

# Grace Devotion

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**Week of March 3, 2024**

Pastor Fred Young

*My body is what connects me to all these other people. Wearing my skin is not a solitary practice but one that brings me into communion with all these other embodied souls. It is what we have most in common with one another. In Christian teaching, followers of Jesus are called to honor the bodies of our neighbors as we honor our own. In his expanded teaching by example, this includes leper bodies, possessed bodies, widow and orphan bodies, as well as foreign bodies and hostile bodies, none of which he shied away from. Read from the perspective of the body, his ministry was about encountering those whose flesh was discounted by the world in which they lived.*

*What many of us miss, in our physical dis-ease, is that our bodies remain God's best way of getting to us.*

**Barbara Brown Taylor**

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"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking of the temple of his body. **John 2:19**

Our takeaway from today's Gospel is to honor our bodies. Our flesh and bones, hair and joints, fingers, toes, and organs. Jesus rips through the temple, flipping over tables, scaring the animal sacrifices and daring all within ear shot to destroy it. Not the brick and mortar, but as John describes Jesus as the living temple, where God and humanity meet.

The temple that he claims will be 'rebuilt' in three days upon destruction. The same body that is sacrificed, rises again to ensure our eternal life. Jesus invites us to be a part of the good flesh, so that we might come to know God personally. God's

home is not a courtyard, narthex, or altar, rather the Divine lives in a different kind of temple; Jesus' own body.

It is hard for us to accept that our bodies are far from invincible, yet remain holy places, dwellings for God. It is just as hard to recognize that God loves all bodies, everywhere! When we learn to love our own bodies as divine temples it becomes much harder not to love and respect another's body as the same. Jesus interfered with temple life for the sake of justice and compassion. He would not stand for the violation of any sanctuary... anyone's body. As modern-day followers we too should raise our voices when others are exploited, abused, discriminated against or forced to live in poor or oppressive situations. We are God's hands and feet, the Creator's body on earth! How will we respond to Jesus' invitation to get comfortable in our skin and get to know God personally?

PRAYER: Dear God, remind me that my body is a temple. Encourage me in my living to respect and care for it, like the gift you meant it to be. Amen.

March 3, 2024

## Third Sunday in Lent

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes

Prelude "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" ~ Albin C. Whitforth

\*\*Song: "In Christ Alone" ~ Owl City\*

\*\* Call to Worship

Lector: As we come together on this third Sunday in Lent, let's pause and center ourselves for a moment of worship.

**Congregation: We're here, ready to be present and engage in this time of worship.**

Lector: In the midst of our everyday hustle, let's take a moment to reflect on the journey of Lent, where we are and where we're headed.

**Congregation: It's good to have this time to reflect and refocus.**

Lector: As we gather together, let's be mindful of the spiritual path we're on, seeking meaning and connection.

**Congregation: May our time together bring us closer to the divine and to one another.**

\*\* Opening Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, as we come together in fellowship, we seek Your presence to fill this gathering. In the moments that unfold, may Your love inspire us, Your wisdom guide us, and Your grace draw us closer to one another. Bless our worship with unity, understanding, and a deep awareness of Your abiding love. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

\*\* Sharing the Peace of Christ

Joys and Concerns

Prayer of Confession/Praying for Others

Lord's Prayer

Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

\*\* Hymn: "The Solid Rock" #404

Poem: "Hindsight and Foresight"

Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings

\*\* *Doxology*

\*\* Prayer of Dedication

Scripture Readings: Exodus 20:1-17 (NRSV)  
John 2:13-22 (The Message)

Time for the Young at Heart

A New Creed

Hymn: "Great is the Lord" #31

Message: "Breaking Chains, Building Bridges"

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

\*\* Final Blessing

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

Postlude Fuge in F-Dur ~J.S. Bach

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

### Announcements

~ Next Sunday starts Daylight Savings Time. Don't forget to move your clocks forward!

~Next Sunday will be the Congregational Meeting following worship regarding upgrades to the technology at Grace.

#### **Church Financials**

General pledge January 2024: \$5,092

General pledge January 2023: \$7,001

YTD income: \$11,960

YTD expenses: \$15,827

YTD deficit: \$3,867

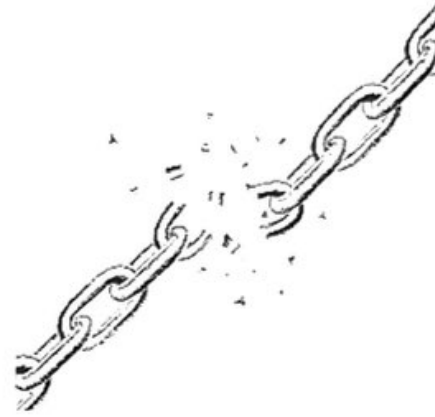
#### **Grace Outreach Activities**

**Goody Bags:** The Outreach Committee will be collecting snack items such as small bags of chips, pretzels, crackers, candy, etc. to be placed in bags and given to area police and fire departments, school bus companies, and hospital ER. There is a collection box in the hall across from the elevator for anyone who may be interested in donating. The bags will be assembled Saturday March 23 at 10 AM.

**March Film:** This 2014 film is about the clash of two cultures and how the people are able to work out their differences. The film will be shown Friday March 8 in Fellowship Hall. The film will start at 3 PM and doors will be locked at 3:15. The film is rated PG and runs 122 minutes. Snacks provided.

#### 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.



## *Breaking Chains and Building Bridges*

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*

## Hindsight and Foresight

After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. John 2:22

So often we recall the past -  
Our failures and our dreams.  
We see so clearly then at last  
Life's not what it may seem.  
"If I had known what I know now,"  
Is often what we say.  
We shake our heads and even smile  
At times we went astray.

We know that wisdom comes with age,  
Experience and years;  
Too late to rewrite that failed page  
That may be stained with tears.  
But Christ forgives our faults and sin,  
Wipes clean that stained profile,  
Encourages us to start again,  
And gives us cause to smile.

Hindsight can matter, but much more  
We need to look ahead,  
God's possibilities explore,  
And go where Christ has led.  
Let's look with hope to brighter days -  
Days bought for us by Christ -  
Expect the best, and mend our ways,  
And foresight will suffice. Patti Miller



Third Sunday in Lent, March 3, 2024

## Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

*To forgive is to set a prisoner free, and discover that the prisoner is you!*  
—Lewis B. Smedes



Jess Walter's book, *The Cold Millions*, was one of 2020's most anticipated books. It told a fictionalized account of the labor and free speech struggles in the early 1900s in Spokane, Washington. The story features two brothers of different temperaments trying to make their dreams come true. Along the way, they meet a young firebrand, only in her early twenties, but who is already turning the world upside down. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn would go on to become a founding member of the ACLU.

In this book, Walters tells the following story.

A preacher, having given a sermon on grace in a small mining town, was approached at the church door by one of the miners. The man was looking distraught. He told the preacher he'd give anything if only he could believe that God really forgives sins.

"I can't believe he'll forgive me if I just turn to him," the miner admitted. "It's too cheap."

"You were working in the mine yesterday, weren't you?" the preacher asked.

"Yes, of course," said the miner.

"And how did you get out of the pit?"

"The way I usually do; I got into the cage and was pulled to the top."

"How much did you pay to come out of the pit?"

"Why, nothing," the miner admitted.

"You weren't afraid to trust yourself to the cage? Was it not too cheap?"

"Oh, no," said the miner. "It was cheap for me, but it cost the company a lot of money to sink that shaft."

As soon as he said it, a change came over the miner's face. He saw the preacher's meaning. Forgiveness is free for us — but it was purchased at a terrible price, a price paid by Jesus on the cross.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord, thank you for all of the spiritual blessings I enjoy at no cost to myself. May I be even more grateful as I stand beneath the shadow of the cross to receive them. Amen.*

# HOME TOUCH® Activity Page

Week of March 3, 2024

## Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Leviticus 1-4

Monday: Leviticus 5-7

Tuesday: Leviticus 8-10

Wednesday: Leviticus 11-13

Thursday: Leviticus 14-16

Friday: Leviticus 17-19

Saturday: Psalms 22-24

## Verse to Remember

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house  
of the LORD my whole life long. —Psalm 23:6*

1. thumb, hornet, earth \_\_\_\_\_
2. little, leg, casserole \_\_\_\_\_
3. rites, straw, word \_\_\_\_\_
4. hat, elephant, knight \_\_\_\_\_
5. arrest, plant, fly \_\_\_\_\_
6. frame, perfect, this \_\_\_\_\_
7. jacket, fever, journalism \_\_\_\_\_
8. weight, tiger, mache \_\_\_\_\_
9. picker, bomb, tomato \_\_\_\_\_
10. ahead, line, away \_\_\_\_\_
11. saucer, buttress, squirrel \_\_\_\_\_
12. association, fall, born \_\_\_\_\_
13. friend, scout, Friday \_\_\_\_\_
14. eye, house, blower \_\_\_\_\_
15. digger, dust, coast \_\_\_\_\_

## ADD a WORD

**Directions:** Add one word to the beginning of each word in the series to create a phrase. For example, to the words **alert**, **carpet** and **herring**, you could insert the word **red** to create **red alert**, **red carpet** and **red herring**. Write the word that is common to all in the space provided.

### MATH SHAPES

**Directions:** Determine the value of each shape.

$$\bigcirc \times \square = 12$$

$$\square + \square = 8$$

$$\bigcirc + \diamond = 10$$

$$\bigcirc = ? \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\square = ? \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$\diamond = ? \quad \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$



Answers:

1. green

2. chicken

3. last

4. white

5. house

6. picture

7. yellow

8. paper

9. cherry

10. straight

11. flying

12. free

13. girl

14. glass

15. gold

MATH

SHAPES:

$\bigcirc = 3$ ;  $\square = 4$ ;

$\diamond = 7$



# How to preach the gospel through forgiveness

*Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.— Colossians 3:13*

Evangelist John Wesley was returning home from service one evening when he was robbed. The thief didn't make out with much – a little money and some Christian literature. As he was running away, Wesley shouted, *"You may regret this sort of life. And if you do, just remember the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin!"*.

Years later, Wesley was greeting people after a Sunday service when he was approached by a stranger. He was surprised to learn that this well-dressed businessman, now a believer in Christ, was the same man who had robbed him years before.

*"I owe it all to you,"* the man told Wesley.

*"Oh no, my friend,"* Wesley quipped back, *"not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin!"*

Grace and forgiveness have the power to destroy barriers of the gospel. That's because when we forgive, we literally give others a small taste of the grace of God. And when they've had a taste, they might just want more.

**Don't forgive because it's easy. Forgive because it reflects the character of Christ.** Live a life of forgiveness and you'll preach the gospel of grace to everyone you forgive!

## ***Prayer Challenge***

Pray and ask God to help you live a life of forgiveness – always showing grace to those who wrong you.

## ***Questions for thought***

Think of some people in your life to whom you can show grace today for past mistakes. Who comes to mind?

What would your life look like if you lived with that attitude of grace every day?





# LENT

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

OPERATIONRICEBOWL

FOREHEAD

FORTY

SORROW

FAST

FASTING

ASHES

PRAY

SPRINGTIME

PURPLE

LENT

PRAYER

CROSS

MARCHFIRST

PENANCE

ASHWEDNESDAY

ALMSGIVING

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Psalm 19

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

save	please	innocent	obey	honey
gold	teachings	decisions	respect	commands
happy	wise	instruction	trusted	laws
rules	strength	perfect	heat	athlete
morning	sun	home	world	message
sound	power	story	glory	heavens