

# A Lenten JOURNEY

2020



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A COLLECTION OF DEVOTIONS  
VOLUME XXIII



# Preface

In 1996, then resident Mrs. Marguerite Wingo was inspired to encourage Westminster Canterbury to publish Lenten devotions written by residents, staff and volunteers. She encouraged people to think about how God had touched their lives and to write about their experiences—so that other residents would be encouraged to love, serve, and live lives of faith.

I know that the Westminster Canterbury family can attest to how our community is a constant inspiration to us. We hear stories of strength, loss, generosity, resilience, wisdom—and much more—every single day. Behind every smile and every tear is a lifetime of “stories.”

Thank you to all who have shared your stories with us for this year’s Lenten Journey. It is our hope that those who read what you wrote will take heart, be moved, and be inspired. One never knows how the Holy Spirit will work through the written page or the spoken word. But we do know that the Spirit moves!

Thank you, also, to the many folks who offered hours of their time in collecting, editing and formatting the submissions. This beautiful booklet you hold in your hands was brought to you by many who pray that you will be inspired by the stories inside.

May we all be grateful to Marguerite who knew what she was talking about when she wrote:

“I am convinced that God’s ways of dealing with His children are far more wonderful than we could ever imagine. It is my hope that you will be inspired by these stories of faith...”

— Rev. Dr. Lynn McClintock  
DIRECTOR PASTORAL CARE

# Introduction

## CONGRATULATIONS!

By opening this book you are taking an important step in the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Lent is the Season of Preparation for Easter. Planning and preparation for a major event are always a good thing. By reading this devotional daily you are participating in Lent.

Many people observe Lent by giving up something for the season. What they give up is usually desirable, something they will miss. The idea is to “go without” for 40 days, just as Jesus went without in the wilderness. Jesus went without food, so I should give up chocolate? Some have tried to go without coffee; they were miserable, they made those around them miserable. Is that what Lent is supposed to do?

By opening this book you are adding a daily devotional (or adding something to your ongoing daily devotional time). Spending time daily reflecting upon Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is the best way to prepare for Easter. Do not to rush through this part of your day. Enter into this time with prayer, read and reflect upon the devotion, and then conclude your time with prayer.

You and those around you will be blessed by your taking the time and preparing for the celebration of God’s ultimate expression of love.

Enjoy these 40 days, may you grow in your excitement for the celebration of the Resurrection!

– Dr. Jim King

PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF

SALISBURY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## MY HIDING PLACE

The word, “dappled,” was not part of my vocabulary as I lay on my back on spongy moss, peering up at the huge trees that filtered the sunlight. A small brook bubbled alongside me. The shadows cast by the sun introduced a new dimension to the afternoon that made me feel content—a feeling I had neither recognized nor named before.

My hiding place, down a rocky path deep in our neighborhood woods, absorbed the angst of middle school drama and tears.

I was in eighth grade, perhaps thirteen years old. I found such peace there that I slowly became aware, for the first time, of not just “being,” but of different states of being; aware of being an individual, separate from the family identity I had always known.

I was too young to recognize these feelings as a paradigm shift.

My awakening in this sanctuary was enlightening, and I longed to stay there. I felt a certain spirit there I could not explain — a warm presence drawing me into a sense of assurance and belonging. This secret place was like a sanctuary, so secluded, so silent that I was overcome with awe.

I did not recognize it at the time, but I was being wooed by the Creator of my hiding place. As time progressed, He continued to pursue me, make His presence known in my spirit, then to call until I recognized that still small voice within me and, at His knock, I opened the door of my heart. I became His. He is my hiding place. I have loved dappled sunlight ever since.

“You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” Psalm 32:7-8

— Ann Neidow, RESIDENT

# Thursday after Ash Wednesday

JONAH 3:1-10

PSALM 37:1-18

ROMANS 1:1:7

## A BLESSING AND A PRAYER

In May 2011, I had hip surgery. The nurses told my husband and sons that I had a stroke after my surgery. I was very sick during my stay at the hospital, and I did not eat well. I threw up everything I ate. I came back to Westminster Canterbury and was given food, but vomited again. The next morning Dr. Christensen came into the room and saw me. Then he sent me back to St. Mary's Hospital with an ileus diagnosis (medical term for shutdown of the intestine) and then the hospital tested me for many other things. After about 10 days, I came back to Westminster Canterbury. My grandson and my family came to see me. My grandson wrote me this very heartfelt and touching note about life and the ever loving ability to continue on and touch the lives of others. "Grandmother, remember all the life you've lived. This is just a bump in the road. You're a great person and you'll continue to be a great person. We need you. Push through this and continue to love, just like you always have, for me and for the rest of the family and for all the lives that you have touched and for God. This is from your grandson, who needs you and loves you. If anything you do right now, I want you to not regret doing this surgery. I want you to be optimistic about the future. I want you to get well."

Love, Peter, and the rest of the family.

– Mary Alice Aikin, RESIDENT

OPENING UP IN LENT

I remember watching a film called *Chocolat* in a French Studies class. It tells the story of a woman who moves to a small French town in the winter. She opens a chocolate shop right across from the town's church and makes delicious treats that the people love. A problem arises, however, when Lent begins and she continues to bake her tempting and tasty desserts! Many townspeople feel tempted to break their Lenten fasts, and the woman quickly becomes the object of the town's scorn.

I remember watching the film and feeling sorry for those folks who in quiet (and in guilt!) ate those sweet treats, so as not to let on that they had broken their Lenten discipline. As I continue to grow in my own faith, I've realized that during Lent, unlike the characters in this film, rather than giving something up like chocolate, I like to "take something on."

For several years, I have enjoyed taking on a practice for Lent which turns me toward God and deepens my relationship with God and others. One year, I wrote 40 handwritten notes to people who I love, letting each person know that I care about them. One note for each day of Lent. Another year, I took on a practice of praying the Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer each day. I've found that these practices have opened my heart, prepared my heart and have called me to a deeper relationship with God as I move toward celebrating the loving, risen Jesus on Easter Day.

— Logan Augustine, PASTORAL CARE

# *Saturday after Ash Wednesday*

ISAIAH 58:1-12  
PSALM 30  
MATTHEW 18:1-7

## GOD'S INSURANCE POLICY

Psalm 91 has been my favorite for such a long time - and my husband's also. I like to read it from the King James Version and the Amplified Bible as the slight changes in interpretation each have much to say. It is said that Moses wrote this psalm that protects you at home and away, and you have protection for your head, your front and back, your sides and your feet. This protection is day or night. The God referenced here is El Shaddai. You can stake your claim to all His promises by speaking and claiming them-drawing your blood line.

Verse 1 tells us we can be safe if we just get in the shadow of the Almighty. The Amplified Bible adds, "No foe can withstand this shadow."

As this psalm continues, we learn that we are safe night and day and that we are protected from both small and large attacks, because God has us under his wings. We shall be just spectators watching our attackers fail. We have all sorts of "attacks" in our lives, but we just need to trust God and turn them over to Him.

Verses 9-16 are God answering back. How wonderful to know that we have angels watching over us! Verse 14 sets out seven promises to those who love Him: (1) He will deliver us; (2) He will set us on high; (3) He will answer us; (4) He will be with us in trouble; (5) He will deliver us and honor us; (6) We are promised long life and (7); We have His salvation.

This is a truly comforting psalm. Read it, and discover all that God promises you.

— Sarah Jones, RESIDENT



# *First Sunday in Lent*

GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7

PSALM 32

MATTHEW 4:1-11

## ON BEING THANKFUL

On Thursday, he fell in his bathroom in Monticello and wrenched his back. Staff was on the spot to assess the damage, make him comfortable, and alert me.

I was thankful.

On Friday, it was decided that he would receive better pain control and rehab in Parsons Health Center – where staff remembered him, from a previous visit, as a violist, a chess player and a partaker of a late afternoon beer!

I was thankful to leave him in such friendly and caring hands.

Over the weekend, other issues arose and were beautifully managed.

I was thankful.

Another set of issues arose early the next week, and I could not be more thankful for the promptness and efficiency of solutions from all levels of staff . . . for the love expressed for him, and the generous support for me and my concerns.

He'll return to Monticello in a couple of weeks . . . he will forget . . .but I am forever thankful, for both of us, for Westminster Canterbury!

– Ann Archer, RESIDENT AND FORMER STAFF MEMBER

# Monday First Week of Lent

1 KINGS 19:1-8  
PSALM 41  
HEBREWS 2:10-18

## A PRAYER OF PRAISE AND PEACE WITH GOD

(Psalm 34)

I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears.

They looked unto him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed.

This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of his troubles; the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivered them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him . . . so I thank God.

I thank God for blessing me to be humble before him: quick to hear and slow to speak.

I thank God for gracing me to embody a positive mind and spirit and to have an intimate knowledge of you.

I thank God for granting me with wisdom and understanding.

I thank God for growth in obedience and instruction from the Holy Spirit that guides and lead me through my walk in life and my decisions.

I thank God for my challenges, for without them I know growth and knowledge will cease.

I thank God for knowing how to and when to search my heart when it needs filling.

Thank you God, for allowing me to love unconditionally and without persecution.

I thank God for blessing me with the gifts that are in me, so that I am able to also be a blessing to others. Amen.

– Kim Diehl, HOUSEKEEPING

## PATIENTS WHO INSPIRE THEIR DOCTORS

After many years of caring for patients with serious blood diseases such as leukemia or lymphoma, and later caring for geriatric patients, many important incidences have taught me a great deal about how patients, their family or friends have sought to help patients in need. Yes, we do tend to hear of occasional instances of neglect or insensitivity by relatives but, in my experience, they are extremely rare.

Almost always, I have seen the courage of my patients in the face of progressive disease. I have also seen sacrifices by family or friends to address the patient's needs and a sense of duty that keeps them loyal to the patient. This is what inspires the doctor and enriches my opportunity to know each patient and learn from them.

Patient care provides a window into the lives of ill persons that others, even close family, may not see. A physician learns of patient's fears, what their wishes are and what they most desire as an outcome. Mainly, I am inspired by their courage to face serious consequences or physical and mental declines due to aging, and their ability to maintain a positive outlook.

Patients' families, or even neighbors, will sacrifice to help their loved ones, including leaving employment, spending long hours attending to their needs and changing their own lives. Caregivers do not complain about these interruptions in their lives. One person told me that in his house, he made an apartment for his mother on one end and an apartment for his mother-in-law on the other end. That is a sense of duty cheerfully kept.

These many experiences of love, duty and courage have inspired me, and I believe many other physicians also, as we learn from interactions with our patients and families.

– Robert B. Scott, MD, RESIDENT

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT,  
AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE OF COMFORT

As I look back over my life, I can account for many gifts I have received. However, Westminster Canterbury Richmond is not one I anticipated, nor one that would be so meaningful. As I prepared to move from my house in Richmond, I became aware of such benefits, such as its secure environment, a variety of cultural activities in which to participate and recreational opportunities designed to enhance wellness. Oh, I can't omit how much I looked forward to the number and varied dining opportunities for someone who did not enjoy cooking and dining alone.

Beginning with the day I arrived in April 2018, I began to receive the gift of new and precious friendships from the residents on my floor in the Tower as well as in other areas of the campus. Because of the many welcoming gestures, I immediately felt at home. Soon after, I was touched by how these gestures were extended to my 102 year old mother, a resident of Mary Morton Parsons Health Center. As Mother's health declined, these acts of kindness and support from my Westminster friends grew.

In August 2019, the gift of a multi-faceted resource for religious and spiritual support became more meaningful when Mother died. At that time the comfort and support provided by Chaplain David Curtis was invaluable. Also, I could never have imagined the outpouring of love and acts of kindness shown by the Westminster community.

How grateful I am to be able to call Westminster Canterbury my home.

— Carolyn Switzer, RESIDENT

LOOK TO SEE HOW GOD MOVES

I recently returned from celebrating the wedding of my 2nd child. I wanted to give her something special she might always remember, so I wrote her a letter. During this time of reflection, as my thoughts came into form, I could see how God's presence moves throughout my life. The first line of my letter was: "This is the day that almost wasn't," for on the day she was born her heart stopped beating shortly after birth for no apparent reason. I could say modern medicine and technology saved her life, but just as easily, it could have failed. A miracle, one of many.

The early years of marriage, children and life may seem familiar, a struggle to make ends meet, but we made the best of it with love and laughter. However as time rolls on, like loose threads, things began to unravel, life was hard, messy, complicated and painful. Still, God moves.

I thought I would break, enduring the darkest days dragging on into months and years of hardships that followed. I had 3 daughters to care for, giving up was not an option, I persisted. By the grace of God, and faith I found my way through, along with the help of family and friends. Still, God moves.

Now 29 years later, I have the privilege of walking my daughter down the aisle - this beautiful amazing daughter I'm so proud of. This, no less a miracle, to see this child emerge, with passion, tenacity and grit, to live her life and own it. I do not take for granted that she is one of 3 beautiful, healthy, happy daughters, whom, having overcome the hardships, emerged as sound individuals, self-sustaining members of community, who know how to love and work. Still, God moves.

So this Lenten season, pause to reflect on your life, find the moments where the divine being within has influenced miraculous outcomes. Be still, let your heart be filled with gratitude, for all the ways God moves in your life.

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

— Patti Pickering, WELLNESS

## CHAIR EXERCISES

When my aunt moved to Westminster Canterbury in 1980, she told me she went to chair exercises on the Roof Terrace. I thought to myself, “chair exercises?” How helpful could that be? I did aerobics, moving around the floor doing different steps in time to the music and lifting weights. I even got on the floor for more exercises.

Now almost 40 years later, I am at Westminster Canterbury doing chair exercises. I find they are actually quite good and beneficial. Some exercises we do sitting and some standing behind the chair, using the back for stability. We lift weights, use elastic bands, balls, sticks and other equipment to make the exercises different and more fun.

Why am I writing about chair exercises in a devotional journal? A person needs to have a strong body to have a strong mind. It is very important to do some sort of exercise – chair exercises, walking, water aerobics, gardening, golf, or anything that will keep your body fit and, therefore, your mind.

My days of standing aerobics are over, and I’m thankful to have the chair exercises offered at Westminster Canterbury to strengthen my mind, body, and, of course, spirit.

– Jean Brydon, RESIDENT

## FRAGRANCES

Followers of Christ are to have an AROMA. We are to have an “air” about us that portrays the ESSENCE of CHRIST. We are to live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, as a “fragrant offering” and sacrifice to God.

So, what is OUR fragrance? Do others detect the Aroma of Christ when they are around us? The more we linger with Jesus, the more we carry His scent. Jesus lets us know very clearly that HIS scent is LOVE. We *apply* His scent when we study His Holy Word, when we pray to Him, when we believe in Him, trust Him and obey Him.

In cultivating relationships with others, it is important to *be ourselves* and let Jesus’s aroma flow naturally through the *unique* person that He has made each of us to be. The sweet aroma of Jesus (LOVE) is detected by others through our actions and our words. When we are obedient to wear His scent, the Holy Spirit will draw others to Christ.

*The fragrance of the World* is packaged as “SIN.” It has the aroma of impatience, unfaithfulness, selfishness, pride, lack of self-control, impure thoughts, jealousy, neglect of God, etc. *The fragrance of Christ* is packaged as “Love.” *Love’s fragrance* is forgiveness, serving, peacemaking, patience, self-control, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, etc. (See Galatians 5.) How rank our fragrance is when we lose self-control, when we “step” on others, when we exclude others, etc. The smallest of actions that carry His aroma can change our world.

To those willing to breathe in His fragrance, it is a life-giving sweet perfume. “What aroma do I emit to others?” “Does my fragrance draw others to Christ?” May our lives blossom as the fragrant aroma of Christ!

— Nancy King, RESIDENT

## *Second Sunday in Lent*

GENESIS 12:1-4A

PSALM 121

JOHN 3:1-17

### PERSEVERANCE?

My dear cat, Nola, and I have not had quality of life lately. In late August, I was coming out of the dining room, lost my balance, and had a half-fall because God placed a rollator's seat to catch me. He was saying, "I don't want you falling on your weak artificial hip." I did, however, have a skin tear on my arm from wrist to elbow, which meant multiple trips to the Clinic for wound care.

The Lord is with us all the time and for reasons unknown to us, good and bad events happen. Twenty-four hours after my fall, I had a vertigo attack that knocked me for a loop! As I am writing this in November 2019, I'm still having vertigo symptoms daily. I pray that He will make my vertigo spells vanish. Psalm 121:5 reads, "The Lord will guard you; he is by your side to protect you ... now and forever."

If that incident wasn't enough, Nola has been in and out of the vet's office since late September – stress is bringing on her problems, so they tell me. Pets, as members of our family, are an important part of God's world for those who believe. In "Day By Day Pet," it says, "Every life is precious; God looks with compassion on Nola and Jane and makes us agents of healing in a broken world."

With my busy life, I assume that is contributing to all my latest physical problems. In the last three months, I have seen multiple doctors and therapists for medical issues: back, balance, eyes, two MRI's, adjusting to an electric bed, new brace with multiple fittings, plus having three procedures – happy to say those came out positive.

I know that God is always by my side to help and care for Nola and me. This gives me great comfort and strength during our time of recovery.

– Jane Neer, RESIDENT



TWCW – A CULTURE OF LOVE

Here at Westminster Canterbury, we are always hearing about how everyone is so supportive of the Westminster Canterbury way (TWCW); it's a way of life around here. So I thought to myself, what does that really mean and how does it represent the work everyone puts in?

I was reminded of a scripture that I feel sums it all up:

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

If there is one thing I have always felt while working here, it is LOVE. I am proud to be a part of this culture and strive to never forget our true mission here. To represent the love for family, the love for the fallen, the love for the broken, the love for church and above all, the love for God.

– Robert Flowers, CLINIC

LET GO AND LET GOD

The first time I heard this phrase was in college while working on a dance project. I overheard it from another group, and it stuck with me. Not on a daily basis as one might think, but in those incredibly stressful moments when everything is falling apart, and my ire is raising, it comes back to me, and I am grateful for it.

I remember one particular experience when my mother, who was not great with directions, wanted me to meet her, along with a few colleagues, at a restaurant I knew well. I had no idea how to get there. She assured me I could “find my way.”

Admittedly, I was not particularly interested in attending the gathering, a fact that only added to my impatience. As I became more and more lost driving aimlessly around Richmond’s Southside in darkness, my jangled nerves became fearful then rather quickly turned into anger. Intense, ugly anger with everything around me. After 45 minutes of frustration and fist pounding, I found myself at a stoplight and said, “I give up. If I am supposed to get there, I will find my way.” Then I turned my head to the right, and there was the restaurant. I was supposed to get there, because my mother needed a ride home.

Let go and let God. More useful today than ever.

– Taryn Young, WELLNESS

## SPORTS REVEAL CHARACTER

One year ago, the University of Virginia's basketball team won the NCAA National Championship after absorbing, in the previous year, a devastatingly ignominious defeat in that tournament's first round.

Sports are about victory, but more than that, they are about spirit and character. The Apostle Paul sounds like the epitome of college coaches as he sends his epistles to Greek and Roman followers of Jesus; they were familiar with athletic competition: "In a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize. So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we - an imperishable." (1Corinthians 9:24-25)

Paul urges the believing Hebrews to, "Lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us... For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:1-2, 11)

Heywood Hale Broun was a respected sportswriter and a wise observer of humankind. One of his memorable reflections was: "Sports do not build character. They reveal it!" Through perseverance and discipline a basketball team was transformed from an abject failure to the pinnacle of success.

In a sequential act of humility, Virginia's head coach, a man of deep faith, turned down a munificent salary increase and recommended that the funds be allocated instead to his assistant coaches and to student aid generally.

What more suitable time than Lent to comprehend the omnipresence, through all our days, of our Risen Lord and Savior? A catastrophic defeat drew a sorely pressed group of athletes together in common cause. It is fitting that their redemption came during Lent, for only through the sacrificial life of Jesus are we all redeemed.

STRENGTH, KINDNESS & LOVE

The Lenten season is a time of waiting – watching – listening. It is time for quiet moments of reflection. It has been two and a half years since my grandson, Teddy, died of a suicide. Last year, I was still too close to the event. This year, as I look back over the months of grieving, I am amazed at my daughter and her family. I thought this tragedy would destroy them, but instead day by day, I learned my daughter went from not wanting to get out of bed, not wanting to do any of the daily ordinary things, to finally putting her feet on the floor and coming downstairs to be present again.

God's grace was there. Two other sons needed their mother's attention: one was about to head to college, and the youngest was about to enter seventh grade. This family of Dad, Mom and now two sons instead of three put their arms around each other in a fierce protective shell of love.

Nothing was easy. Going to the grocery store was impossible because there were too many people with too many questions. Stepping out of their home, their safe place, was difficult. And yet, there were so many small acts of kindness from a community of friends and strangers that over time the family felt this blanket of love. Healing is slow but ongoing. Strength comes.

I rejoice because I have seen through this tragedy the many faces of Christ's love in action. When the minister asked the brothers and their cousins what words described Teddy, they chose kindness, love and strength. During this Lenten season, think about these three words and how you can be the face of Christ to someone in need.

– Kay Remick, RESIDENT

## A SURE CURE

No one wants to hear the “C” word. The mention of cancer is frightening – sometimes terrifying. And it can be blatant, with very visible signs, or it can be insidious, not so obvious. In my case, it was the latter. And it can come back; mine did, even after surgery. So we had to tackle it again with a different and similarly aggressive approach.

My sin is like that. It can be blatant, but more often, it is insidious: like pride, or selfishness, or envy or self-righteousness. But unlike my cancer, my sin has been dealt with decisively by Jesus Christ. The *penalty* of my sin was paid for by His atonement on the cross. The *power* of sin was crushed by His resurrection. And one day, although I still wrestle with its effects now, I will go to glory and be delivered from the *presence* of sin.

When I appropriate what Jesus has done for me, by personal faith and trust in Him, unlike my cancer, this ultimate and complete cure from the disease of sin is mine! And I can say with Job of the Old Testament, “I know that my Redeemer lives – and after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.”

– Barton Campbell, RESIDENT

GOD USES OUR HANDS AND FEET  
TO CARRY OUT HIS WORK

The dirt under my fingernails is gone. The dust and sweat has long been washed from my clothes. But the faces of the beautiful, faith-driven people I met in Nicaragua are etched in my heart forever. One of these is Gregorio Sanchez, whose eyes filled with tears as he recalled Hurricane Mitch and the October 1998 mudslide that destroyed the church he pastored, his home, and his farm land. It also took the lives of 2,500 people. His description of that fateful day also brought tears to the eyes of a mission team from my Richmond area church, Southminster Presbyterian.

Almost 16 months after the hurricane, the 350 surviving Santa Maria families lived in white tents. The tents had dirt floors, no windows and little furniture. Cooking was done on an open fire outside. There was no electricity. Water was drawn from common wells. Latrines lined the perimeter of the tent city. There were no jobs. Many men were building cinder block squares that would become their homes.

As we stood in a circle where Gregorio's church had been, hot breezes blew dust over us. He talked about how difficult it was to pull from the mud children his church had so much love and appreciation for. With just the blinking of an eye, they disappeared, he said. Gregorio expressed hope for the future, "but it won't erase the suffering from our minds."

The mud slide can be compared with Jesus crying out on the cross: "Why have you forsaken me?" Just like God didn't abandon Jesus, he didn't abandon those dying in the mud slide. He was there, comforting them.

I brought back many stories: some sad, some funny, some heartwarming. But all filled with hope and faith. We took two Coleman lanterns to the tent chapel worshippers, for which they had been praying. God used us to answer their prayers, and we turned their darkness into light. What a joy!

— Alberta Lindsey, RESIDENT

## OUR WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY SPIRIT

On that day in 1974, the Westminster Canterbury dream was coming true! Planning leaders, volunteers, clergy, donors, construction workers, neighbors, and others-of the dream-about-to-become-reality-gathered for the Dedication of the Foundation Stone at 1600 Westbrook Avenue.

The chairman of the board of trustees said, “This will be an ‘empty house’ unless there exists love and concern that cause those who will reside here and those who will labor here to dedicate themselves to providing fellowship, enlightenment, activity, motivation, recreation, physical care, and, above all, spiritual enlightenment and Christian compassion.”

Now, 45 years later, stories of several generations of residents and employees are told, proving this is not—and never has been—an “empty house.” Our home is a community of men and women who share values and purpose in common: to create each day a warm and friendly place, a welcoming place, for all who live or visit here and for all employees who work here.

This friendly spirit is everywhere on our campus. With amazement and delight, visitors notice it, as do we all.

A family member in a recent remembrance service here spoke with passion of this unique spirit, saying “The culture of residents and staff is to care for one another, speak to, show concern and compassion for one another, to be a genuine friend to one and all.” He stressed that this has deep meaning to all who live and work here. Our spirit creates and maintains the happy home—and home away from home—we enjoy, for this, as he said, “is the culture you live by at Westminster Canterbury!”

Residents and employees, together, are a 1,400-person community of belonging. Together, every day we are creating the Westminster Canterbury spirit. Together, we are essential to the protection and sharing of our treasured gift, our Westminster Canterbury spirit. Together, we affirm each day that this is a “full house,” full of gratitude and life-giving spirit.

– Lucy Boswell Negus, RESIDENT AND FORMER STAFF MEMBER

## LENT, PRAYER AND FASTING

For Christians, Lent is a season for prayer and fasting. The point of fasting is self-denial; replacing self-indulgent appetites with a strong commitment to living a holy life. Of course, that has far more to do with what we do than with what we give up. It is far more important, Lent or not, to help those in need than to forego desserts.

What about prayer? What should our prayers be to make them Lent-appropriate? Here are seven suggestions for a “Do/Don’t Do” guideline that’s actually good all year-round:

1. Don’t ask God to smite the evildoers. Instead, ask for the patience and wisdom you need to set a good example in your life to help them see a better way.

2. Don’t ask God for more stuff. Instead, ask God’s help to see the best ways to use what you already have.

3. Don’t ask God to change the past. Instead, ask what you can do to help the present and the future to be closer to what God wants them to be.

4. Don’t ask for grandiose miracles. Instead, ask for the grit and determination you need to help things move in the right direction.

5. Don’t ask God to solve the world’s problems. Instead, say, “Here am I, Lord. Send me.”

6. Don’t ask God to make neighbors who disagree with you admit that they are fools when they won’t bow to what you say. Instead, ask for a mind and heart open enough to admit that you may be wrong from time to time and to work together with your critics for the common good.

7. Never say, “God didn’t answer my prayer.” Instead, remembering that sometimes the answer will be, “No,” press on, trusting that God knows best.

— James Hall, RESIDENT



## IF GOD'S GOING TO DO IT

Templeton Prize Winner, Holmes Rolston, traces Three Big Bangs that shape who we are. The first produced a universe. In the second, matter-energy was shaped by information coded in DNA. And with the third, emerged the human brain. As a fourth dimension, adds Rolston, "Maybe our presence is embraced by another presence."

The Anglo-Saxon word for Lent, *lencten*, means "spring." God's garden includes stuff that dies to be replaced with stuff that lives again. Lent invites us to bloom.

Richard Rohr inspired these outcomes of blooming. "I am indwelled by God's presence, I am infinitely loved, I have everything I need, I have the mind of Christ, I am precious in God's eyes." Lent offers a transformational blooming through the presence of God.

We are not always conscious of God's presence. There are times when we may wish God not to be present, but Lent and Easter, to which Lent points, mean that we are invited to new life from the old, pruned for the new to grow, re-energized. Jesus reminded his disciples that they would experience yet another expression of God's presence after his departure in the flesh.

Parker Palmer wrote about "The Gift of Presence." During a period of depression, the one friend that truly helped came by every afternoon and, with few words, massaged Parker's feet. It was a healing presence. Being present to one another echoes the way God is present with us. This is a great way to prepare for Easter when God's presence overcame all resistance to the divine Word.

Our invitations to faith can get complicated and sometimes distract us from the core benefit of our faith in God. For me, God's presence, in multiple manifestations, trumps everything. For me, Lent is an annual reminder of God's Spring.

— Irving Stubbs, RESIDENT

# Wednesday Third Week of Lent

JEREMIAH 2:4-13  
PSALM 101  
JOHN 7:14-31; 37-39

## THE WOUND OF MEMORY

In the last two decades as I have lost both friends and family, I have found comfort in a passage written from prison by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian, who was executed by the Nazis.

*Nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love, and it would be wrong to try to find a substitute; we must simply hold out and see it through. That sounds very hard at first, but at the same time it is a great consolation, for the gap, as long as it remains unfilled, preserves the bonds between us. It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap. [God] doesn't fill it, but on the contrary . . . keeps it empty and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain.\**

Ongoing communion is possible with those separated from us by death, distance, estrangement, illness, or even the imprisonment that Bonhoeffer experienced. There is a price, however: the wound of memory.

A wise friend pointed out to me recently that when, over many decades, the fabric of our lives becomes riddled with gaps, memory's pain can overwhelm. I cannot disagree. Nor do I know a solution.

I do believe, however, that these gaps in the fabric of our lives can give us access to a larger communion with others similarly wounded, even with those who have gone before us. This larger communion, a gift of the Spirit, provides a foretaste of a joyous, unending union in which God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28), and we shall know each other and be known to each other in God.

— Rebecca Weaver, RESIDENT

\*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

AN UNEXPECTED REPLY

“Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said.”  
(Matthew 28:5-6)

I love the Easter greeting, “The Lord is Risen!” with the expected reply “He is risen indeed!”

On a visit to the Palace, an adult living facility, I used the greeting and was startled by the response – startled, then filled with a sense of awe. Here’s how it went:

Greeting – “The Lord is Risen!”

Response – “He sure has!”

I think the Lord smiled.

Prayer: O God who hears songs of praise and pleas for help in all languages, dialects, vernacular. Thank you for the assurance that you hear us all. Help us to feel our oneness with those whose words differ from ours. In the name of Jesus who accepted all.  
Amen.

– Betsy Rice, RESIDENT

WHEN GOD WINKS

We all have those days. Days of exhaustion and wondering how to go on. Those are the days I find myself most open to receiving that little nudge from God, that nudge that I can keep going and affirmation I am on the right path, his path. Today was one of those days that I walked with exhaustion and wonder on how to get it all done, and as I put one foot in front of the other, I saw trash on the ground. I bent over to pick up the trash so that I could later place it in the trash can, but when I read it I realized it wasn't trash at all, it was my God Wink. The purple piece of paper said, "Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out." It made me smile. The other side had another note on it. "You are SPECIAL! I just wanted you to know how special you are!" I know that this note was meant for another at some point, but for today it was meant for me. It was the affirmation from God that I am on the right path! I am humbled when I receive those moments of affirmation. I am blessed to be able to have an open heart to receive them. May God bless each of us with a "Wink" when we most need it.

— Lori Cahen, SALON SERVICES

THE PERFECT FAMILY

Growing up in a small Ohio Valley town was a true blessing. In retrospect, everyone knew everyone else's business, kept an eye out for wayward children and, when the Ohio River flooded our homes, the gathered community came to our rescue (moving furniture and people to higher ground, providing food and medical aid to rich and poor alike). As a child, it all seemed like Camelot or some idyllic place where few problems existed.

Years later with my own young family, I became keenly aware of varying degrees of dysfunction in many families. Outwardly they were well educated, religious, handsome, successful and productive members of the community. "The Perfect Family."

However, all that glitters is not gold. Disillusionment with the real world came through people I thought I knew: A man left his wife and three young children; a highly-respected bank president absconded with funds; a friend married a successful man who lived two different lives involving other women; two sisters in their 80's living alone in the same town had not spoken for 40 years; a small town doctor masqueraded behind his personal use of pharmaceutical samples.

My rose-colored glasses took on a warped and jaundiced view upon realizing that our tribe was not "the perfect family." In our family, holding on to sad and grievous events of the past allowed no room for forgiveness. Learning to live with this reality was painful. Moving on (without guilt) became a challenge.

Last summer, I grasped and held tight to an intercession within a prayer by Bishop Gene Robinson. I have commended it to my own family. May it bring solace and healing to all.

"Lord, reach deep within our souls and restore all that is broken within us." Amen.

— Mary Fran Lowe, RESIDENT

## *Fourth Sunday in Lent*

JOSHUA 5:9-12  
PSALM 32  
LUKE 15:1-3; 16-21

### AN EARLY FAITH FOUNDATION

When I was 13 months old, my dad enlisted in the Army. After training, he was overseas for 21 months, mostly in the “South Sipik.” My mother and I spent a lot of time at his parents’ home in Union City, PA., about 130 miles from our apartment in Oakmont.

Those visits led to the development of a specific faith foundation. Not only was the large white house on Main Street my grandparents’ home, but it also housed their business – Glenn Funeral Home. So, very early in my life I was told, “Sometimes people come to the house who are very sad. When they are here, you have to be extra quiet.”

Upon arrival, right after hugging Gram and Gramp, I went to the front of the house and looked into the viewing parlor. If there was a casket there, I knew “sad people” might arrive at any time, and I behaved accordingly. When I was older and there was a big delivery of memorial flowers, I helped Gramp carry them in and arrange them around the casket. There was always respect, but at the same time, I KNEW that was not the “person” whose name was beside the casket. That person’s essential being, whether you call it soul, spirit, character, or “Ba” (an Egyptian term that gives me a more “inclusive” sense of what I consider a “person”), was already with their higher power, whatever they might call it.

Through the years, that strong understanding established so early, stayed. No change has been needed, unlike some religious precepts taught me as a child. I am grateful for those changes, but particularly grateful that, as family and friends have passed away over the years, and I have attended Visitations, funerals, memorial services, and grave sites, I have always known that everything that I loved about them was already safely with the God of THEIR understanding. And that there is nothing to fear from a place where there might be hearses, caskets or even the physical remains of a beloved person.

– Marylee McGregor, RESIDENT<sup>30</sup>

# Monday Fourth Week of Lent

ISAIAH 59:9-19

PSALM 89:1-18

ACTS 9:1-20

## LENT IS THE SEASON OF SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

This is an important time of the year to nurture our inner life. Our minds wander, our lives wander. Each Lent gives us a renewal time. Remembering each day we should live life to the fullest. Do we spend too much time accumulating things? They can't go with us. After all, one day we will just be dust!

Consider doing something special this Lent:

Call a loved one and tell them how important they are to you.

Send that note to a shut-in or distant relative, or just someone who needs a special touch. People still like to get snail mail and cards.

Make a phone call to someone who needs to know they are in your daily prayers.

Give up a treat and give that money to a worthy cause.

Let your minister know that you care about their work and them as a person.

Remember that extra smile and word of interest to a tired worker.

Take time each day to spend renewal with God through reading, study and always prayer.

Remember we are all "treasures" of God that have acquired too many layers of pride, selfish living, over-indulgences, prejudices and frown wrinkles! Lent can help us begin to remove some of the layers to find the real "treasure," the real child of God that He had in mind for us to be.

May we pray: Help us to grow in awareness of your unconditional love. Help us peel away our layers in order to shine for you. Thank you for your forgiveness and a chance for renewal. In Christ's name we pray. Amen

— Linda Doggett, RESIDENT

# Tuesday Fourth Week of Lent

ISAIAH 42:14-21  
PSALM 97  
COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

## ONE FAMILY

I am a native of Trinidad and Tobago, a small West Indian country, but I have been adopted by the U.S.A.

I was taught by my parents to love people for their character, not what they own. I come from a family that is all-inclusive and is composed of different cultures, languages and races.

I heard that variety is the spice of life and this world is full of variety. Just imagine how boring it would be to live on earth with everything exactly the same. God our Father in His wisdom made us in His image, so please be happy and embrace God's work.

As Lent approaches, let us be mindful of those we meet along the way, let us concentrate on the value of diversity and look for the God-given talents in each of His children and enjoy our family.

Peace and love always.

— Ruth Small, RESIDENT



THE RESPONSE CAN BE LIFE CHANGING

Scripture: Matthew 25:40

Philippians 2: 4-8

Toyohiko Kagawa, born in Kobe, Japan, in 1888, had a deep faith in God. His childhood was very sad — an illegitimate son whose parents died when he was 4 years old. He lived a lonely, abused life and was humiliated because of his birth. Two missionaries came into his life and became his friends and counselors, and through them he came to know Christ and find purpose and meaning in life. He prayed, “O God, make me like Christ,” and he entered into a life of fellowship with and serving God. He read a book about the slums of London and dedicated his life to serving the poor. The head of the family was very angry, and Kagawa was disinherited. At 47 years of age, he became a minister and was known as a person who lived and defended the weak and needy. He was a pacifist, and during a Japanese war with Russia he was beaten by his fellow students. In his second year of college developed tuberculosis and had to go to the seashore for recovery; there he gave himself to serving the needs of the fishing people around him. He felt God had called him to work in the slums of Kobe where the people were very poor, starving, filthy dirty, and where there was crime, disease and beggars. Kagawa took care of the sick, washed the people’s infected clothes, and taught reading and writing to people before they went to work. He contracted an eye disease in the slums and was almost blind the rest of his life. His life was devoted selflessly to helping others become recognized as human beings because of what God had done for him in Jesus Christ. What is our response to God’s call to us? Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that as disciples we are called to enter the suffering of God in a broken world.

— Dot Apperson, RESIDENT

BEING PRESENT

I grew up faster than a child should. I never went on big trips to Disney with my family or the crazy family vacations my friends were taking. My life was always a little different. My brother, Cole, had a heart transplant at only a few months old and, as he started to grow up, my parents realized my brother was on the autism spectrum. Along with all of the hospitalizations, this was a whole new situation my parents never thought they would be in. This caused their life to be turned upside down. Everyone thought they were crazy to have another child (me), but they knew they wanted to continue to grow their family, and a few years later I was born.

We had to take life day by day. Something that would seem so small to us (certain lighting, a sound, etc.) could be a complete game changer for him. A simple family outing could change into a complete catastrophe at the drop of a dime. Through all of this and growing up in a different home environment than most all of my friends, my brother became my best friend.

As my brother got older, his heart disease worsened. At 16, my family decided that hospice would be the best next step for him. The doctors told us that there was nothing more they could do for his heart. And we had to wait. For the next few years, we had huge birthday parties for him each July and celebrated every holiday like it was our last one as the four of us. Until one day, my brother passed away peacefully at the hospital. For a family where this one person was their whole world, this was earth shattering. It was the first and last time I ever saw my father cry.

A day doesn't go by where I don't think of him. Some days are harder than others. Some years are harder than others. The one thing I do know is that I would not be who I am today without his presence in my life. I believe I was put on this earth to be his sister, and I am truly blessed. The moral of this story is to keep your family and friends close. Know that there is a reason you are in each other's lives and live each day together to the fullest.

— Emily Williamson, RESIDENT SERVICES

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW  
WHO IS GOD?  
CONFESSION

I don't go to church. When I used to go, I was always puzzled that nobody talked about the sermon after the service ended. Did they agree with the pastor? Did they disagree? (I often did.) Why? Maybe many people are just comforted from hymns, prayers, the Bible readings – a way of communicating with God, in a special place at a special time.

An important point for me is:

“Who is my God?” “What does my God look like?”

For me: God is energy. God is powerful energy, a part of everybody, everything, everywhere. God may be negative energy at times. (Think of war, bad weather, death, crime.) We are not in total control.

I do believe the God energy is with each of us at all times. It is up to each of us to recognize, access, integrate, and hold on to this energy. And to use it for good in our own lives as well as in the lives of others.

– Frances Burch, RESIDENT

# *Saturday Fourth Week of Lent*

EZEKIEL 36:8-15  
PSALM 107:33-43  
LUKE 24:44-53

## MANY P'S AND ONE S. A.

### MANY P'S

The pure plain primary truth is that living on a high plain, patient, punctual, prudent, powerfully praying to the one God can't be beat.

God is perfect with divine providence. He wants us to be peacemakers with no postponed priorities, and to make a public profession of our faith in God and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

God is our pilot. He makes us feel precious, bringing us to our knees with joy.

### ONE S. A.

General Booth was walking with his son on a London bridge and saw a homeless destitute man asleep. He vowed then and there to do something. That night he founded the Salvation Army. Forbes writes that it is the most efficient organization in the world.

— Grace Lindner, RESIDENT

GRATITUDE

I'm thankful that I live here, the home that promotes life well-lived. I am thankful to God, the maker of us all.

When asked to write this devotional, I started daily to write down one thing for which I was grateful. I didn't do it every day, but I did it most days. One day, I wrote down rain after a long time of drought, but most days involved people.

Some of the things I mentioned were:

- Seeing determination and strength from someone facing illness
- Someone facing a fearful time and fearing not
- A friend listening, really listening
- Listening to a young lady preach from her heart
- To be needed by a friend whom I knew and a new friend whom I didn't know
- A good night's sleep and rest
- The gift of memory
- A new baby
- An old love
- Sharing with friends
- Time with God
- Listening and being quiet
- The gift of music; playing the piano
- Singing with a group of women who love music and old folks
- Going to church and worshipping with a group of Christian friends
- A good preacher
- Sharing love with one another God's never ending love

Psalm 106:1 "Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever."

May you and I continue to notice the gifts of God, small and large, that daily grace our lives. God's love does endure forever.

— Sally Maynard, RESIDENT

## FINDING OUR WELFARE

“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” (Jeremiah 29:7)

Most of us live in several different places over a lifetime. Adjusting to a new home requires effort. After the excitement of a new place, we settle into learning about our new home, finding our way around and establishing friendships. It’s challenging to do this, whether we are trying to make friends at a new school, or learning the routines in a new job or giving away treasured items as we move into a smaller home.

For those of us living in Westminster Canterbury, the move here may be emotionally freighted. Leaving a familiar home, adjusting to retirement, and facing illness and loss make demands on our emotional and spiritual resources. With mixed feelings we embrace the physical beauty of this place, the friendly and helpful staff and other residents welcoming us to share a meal. All the while, we may be longing for the place and people we have left behind.

As a young person, I had a colorful poster in my bedroom. It had a huge flower and these words: “Bloom where you are planted.” I think I chose it mostly for its colors, not so much for the advice it offered. While that poster is long gone, its advice is timely now.

The prophet Jeremiah is speaking to people who have lost their homeland, uprooted and moved into exile in a foreign land. The word that comes from God is to seek the welfare (the shalom) of the place where they have been sent. The promise is that in seeking the welfare of our new home, we will find our own peace. May this Lent help us find God’s shalom in our new home.

– Rainey Dankel, RESIDENT

LEARNING TO HAVE FAITH

Faith did not come easily or quickly to me. Oh, I had more than adequate preparation for living a Christian life. I grew up in a rural Southern Baptist community where our social and family life was centered in the church. I had numerous role models for living a life of faith. But as a young adult, I struggled emotionally and intellectually with my childhood beliefs. It was only when I began to experience the trials of life as a mature adult that I realized the effects of lifelong immersion in a Christian culture. In the intense pain of loss and grief when my parents died, in the overwhelming fear of losing an adult child, and in dealing with the gut wound of a long marriage ending, I was comforted by the familiarity of traditional hymns and the poetry and rhythms of the scriptures. In these darkest of times, I have felt a presence beyond my capacity for rational understanding and have realized that I do indeed have faith.

— Joan Wood, RESIDENT

JESUS CALLING

The following thoughts come from a book entitled, “Jesus Calling,” by Sarah Young, author of a number of spiritual books. Our daughter, Lisa, introduced us to this series by giving John and me a copy with her thoughts inside the front cover early in her battle with the fatal cancer. The book accompanied her Bible on her bedside night stand. She would share some of the readings which meant much to her and us. This is one of those, and one to which I often refer:

*Approach problems with a light touch. When your mind moves towards a problem, you tend to focus on that situation so intensely that you lose sight of Me.*

When someone you love so dearly is going through the pain of such intense magnitude, the faith and mind set begin to crumble a bit.

*There is a better way. When a problem starts to overshadow your thoughts, bring this matter to me. Talk with me about it and look at it in the Light of My Presence.*

This is how our family handled many day-to-day frustrations.

*You will always face trouble in this life. But more importantly you will always have Me with you, helping you to handle whatever you encounter. Approach problems with a light touch by viewing them in my revealing Light.*

Psalm 89:15: Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.

John 16: 33: I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart. I have overcome the world.

– Burrell Stultz, RESIDENT



# Thursday Fifth Week of Lent

1 SAMUEL 16:11-13

PSALM 131

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

## WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

How many times have I asked preschoolers what they think they might want to be when they grow up? The usual response is a vocation like a fireman or policeman or something like what their mom or dad do. In my advancing years I realize that there is a great difference in “being” rather than “doing.” Now that I am 75, I wonder if God is asking me this Lenten season what I want to be when I grow up. Am I ready to answer, “More like your Son?” What would your answer be?

— Jan Orgain, RESIDENT

## THE LITTLE CHAIRS

Once upon a time in the village of Richmond, there lived a little chair. The chair belonged to an older lady who was moving from her home to the Protestant Episcopal Home on Thompson Street in Richmond. The little chair was very sad that he could not go to live at the home but was happy that he would be living with the older lady's niece who was getting married. The little chair was happy but a little lonely.

Years passed, as they always do, and all the ladies of the Protestant Episcopal Home were to be moved to a big new place across town, called Westminster Canterbury.

One day the lady's niece came to visit. In the front hall of the Protestant Episcopal Home she spied the brother to her little chair. When she inquired, she was told, "Westminster Canterbury does not want it." Such a sad, sad day for the little chair.

The niece was told she could have the chair for \$20.00. The niece put the little chair in her car all the time telling him about his brother already living at her home and promising they would enjoy each other.

The two little chairs shared their stories. One didn't get to live at the Protestant Episcopal Home, and one didn't get to live at Westminster Canterbury. It was very sad.

Time passed again, as it always does. One night the two little chairs heard the niece and her husband, now quite elderly, state that the time had come for them to move, and they would be moving to Westminster Canterbury!

The little chairs could not believe it! Finally after all the years of hoping and praying they would get to live at Westminster.

In January of 2012, the two little chairs made sure they were first to be placed on the moving van.

Sometimes, late at night, when it is quiet on the 8th Floor of the Tower, if you listen carefully, you might hear the voices of the two little chairs, sharing with each other,

"We are finally here; Thanks be to God!"

IN LIFE, IN DEATH, O LORD ABIDE WITH ME

At the All Saints Day service last year, we remembered and celebrated the lives of all our resident friends, neighbors and employees who joined “the Cloud of Witnesses” in 2019. I was emotionally sad and joyful at the same time, especially missing several of my closest companions in the years I have lived at Westminster Canterbury. Reflecting on these two words: “sad and joyful,” they seem like a contradiction, an oxymoron. But are they? In the 40 days of the Lenten season, we study the life and death of Jesus. He promised his disciples that, though he would die, he would also live. I can relate, perhaps in a small way, how the disciples and followers of Jesus must have felt at Jesus’s death and crucifixion. Their mourning had to be intense and bewildering. At the same time, they wanted to believe what Jesus had promised, but how He could still live, was incomprehensible to them. Three days later Jesus appeared . . . alive . . . to the women who went to his grave, and then to the disciples! Intense sadness and now intense joy. Jesus would leave again when He ascended into heaven, but now in their mourning, their faith had been restored. Jesus had kept His promise. He affirmed to his disciples, to his followers then and now, *and to me*, that when we die, by our faith, we will have eternal life with Him in heaven. I am grateful that when Jesus went to heaven, he gave us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to abide with us in our joys and sorrows and always

— Pat Kawana, RESIDENT AND FORMER STAFF MEMBER

## PALM SUNDAY BREAKTHROUGH

On Palm Sunday 1962, I experienced the triumphal entry of Jesus into my life.

At age eleven, I enrolled in a Presbyterian Confirmation class doubting the existence of God. Encouraged by my parents, I, an agnostic, prepared for confirmation. As class ended, I intellectually understood Christianity, but I still had no first-hand experience of God.

On Palm Sunday evening 1962, our pastor explained to Confirmation students the symbolism of Holman Hunt's painting, "The Light of the World." Hunt depicted Christ knocking on a fast-closed door seeking entrance into a house, symbolizing the human heart. My minister read Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in." He told us Jesus was knocking on the doors of our hearts. He asked us to remain in prayer until we knew Christ had entered our lives as Savior. I prayed for twenty minutes. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel, I would not let God go until God blessed me. I got up from my knees and shared how Jesus had entered my heart. God granted me a strong inward assurance that God existed and loved me. Six years later, Jesus called me to ordained ministry.

For years, I did not have words to express how the palpable presence of the Risen Christ banished all my doubts. Later, I read John Wesley's description of his conversion: "I felt my heart strangely warmed ... an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins." Wesley described my heartfelt new birth. Later, I publicly professed my faith and was confirmed. Each year when I wave palm branches and sing hosannas, I celebrate Palm Sunday as a red letter date in my life.

— Art Thomas, RESIDENT

THROUGH LOVE, SERVE

“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.” Amen. (1 Peter 4:9-11)

Working here has enriched my life to an extent beyond measure. The Vision and Mission is to serve others. The Lord Christ came not to be served but to serve. He gave his life for all who believe in him.

Faith. A simple act of kindness brings joy to the heart of the receiver, as well as to the giver.

Serve. A very wise soul once told me that the two most important words to live by are, “attitude,” and, “gratitude.” I am inspired to love others by Christ’s love and so very thankful to our Lord God for all his creation.

Love. This time of year, when the seasons change, I feel so very blessed to witness the most beautiful sunrises and sunsets while driving to and from work. To see God’s woodland creatures in their habitat, thriving, makes my heart sing with praise. Seeing such beauty in God’s creation fills my spirit with much love, joy and thankfulness for this life.

Joy. Every day, I pray to keep a good attitude and the wisdom of gratitude in order to serve others. We are all here to love and serve one another.

Prayer. Faith. Serve. Love. Attitude. Gratitude. Joy.

The things I reflect upon, especially during Lent.  
Praise be to God. Amen.

— Susan Fletcher, HUMAN RESOURCES

OUR LAST DAY

This is the poem I wrote the last day I sat with my grandma:  
Sitting here watching over you, not wanting to let go.  
Realizing it's only my selfish prayers that's having you to hold on.  
People say hold on to your memories, but is that really enough?  
As I sit here and reflect on your words of wisdom and slick  
mouth I do (smile). I'm trying to do my best to carry your name.  
But I'm not strong enough to hold your name with fame? Mrs.  
M is what they call you. Which stands for so much: Marvelous,  
Mighty and plenty more.

— Paulette Smith, CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

THE CIRCLE

Sometimes there are losses just too deep for tears. Lent is a time when I imagine that is how Jesus's followers must have felt when their beloved leader and teacher was scourged and crucified like a common criminal.

Then I think of their joy: his empty tomb, his reappearance as a living body, and his reassurance of an eternal bond. Despite the hardship and danger that might lie ahead, they were ready to spread his message of peace, justice, and love; the true kingdom of God.

We are commissioned to do the same. Today when we ask if this circle will be unbroken, the answer is yes, it will be, thanks to God.

— Pat Dole, RESIDENT

LOOKING UP

My husband, Brent, and I try to go to the beach for a few days right after Easter each year. Last time we were there, we spent a lot of time just walking up and down the beach. I love to walk where the waves barely wet my feet, where I can see all the seashells. I become mesmerized combing over them, searching for ones that catch my eye. I become completely enthralled and can't stop looking, can't stop staring at the sand right in front of my feet. I slowly make my way down the beach so focused that I can't pull my gaze upward. On our last day at the beach, I was once again searching for seashells when I suddenly realized I had been so focused on what was right in front of me, that I was missing the beauty all around me. I was missing the waves crashing on the sand, seagulls flying overhead, children laughing and playing, the person walking beside me, and most of all the splendor of God's creation that surrounded me. It was a perspective shift I needed at the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time when we are invited to lift our gaze, beyond the busyness of our everyday lives, beyond the details that can consume us, and instead to refocus our attention on God. We are invited to be fully present in our lives, so that we don't miss the beauty that surrounds us, those precious moments with people we love, and the continual ways that God is reaching out to us and saying, "Here I am." Lent calls us to turn toward the good in our lives, to pause and recognize God in our midst.

— Jennifer te Velde, PASTORAL CARE

WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS?

Of all the holy days and celebrations of the Christian faith, it is Maundy Thursday that troubles me the most. Jesus is at table with his disciples. He is feasting and celebrating the Passover. He and others are remembering the Hebrew people's liberation from slavery by God. During the meal, Jesus blesses bread and wine and says that these are his body and blood. And, when he leaves that room, he walks to his death.

That's what I don't understand. An innocent man willingly goes to his death for those who revile him. When I hear the Gospel narrative of the last supper, I want to stand up and yell, "Don't go outside, Jesus! They want to kill you!" And, yet, every year, Jesus gets up to go to his death.

That is love. That is what we mean when we hear the words "God so loved the world...." God so loves us that God died for us. And if God can have that type of love for us, what type of love should we have for each other? Love enough to forgive? Love enough to be kind? Love enough to accept? Love enough to weep with others in their pain?

On Maundy Thursday, I will read the Gospel, and I hope to glimpse and understand God's love in that passage. And, if not then, then perhaps I will feel God's love when we sing:

What wondrous love is this, oh my soul, oh my soul?

What wondrous love is this, oh my soul?

What wondrous love is this

That caused the Lord of Bliss

To lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul;

To lay aside his crown for my soul?

— David Curtis, PASTORAL CARE



THANKFUL, GRATEFUL AND BLESSED

I am so blessed to be an employee here at Westminster Canterbury, and all my thanks go to Derek Oliver and his wife, Debbie. You never know who is watching you. One day Debbie approached me and said, “You would be the perfect fit for Westminster Canterbury,” and that was four years ago.

I am deeply touched by the kind words and smiles given by the residents and employees here. My co-workers are remarkable, loving and very caring. The good Lord always knows what is best for us. He is always watching, guiding and giving us strength. It is so amazing because God knows what’s going to happen before we do.

I just want to say, “Thank you, Lord, for your many, many blessings.” I am thankful, grateful and blessed.

— Joyce Crews, COURTESY SERVICES

# *Holy Saturday*

LAMENTATIONS 3:1-9, 19-24

PSALM 31:1-4, 15-16

MATTHEW 27:57-66

## LET OTHERS SEE JESUS IN YOU

Remember that old hymn? Since I played the piano at church almost every Sunday, I was very familiar with all those “oldies but goodies.”

Lately when I have done my morning devotion, I have been impressed by God to ask for my words and actions to be more God-like. Can’t get this hymn out of my brain!

If I say I’m a Christian and people see me going to church every Sunday, I don’t want them to think, “Well, her words and actions, Monday through Saturday sure don’t match her actions on Sunday morning!”

I’ve become convinced that, that is why this old hymn keeps coming into my brain. I have a responsibility! Please God, “Let Others See Jesus in Me!”

— Pat Culp, RESIDENT

# Easter Sunday

JEREMIAH 31:1-6  
PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24  
JOHN 20:1-18

## THE AWESOME POWER GOD

“The Majesty and Glory of Your Name,” a powerful and beautifully-written choral piece by Tom Fettke based on Psalm 8, expresses God’s love for man. It captures His heart and adoration. When we sing this anthem at church, I feel like dropping the songbook and lifting my hands to the heavens. It touches me deep down within my soul.

*“When I gaze into the night skies, and see the work of your fingers. The moon and stars suspended in space. O what is man that you are mindful of him? You have given man a crown of glory and honor, and made him a little lower than the angels. You have put him in charge of all creation. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea. But what is man, o what is man, that you are mindful of him? O Lord, our God the majesty and glory of your name, transcends the earth and fills the heavens. O Lord, our God; little children praise You perfectly, and so would we, and so would we. Alleluia! Alleluia, the majesty and glory of your name.”*

God made us a little lower than the angels. A little lower than the angels! How awesome is that! The anthem gives us a glimpse of God’s majesty and glory. I can envision Him sitting high and lifted up in the heavens looking down on His “beloved” children. A loving God that would lay down His life for us. One who unselfishly suffered on the cross that our lives might be saved.

By the time the anthem reaches the alleluias, I can see Him standing dressed in radiant white with arms opened wide waiting for me to rush in for a big “bear hug.” Wow! How delightful that would be! A “bear hug” from a God that loves me beyond measure. A God that will never leave me nor forsake me. Someone who wants only the best for me, whose love cannot be compared to anything in this world. When I fall down, He is there to pick me up.

What a loving Father we have in Christ Jesus. Alleluia!

— Bessie S. Taliaferro, RESIDENT

*Easter Monday*

EXODUS 14:10-31  
PSALM 18:19-24  
MATTHEW 28:9-15

## BLESSING ON BLESSING

The Lord who is head of my life has blessed Yovandel with loving family – a TLC Church family – a work family. I love my families. We all need to encourage to each other and to be a blessing to one another.

The Lord has blessed me, Yovandel. I am thankful for what the Lord has done for me. I am truly blessed. Thank you, Lord. I don't take anything for granted. Thank you, Lord, for being there for me all the days of my life. I love the Lord with my whole heart and mind. I will keep my mind on Jesus at all times.

Blessings on blessings.

– Yovandel Perkins, DINING

WHY MY DEAR LORD

When I picked up last year's *Lenten Journey*, it showed my birth year "22." There have been many things I've had to do and take part in that have not been at my request—good and bad—but my plans are always to do—with your help and encouragement.

I feel your touch when I may be planning to do something else. But then I think I have always tried to help you—almost forever, but each day when my feet hit the floor, it's time to do a little more, and I feel your gentle encouragement again. If I slow down or miss some of your hopes for me, I am ready to stay in your path. Everyday participation in Evening Prayer is a great help and a special time that I plan to be nearer to you.

When you help me, how can I not help you? You always know where I am. With great love and attention.

— Virginia Watkins, RESIDENT

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*The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily  
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## WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY RICHMOND

was founded in 1975 by the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches as a faith-based charitable organization. Today, the continuing care retirement community serves more than nine hundred residents, who enjoy a wide variety of housing options and amenities such as

performing arts and cultural programs in the Sara Belle November Theater and the Center for Creative and Cultural Arts. Westminster Canterbury Richmond is accredited by the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission and has been named “one of America’s 20 best” by *New Choices Magazine*. Westminster Canterbury welcomes all regardless of race, religion, or nationality.

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