

Grace Devotion

Week of February 18th

Fred Young

All those days you felt like dust,
like dirt, as if all you had to do was turn your face
toward the wind and be scattered to the four corners
or swept away by the smallest breath as insubstantial—
Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?
This is the day we freely say we are scorched.
This is the hour we are marked by
what has made it through the burning.
This is the moment we ask for the
blessing that lives within the ancient ashes,
that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth.
So let us be marked not for sorrow.
And let us be marked not for shame.
Let us be marked not for false humility
or for thinking we are less
than we are but for claiming what
God can do within the dust,
within the dirt, within the stuff of
which the world is made,
and the stars that blaze in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge we bear.

—Jan Richardson

Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons

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"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

Psalms 51:10

Ash Wednesday, February 14, opened the liturgical season of Lent. For the next 40 days, Christians around the world will prepare themselves; emotionally, physically and spiritually for the celebration of our highest Holy Day, Easter. Lent is a time of repentance and contemplation. When we are invited to look deep within ourselves to see what God already knows about us.

A few lines of the poet's words made me pause. *"Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?"* There have been many moments in my life when I have felt like a gust of wind could take me away. And yet, in those moments, I have felt the warmth of an unknown but familiar touch on my face. I'd like to think it is the presence of a loved one, or the Spirit's gentle nudge. On really bad days, there's room enough for both because a lot can be done with dust.

The other line which brings a smile to my face, *"This is the hour we are marked by what has made it through the burning."* These words serve as a reminder that, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, God remains! No matter who you are or where you are or what is happening on your journey, God remains! Comfort we might need as we discover, like the psalmist suggests, what truly lies within our hearts.

Happy Lenten journey!



Things to Consider:

1. What speaks to you in the poem?
2. What is the smudge you bear this day?

PRAYER: Forgiving and life giving God, wash our hearts and give us the courage needed to share our love with others. Amen.

February 18, 2024
First Sunday in Lent

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes

Prelude Wade in the Water ~ Burleigh

~ Soloist Thomas Lynch IV

**Song: "In Christ Alone" ~ Lauren Daigle*

** Call to Worship

Lector: In this season of Lent, we gather as a community.

Congregation: We come, opening our hearts to the journey of repentance and reflection.

Lector: As we walk through the wilderness of our lives,

Congregation: We look to God for guidance and strength.

Lector: With humble hearts, let us confess our shortcomings and seek forgiveness.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy on us and lead us in the path of righteousness.

Lector: Join your voices in praise and your hearts in worship,

Congregation: As we seek the presence of the Almighty on this first Sunday in Lent. Amen.

** Opening Prayer:

Gracious and Loving God, As we gather on this first Sunday in Lent, we come before you with open hearts and humble spirits. We understand the journey that lies ahead, a journey of reflection, repentance, and seeking Your guidance. Grant us the courage to face the wilderness of our lives. As we embark on this Lenten journey, lead us in the path of righteousness and fill us with Your mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Guide and Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

Joys and Concerns
Prayer of Confession/Praying for Others

Special Music The Lord's Prayer ~Malotte
~ Soloist Thomas Lynch IV

Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

** Hymn: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" **

Poem: "Lent"

Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings

** *Doxology*

** Prayer of Dedication

Scripture Readings: Psalm 25:1-10 (The Message)
Mark 1:9-15 (The Message)

Time for the Young at Heart

Hymn: "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" 183

Message: "Journeying Through Lent: Seeking God's Guidance in Repentance"

**Song: "Living Hope" ~ Phil Wickham *

** Final Blessing

Please remain standing to sing "A Choral Benediction"
(Inside front of hymn book or on screen).

Postlude

*On the screen ** Please stand, if you are able.

Announcements

~ Thanks to Thomas Lynch IV for his special music this morning.

~ Movie viewing opportunities in Fellowship Hall:

- Bible Study group on Wed, Feb 28th at 1pm

~ Reminder: We are not using printed envelopes for offerings in order to save money and paper. You may pick up a packet of envelopes in the Gathering Place for either monthly or weekly contributions.

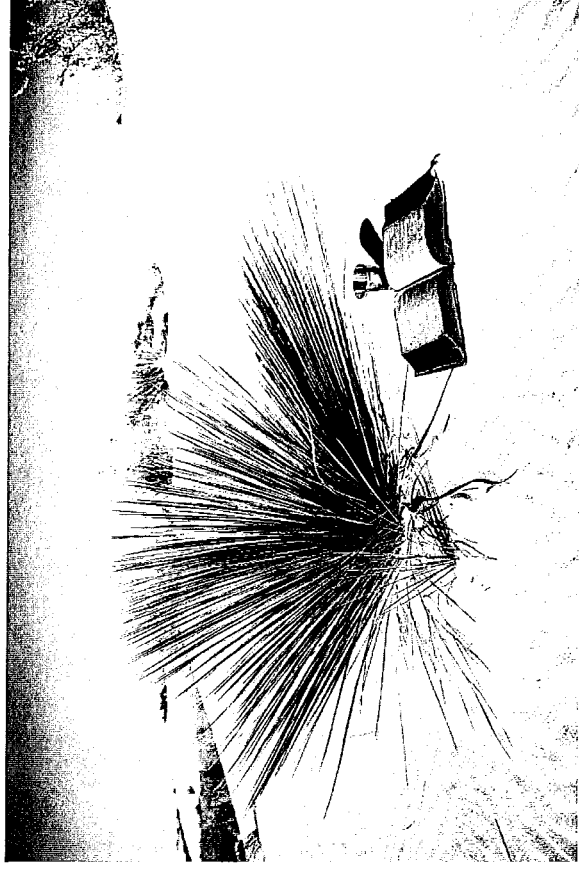
~ To be good stewards of God's earth, we are recycling paper and plastic. Please look for the recycling paper containers at both entrances. Feel free to put any unwanted bulletins in these containers. The container for plastic bottles will be in The Gathering Place.

Grace Outreach Activities

~ February 25, immediately after the worship service, there will be a gathering for anyone interested in signing cards for any Grace off site saints, college students and those serving in the military.

Easter Services Update

- Maundy Thursday Service at Trinity UCC Gettysburg led by Pastor Fred at 7 pm
- Good Friday Service at Grace UCC led by Pastor Fred at 7 pm
- JOINT Sunrise Service on Easter at 6:30 am (location TBD)
- Worship at Trinity UCC Gettysburg led by Pastor Fred at approx. 8 am
- Worship with communion at Grace UCC led by Pastor Fred at 10 am.



Repentance

Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

In case of inclement weather, please check Facebook or call the Prayer Line 717-634-8865

Lent

"Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15

For forty years the Hebrews wandered,
Fleeing slavery's hold,
God's grace and mercy sadly squandered –
A false "god" made of gold;
And Moses fasted forty days
Upon Mount Sinai where
The Lord spoke from smoke, cloud, and haze
And would the Law declare.

Our Savior braved the wilderness
For forty days and nights
And passed the devil's tempting tests
To show the truth and light.
Preparing for his ministry,
Christ fasted and he prayed,
And though the cross loomed cruelly,
Christ on his mission stayed.

We now have forty days to pause,
To pray and contemplate
God's mercy, grace, and sacred laws
That lift sin's heavy weight.
This is the season to reflect,
To fast, and to repent.
A call from Christ we can't neglect,
Our journey during Lent.

Patti Miller



How to make good choices by looking ahead

In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.— James 3:5

In a small village in Borneo, well-intentioned health workers once sprayed the straw huts with the now-illegal substance, DDT. The purpose of the spraying was to control the mosquito population, thereby reducing cases of life-threatening malaria among the tribe. Little did they realize the unintended consequences they'd incur.

The spray didn't kill just the mosquitos. It also killed the lizards that normally inhabited the thatch walls of the huts. The village cats then ate the lizards and died also. That resulted in an unrestrained influx of rats into the village.



Not only that, but the lizards' demise left the population of straw-consuming caterpillars free to reproduce. They eventually gobbled up the straw roofs of the huts.

Almost every action has unintended consequences. Sometimes they're harmless; other times they aren't. But it's important, as believers in Christ, for us to think through the consequences of our actions.

For example, before we repeat something we heard about someone else, it's important to stop and think about how it may impact that person. It might cause us to think twice before speaking!

Be mindful of the consequences of your actions and make wise choices to do what's right!

Prayer Challenge

Pray that God would keep you mindful of the consequences your actions have.

Questions for thought

Think of a time when you did something that caused unintended negative consequences. What happened?

How might looking ahead thoughtfully keep a situation like that from happening again?

First Sunday in Lent, February 18, 2024

Scripture Reading: Genesis 9:8-17

If it costs your inner peace, it is too expensive. — Anon.

Once upon a time, a City Mouse from Chicago visited a cousin who lived in the neighboring state of Iowa. For lunch, the Country Mouse served wheat stalks, roots and acorns, with a dash of cold water to drink. The City Mouse ate very sparingly, nibbling a little of this and a little of that, and by her manner making it very plain that she ate the simple food only to be polite.

After the meal, the two cousins had a long talk. Actually, the City Mouse talked about her life in a huge metropolis, while her cousin, the Country Mouse, listened. They then went to bed in a cozy nest in the hedgerow and slept in quiet and comfort until morning.

In her sleep, the Country Mouse dreamed she was a City Mouse with all the luxuries and delights of city life that her cousin had described for her. So the next day, when the City Mouse asked the Country Mouse to go home with her to the city, she gladly said yes. They hopped a Union Pacific train, and off they went.

When they reached the mansion in which the City Mouse lived, they found on the table in the dining room the leavings of a very fine banquet. There were sweetmeats and jellies, pastries, delicious cheeses, indeed, the most tempting foods that a mouse can imagine.

But just as the Country Mouse was about to nibble a dainty bit of pastry, she heard a Cat mewl loudly and scratch at the door. In great fear, the mice scurried to a hiding place, where they lay quite still for a long time, hardly daring to breathe. When at last they ventured back to the feast, the door opened suddenly and in came the servants to clear the table, followed by the House Dog.

The Country Mouse stopped in the other Mouse's den only long enough to pick up her carpetbag and umbrella. "You may have luxuries and dainties that I have not," she said as she hurried away, "but I'd rather gnaw a bean than be gnawed by continual fear. Truth is, I prefer my plain food and simple life in the country with the peace and security that go with it."

Yes. Who wouldn't be glad to feel secure and at peace? But it is also possible that the City Mouse also felt more secure with her life in the city. Most of us prefer the peace and security of what we call "home."

It's wonderful to have peace and security with our outer, external life. Yet, somehow, it is even better to have that peace "which surpasses all understanding, [which] will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

—Timothy Merrill, with apologies to Aesop's version of this fable, with which creative liberties were taken.

Prayer: O Lord, thank you for surrounding me with your peace. Amen.

Week of February 18, 2024

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Exodus 21-24

Monday: Exodus 25-27

Tuesday: Exodus 28-31

Wednesday: Exodus 32-34

Thursday: Exodus 35-37

Friday: Exodus 38-40

Saturday: Psalms 16-18

In Between

The object of this game is to find words that begin with the letters in the word on the left column and end with the word on the right column.

EXAMPLE:

B	BUSINESS	S
I	ICE	E
R	RIDE	E
D	DIAMOND	D

1.	A	P
	R	I
	M	T

2.	B	A
	A	C
	C	H
	K	E

3.	C	F
	A	R
	R	E
	E	E

4.	D	L
	E	I
	A	N
	D	E

5.	F	B
	I	O
	S	W
	H	L

6.	O	F
	V	L
	E	O
	R	W

7.	G	C
	R	H
	A	I
	N	L
	D	D

8.	H	M
	O	A
	M	D
	E	E

9.	L	W
	U	A
	K	R
	E	M

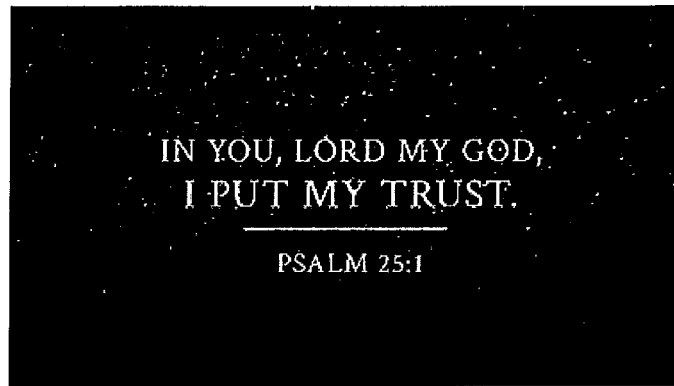
10.	P	O
	A	F
	Y	F

Possible answers : 1. asleep, ravioli, mount; 2. banana, atomic, church, knee; 3. chief, affair, rinse, eve; 4. devil, eboli, adjourn, deceive; 5. flab, igloo, show, hell; 6. oaf, vernal, echo, renew ; 7. graphic, ranch, alibi, naval, decided; 8. harem, opera, mild, elevate; 9. law, utopia, knitter, elm ; 10. photo, aloof, yourself.



First Sunday
IN LENT

Psalms 25:1-10



L	E	K	F	N	W	K	B	U	G	M	S	T	B	S	J	K	V	L	S	I	R	T	X	D
N	A	F	V	G	U	L	A	F	L	I	K	U	W	C	B	I	B	W	I	O	O	T	A	P
R	Z	L	I	O	W	V	H	A	U	R	E	T	H	W	T	N	A	T	S	N	O	C	R	I
H	V	Q	W	C	K	T	S	L	Q	V	U	C	R	O	B	D	L	U	S	A	M	A	V	W
E	C	S	S	A	R	T	I	H	F	O	A	I	B	H	B	N	V	R	Y	C	Y	N	W	V
I	E	A	B	U	Y	W	J	Q	A	E	R	Z	U	X	R	E	F	N	Q	E	W	L	F	G
A	B	L	S	A	K	S	G	C	T	M	C	P	T	S	Y	S	D	G	R	F	B	I	X	C
M	C	T	A	G	X	E	N	E	M	I	E	S	I	M	T	S	I	Q	H	D	B	O	C	B
F	X	G	W	P	T	H	O	R	S	R	X	X	M	S	U	E	M	R	Q	H	V	V	F	V
O	Y	U	E	W	J	V	F	Y	F	N	P	U	C	D	M	R	N	X	S	U	J	M	S	O
R	H	R	G	Z	V	R	H	T	U	R	T	N	M	E	M	Y	V	W	X	O	F	W	K	D
G	D	K	X	R	L	J	C	D	G	E	Z	O	V	P	A	T	E	H	A	F	S	V	Y	X
I	E	J	V	U	F	Q	G	J	O	J	K	A	N	B	N	A	I	A	M	O	H	G	I	P
V	A	X	U	J	B	M	F	S	G	E	S	S	F	A	U	E	Y	N	R	M	U	V	M	K
E	G	L	B	V	L	Q	V	G	A	N	A	U	L	E	B	F	N	B	U	H	J	R	T	V
P	A	A	Y	R	T	R	D	F	R	V	Q	U	S	N	R	E	S	M	F	I	U	G	L	B
U	B	A	R	H	Y	K	N	O	Y	Y	E	Q	M	Z	W	D	O	N	J	S	A	Q	L	B
O	M	I	Y	A	T	U	L	V	Z	K	T	S	I	W	F	Q	P	J	M	G	O	Z	C	X
Q	A	T	K	O	R	F	U	Z	W	A	S	E	A	R	M	J	F	V	O	O	Z	A	P	J
F	O	W	P	X	G	P	J	R	N	R	A	D	T	V	Y	S	C	J	R	T	Z	H	F	J

ALWAYS
ENEMIES
PRAYER
SHAME
TRUTH

CONSTANT
FORGIVE
SAVE ME
TEACH

DEFEAT
KINDNESS
SAVES
TRUST



Genesis 9:8-17

I L P W P V W P Q O K K B S R D C N M C
 U I S B M Y R R N E B W T I A O Z X W F
 R T O S S F L O O D G N N O U Z A G D M
 X L M Q G K G M J V A Z I R Y A N A H S
 N A C U O E A I A D H Q Z O I I O B I K
 B C H N X W E S N H R A Q U T C B C U K
 E Z L I L J Z E Z Z Z I O S I D J M O G
 P W B B F M C M K J I W A N G O D J Q Z
 I X S O N S I X G K F L L B U S R P F F
 C C W T E R T D K C R W H T A Q B D Y M
 X L O D R Z A N C E S T O R S D F Z H F
 X B O V D O H Y V A E U A U E M D X M F
 S D V Z E V R E N H L H S G H K D C L N
 T S J N Y N M F P J A Y B C F C Q Q G D
 E L N P L H A A N U O X U R N G A K X C
 D S V Z A B J N H O K R V F O B H L G H
 P L K G J X W J T P C N N Y N D S I O L
 E T R A J U L V J W O B N I A R Q H Y Z
 H W W U X O Z U N G M S R I T T J F E O
 R Q W R X K G M L P H M W N J S P U Y M

ANCESTORS

COVENANT

DESCENDANTS

EVERLASTING

FLOOD

HAM

JAPHETH

NOAH

PROMISE

RAINBOW

SHEM