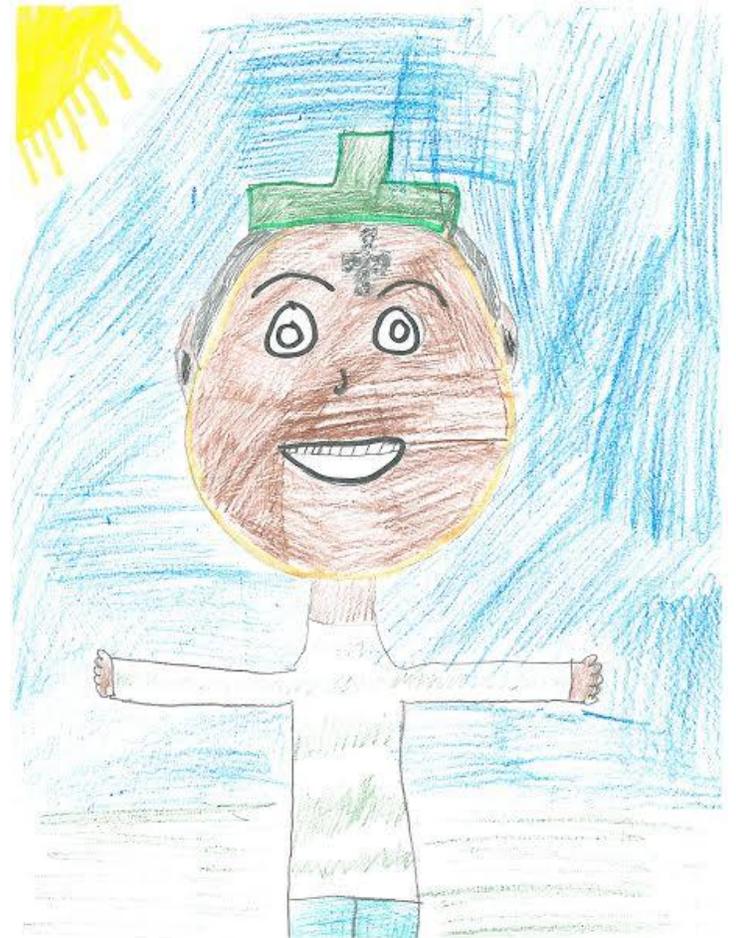




LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

Return to Holiness



ABSTRACT

Adult members of the Morningside Church family submitted devotionals to this Lenten guide, and the children of our church family contributed artwork

Editors: Dr. Shirline Potts, Dr. Jennifer Brooks, and Pastor Ramon F. Smith

Morningside Fast March 5-26

The Daniel 21 Day Fast

Fasting is means experiencing God's grace through abstinence from food or limiting one's food. Its purpose is to help us submit to God, to learn how to resist Satan, to prepare us for our mission in the world, and to rely on God rather than our own strength. After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, Satan attempts to tempt Jesus into breaking his fast (Matthew 4:1-4). Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 from the Old Testament when he says in Matthew 4:4 ***"man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."*** Instead of eating meat, sweets, and drinking flavored drinks, we invite you to read the Morningside Devotional, read scripture, pray, and be present for worship, bible study, and Sunday school. All of these spiritual disciplines involve feeding on the word.

Like Jesus we will be using an Old Testament text for our foundational scripture for our fast. ***"In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."*** Daniel 10:2, 3

One of the great things about the Daniel Fast is that you are not limited to any specific amount of food, but rather to the kinds of food you can eat. **The Daniel Fast is limited to vegetables (includes fruits) and water.**

Special Note: if you have health issues, please be sure to contact your health professional for advice before committing to any fast including the Daniel Fast. If you would like a list of the foods included and excluded in the Daniel Fast to show your doctor, just copy the contents of this page.

Foods to include in your diet during the Daniel Fast

All fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are not limited to apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

All vegetables. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are not limited to artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains, including but not limited to whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds, including but not limited to sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes. These can be canned or dried. Legumes include but are not limited to dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils including but not limited to olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

All meat and animal products including but not limited to beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.

All dairy products including but not limited to milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

All sweeteners including but not limited to sugar, raw sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, and cane juice.

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

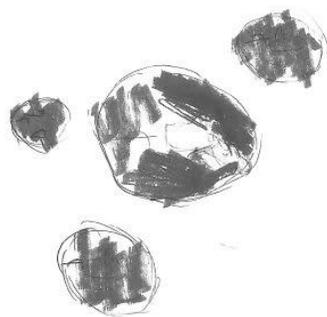
All refined and processed food products including but not limited to artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

All deep fried foods including but not limited to potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

Beverages including but not limited to coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Source of information regarding the fast: <http://danielfast.wordpress.com/daniel-fast-food-list/>



March 5, 2014

A Great Feast: Fasting

Read Deuteronomy 8:1-5

Key Verse: *“He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” Deuteronomy 8:3 (Message)*

Key Thought: I will try fasting for at least one day during this season of Lent.

One day early in 2007, my husband and I were in church, and he said: “We are going to have a church wide fast.” I had mixed reactions to the fast. Part of me was curious—I wanted to try it. Of course, as the pastor’s wife, I was expected to participate. The other part of me was not curious. I never participated in a fast before- I was extremely skeptical. What if I pass out from hunger? I love to cook, and I really love to eat. Fasting for 30 days? I would try, but I wasn’t sure I would make it. What if I fail? During the first few days of the fast, I cringed knowing I could only eat one meal a day after sundown. I was going to law school full time, working two part time jobs, and still learning my responsibilities as a new wife. Between commuting, studying, and working, and my home life, there is no way I could continue to lead such a busy lifestyle without eating more than once a day. But I tried it anyway.

During the time I would normally eat, I started to read the Psalms. I began to hunger for lunchtime, not because I was about to eat food, but because I was sure to have a spiritual feast. Can you imagine, filling up on scripture and personally reflecting on the word of God? What lessons will I learn in God’s word, and in study and prayer, that will sustain me, not just in the near future, but for the rest of my life? I made it through the fast. I didn’t lose any weight; I didn’t get seriously sick. But my soul was unusually satisfied. I am now assured that God will discipline and sustain us, even when things of the physical world—such as food—are unable to sustain us. Rejoice in the opportunity that the Lord gives us to grow stronger in our faith through fasting, meditation and prayer!

Prayer: Jesus, we praise you for the opportunity to feast on your word every day so that we are satisfied and made whole. We pray that all may recognize that even in today’s fast paced world, we will not be satisfied unless we know that we cannot live by physical food alone. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray: Amen.

Prayer Focus: Those fasting for the first time.

Gabrielle D.R. Smith, First Lady

March 6, 2014

Just Like You and Me: Welcoming the Stranger

Key Verse: *"When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."*

Leviticus 19: 33-34

Key Thought: Today I will welcome someone who is different from me.

For just under a year, I served as an Immigration Officer with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services- Dallas District Office. It was my job to welcome immigrants and give information about navigating our complex and fragmented immigration system. After a few weeks of this work, I realized some immigrants seemed hesitant, or even afraid to talk to me. This was a stressful and anxiety producing process for them. After talking to them, I realized they were afraid of me because I worked for the government. They had bad experiences with government employees before, and they were afraid of having yet another bad experience. Once I realized this, I did everything that I could to be hospitable. I offered Kleenex when I had to tell a lady that her relative couldn't lawfully enter the United States for at least twenty years. I celebrated with another who had waited years to take the oath of citizenship when she came back to thank me for helping her after receiving her citizenship certificate. I joked and laughed with many others as I helped them navigate the system. I repeatedly received the comment from customers: "I didn't expect you to be so nice to me." This statement was part compliment, part insult. While I was happy that I was providing acceptable customer service, I was disappointed that people didn't expect me to be nice. Why shouldn't I be nice? I am a Christian! The Bible is loaded with passages about welcoming immigrants, aliens, strangers, foreigners—all names for persons who are not native born citizens. We should treat immigrants as we want to be treated. It is our job to love- not to judge.

Prayer: Father God, we thank you for the beauty and depth that immigrants bring to our country. No matter the story, no matter the cost, help me to remember that an immigrant is a person, with family, with dreams, and most of all, with a heart that needs you. In Jesus name. Amen.

Prayer Focus: Immigrants and immigration advocates

Gabrielle D.R. Smith, First Lady



March 7, 2014

The Aroma of Grace

Read John 6:32-59

Key Verse: *Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:35 (CEB)*

Key Thought: *Grace is an unmerited gift of God that wakes us from our slumber, imputes Jesus' righteous to us, cleans us up, and grows us up*

I was fast asleep, but suddenly I was awakened from my slumber by the buttery sweet smell of hot biscuits in the air. Immediately, I felt hunger pains in my stomach and I had a decision to make. I could roll over and catch a few more winks or I could get up and accept the free meal that was awaiting me at my grandmother's table. If you know me well, you know I chose the latter. I had done nothing to deserve the meal. My grandmother prepared it for me because she loved me; it was her free gift to me. I didn't have to pay for the ingredients. My grandmother had already paid the cost. Even if she wanted to charge me, I was only eight years old and I couldn't afford to pay the cost anyway.

God's grace is like the aroma of my grandmother's biscuits. God's grace wakes us from our slumber of sinfulness and helps us acknowledge the intensity of our hunger pains. We are presented with choices: lay there and choose death or get up and choose life. We respond in faith by getting up and accepting Jesus, the Bread of Life. Jesus promises that we will never go hungry again if we eat his Bread of Life.

God's grace is like the experience of sitting at my grandmother's table alongside my family members. We were able to sit at the table because of the goodness of my grandmother, not by our own goodness. Likewise, we do not assume our seat at Jesus' table of fellowship because of our own righteousness but due to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is no cost to us because Jesus paid the price for us through his salvific work on a Roman cross long ago. We sit at the table of fellowship not as solitary figures but as a fellowship of believers.

God's grace is like the experience of eating from my grandmother's table daily. Daily, we eat the Bread of Life at his table of fellowship. We feed on him through works of piety and works of mercy. These are means of grace that give us strength for the journey and helps us grow in grace alongside other sojourners. By the grace of God, the power of sin over our lives is broken. By co-laboring with the Spirit of God we are transformed into people who transform the world.

Prayer: O God please awaken in us the need for Bread of Life, by your grace give us the power to choose life, fill us up with your love, and help us to grow in grace daily.

Prayer Focus: For those who are hungry for change in their lives.



March 8, 2014

TELLING YOUR STORY

Read Romans 1: 11-12

Key Verse: *That is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. Romans 1:12*

Key Thought: Sharing my faith walk can make a difference in the lives of others.

I have been part of a church family since birth. My mother was an active member of our church and my attendance was never in question. In our home, Saturday nights were deemed as preparation nights for Sunday mornings. It was a time for shoes to be shined, hair brushed and clothes ironed. As I grew into adolescence and young adulthood, it was an acceptable expectation in our home that Sunday was church time regardless of Saturday nights' activities. The thing is that although I was a regular and active member of my church, my real faith walk did not truly begin until I formed a personal relationship with God.

My acceptance of God as my very own Lord and Savior occurred when I witnessed the change God had made in the life of others and the grace and peace my mother demonstrated as a Christian through good times and challenging times. As it was common to hear my mother talk to God in our home, I was also exposed to small group gatherings where others shared their experiences of God's presence in their lives and his divine intervention.

I recently had another experience of God's amazing grace that I readily share with others. My husband, diagnosed with obstructive chronic pulmonary disease, was not expected to survive being attached to a ventilator. We reached out to prayer warriors in and out of Texas. We prayed for grace and mercy and healing. It made a difference as my husband recovered.

We, as Christians, are walking testimonies of God's grace. God's love is seen through our walk and our faith is developed as we tell the story of how we survive life's challenges.

Prayer: Dear Lord, give me insight and courage to tell others about your grace and love.

Prayer Focus: For those who need to tell their story.

Helen Grape, Evangelism

March 9, 2014

Hospitality

Read: Hebrews 13:1-16

Key Verse: *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrew 13:2*

Key Thought: Showing hospitality means lovingly making room for others in our lives.

I come from a large family of eight siblings. When my parents only had six children, they came to us and asked if it would be okay for them to become foster parents. My parents felt compassion for children who were in situations where they had to leave their families. My parents wanted to expose these children to a different kind of home life. They discussed the children's situations and their need for a safe and loving home. My siblings and I agreed to welcome the foster children into our home to share our parents and our living space.

My first foster sibling was a child selected from over a hundred children who were apart our family for a day, a few months or several years. This was Gloria, a child of my same age. She shared a room and other things with me; she was my sister. Throughout the years my parents cared for brothers, sisters, and infants to teenagers that needed a home. These children came from diverse ethnic backgrounds: African American, Native American, Hispanic, Asian and Caucasian. I learned many things from my foster siblings; I was able to see the world through their eyes. The foster family experience has taught me compassion and hospitality.

Thank you Lord for teaching us hospitality and helping us to reach out to all of your people; not just the ones that look like us, talk like us, or think like us.

Prayer: God grant us the ability to welcome all church visitors with open arms of love and warmth.
Amen.

Prayer Focus: For everybody that Jesus made room for through his loving and sacrificial act on the cross.

Karman Drake, Usher Board Pres.

March 10, 2014

Service

Read: James 2:14-26 & Colossians 3:14-25

Key Verses: *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: For ye serve the Lord Christ. Colossians 4:23*

Key Thought: Am I doing all that I can? Or just enough to get by?

Time and time again we hear of service men and women of the US Military who return only to become homeless or unemployed after serving. These men and women often become overcome with feelings of emptiness. Disappointed that there is no earthly reward for the service to the country. It feels like all of this service went in vain. We too sometimes feel empty and unappreciated if we continue to serve others and cannot see the rewards. We often look for rewards that are tangible, here and now.

As Christians we must always remember that service to God requires much more than just believing in God. We must actively live in accordance to this belief through our actions. By showing charity in the care of the poor and sick, we would actually be waiting upon God. Our full service to God requires sacrificial living. We should serve knowing that we have the promise of a reward of inheritance from God our father.

Prayer: Dear God help us to offer our service to others wholeheartedly. Thank you for all the rewards seen and unseen.

Prayer Focus: People who are still trying to find ways in which they can serve

Margaret Joseph, Choir Member

March 11, 2014

Generosity

Read Deuteronomy 16:13-17

Key Verse: *"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."
Deuteronomy 16:17 (KJV).*

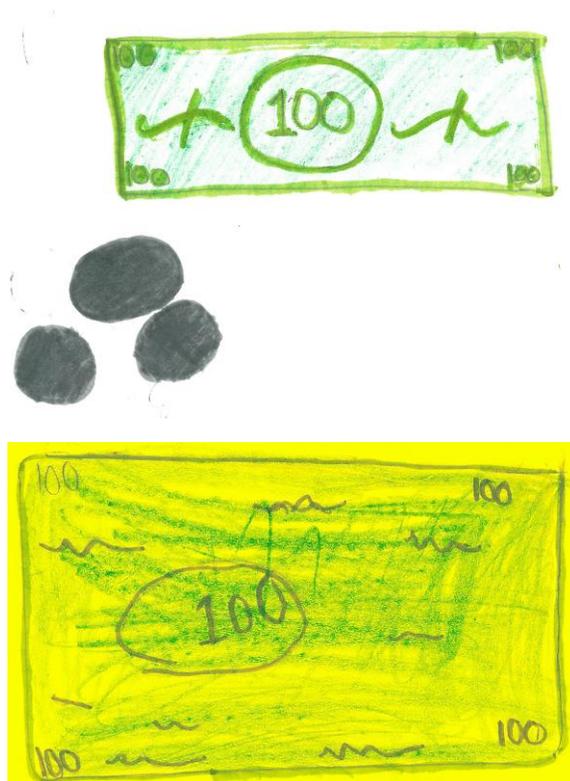
Key Thought: Generosity is freely giving or sharing to the church and to those in need.

The wisdom and energy to acquire wealth come from God. We must give Him glory and take little for ourselves. God's gifts and purposes for me are good.

Prayer: Dear God, help us be attuned to your voice and willing to give all that you ask of us. Knowing we can't beat God's giving. Amen and Amen.

Prayer Focus: For those who struggle with giving

Beatrice Thomas, Trustee



March 12, 2014

Discipline

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Key Verse: *You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*
1 Corinthians 6:20

Key Thought: Do something during Lent that will give God glory and improve your health

Lent is a time to work on personal discipline. Instead of giving something up, you can do something positive that will increase your physical strength and “guard” your heart. Proverbs 4:23 says “Guard your heart above all else, for it’s the source of life.” What better way to guard your source of life than getting fit. This can be accomplished through the introduction of exercises. These exercises can include walking, jogging, or strength training with can of peas.

The simplest form of exercise is walking. During Lent, start walking briskly 30 minutes a day. If a 30 minute brisk walk seems daunting, do a 10 minute walk three times a day and increase your walking time each week until you build up to 30 minutes. Habits, good and bad, become part of you before you realize it. Let the next 40 days of Lent help establish the habit of exercise and healthy eating.

Prayer: Gracious and merciful God help me to develop good and healthy eating and exercising habits that will strengthen me to do the work of the church and its outreach ministries. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer Focus: For those who need to improve their spiritual and physical health

Viola Dean, Lay Member to Annual Conference

March 13, 2014

PRAYER

Read John 10:7-9

Key Verse: *Jesus said: I tell you for certain that I am the gate for the sheep.
John 10:7*

Key Thought: Staying in touch with God through prayer.

Without prayer we are lost, like the lost sheep who wandered away from the flock. I tell you for sure that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. In my personal experience with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I know that prayer is the key to Salvation.

Within two years, I lost three sisters, my husband, and a fire that destroyed my home. Through prayer, God gave me a new home, paid in full, a new car, a happy life and a desire to continue to Worship Him in Spirit and Truth. I'll close my testimony with this Scripture:

If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Prayer: God of Miracles, open our eyes to seek your face.

Prayer Focus: Praying for those who are unable to pray for themselves.

Juanita Mackey, Lay Leader



March 14, 2014

Finding Freedom in Prison

Read Matthew 25:31-46

"I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me."

Key Verse: Matthew 25:26 (CEB)

Key Thought: God can set you free from whatever imprisons you, so that you can help set others free.

While serving as an associate pastor in a previous appointment, I was approached by a group of laypersons who were active participants in Kairos Prison Ministry. They thought I would be a perfect fit, so they asked me if I would be interested in going to prison to spread the gospel. They explained that the ministry actually takes participants inside the prison to minister to a preselected group of incarcerated people. There is no glass window or bars separating the Kairos ministry team from the group of sixty incarcerated people. The thought of being in close quarters with incarcerated people was completely terrifying for me. Where was my faith? I didn't want to admit to the faithful saints of the prison ministry that I was terrified of prison. So I consistently found some excuse as to why I would be unable to participate. I spent my whole life being a law abiding citizen so that I could avoid prison. After all, black men are disproportionately represented in the prison population. I did not want to be the latest representative. I feared that someone would possibly shank me to death. While I was imprisoned by my own fear, I was reminded of these words from Jesus ***"I was in prison and you visited me."*** I made a decision to trust God, and I was set free from fear. So, finally I told them, "yes!" The Kairos Ministry team and I ministered to these children of God from Thursday evening until Sunday afternoon. I shared the gospel with them and they shared their fears, hopes, dreams and some even shared the gospel with me. Jesus was there with me. To my surprise, Jesus had already been there waiting patiently for me to visit him.

Prayer: O God, you know what imprisons us, and keep us from moving toward the destiny that you have for us. Thank you for sending your Spirit to remind us of your words and empower us for the journey.

Prayer Focus: For those who want to be set free.

Ramon F. Smith, Pastor

March 15, 2014

The Unparalleled Blessing: Service to Children

Read Matthew 18: 2-6

Key Verse: *And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. Matthew 18:5*

Key Thought: Sharing myself could give hope and make a difference in a child's life.

Thirty-five years of service in the field of Child Welfare brought me in contact with children whose life experiences had robbed them of a nurtured and loving childhood. As opposed to being filled with wonder and having a sense of hope, the children experienced fear, neglect and low to no self-esteem. There are many theories and therapy strategies applied to serve these children; but the healing strategy that proves to be the most effective is that of nurturing. This applies to all children.

A panel of former foster children expressed the one thing that made a difference in their lives was the love and care of a caregiver. The thing that made a difference in my professional career was witnessing the statement of a child who gave thanks to a caregiver, "she spent time with me."

I find that often, through our observations, we are quick to decide on a child's character. Children's outside behaviors often depict experiences unseen or not shared with others. A hurt child might act in hurtful ways. A hungry child can only attend to being relieved of her hunger. As opposed to acting solely on observations, children would probably be better served if we made diligent efforts to welcome them "to the table" by giving of ourselves; our time and sharing our gifts. This is a most precious gift and it says to the receiver, "*you are important, you are worthwhile.*"

This is a freebie that God gives to us...his attention, his time and his love. As our heavenly Father gives this to us, it is required that we do the same for our children; the most blessed and yet the most vulnerable people in our society.

Prayer: Dear God, help me to take every opportunity to welcome children to your table of love and grace. Amen.

Prayer Focus: For those who love and minister to children

Helen H. Grape [Evangelism]

March 16, 2014

SILENCE

Read Psalm 46

Key Verse: *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10 (KJV)*

Key Thought: We allow ourselves to believe that this life requires going from here to there and busy ourselves and do not take the time to just be still and have a conversation with GOD.

What a blessing it is to be still and know GOD. PSALM 46:10 states BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD...if we need a little help, it is provided but only when we are quiet. Romans 8:26 tells us; "likewise the spirit also helped our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning's which cannot be uttered".

When we consider how we are made it becomes obvious that we have two ears and one mouth. Some believe that the meaning of this is that we should listen twice as much as we speak. The word of GOD underscores this as in ECCLESIASTES 3:1 "TO EVERY THING THERE IS A SEASON AND A TIME TO EVERY PURPOSE UNDER HEAVEN and in verse 7: A TIME TO REND, AND A TIME TO SEW, A TIME TO KEEP SILENCE, AND A TIME TO SPEAK. We can only hear and learn through listening.

This implies that our Lord and Savior Jesus provided an example of this as the preferred posture for us. In MARK 4:39 we find, "AND HE AROSE, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, peace be still and the wind ceased and there was a great calm".

Prayer: Dear God, as we enter the Lenten season, help us take moments to remember and to find the time to listen. Help us understand what your will is for our lives and walk in it.

Prayer Focus: For those with busy and noisy lives.

Jane Goodspeed, United Methodist Women's President

March 17, 2014

Quiet Time

Read Matthew 14:13-33

Key Verse: *After he dismissed the crowds, Jesus went up to the mountain by himself to pray. –Matthew 14:23*

Key Thought: Spending quiet time with God empowers us

My early mornings are pretty routine. I get up, prepare a cup of coffee or hot tea, and sit on the patio.

I listen to the birds and the wind in the trees. Sometimes I sit quietly at the kitchen table. There is no TV, radio or other electronic distractions. These are the times when I read and meditate on God's word. I feel so close to God during these times; through his presence, I gain the strength I need to face whatever challenges the day may bring.

We need power from God to enable us to build our faith amid the distractions within our daily lives. To do this, we can make a conscious decision to pull away from the "crowds" of our many responsibilities in life and find some time with God through reading, meditating on scripture, and prayer.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to set aside the distractions of daily life and draw closer to you.

Prayer Focus: Quiet time with God.

Barbara Wright, Morningside Outreach Ministry Participant

March 18, 2014

Clothing for the Naked

Read: James 2:14-18

Key Verse: *Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

James 2: 18 (KJV)

Key Thought: Helping others is putting our faith in action

Earlier in my professional career I taught at a small school with students encompassing a broad spectrum of academic capabilities. One of these students was raised by his grandmother with no fatherly image in the home, was a good student, always meticulously dressed in his starched and ironed school clothes. This young man seemed destined for a very successful adult life. Many years later, unfortunately I began to read and hear about many ferocious behaviors that he was involved in, including murder, robbery, gang banging, and other convulsive activities.

After a long period of absence from the town we lived in, it is a mystery that we ended up in the same city some twenty years later. One day he stopped by my home while I was doing yard work and I barely recognized him due to his apparently turbulent lifestyle. He convinced me that he was in fact James Hill (not his real name). He shared with me that he was waiting to go to his trial. He did not say for what and I didn't ask. He did say he needed some clothing. My initial reaction was to be passive and hope that he would soon move on. The next day my conscience was running rampant, so I gathered a sport coat, several shirts, and trousers and carried them to the area where he told me he was staying. I found him in the midst of several other men who appeared to be experiencing similar problems as James. I gave him the clothing and money and wished him well. I never knew the outcome but I thank God I had the works to go along with my faith.

Prayer: Merciful God Almighty, thank you for the small amount of faith that will suffice to have positive results in our lives. Help us to always be mindful that the faith is sufficient only if it is accompanied by works.

Prayer Focus: Christians who have faith but must work diligently to have the works to accompany their faith.

Dr. Raymond Wright, United Methodist Men's President

March 19, 2014

Remembering Your Key: Communion

Read Luke 22:17-20

Key Verse: *“Do this in remembrance of me.” Luke 22:19 (CEB)*

Key Thought: Holy Communion is sign/act of the grace that is available to us because of the sacrificial act of Jesus Christ on the cross for the world.

Sometimes, I can be very forgetful. I forget where I put my keys at least three times a week. You would think by now I would have designated a place to put my keys so that I wouldn't lose them. My mother even purchased a key ring finder, but I forgot where I put it. Jesus asked us to participate in Holy Communion as a means of remembering him. Jesus does not want us to forget him or his sacrificial act for us. Jesus is the key to the kingdom. If you have him, the Key, in your heart you will enter the kingdom of God.

Every first Sunday at Morningside United Methodist Church, we break bread together and drink wine together on our knees. We kneel in reverence to Jesus Christ, the one who gave his life sacrificially on a Roman cross for our sins. The bread serves as a reminder to us that Jesus gave his body for us. The cup or juice serves as a reminder that Jesus gave his blood for us. What did we do to deserve this loving action from Jesus? The answer is nothing. Jesus' body and blood was given as a gift, a sacrificial act of love. We don't deserve it and we cannot earn it. However, we can remember it by breaking bread together and drinking wine together on our knees. While the bread and wine/juice do not literally change into the body and blood of Jesus, we can be changed by the grace of God when receiving communion.

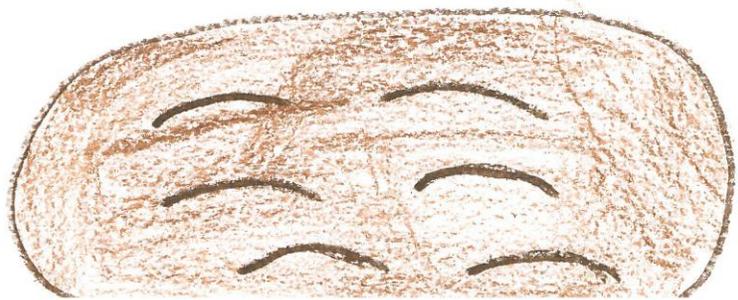
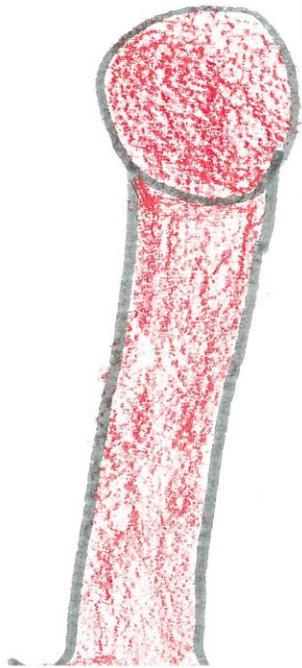
Please don't forget Jesus and his sacrificial act of our behalf. Unlike my keys, Jesus cannot be lost, but we can. Communion is a means of helping us remember the Key to the kingdom, Jesus Christ. Also, it is a means of experiencing the grace of God anew each time we break bread together and drink wine together on our knees.

Prayer: O Lord help us to remember daily your acts of sacrificial love for us. Fill us up and quench our thirst with your body and cup.

Prayer Focus: For those who forget their keys.

Ramon F. Smith, Pastor

The Blood and Body of Jesus.



Life Line Memory Verses

Please attempt to commit these scriptures to memory and heart for the remainder of the days of Lent. Please read the entire chapters so that you understand the context as well.

March 20, 2014: Psalms 121

March 21, 2014: Psalms 23

March 22, 2014: Psalms 27

March 23, 2014: 2 Timothy 1:7

March 24, 2014: Micah 6:8

March 25, 2014: Matthew 22:36-40

March 26, 2014: Matthew 28:16-20

March 27, 2014: Romans 10:9-13

March 28, 2014: Hebrews 11:1

March 29, 2014: James 5:16

March 30, 2014: Joshua 24:15

March 31, 2014: Isaiah 53:5

April 1, 2014: 1 Samuel 15:22

April 2, 2014: Ephesians 5:22-25

April 3, 2014: Ephesians 4:10-12

April 4, 2014: 1 Peter 4:8-10

April 5, 2014: 2 Timothy 4:2

April 6, 2014: Romans 12:2

April 7, 2014: Galatians 5:22-23

April 8, 2014: Malachi 3:8-10

April 9, 2014: Luke 6:38

April 10, 2014: 2 Chronicles 20:15

April 11, 2014: Romans 12:1

April 12, 2014: John 15:16

April 13, 2014: Philippians 4:8

April 14, 2014: Matthew 6:19-21

April 15, 2014: James 4:7

April 16, 2014: Hebrews 12:1

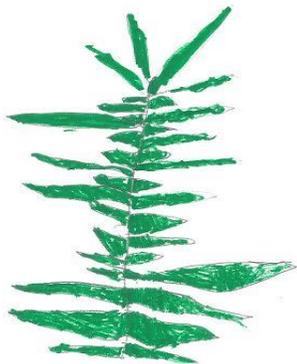
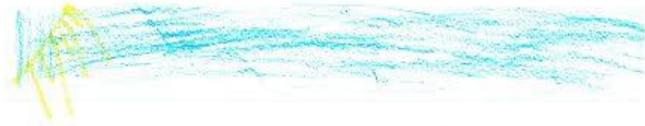
April 17, 2014: Psalms 116:1-2

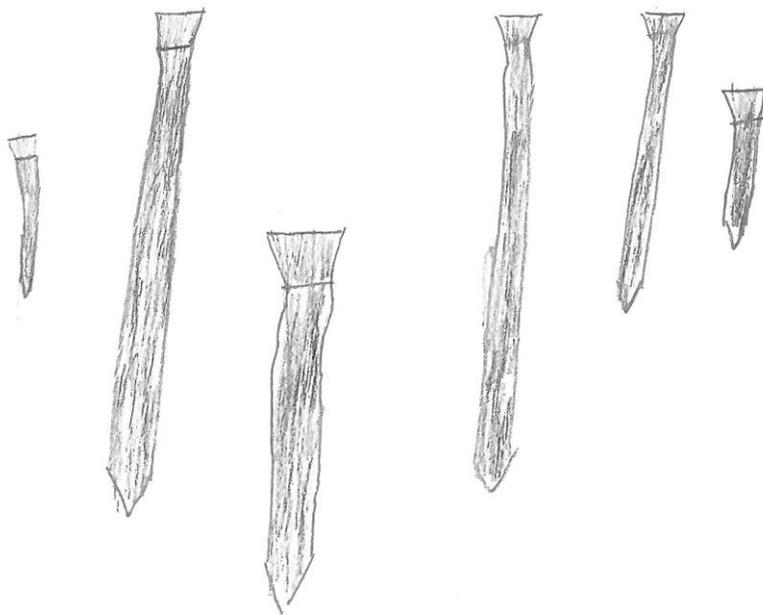
April 18, 2014: Psalms 19:14

April 19, 2014: Psalms 29:11

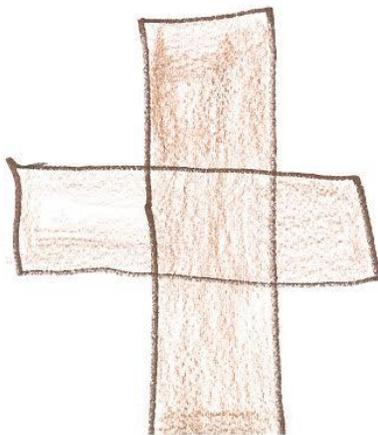
April 20, 2014: Revelation 21:1-4

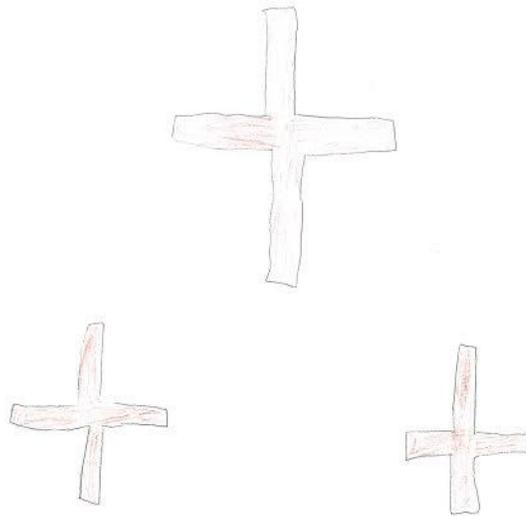


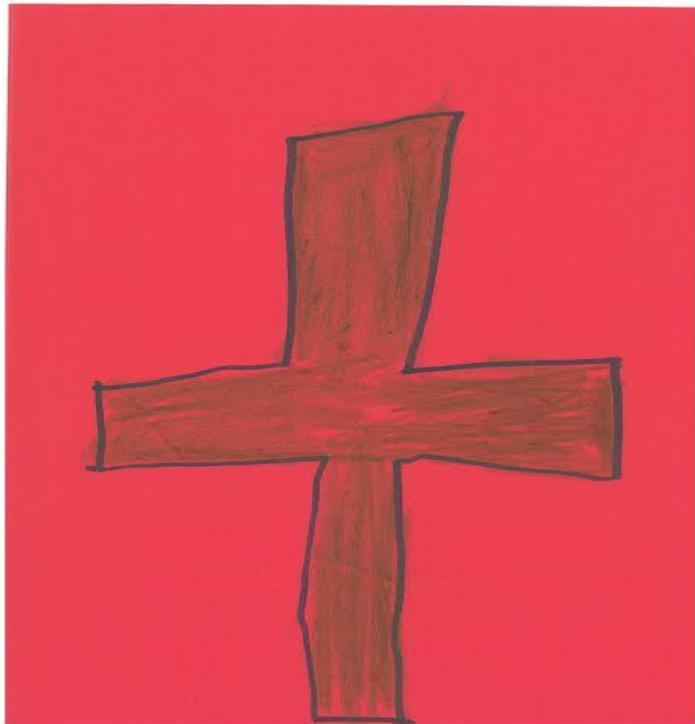
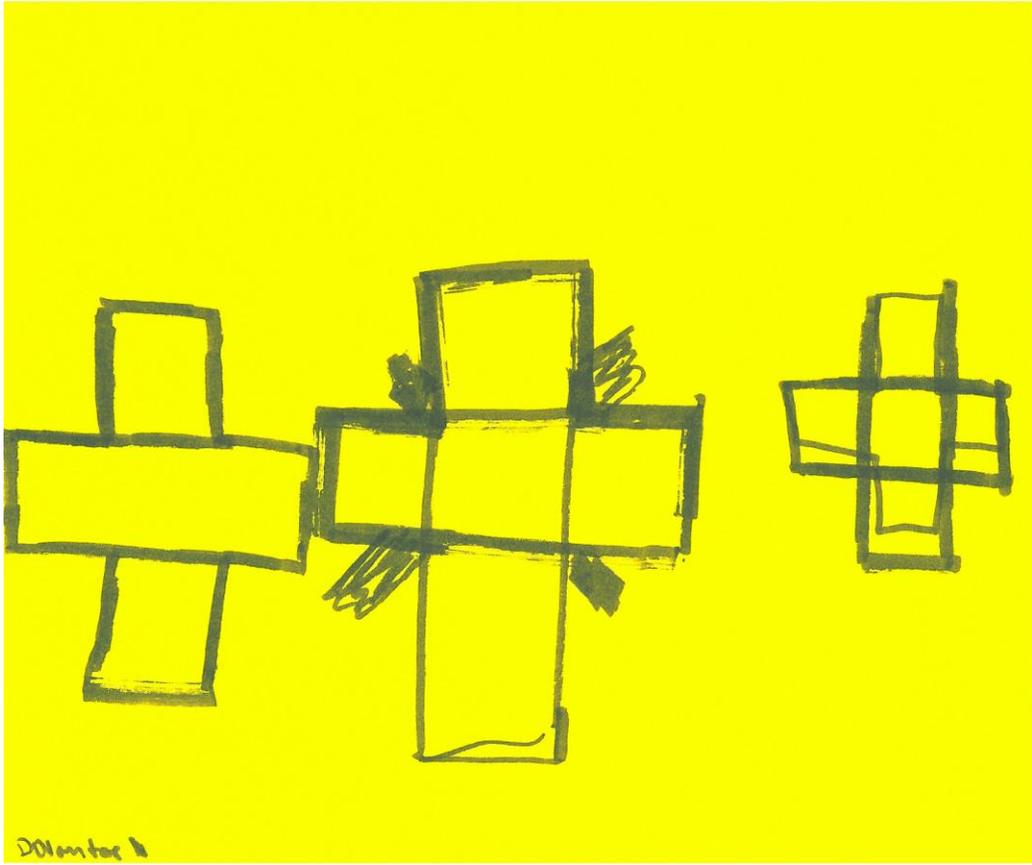


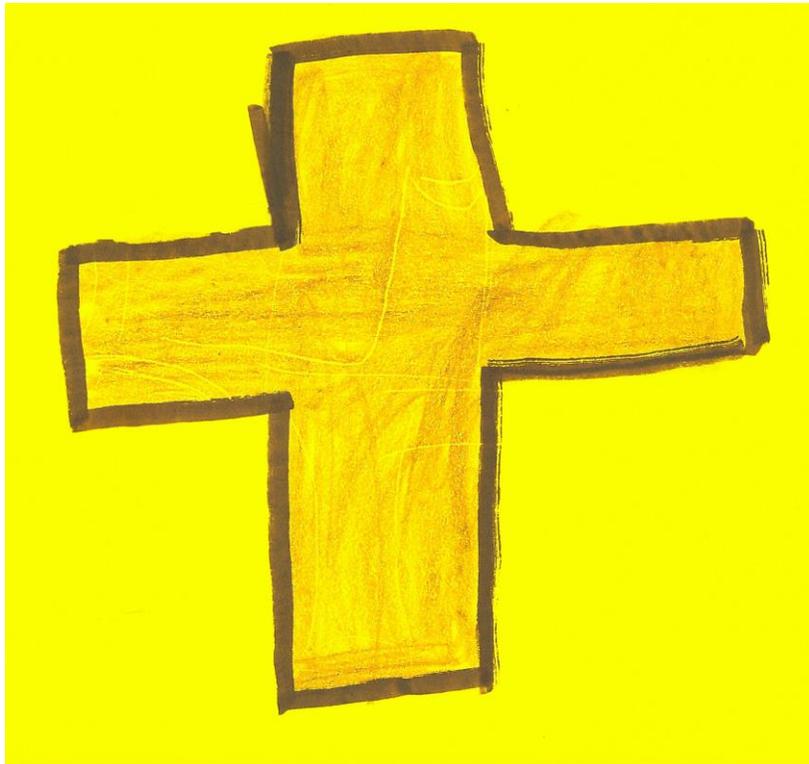


The Cross
of God

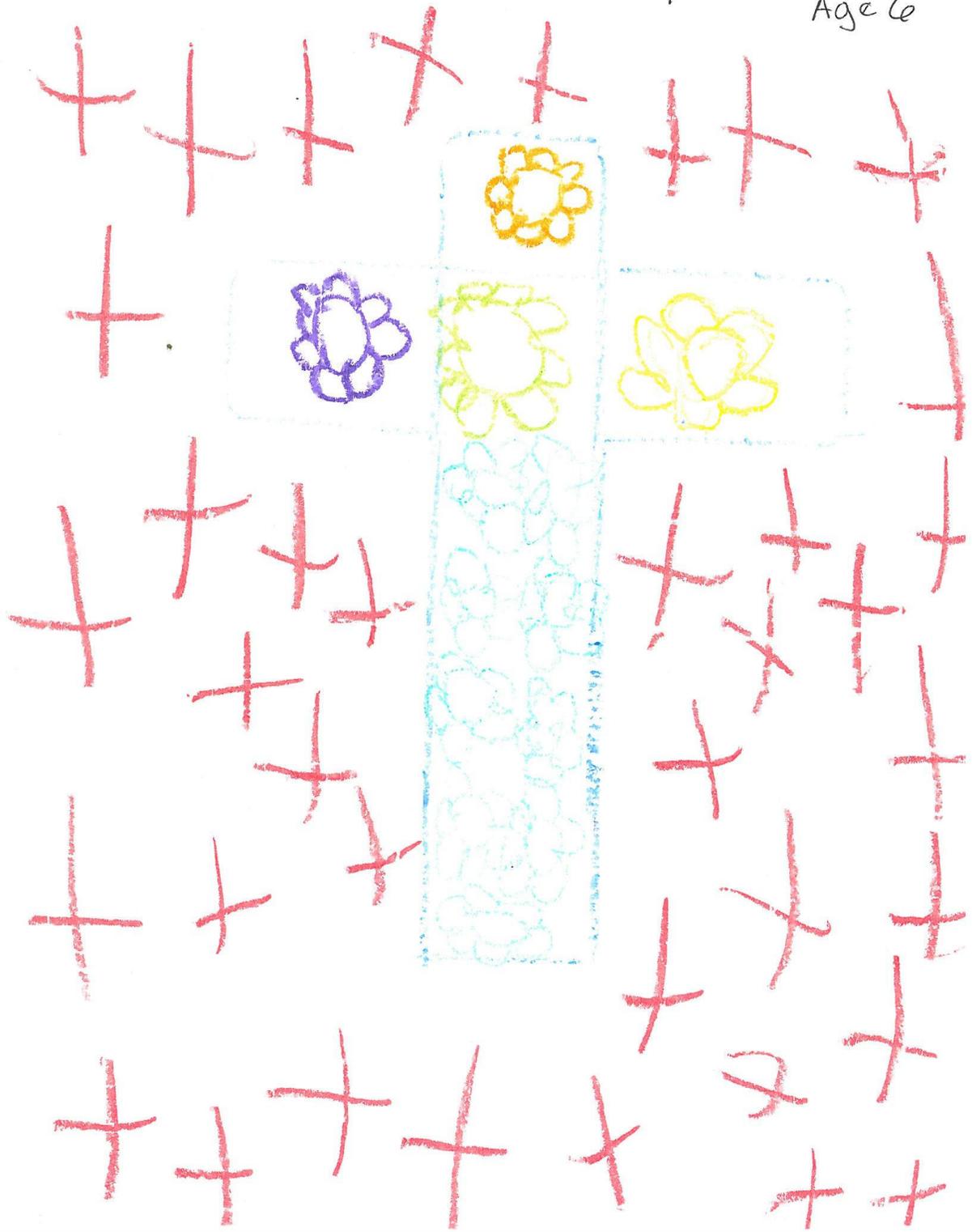








Amiyah McWilliams
Age 6





Always



Brooke Phillips?

It was 9:00 in the morning when they crucified him. They wrote out the charge against him. It read THE KING OF THE JEWS. Mark 25-26



The Grave is empty and Jesus is Alive!

He has Risen! He has Risen indeed!