Jesus Lord of your jobs? Your relationships? Your stressful moments? Your joys? Or do you, as I, sometimes live with only the head knowledge of Him, keeping Him lord of our Sunday mornings, or lord of our devotional time, but not always Lord of our hearts?

Jesus came to set you free from your sin to live in relationship with Him. Knowing that we are beloved and redeemed children of God should change the way we view every aspect of our lives, the people around us, and ourselves. Living under Jesus' Lordship means trusting Him to be in control of our lives. It means receiving the grace God freely offers us for the forgiveness of our sins and living as people freed from sin. It means leading with grace in every relationship and interaction that we have, offering His grace and mercy even to those whom our sinful minds may deem "undeserving." It means living for Him and His desires for our lives, always seeking alignment with Him. It means living as Christ did, and loving as Christ loves. Is Jesus Lord of your life?

Reflection:

Where are the areas that you find it easy to make Jesus the Lord of your life?

Where are the areas that you struggle to make Him Lord of your life?

Sunday, April 3, 2022

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Lamentation 5:1–22

**The People Scattered** | Pastor Gabe Kasper

Sermon Note:

Psalm 132

**Going Off Script** | Paul Chamberlain

Have you ever felt that something was so important that you could not sleep without attending to it? For college students, this might be that project due tomorrow morning that you hadn't meant to put off, then ended up pulling an all-nighter to finish. For parents, it might be a restless child who wakes them up at all hours of the night, but caring for their little one is more important than a good night's sleep.

David could not be at peace with living in his house or resting in his bed until he found a more permanent home for God to dwell. We rightly admire David for his zeal to serve and honor God. But even though David yearns to build a magnificent temple for his Lord, God flips the script: "...*the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house*" (2 Samuel 7:11b, cf. 1 Chronicles 17:10b). Now, David does help prepare the materials his son Solomon will use to build the temple, but God is the one who establishes David's line. Solomon may have built the temple, but God makes it a true temple by dwelling there and clothing the priests with salvation.

God seems to delight in flipping the script of our religious expectations. Two verses come to mind: "*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8), and "*In this is love, not that we loved God, but He loved us*" (1 John 4:10). As we reflect this Lenten season on how "His Mercy Is More" than our sinfulness, let us "*worship at his footstool*" and "shout for joy" to our script-flipping God!

Reflection:

In his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine writes, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." Jesus calls out, "*Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 12:28). How can you rest in God during this season of Lent and beyond?

John 9:1–7

**Light in the Darkness** | Lindsey Meister

The curiosity of Jesus' disciples in this passage amuses me. At first, it seems kind of rude. We don't normally attribute differences in ability to personal or moral failure. Jesus has just clearly stated that this man's suffering is not a punishment for sin. However, the disciples' desire to understand the cause of suffering is relatable. It is easy to question why some people seem to face more difficult circumstances than others. Why do some people face serious illnesses? Why do some experience tragedy? Why do some lack access to adequate water, food, or a safe environment? It seems unfair.

I certainly do not have an answer to these questions, but Jesus tells us that His strength and power are displayed in weakness, and His light is displayed in darkness. He also keeps His word. The man who was blind was faithful to Jesus' command, and Jesus restored the man's sight. Jesus literally brought light into the man's darkness.

Even further, Jesus went to the darkest physical and spiritual place, death, to bring light to the whole world. Therefore, when we have the same faith in Jesus that the blind man demonstrated, we will eventually see every broken part of us, physical and spiritual, fully redeemed. In this miraculous process, His power is displayed.

Reflection:

What is a way that God has displayed His power in your weakness and met you where you were? Where can you pray for God's power to be displayed, according to His will?

John 10:1–10

## Jesus as Our Shepherd | Bob Grese

I'm not sure I like being compared to sheep. I'll admit it looks peaceful to see them out in a meadow, wandering around without a care in the world. As I have come to learn, however, they are not the brightest of animals or even that much fun to be around. They're smelly, and they often wander from the flock and are easily lost. They can easily fall into holes and ravines and are ready prey for any larger predators that might be around. They're also readily frightened when provoked.

As I think about the past year and a half during the pandemic, maybe we all have been more like sheep than we're willing to admit. As a society, we tend to be tossed to and fro by what we see and hear on social media and the news, we're skeptical of scientific research and facts, and we're easily led astray by all kinds of hollow promises. On a personal level, I know I've found myself feeling quite vulnerable and much like a sheep in need of a shepherd.

Where do we turn? Jesus calls us through the Bible, the sacraments, and through the faithful teaching of our pastors and the Word of God spoken by other people in our lives. He also talks with us in prayer as we reach out to him with our cares and listen for His responses back to us. He also comforts us through His Creation and through music, the arts, and so many other blessings He's placed in our lives.

In this passage, Jesus tells His disciples that they are like sheep and that He is their "watchman" or shepherd watching over them and keeping them alive and well. He is the one to let them through the gate and into the fold where they will be safe. In the midst of all the turmoil in our personal lives and in the world around us, this is a most comforting promise. Maybe it's not so bad to be sheep when we have a shepherd like Jesus!

### Reflection:

How can you be more open to letting Jesus be your Good Shepherd? Try to let go of your worries, knowing you're safe in His fold.



John 11:32–44

**That You May Believe** | Andrew Komurka

“Why?” is a very important question. Kids ask their parents “Why?” so they can learn how the world works. Doctors ask “Why?” so they can learn from symptoms how to treat illness. Scientists ask “Why?” with the hope of discovering something new and exciting. But “Why?” can be a hard question. When a loved one gets sick or dies, when a job opportunity doesn’t work out, when a relationship suddenly ends, we ask “Why?” We question because we don’t understand where Jesus is amidst the grief and pain.

When Mary says to Jesus, *“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died,”* it is both a profound statement of faith in Him and His power, and an implicit question about why He was not around to wield that power. Mary, just like her sister Martha in verses 21–22, truly believed that Jesus could have saved Lazarus, yet she did not understand why He was absent as Lazarus died. For those who have lost loved ones, it is a familiar question. Thankfully, Christ’s answer is only a few verses away.

Jesus says twice in this chapter that He acts so that those around Him may believe (vv. 15, 42). Furthermore, He encourages Mary’s and Martha’s faith by reminding them that belief in Him leads to life in God’s glory (verses 25 and 40). In fact, that is how John summarizes his entire Gospel’s recording of Jesus’ life and work: *“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name”* (John 20:31).

God’s work in our lives is intended to draw us closer to Him, to encourage our belief in salvation through His Son, and to invite us into everlasting life in His glory. Just as Lazarus’s death was an opportunity for Jesus to display His power over death, the challenges we face are opportunities to trust in Jesus and put our faith in Him. Why? That we may believe!

Reflection:

Think about a situation in your life in which Jesus felt absent. Maybe it is going on right now. Pray for the courage to trust that even this struggle is for God’s glory, and look for the opportunity for your faith to grow.

John 12:1–8

## **How Would You Honor Jesus?** | Bob Grese

Have you ever been invited to a celebration for someone, and you didn't know what to bring? What can you give someone who already seems to have everything? You want to give something that lets the person know how much you care about them. If you're like me, it's always a struggle to decide what kind of gift would be meaningful.

In this account from the Gospel of John, shortly after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, a dinner was being given to honor Jesus. On this occasion, Lazarus's sister Mary decides to honor Jesus with a gift of expensive perfume, anointing His feet and wiping them with her hair. For Mary, this was a very personal way of honoring Jesus—someone she clearly cared deeply about. She knew Him to be her Messiah. Not only was she giving Him something of great value—we're told by John that the perfume was worth more than a year's wages—but she was also giving of herself, wiping Jesus' feet with her hair.

How do we choose to honor Jesus? There are always so many competing ways we can spend our money, time, and attention. How often are we conflicted with how to make priorities in our lives? Why devote our time and resources to Jesus now when we've got so much else going on? Can't we do that tomorrow? How often do we think, "I'll be glad to give my time and treasure to Jesus at some point later in my life when it's more comfortable."

At ULC we often sing of how "worthy" Jesus is of our honor, praise, and love. In this time of Lent when we meditate on the sacrifice Jesus made for us, might we pause and think about what gifts we could offer to honor Him? What do we have that is of great value? Time? Money? How can we, like Mary, make a personal commitment to honor and serve Him?

### Reflection:

Is your commitment to Jesus reflected in your priorities? How can you honor Him with your life?

John 12:12–19

## God's Eternal Plan | Jeaneen Wyly

The entire Old Testament was written to prepare God's chosen people for the Messiah. In fact, at least 300 prophecies point toward Him. Yet during his ministry on Earth, many people only followed and praised Him, even on that first Palm Sunday, *"because they had heard that he had performed this sign"* (v. 18) while even His disciples *"did not understand"* (v. 16). It was only after He *"was glorified"* after His resurrection that *"they realize[d] that these things had been written about Him and that these things had been done to Him"* (v. 16).

Often, we, too, do not recognize the Holy Spirit's work in our lives until later. While we are going through physical or emotional pain, grief over lost relationships or loved ones who have died, uncertainty about choices or decisions, or simply the grind of everyday life, we do not always realize that God is working through all of these results of a sinful world for our good. Keeping a "spiritual idea" might be a good spiritual discipline for us in order to praise God for the work He has done in our lives, which we often see only in hindsight.

Someone once described God's plan for our lives as an intricate embroidered tapestry. While we are on Earth, we only see the jumbled and crisscrossed strings and knots on the back side of the cloth—tragedies, unfair decisions, unfulfilled dreams and desires. From a heavenly perspective, though, God has somehow created the front side: a beautiful piece of fine art. The disciples, too, must have often been confused by Jesus's lack of acceptance by the synagogue leaders or His unwillingness to take on Rome. It was not until much later, after all of the prophecies had been fulfilled, that they finally understood what this kingdom of God was and saw Jesus' true purpose. God wove all of the pieces of the Old Testament together to prepare His people for Jesus and His fulfillment of the Law, and He continues to design our lives in a way that fulfills His plan for this world. May we allow God to work through us, even if we do not see His reasons, and may we have our spiritual eyes open to recognize God's work throughout our lives. God's mercy is more than we know or recognize, and His Spirit is always working for us and through us to bring us closer to Him.

### Reflection:

Which prayers has God fulfilled in your life? Think back on all of those answers that you may not have understood at the time but may be clearer with distance. What difficulties are you currently struggling with?

Pray for God's peace to know that even these hard times will somehow be worked out for our good (Romans 8:28).

Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022

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Lamentation 5:1–22, John 12:12-19

**The Cry for Restoration** | Pastor Marcus Lane

Sermon Note:



Psalm 133

**The Me I Want To Be** | Larry Frank

Right now read aloud with boldness, as a preacher would:

**“Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
when brothers dwell in unity!**

**<sup>2</sup>It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,  
running down on the collar of his robes!**

**<sup>3</sup>It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion!  
For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,  
life forevermore.”**

Did you hear and feel—your cry for restoration, the renewal of something—like life forever? What does forevermore mean here? It means eternity!

*“Dwelling in unity.”* Does this mean, *“Live together like brothers and sisters?”*  
133:1 TEV

This song of worship honors God, and it not only causes us to rejoice: it also unifies us. For when we know ourselves and each other in unity, when we walk in love, we are free to be called to the best version of ourselves—God’s “anointed” version of ourselves. **That is what we really want.**

When we know other people’s patterns, it helps us live in a community better. We grow into a way of talking about our sin so that we challenge each other in ways that include laughter and lightness about our common brokenness. *“But he who is joined to the Lord becomes of one spirit with Him”* (1Cor. 6:17).

It is our reunion with God. Like the morning dew, the Holy Spirit is the new life created in us. The Holy Spirit joining Himself to our spirit brings us from death to life and makes us new creatures. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”* (2 Cor. 5:17).

Reflection:

*“But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you have all knowledge”* (1 John 2:20). Walking with God does not mean we are without sin. It means that companionship with Jesus remains unbroken. Your anointed relational life is the heart of it. **Pray: Psalm 51:11–12**

John 12:23–33

**Life Comes After Death** | Norma Polk

Jesus knew that He had entered the world to die, and that it would not be a typical death, but death on a cross: *“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself”* (John 12:32). Crucifixion is one of the most brutal and shameful ways to die. Before being nailed to a cross, the condemned were scourged, stripped naked, tied to a post, and then flogged.

When the hour had come, even though His soul was troubled, Jesus accepted his destiny: *“But for this purpose I have come to this hour”* (John 12:27b).

What is “this purpose?”



His purpose is to give us life, life eternal. But He said that without death, there is no life. To explain, He used the analogy of wheat, a major food staple in the ancient Middle East. To have more wheat, farmers need to bury a grain and let it die. The death of this grain results in the life and growth of the wheat plant that bears more fruit. Likewise, in order to experience the abundant life that Jesus wants for us, we need to bury our sinful lives, die to sin, and be born again spiritually. Thanks be to God, through Baptism in the name of the triune God, we have been buried and given eternal life.

Jesus exclaimed, *“Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”* (John 12:25). The first two words that are translated “life” in this verse are ψυχή (psyche) in Greek, meaning the “breath” or “soul” of our natural life. But interestingly, the third word that is translated as “life” in this verse is different. It’s the Greek word ζωή (zoe), which means “continuing existence” or “eternal life.”

Jesus is saying that if we love our natural life and focus exclusively on that, we will paradoxically lose the opportunity to keep it for eternal life. We must instead be willing to die to ourselves and give up our natural life to God. Only then will we be able to keep it eternally. Jesus Himself provided the perfect example of what this looks like. He was willing to sacrifice His natural life because He knew that was the only way that we could have access to eternal life. May we meditate on His sacrifice and follow in His footsteps.

Reflection:

What aspects of your natural life do you love in a way that is unhealthy? What steps can you take to die to yourself so that you can live more fully for God?

John 12:44–50

## **Everybody Is Looking for Some Light | Angela Post**

Many years ago, my family went on a tour of Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky. About halfway into the tour, the guide instructed us to turn off our flashlights. Once the lights were off, I stood as still as possible and waved my hand in front of my face in an attempt to see it. After what felt like an hour, the guide invited us to turn our flashlights back on and explained that what we had just experienced was similar to the work environment that the early miners had experienced before lights were installed in the cave in 1817, a full 38 years after the light bulb was invented by Thomas Edison.

Complete darkness is isolating, cold, and hopeless, and this is what awaits the non-believer. On the other hand, Jesus offers new life, communion with the triune God and fellow believers, and most importantly, hope. These truths are easy enough to believe when things are good, and the light shines, while in darkness, belief is almost impossible. Thankfully, the Light of the World's promises never fail.

I still remember that day in the cave when the lights were turned off. I remember how debilitating it was and the uncertainty of it all. I also remember how I felt when the lights were turned on: complete and profound relief.

### Reflection:

Which of God's promises provide comfort when you experience darkness?

John 13:1–17

**A New Commandment: Love One Another** | Thad Polk

Today is Maundy Thursday. Most scholars believe the word Maundy derives from the Latin word *mandatum*, from which we get the word mandate—a command. So Maundy Thursday can be thought of as Command Thursday. And what command is associated with Maundy Thursday? It is Jesus' command for his disciples to love one another: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:34–35).

In today's passage, Jesus washes His disciples' feet in order to provide a concrete illustration of the kind of love He commands His followers to demonstrate, a love that is characterized by service and humility. Washing feet was an unpleasant job that would normally be assigned to a servant at the very bottom of the social ladder. And yet Jesus, the Son of God and the Creator of the universe, took off His outer garments, tied a towel around His waist, and then kneeled down and washed all 24 of His disciples' grimy, sand-encrusted feet.

Naturally, His disciples were taken aback and undoubtedly felt very uncomfortable. Peter even went so far as to say, *“You shall never wash my feet”* (v. 8). He obviously thought it was demeaning and completely inappropriate for Jesus to perform such a humble task. And if we were there, I think we probably would have agreed with Peter. So why did Jesus do it?

Jesus Himself provides the answer in verses 14–15: *“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”*

Basically, Jesus expects us to be willing to humble ourselves and serve each other, even if that service is demeaning and unpleasant. If washing His disciples' feet was not beneath the Son of God Himself, then what kind of service could possibly be beneath any of us? May we follow Christ's example and humbly serve those around us.

Reflection:

How can you follow Christ's example of humble service to those in your life? What acts of love do you think God is calling you to perform?



Luke 22:7-20

Sermon Note:



John 19:13–22

**Coward!** | Mark Liston

Today's lesson teaches us several lessons:

1. If your gut tells you something—stick with it.
2. Don't let the crowd influence your decisions.
3. Listen to your wife in most situations—she has great input.

One of the advantages that we all have is being able to see different versions of events that happened in Jesus' time by reading all the Gospel accounts. Pilate was a Roman governor whose main mission was keeping peace with the Jewish citizens of his region. During Passover, he went to Jerusalem to make sure everything stayed peaceful. That's when he discovered Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus. Pilate had trouble on his hands!

Matthew 11:11 reads, *"Pilate asks Jesus, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'You have said so,' Jesus replied."* He then sends Jesus to his boss—Herod. Luke 23:11–12 continues the narrative: *"Dressing him in an elegant robe they sent Him back to Pilate."* Pilate knew it was wrong to kill Jesus. We read in the Gospel of Mark 15 that Pilate had one more trick up his sleeve. *"It was the custom of the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising"* (vv. 6–7).

Surely the Jews did not want Pilate to release a murderer. Wrong. They begged for Pilate to release Barabbas. John 19: *"'Here is your king,' Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, 'Take him away! Crucify him!' 'Shall I crucify your king?' Pilate asked. 'We have no king but Caesar,' the chief priests answered."*

One more way out came to Pilate: *"While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him'"* (Matthew 27:19).

Pilate knew what to do, but he did not do it. Instead, he tried further to avoid making the final decision. A true coward, he is pressured by public opinion to make the wrong decision: *"Finally Pilate handed Him over to them to be crucified"* (John 19:16).

Reflection:

Even though Pilate might have been motivated by fear of public opinion, his decision became a part of God's sovereign plan. Meditate on what the crucifixion of Jesus means to you. Pray that people around you will open their hearts and minds to the significance of the crucifixion, may they accept God's mercy!

**Tenebrae**

Sermon Note:



John 19:38–42

**Life From Death** | Pastor Marcus

I still vividly remember the first burial I ever performed as a pastor. I remember the strange blend of both relief and uncertainty I saw in the family who had gathered to bury their loved one: relief that the burial presented a feeling of finality to their experience of loss, but uncertainty over the days ahead. What will things be like as everyone around us moves on, but we still live with the sense of loss? How long will the grief linger? What will holidays be like from this point forward? Death has a way of forcing us into emotional experiences that often feel contradictory.

As I drove away from the burial site that day, I remember observing the cemetery with new eyes. I had never before noticed how strangely serene the whole place was: beautiful trees and landscape, perfectly manicured grass, and row upon row of perfectly hewn stones built as memorials to friends, family, and people who were deeply loved. As picturesque as it was, I began to feel like I was being lied to. All of it felt like an attempt to hide the reality lurking beneath that we spend so much time trying to ignore: death is inescapable. We can run all we want, but in the end it comes for all of us, and when we are confronted with death, it is almost always painful. No wonder we try to make our cemeteries look like Normal Rockwell paintings.

John describes the place of Jesus' burial in similar language as that cemetery. He writes, "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid." Yet, John doesn't describe Jesus' burial as taking place in a picturesque scene to somehow soften the blow of Jesus' death. He has already displayed the horror of Jesus' crucifixion. I think John is trying to tap into something much deeper.

Cyril of Jerusalem writes about Jesus' burial, "In Paradise was the fall, and in a garden was our salvation." The horror of Jesus' death on the cross has paved the way for the beauty of our salvation. We no longer need to try to cover up death or attempt to deafen our ears to its reality. The Son of God has entered into death so that life would spring forth for us. Sin and rebellion have brought pain and destruction upon creation, but the death of God's Son has brought restoration and peace. The garden that was destroyed has been recreated in the tomb of Jesus. The tomb still stands as a reminder that this enemy has been defeated. We don't need to run from it. Instead we get to confront it in the hope that because Jesus died and has risen, life will spring forth from death.

Reflection:

How does Jesus' death and burial give you courage to face the painful reality of death?

Luke 24:1-2

Pastor Gabe Kasper

Sermon Note:



## About the Writers

### Margaret Baker

Happy homemaker with five children married to David, the man of her dreams. Margaret speaks Mandarin & loves walking, swimming, helping students edit their college essays, and playing from the American Songbook on the piano.

### Todd Baker

Todd seeks to follow Christ above all else, serves ULC by leading small groups, drinks chocolate milk as if it's oxygen, and can often be found engrossed in a book or podcast about an interesting topic.

### Will Cannon

Will is a mission director for University Christian Outreach and a member of the Servants of the Word, an international brotherhood of lay missionaries. He serves as an elder for ULC, as well as on the music team.

### David Carlson

David Carlson's family at ULC includes his wife Pat, his daughter Krissa Rumsey, his son-in-law Jim Rumsey, and his granddaughters Ella and Josi Rumsey.

### Paul Chamberlain

An avid runner, hiker, musician, and board game enthusiast, Paul now lives in Seattle, where he works as a software development engineer for Amazon Web Services (AWS). Paul enjoys reading books by many authors, but especially those written by his sister, Grace.

### Tony Creeden

Tony served as a pastor for eight years and then taught high school theology for five years before transitioning into graphic design and beginning his own gospel-centered ministry, BoldSpeak. He is married (Ashleigh Creeden) with three amazing kids! You can learn more about him and read more from him at [www.theboldspeak.com](http://www.theboldspeak.com).

### Ashleigh Creeden

Ashleigh is wife to Tony, and mom to beautiful seven-month daughter Evelyn. She loves being creative via art and writing, serving others, and sharing the Gospel. She works as Executive Director of a nonprofit organization.

### Anna & David Dickhudt

Anna is in her second year of the WISD Young Adult Program at WCC and is one of the MLI interns at ULC this year. Anna enjoys Zumba, swimming and soccer for exercise and occasionally rides home from church on the tandem bike with her dad. David is Anna's dad.

### Carley Fletcher

Carley is from California, went to college in Seattle, lived for the last three years in Atlanta, and then moved to Ann Arbor in January 2022 after becoming engaged to Todd Baker!!! As an enneagram 5, Carley has many passions: nursing, data analytics, economics, poetry, swing dancing, cooking, tea brewing, enneagram, and Common Cup drinks.

### Larry Frank

Baptized October 1937. Those strong words protecting me forevermore - in Grace!

### Kyle Gontjes

Kyle is a PhD candidate at Michigan who researches antibiotic resistant bacteria and infection prevention. Outside of the lab, he enjoys trivia, going to concerts, and playing indoor soccer.

### Bob Grese

Bob is a retired professor of landscape architecture from UM. He and his wife Susan live on the west side of Ann Arbor where Bob loves gardening with mostly native Michigan plants.

### Janette Haak

Mom of two grown children and wife of an airline pilot. We love to travel, but when we're home, I enjoy tutoring and substitute teaching.

### Monica Heissenbuettel

Monica is the lead preschool teacher at St. Paul Early Childhood Center-Liberty (Downtown) Campus, Ann Arbor. She's been married to Bruce for twenty-five years, has two daughters, and enjoys teaching piano, playing the church organ, gardening, walking the family Corgi, and traveling.

### Ken Huner

Thrivent Rep., Pastor Emeritus, involved with Greek and deacon training for the Michigan District, LCMS. He's married to his better half, Kim, and loves to play golf with anyone who can play with a lefthander.

### Kim Huner

Kim is married to Ken, and is mother of four sons, grandmother of seven. She has been employed at the University of Michigan for 24+ years, and spends some of her time gardening, reading, and quilting.

### Elizabeth Jahn

Elizabeth is a business & finance director of a non-profit health policy center housed at the University of Michigan and recently completed her MBA at UM-Flint (Class of 2020). She enjoys traveling and Michigan football, and has a Persian cat named Mr. Darcy (yes, I am a big fan of Pride and Prejudice).

### Nathan Janke

Nathan is a sophomore in Christ College, the Honors College at Valparaiso University in Indiana, where he studies Biomedical Engineering. President of his fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi, he loves to snowboard, participate in intramural sports, and play Euchre with his brothers.

### Becky Johnson

Becky Johnson is happily married to Tom and works at Ann Arbor Christian School as the Spiritual Life Coordinator.

### Pastor Gabe Kasper

Gabe Kasper is Lead Pastor at ULC. Husband to Melissa. Dad to Titus, Lila, and Levi. Fan to Packers. Friend to all.

### Emily Knickelbein

Emily is currently a WCC student. She works as a student intern at ULC and also as a hairstylist on the side. She enjoys sports, traveling, and playing the piano.

### Liz Komurka

College golf coach, wife (Andrew), fur-mom (Quincy), and mom-mom (Natalie Grace), Liz and Natalie can either be found running around for golf or sitting in the nursery getting lost in books.

### Andrew Komurka

Andrew is an engineer at Ford Motor Company. He's very thankful for his wife, Elisabeth, their daughter Natalie, and any opportunity to play a sport, make music, or ride a motorcycle.

### Pastor Marcus Lane

Marcus serves as campus pastor here at ULC and loves reading, writing, coffee, whiskey, basketball, and spending time with his wonderful wife Vanessa and their two children, Della and Jude!

### Mark Liston

Mark and Mary Kay are retired members of ULC who recently moved to Florida and Ohio to be better grandparents and snowbirds and better grandparents. While in Ann Arbor, Mark was the International President of Glass Doctor and Mary Kay was the International President of Molly Maid.

### Lindsey Meister

Lindsey works in two research positions at the University of Michigan studying life factors related to cognitive aging and hopes to pursue a career in geriatric neuropsychology. She is also engaged to her ballroom dance partner, Stephen Mundy.

### Norma Polk

Norma Polk is a baptized child of God. She loves to study the Word of God. She is a Costume Designer for Concordia University Theatre Program and The Dio in Pinckney. She is married to Thad and they have three adult children, a dog, and three cats. She enjoys traveling, golfing, and cooking.

### Thad Polk

Thad is a psychology professor at Michigan who does research on how the mind is implemented in the brain, and how aging changes both. He's married to Norma, his college sweetheart, has three children. He loves to golf and play guitar.

### Angela Post

Angela is the Director of Admissions for AbleLight College at Concordia University-Ann Arbor, which will have its first class in Fall 2022. She enjoys walking her dog, Lilly, hanging out with friends, and line dancing.

### Amy Robson

Amy Robson is married to Brian and has three grown children. She tutors students in English and enjoys reading, PBS, and exercising with friends, including Brian:)



### McKinley Schmitz

McKinley is a junior at Concordia University Ann Arbor where she studies Business and Theatre. She is a Resident Assistant, Stage Manager, and member of the school's Student Government Association. In her limited free time, McKinley enjoys reading, laughing with her friends, and missing her dogs back home.

### Sarah Trent

Happy wife and mom; earned Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Cleveland State University

### Suzanne Vivacqua

Suzanne is wife of 30 years to Ray, mom of three, and a certified yoga instructor. She enjoys running, reading and being outdoors.

### Jenna Wyly

Jenna is a sophomore photography major at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. She is the daughter to Jeaneen and Jamie Wyly and sister to former ULC intern Makayla Wyly. In her free time, she loves to listen to music, cook, play games, and make art for fun.

### Jeaneen Wyly

Jeaneen is an ELA teacher at Salem High School in Canton. Married to Jamie and Mom to Makayla and Jenna, she enjoys reading, traveling, and relaxing on the days when warm sunshine finally returns to Michigan.

### Nate Zuellig

Nate Zuellig is an artsy guy who teaches music lessons and has recently joined the ULC team as Assistant Worship Leader/Artist in Residence. He loves the Lord, music, poetry, people, and (attempting) to play tennis.

He is risen!



