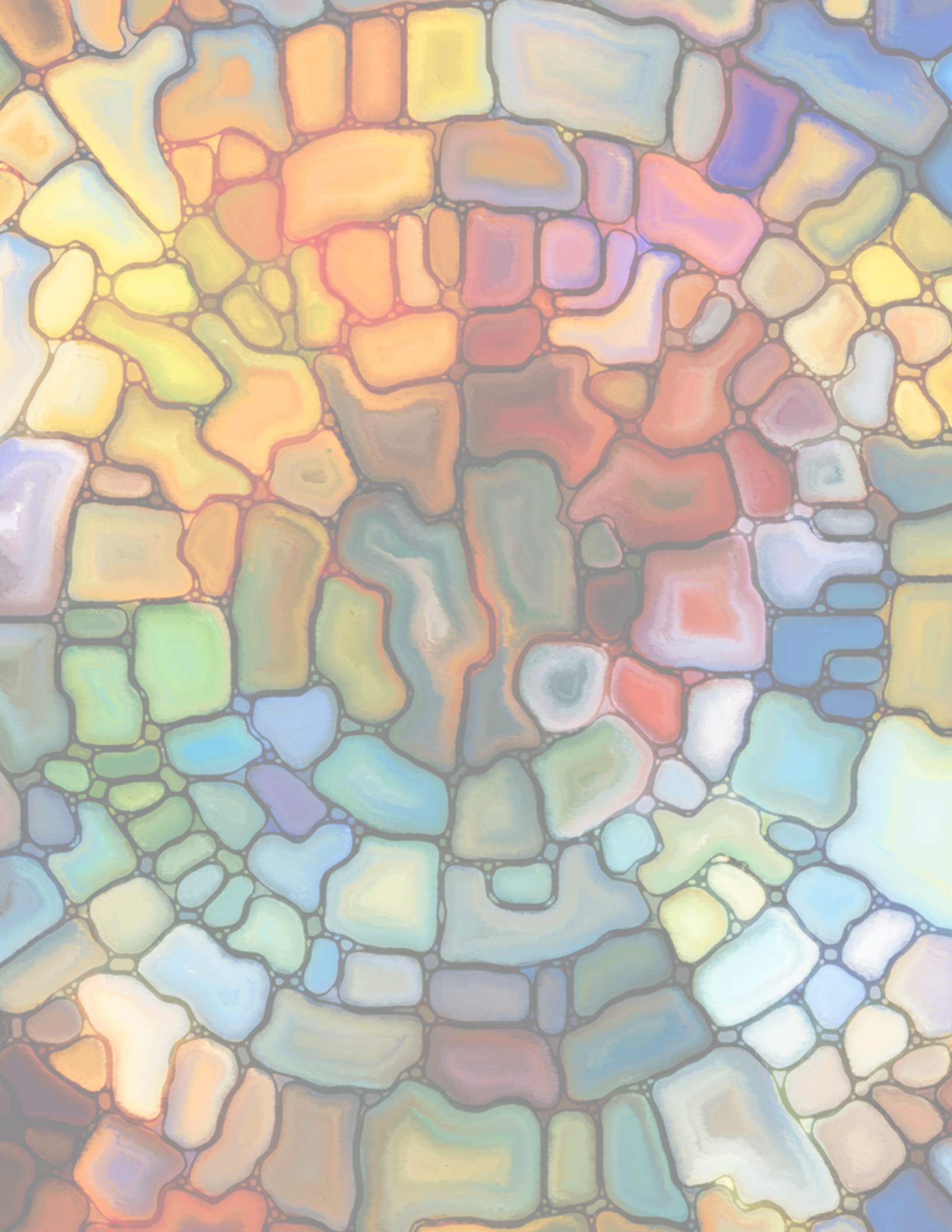




JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

**A Lenten
Devotion
for Families**






How to Use This Devotion

This devotion booklet is a Lenten resource designed to give your family intentional time to reflect on what it means to follow Jesus and live life as Jesus lived. This devotion booklet begins with Ash Wednesday (February 14, 2024) and ends with Easter Sunday (March 31, 2024). There is a devotion each Sunday during this time as well as one on Ash Wednesday.

To accompany this devotion booklet is a Lent calendar that can help you count down to Easter as well as keep track of what activities to do from this booklet. Each week there is a devotion including “I wonder” questions and a prayer. There is also a Family Activity and a Spiritual Practice for each week. We know how busy family schedules are, so these activities and devotions are not intended to do in one day; feel free to spread them out over the week. These activities are also intended to not take more than 10 minutes.



Before you begin using this resource there are a few things you might want to consider:

- Decide when and where your family will do this devotion each week. (At a mealtime around the table, bedtime in the living room or a child's bedroom, or another time and place that fits into your family's routine.)
- Store this devotion booklet, your Bible, and the calendar in a designated spot where you will be doing the devotions.
- Encourage all family members to participate - grownups and kids together! Give the readers in your family a chance to read the scripture, devotion, and prayers. Give everyone a chance to share their answers for the I wonder questions. Let nonreaders say prayers in their own words and do the activities.
- For little ones, it might be good to have a picture Bible handy for them to look at the pictures while the Bible story is read.
- Don't give up on this resource! Some weeks might be super busy and you might forget to do this one night. That's okay, keep plugging along. There is only one devotion a week, so if Sundays don't work for you, pick another night to do the devotion during the week.



What is Lent?

The season of Lent begins 40 days (excluding Sundays) before Easter Sunday with Ash Wednesday. It mirrors the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness before beginning his ministry. Lent was first observed a long time ago, all the way back in the 4th century. It was started as a way to help Christians prepare their hearts and minds for the holiest day of the year- Easter!

During the season of Lent, we try to spend more intentional time talking to and listening for God. Sometimes people will spend extra time praying, fasting, or giving during this season. Churches all over observe Lent in different ways, and some don't observe it at all. Even if Lent is something that your church doesn't talk about, it is still something you and your family can observe together.

We hope that this season of Lent is a time for your family to grow closer to God and closer to each other as we journey together with Jesus towards the cross and then celebrate Jesus' resurrection together.

February 14, 2024 - Ash Wednesday

Scripture


Matthew 6:1-6,16-21. Have someone in your family read these verses out loud.

Reflection

The season of Lent is the 40 days (not counting Sundays) before Easter. This is when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert, after his baptism, being tempted. Lent is a great opportunity for us to work on being better followers of Jesus.

Today is the start of the season of Lent which is called Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday, we look at ways we can follow Jesus more closely. One way of doing this is by deciding on one thing that we should do or not do that will help with this.

Some things people might choose to do during Lent to help them be a better follower of Jesus is to spend more time talking and praying with God, spend time reading the Bible, or spend time helping others in your community. Think about something you can do over the next 40 days of Lent to help you better follow Jesus. Share that idea with your family. Talk about when you can do that idea each day or week during Lent. Are there any items you need ahead of time to help you do your idea?



The hope is that we take this season of Lent, the next 40 days, and focus on this one thing that we came up with to help us better follow Jesus. However, in the scripture passage for today, Jesus tells us that we should not brag or be boastful about what we are focusing on. We don't need to tell everyone we know and remind them of how good we are for focusing on this particular part of our faith journey. Instead we are to make this journey and these decisions between God and ourselves. So talk to God about it; ask God to help you; thank God for forgiving you when you fail. By doing this, you are practicing humility, allowing your actions to speak louder than our words.

The Mission of Jesus by Glenys Nellist

*'Twas the season of Lent, when for forty whole days
God's people were trying to think of new ways
To be more like Jesus - to love, care, and give -
In hopes that they'd choose the right way to live.*

*On this journey through Lent they were hoping to find
How to forgive, to pray, and be kind.
To think less of themselves, how to put others first,
To help heal the world of its sorrows and hurts.*

*But the story of Lent began long, long ago...
In a dry, dusty desert where no flowers grow.
For forty long days and forty long nights
Jesus listened to God and chose what was right.*

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the next 40 days where we can focus on becoming better at following you. Sometimes following you is easy, but sometimes it can be hard. When it's easy to follow you, help us not to brag about it to others. In the times that it is hard, help us to remember that you are there with us to help guide us. Thank you for loving us both when it's easy to follow you and when it's hard to follow you. Amen.

Family Activity:

Pancake Family Night

Shrove Tuesday is a Christian celebration that happens all around the world. It occurs on the Tuesday before the start of Lent (Ash Wednesday), which is the 40 days before Easter. It got its name from the old word "shriving" which means to listen to someone's sins and forgive them.

Shrove Tuesday also has another name..Pancake Day! Traditionally during Lent, Christians would give up rich, tasty foods such as butter, eggs, sugar, and fat. Shrove Tuesday was the last chance to eat a delicious pancake for 40 days, so many Christians would celebrate by eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

For a family activity this week, celebrate this tradition by eating pancakes as a family one night for dinner. Feel free to make

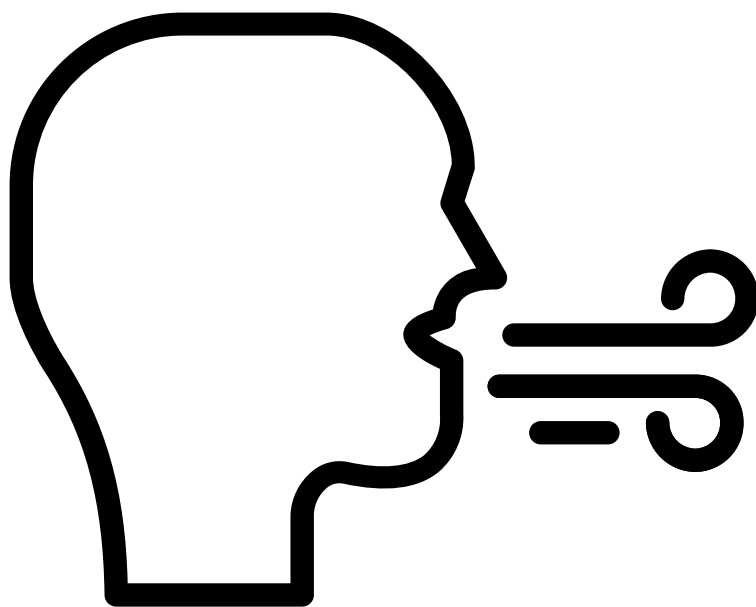
your pancakes fun by adding fresh fruit or sprinkles, and don't forget the syrup!

Spiritual Practice

Breath Prayer

Take some time this week to try out this breath prayer. Try to do it more than once, as the more you do it together, the more comfortable it will become.

Breathe in and out for one minute. As you breathe in, think the words: "I am breathing in God's love." as you breathe out, think the words, "I am breathing out worry and fear."





February 18, 2024

Scripture

Read Genesis 9:8-17 as a family.

Reflection

I wonder if you have ever seen a rainbow? It takes just the right amount of sunlight and rain to make a rainbow appear, so it's always a special gift when we see a rainbow in the sky. After the flood, God promised Noah that God would never flood the earth again, and each time we see a rainbow we remember that promise. But we can also remember all the other promises that God gives us when we see a rainbow, like that God will always love us and never leave us. There are a lot of stories in the Bible that help us remember that God loves us, and the story of Noah and the rainbow is just one of them.

I wonder...

...how Noah felt when God put the rainbow in the sky and made the promise to not flood the earth again.

...if God still makes promises.

...how God loves seeing rainbows as much as I do.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for all of the promises that you give us, especially that you will always love us and never leave us. Help us to trust in you always- when we are happy, when we are sad, when we are scared, and when we are celebrating. Thank you for the signs we can see all around us, like rainbows, that remind us you are with us always. Amen.

Family Activity

Plant flowers.

We are reminded in both the book of Genesis and Ecclesiastes that we are created from dust and to dust we shall return. What better way to acknowledge the season of Lent than to plant flowers. Take a flower bulb or flower seeds and plant them into a flower pot or the ground outside. Make sure you water the seeds or bulb each day and put it in a sunny spot where it will get lots of sunlight.

Flower seeds are pretty boring to look at. They are usually a dull gray or brown color. Nothing is exciting about them. But after some water, sunlight and time the flower seeds start to open up and come up from the ground as beautiful, colorful flowers!

The season of Lent takes place during winter time. This is a time when things are dark, cold, and not very pretty. This usually reminds people of the 3 days that Jesus had died and was buried in the tomb. But on Easter morning the best thing happened..Jesus was alive!

As your flower begins to grow during Lent, it can remind you that Easter is coming!

Spiritual Practice

Sculpt

Take some play-doh (or kinetic sand, clay, or anything that you can sculpt with) and make something that reminds you of God's love. Share with your family what you have made. How does it make you feel? Why does it remind you of God's love? Thank God for loving you so much.





February 25, 2024

Scripture

Mark 1:9-13

Reflection

One day, Jesus went to a river, and found his cousin, John. John had been teaching people how to follow God and was baptizing people. Jesus asked John to baptize him. John helped Jesus get into the water. Jesus went into the water and came back out.

As Jesus was coming out of the water, something amazing happened! The sky opened up, and a gentle voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved son; with you, I am well pleased." Jesus knew whose voice it was...it was God! After all, Jesus was God's son.

After Jesus was baptized, he went on an adventure in the wilderness. It was desert all around him. Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights there...without food...without water...listening to God...praying...trying to think about what God wanted him to do.

Whenever Jesus heard a voice tempting him to think about himself, he just closed his eyes and thought about God. After 40 days, Jesus came back from the wilderness. He was strong and ready to share love and kindness with everyone he met. And even though he had some tough times in the wilderness, he always remembered how God was there with him.

I wonder...

- ...how God felt when Jesus was baptized.
- ...how Jesus felt in the desert.
- ...if God is trying to teach me something.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for being with us when things are scary, just like you were with Jesus in the desert. Help us to listen to you just like Jesus did in the wilderness.



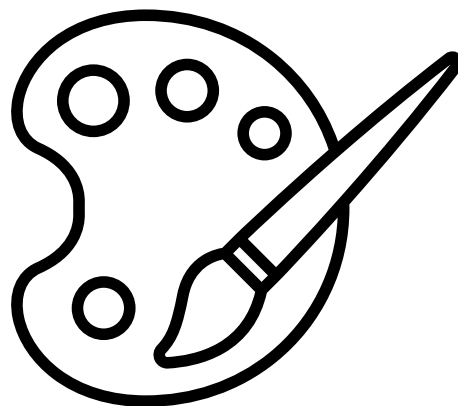
Family Activity

Sand Art

When Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days and nights he was surrounded by desert sand. Sand was in his hair, on his face, in between his toes. It wasn't a fun place to be.

Together use the sand art kit provided to make art out of sand. Carefully pull back one sticker at a time on the board and cover with one color of sand. Repeat on each section of the sand art board.

After you finish your sand art, lightly rub your finger over the sand and remember how Jesus was in the desert sand for 40 days praying and listening to God.

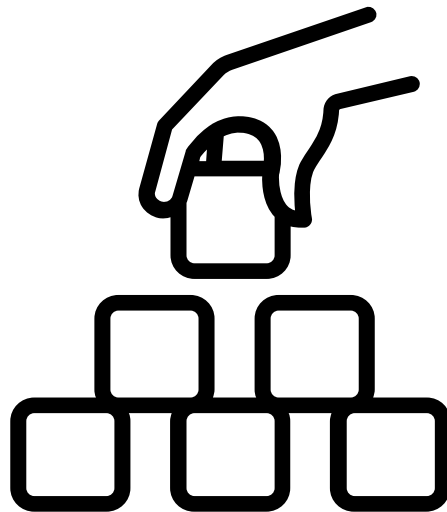



Spiritual Practice

Building

In church, we hear a lot about “God’s kingdom”. In the Lord’s Prayer (look it up together if you don’t know it), we say “thy kingdom come”. God wants us to have a world where there is no more sadness or fear, but lots of joy and love.

Find legos in your house to build with, or just pencil and paper if you don’t have building materials, and imagine what God’s kingdom would be like. As you build/draw, talk about how our world might have to change to become more like the kingdom of God wants it to be.





March 3, 2024

Scripture

Read Psalm 63:1-8 as a family.

Reflection

This Scripture talks about having a soul that “thirsts” for God, like being in a dry land where there is no water. Think about all the things you use water for. Make a list as a family and see if you can come up with 25 things water is used for.

Did you know that we need to drink water to live? We need God in our lives just like we need water. Sometimes it can be easy to forget we need God, because we don't get thirsty for God the same way we get thirsty for water. Just like drinking water is good for our bodies and makes us feel better, spending time with God has the same effect!

I wonder...

...how God feels when we spend time talking to God.
...how I can praise God like the writer of this psalm described.

Prayer

God of ever-flowing water, Help us to remember that we need to spend time with you, just like a plant needs water. Remind us to set aside special time as a family to learn about You, because that is how we will grow as Your followers, just like the grass grows in our garden. Amen.

Family Activity

Prayer Chain

Using construction paper or printer paper, cut several strips of paper the length of the paper that are about 1 inch wide. Using writing utensils, write or draw different prayers to God. Some things you can include on your strips of paper are:

- Something they are thankful for.
- Someone they want to pray for.
- A way they can show kindness during Lent.
- A personal goal for Lent.

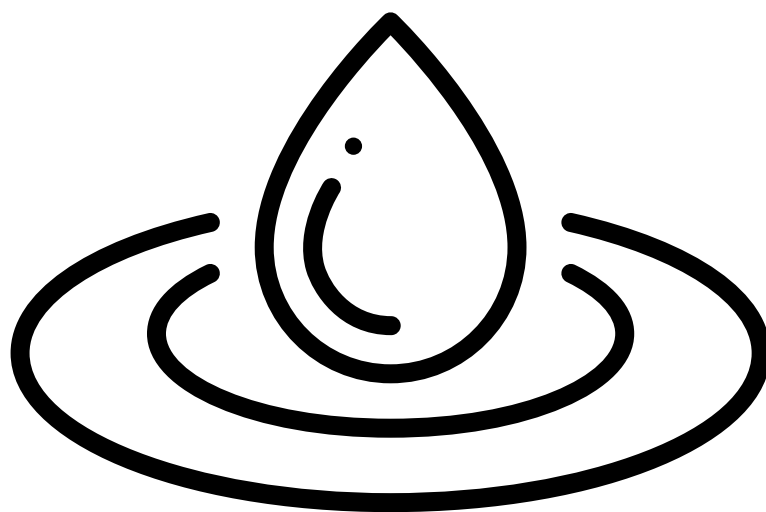
After everyone in your family finishes writing their prayer, loop the paper into a circle and tape it together. Then connect the next prayer through the first loop and tape it together. Repeat this until all the paper prayers are linked together in a chain. Hang the prayer chain somewhere

where the whole family can see it. Feel free to add more prayers to it throughout Lent.

Spiritual Practice

Blessing

Pour some oil in a saucer and stand with your palms out. Depending on the age of your child(ren) you may want to take turns having each person bless the person to their left or have only one person do the blessing. Dip a finger lightly in the oil and say the person's name. As you make the sign of the cross on their palm, say, "May God bless these hands and the work that they do. Amen."





March 10, 2024

Scripture

John 3:1-21

Reflection


Nicodemus was a kind and wise teacher who knew and had read all about God. One night, he quietly went to visit Jesus because he wanted to learn more.

Nicodemus said to Jesus, "You must be a special person because you do amazing things. Can you tell me more about how to be close to God?"

Jesus smiled and said, "To be close to God is like being born again, not in a baby way, but in a heart way. It's about having a fresh start, like a new beginning."

Jesus explained that God loves everyone so much that He sent Jesus to show the way to love and happiness. He said, "It's like a bright light in the darkness. When you follow me and love others, you walk in the light and make God happy."

Jesus also shared a special message: "God loves the



whole world, and when you believe in me, it's like having a forever friendship with God. It's not about doing everything perfectly but trusting and loving like a good friend."

Nicodemus listened carefully, and Jesus shared that God's love is like a gift – you don't have to earn it; you just have to receive it with a happy heart. Jesus explained that God's love is so big that it lasts forever.

As the night went on, Jesus told Nicodemus that love is the best thing ever, and those who follow God's way will have a happy and everlasting life. He said, "It's like a big, warm hug from God that never goes away."

Nicodemus left that night with a heart full of joy and a new understanding of God's love. From that day forward, he tried his best to follow Jesus' teachings, sharing love and kindness with everyone he met.

I wonder...

...how Nicodemus felt when he brought his questions about God to Jesus.

...how God felt when Nicodemus asked his questions about God.

...what questions you have about God.

Prayer

Thank you God for giving us minds to think and ask questions. Thank you for letting us ask questions about Jesus and why he came. Amen.

Family Activity

Grati-cube



Use the enclosed copy of a Grati-cube or scan the QR Code for this activity. Cut out the Grati-cube along the solid lines. To assemble, fold along the dotted lines and use tape to secure in a cube shape.

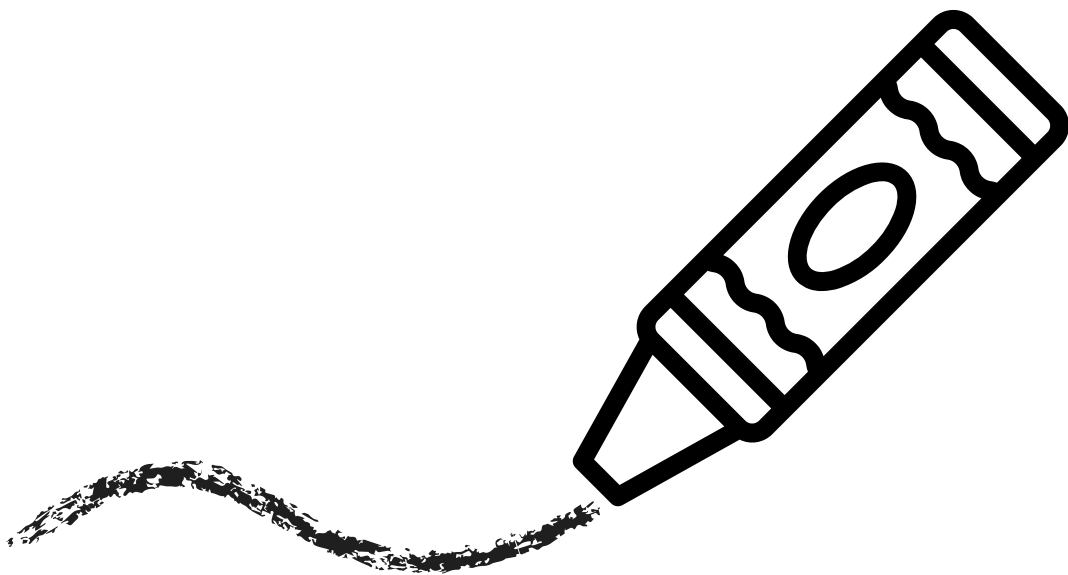
Take turns rolling the cube. When it lands on a side, read the item listed that you can use to prompt you to thank God for something today. Say out loud, “Thank you God for ____.” Sometimes our days aren’t filled with all things that make us happy. In difficult, sad, and hard times, it’s important to remember that God is with us and feels our frustration, anger, and pain too. When we experience difficult times, it often gives a chance for our faith in God to grow. If you expressed a time that isn’t happy, say out loud, “Thank you God for being with me in this hard time.”


Feel free to keep this cube on your kitchen table to use during meal times during Lent to help your family think of different things to thank God for each day.

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer Doodle

Write the name of God in the center of the page. After you do this, you can doodle around it and color it in. Be creative. Then draw lines away from the word God. Add a picture or word of gratitude or prayer request to each line. Then circle or doodle around each of these things. As you fill your page with doodles and color, make sure you pray to God.





March 17, 2024


Scripture

John 13:1-17

Reflection

Imagine you're in a room with Jesus and his friends. They were having a meal together, and something extraordinary was about to happen. Jesus, who was the leader of the group, did something surprising. He took off his outer clothes or cloak, wrapped a towel around himself, and started to wash his friends' feet.

Now, washing feet might not sound like a big deal to us, but back then, it was a job for servants. People always wore sandals on their feet, and they walked on sand and dirt roads. This meant that people's feet were always covered in a thick layer of dirt and mud. Usually, because it was a dirty and not pleasant job, it was the job of the servants to clean the feet of the people in the house. Instead, Jesus, the Son of God, chose to do something humble and caring for his friends. Can you believe that? He was showing them how much he loved them by cleaning their dirty, muddy feet.



Jesus explained to his friends that he did this as an example for them to follow. He wanted them to understand that real leaders and real followers of God are those who serve others with love. Jesus wasn't just talking about washing feet; he meant that we should help and care for one another, just like he did.

Sometimes, we might think being a leader means being in charge or telling people what to do. But Jesus showed us that being a true leader means being kind, helpful, and loving to everyone around us. It's about putting others first.

I wonder...

...how the disciples felt when Jesus washed their feet.

...how it feels when someone does something kind and loving.

...how I can do something kind and loving for others.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the amazing example Jesus set for us by showing love through serving others. Help us to be kind and caring, just like Jesus, and to always look for ways to help those around us. In Jesus' name, we pray.
Amen.

Family Activity

Handwashing

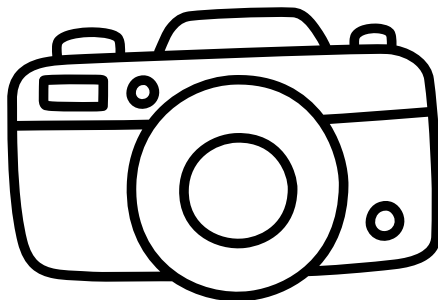
Gather a large bowl of warm water, hand soap, a wash cloth, and a towel. Take turns washing each other's hands. As you do, look each other the eye and say, "Jesus loves you and so do I."

Talk about ways you can show other people kindness and love this week. Pick one person in your school, family, or community that you can show kindness to. Take time this week to follow up with each other to see how they are doing in their plan to show kindness.

Spiritual Practice

Photo Prayers

Look for pictures around your house as a family. Find one that makes you feel joy or gratitude. Share with one another and then end with each person saying, "Thank you, God."



March 24, 2024 - Palm Sunday


Scripture

Read Mark 11:1-11 as a family.

Reflection

Have you ever been to a parade? Maybe you've been to a parade in your town or at an amusement park like Disney World. Parades are fun! Usually a crowd gathers to watch someone special pass by. People in the crowd usually cheer and wave. This is what was happening in today's scripture. People heard that Jesus was coming to town - their own town - and they were excited! They wanted to meet Jesus because they had heard all the wonderful things about Jesus healing and helping people. People grabbed their coats and palm branches from trees and ran to the streets. They laid down their coats on the dirt road for Jesus to walk on and they waved their palm branches to honor Jesus and praise him.

This was the start of a special week, Holy Week, which marks the last week before Jesus died on the cross and came to life again. Holy Week starts off with this big celebration of Jesus coming to town, then the week gets sad as we see Jesus celebrate the Lord's Supper, be



betrayed by a friend, get arrested, & put on a cross to die. But the week doesn't end there. The best celebration comes next week on Easter Sunday!

I wonder...

...how Jesus felt when people started coming out to see him ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

...how I can praise Jesus today.

Prayer

God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus. We thank you for the love you have shown us through Jesus. As we celebrate Holy Week, there are some happy moments and some sad moments. Just as you were with Jesus then, help us to know that you are with us now when we are happy and sad too. It's in your name we pray. Amen.

Family Activity

Nature Walk

Go on a nature walk. Stop every few minutes and share as a family what you see, hear, and smell. Talk about the beauty you see in God's creation. Say a prayer thanking God for the world that God created!

Spiritual Practice

Sharing your Faith

Have you ever shared the story of your baptism with one another? Have anyone who has been baptized (parents or kids) share about what that experience was like. It is important to listen to one another's faith stories. It can help us grow in our own faith!

Questions to ask:

- Why did you decide to get baptized?
- Where were you baptized?
- Who was there to see you get baptized?
- Did you do anything to celebrate your baptism?

**Remember, being a Christian is someone who has made the decision to follow Jesus and live your life the way that Jesus taught us to live. Being baptized is an outward symbol of the decision someone has made to follow Jesus, and shows everyone else that you have decided to follow Jesus. If you or your child would like to talk to someone about being baptized, feel free to contact the Children's Minister or another minister at your church.*

March 31, 2024 - Easter Sunday

Scripture

Mark 14:22-24; John 13:3-5, 12-15; Luke 23:44-46, Mark 16:1-8.

Reflection

The last two days that Jesus was alive on Earth were filled with many important things. He went to a room with just his closest friends. Jesus knew that he didn't have much longer to spend with them, and he only had a little more time to teach them important things. So he decided to teach them how they could remember him once he couldn't be with them anymore.

Jesus shared communion with his friends, using bread and juice as symbols for himself. Jesus was showing his disciples, and us, that we don't need to have a big fancy meal to remember Jesus- we can have simple things like bread and juice to help us come close to God.

After Jesus taught his disciples these things, the next day was very sad. Jesus left the disciples and he died. It was a very hard day for Jesus and those who loved him, and the details of the day can be hard and sad for us to read too.



But we know that the story isn't over yet.

It had been three days since Jesus had died. On that first Easter morning, the women went to the tomb where Jesus' body was laid, expecting to find his body there. They had even brought spices to put on his body as a sign of love and respect. As they walked to the place where the tomb was, they were trying to figure out how they were going to get the huge stone to roll away from the opening of the tomb so they could go in.

When the women arrived at the tomb, what they found surprised and scared them! The stone was already rolled away, Jesus' body was gone, and there was a man dressed in white sitting there. The man quickly told the women not to be afraid, that Jesus was not dead but was alive and had been raised!

The women left the tomb both scared and excited by what they had just learned and seen. Sometimes surprises might scare us, but they can also be good news! The news that Jesus was no longer dead but was alive scared and excited the women on that first Easter. It wasn't just good news; it was the best news ever! Today, we celebrate that Jesus is alive today and every day!



I wonder...

...how the women felt that morning going to Jesus' tomb.
...how Jesus felt when he came alive again.
...how I can share the story of Easter with other people.

Prayer

God, we thank you for the gift of life. We thank you that Jesus is alive. Help us to celebrate Jesus and follow Jesus each and every day. Amen.

Family Activity:

Baking the Easter Tomb

Grab a tube of crescent rolls and large marshmallows. Open and unroll the crescent rolls. Place one marshmallow inside the triangle of the crescent roll. Roll the triangle up with the marshmallow inside. Bake according to the directions on the packaging.

Explain how the marshmallow is like Jesus. After he died, his body was placed into the tomb. After baking the crescent roll the marshmallow will be gone, just like Jesus' body was gone from the tomb on Easter morning. Jesus was no longer dead, he was alive!

Eat and enjoy together!

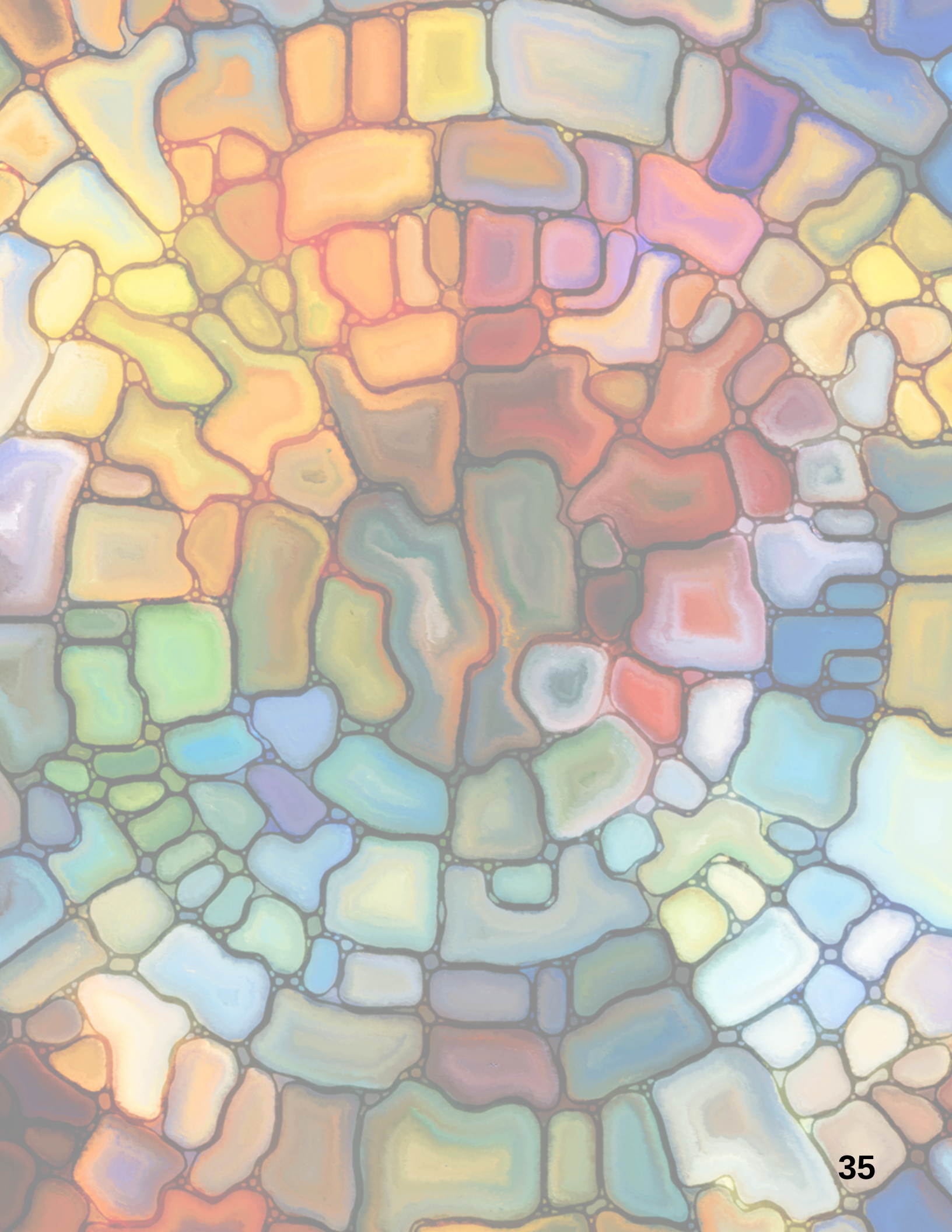
Spiritual Practice

Worship

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKJZRg6OEGA> or scan the QR code. Together as a family sing this song celebrating that Jesus is alive! Feel free to pull up other worship songs that your faith community likes to sing on Easter and sing them together.









Written by the Sheroes:

Rev. Elizabeth Hudson, Providence Baptist, Charlotte, NC

Rev. Christine Powell Kellett, Greenville, SC

Rev. Kristen Koger, FBC Waynesboro, VA

Rev. Bridget Kokolis, FB Greenville, SC

Rev. Kristen Mathis, FBC Rome, GA

Rev. Lauren Mills, FBC Marietta, GA