

From Ashes to the Cross...



A Call to Repentance

March 13—March 18, 2023



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From Ashes to the Cross: A Call to Repentance

At the heart of the Christian faith is our relationship with Jesus Christ. We proclaim Jesus' life, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. Through Jesus Christ, God saves us from sin to righteousness, from death to life, from slavery to freedom, and from oppression to liberation. God in Jesus Christ brings life in deathly situations, hope in despairing situations, and opportunity in desperate situations.

Lent is a time for us to participate in the life, ministry, suffering, and death of Jesus and to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection, which is Easter.* Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, the forty weekdays of preparation for Easter. Ash Wednesday calls for us to return to the Lord. We recall our mortality and wait upon the Lord to renew us. This is a time for putting aside our sins and failures in light of who we are yet to become; by the grace of God through Jesus' suffering on the cross.

Traditionally, the church has observed Lent as a time of penitence, fasting and prayers. This season of forty days provided a time in which converts were prepared for baptism into the body of Christ. It was also a time when persons who had committed sins and had been separated from the community were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to the fellowship of the church. Thus, these acts—preparation of persons for baptism and restoration of persons—reminded the church of its work of forgiveness.

As a mark of our mortality and as a need for the grace of God through Jesus Christ, let us go forth, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to observe Lent by meditating on God's word, examining ourselves, fasting, almsgiving, and praying.

* Sundays are not a part of the forty days of Lent. They are in Lent but not of Lent. Every Sunday of the year is considered to be a "little Easter", a celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Therefore, Easter is a day of the week, a day of the year, and a season of the church year.

Notes from this Lenten Guide

Use this sheet to make some personal notes. Go back over them during the coming week and let God crystallize God's truths in your life.

Main ideas of these reflections:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Illustrations I want to remember:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What should I do as a result of reading these reflections?

*God is real, God is good,
God is faithful. If you serve God, God will bless you!!!!*

Season of Lent



Lectionary Readings

Ash Wednesday

February 22, 2023

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or
Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

First Sunday in Lent

February 26, 2023

Genesis 2:15-17;3-17
Psalms 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

Second Sunday in Lent

March 5, 2023

Genesis 12:14a
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5,13-17
John 3:1-17 or
Matthew 17:1-9

Third Sunday in Lent

March 12, 2023

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023

1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

Annunciation of the Lord

March 25, 2023

Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 45 or
Psalm 40:5-10
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Season of Lent

Lectionary Readings



Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 26, 2023

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

Liturgy of Palms

April 2, 2023

Psalms 118:1-2,19-29

Matthew 21:1-11

Liturgy of the Passion

Sixth Sunday of Lent

April 2, 2023

Isaiah 50:49a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66 or

Matthew 27:11-54



Special thanks go to the following for allowing God to use them:

Contributors who reflected on the meaning of Lent and dared to share their reflections with their brothers and sisters.

Deaconesses Monica Hockaday, Gwendolyn Simms, LaFran Wooten and Deacon Nicholas Anderson, who solicited contributors and shared in editing tasks.

Sister Alexis Cooper who shared her gifts and skills in the final production of this guide.

Pastor Cooper and MAABC Family who gave resources for such a guide to be published.

*Pastor Barbara E. Ingram
Lenten Project Coordinator*

Saturday, March 18, 2023
Seeking God's Mercies: Confession

God of the crucified Jesus, and our God, your love is greater than all our clumsiness, fecklessness and wrongdoing. We thank you that your forgiveness cleanses us, your mercy heals us, and your bountiful grace restores us to a place in your one family that spans both earth and heaven. Wonderful are you, God our Savior, Provider and Counsellor.

Amen!



Reading of the Gospels

During the 40 weekdays of Lent, we will read the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There are 89 chapters in the four gospels. We can complete our reading of the gospels by reading 2 1/4 chapters from the gospels each day of Lent. For the week after the Third Sunday in Lent (Monday, March 13) to the Saturday (March 18, 2023), we will complete the reading of the Gospel of Matthew and then we will move to read the Gospel of Mark.

| <i>Day</i> | <i>Chapters</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Monday, March 13, 2023 | Mark 12:1 to 14:21 |
| Tuesday, March 14, 2023 | Mark 14:22 to 16:19 |
| Wednesday, March 15, 2023 | Luke 1:1 to 3:22 |
| Thursday, March 16, 2023 | Luke 3:23 to 5:39 |
| Friday, March 17, 2023 | Luke 6:1 to 8:15 |
| Saturday, March 18, 2023 | Luke 8:16 to 10:42 |

Monday, March 13, 2023
Discovering Acceptance, Help and Hope

We are the Metropolitan African American Baptist Church family where the unacceptable find acceptance, the helpless find help, and the hopeless discover hope. We are *all* unacceptable, helpless, and hopeless in the eyesight of God because we are *all* sinners. As sinners, we are separated from God, one another, and even God's creation, but there is the good news that comes to us from God through Jesus Christ.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8 NRSVUE

I thank God for this good news. When I first joined MAABC in 2001, I felt welcomed by the MAABC family. I was accepted. Pastor Cooper allowed me to share my ideas and to put them to work. I wanted to have a program and Pastor Ingram suggested that we could do something for the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday. I found help. At the time, Deacon Hunter was serving as Pastoral Leader of the Hospitality Ministry. He along with Rev. Almeta Ingram Miller, Mrs. [Gladys Wilder](#) and others came together with me to make it happen. This gave me hope.

This hope has led me to share in many ministries of the church family. I have served as 1st Sunday Captain and Pastoral Leader for the Hospitality Ministry, a member of the Diaconate Team H, a member of the Daughters of the

Saturday, March 18, 2023
Seeking God's Mercies: Confession

Let us together admit our involvement in this world's evil, and turn again to the drinking fountain of God's grace.

Lord Jesus, when our prayers seem like a stony desert and our hearts feel as dry as a sand hill, drench me with a downpour of mercy.

Whenever we take good gifts for granted, and grumble about every small obstacle, please put a new song on our tongues until we praise as naturally as bell birds.

When life's abrasive pressures fray us, loosing our hold on the Still Centre, tell us again about sparrows and magpies, about wild irises and pink heath, and the Parent who knows our every need.

When our miserly souls begrudge compassion, complaining about needy people, or hiding smugly in the folds of apathy, put in our hands a crown of thorns and show us again what Love can make with two pieces of wood and a few nails.

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

Friday, March 17, 2023
Water From the Rock

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I ask that you will continue to guide and keep me. Show me your favor, keep giving me the strength I need to share your miracles with the people who have yet to accept them. I am your child who once doubted you but no more; as I have seen and experienced your power, grace, mercy, and wonderful miracles firsthand. I ask that you will keep your protective angel wings around me and my family. I thank you for all that you have done and will do for us. These and all blessings I ask in your son Jesus' name. Amen.

Sister Carolette DuPree

Carolette DuPree is a proud founding member of MAABC. A mother of three: Akia, Akai, and Akilah. Carolette has seven grandchildren: Akil, Tykira, Akyrah, Akai Jr, Chozen, Ki'Arii (Dior), and Quinton. Carolette serves as the captain of the Mark Lector's Group (2nd Sunday Team), a member of the Drama and Dance ministries, and a church clerk.



Monday, March 13, 2023
Discovering Acceptance, Help and Hope

the Most High Choir, a member of Christian Women with a Vision, a caregiver for Kindom Village Child Care Center, and a part of Let's Talk. All these ministries inspire me to know, trust, love, and serve God as God is revealed in the Bible, supremely in Jesus Christ and as God through the Holy Spirit is active in the church and in the lives of those who come together in the church.

There have been challenges as I have served in these ministries. People sometimes thought I did not know what I was doing. Other times I have felt that I was not appreciated. I have sometimes felt like giving up but God through the Holy Spirit helped me to remain committed to MAABC--my pastors and church family.

And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:3-5 NRSVUE

Monday, March 13, 2023
Discovering Acceptance, Help and Hope

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the Metropolitan African American Baptist Church family and for allowing me to find acceptance, help, and hope. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, continue to bless me that I may bless others with acceptance, help, and hope. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

Deaconess Pamela Hockaday

An active member of MAABC, Pamela is the proud mother of Joshua Young and grandmother of Joshua Young, II.



Friday, March 17, 2023
Water From the Rock

As I studied Exodus 17:1-7 text, I recall a time when I lost my income and did not know how I was going to take care of my bills or provide for my children. During that period, my life was crazy and overwhelming, I did not expect any help on the way, so I started to question and doubt the Lord. I felt that I was not deserving of God's grace, mercy, and favor. However, as I began to hear and listen to the preaching and teaching of the Pastor, and the testimony of the Saints, I started to realize and believe that God loves every one of us. I began to believe in who God says God is and I started to trust that God would be there for my family and me. Just like the Israelites had to trust God by listening and trusting his servant/leader Moses, I should trust God too.

As the days and months went by without income to pay the rent and utilities, it was God's power, grace, and favor that kept us in the home with running utilities for three months. At the end of the third month, I received a letter from my landlord informing me that I had thirty days to move. I shared my housing and financial dilemma with one of the church Saints, Sandy Hunter Faison (My Moses). Sandy lived nearby in a big house, like the kind that "sits on a hill." As I shared my housing and financial dilemma with Sandy, without hesitation, Sandy opened her home to me and my children.

I know that my life's journey with God through Jesus, that God is capable of anything. God will put people in our lives to help you with any storm that comes your way. Keep believing, keep holding on, and know that God is real, God is good, God is faithful, and will continue to bless you.

Thursday, March 16, 2023

Romans 5: 1-8 text, reminds me of a verse from a childhood song “Jesus loves me this I know, for the bible tells me so!”

“Let us have a little talk with Jesus!” The woman at the well observed that Jesus had nothing to hold the well water he requested. She knew that he was a Jew; moreover, she did not ask him or questioned Jesus about how he knew about her. She wanted some of the living water!

Prayer:

Our Father which art in Heaven! Hallowed be thy Name. Lord, I thank you for leading me on the journey from my youth! Please do not leave me now. Thank you for my journey. Amen

Sister Ann Wiggleton Reynolds

Ann serves as the Pastoral Leader of the Dance Ministry, is in the Lector's Ministry, Christian Women with a Vision fellowship group and CDG I. Ann is the proud mother of one daughter and has two granddaughters. Ann's parents and seven siblings are still alive and praising God.



Tuesday, March 14, 2023
Submission and Supplication

Psalm 95 NRSVUE

- 1 O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
- 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
- 3 For the LORD is a great God
and a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.
- 6 O come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
- 7 For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture
and the sheep of his hand.
O that today you would listen to his voice!
- 8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
- 9 when your ancestors tested me
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my

Tuesday, March 14, 2023
Submission and Supplication

Psalm 95 NRSVUE

10 For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, “They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they do not regard my ways.”

11 Therefore in my anger I swore,
“They shall not enter my rest.”

As I reflect on Psalm 95 the beginning speaks to the unabashed joy we are to have in the Lord. In order to have that kind of joy it requires submission. This week, I pray that God allows me and others, who like me, struggle with the act of submission to learn to rejoice in the freedom of submitting to the one and true God.

Prayer

My prayer is that as we reflect in this season of Lent we allow God to use us in the spaces inside and outside of the church that he has placed us so that all things we are doing are to God’s glory and good work. I pray that in our submission we are courageous enough in humble supplication to ask God to truly be our guide and to open our hearts to hear God’s true wishes for us.

Trustee Tinkhani White

Dr. Tinkhani White is involved in the Dance Ministry and Trustee Ministry. She is the wife of Donald White and the proud mother of Jaylen Hargrove, who is a Senior at Virginia Commonwealth University, majoring in Environmental Leadership.



Thursday, March 16, 2023

My life has not always been a happy one. However, having loving Grandparents, School Teachers, School Counselors, A young Mother, and Caring Community Leader, I was taught Survival Skills. However, my greatest hope came as I attended the Pine Grove AME Church. Hearing Scriptures, preaching and hymns often made me feel as if I had an older and wiser Mother. Later in life I was introduced to my Birth Father.. The introduction to my Birth Father took place in the Church. The Church has been a place of survival, learning, and hope for me! “Let the Church say Amen! Hymns and gospel songs help me to see the Church and God’s word come alive! I’m so glad someone took time to see that I got to church. “Somebody prayed for me!”

The Israelites went from place to place as the Lord commanded. Having no water to drink the people quarreled with Moses. “Give us water to drink!” “Is the Lord with us or not?” Moses cried out to the Lord, “what am I to do with these people?” Moses’ actions reminded me of the song, “How Great Thou Art!” Moses actions also reminds me of the hymn, “Great is Thy Faithfulness!” The Israelites in my opinion, “were too close to the mirror” to see what God sees! However, God continues to shower down blessings upon them. The Israelites are about to stone Moses, yet “God is good.”

In the Psalm 95 text; God invites me to come and worship! “Joyful, Joyful Lord, I adore Thee!” I ask myself, “am I down with God?” “Yes, you know me” and “I receive this invitation to worship and praise you GOD!” (thoughts of Sister Act)

Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Justified by Faith

Prayer:

Just for today Father, and throughout this Lenten season, renew and restore my faith, that I may be your blessing to your people, at a time when we need it most. I thank you Lord, for the justification of Faith as it dwells within me. Thank you for the sacrifices, made to help me see, and share the trust and faithfulness of God. Make me a blessing to grow in the Faith God, that I may sustain and maintain the hope, joy, love and peace of the cross for generations to come. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Deaconess Gwen Simms

Gwen Simms is one of the deacons for the F Tribe. A mom of three and grandmother of two, she loves her MAABC family.



Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Justified by Faith

Romans 5:1-11 NRSVUE

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we [a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access [b] to this grace in which we stand, and we [c] boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we [d] also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. 9 Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. [e] 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. 11 But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Meditation:

“We walk by Faith and not by sight!”, “I trust you, Lord”, “In You I find my rest. You are in control”, “The great one for He created the heavens and the earth God can do just what He wants.” “I will trust, trust in the name of the Lord.”

Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Justified by Faith

These are just a few song lyrics that remind us that Faith is not something that is given but something that we all must work to gain and subsequently to maintain. Therefore, from the reading of the above scripture, we can conclude many things of which these three are most important:

1. God wants us to have faith.
2. God provides opportunities for us to build our faith, not just in God but also in one another.
3. God expects us then to walk in, build up and share the faith.

God wants us to have faith. Why? Because our faith justifies our connection to God. Our faith indicates that above all things that this universe could offer, we trust God to reign supreme and will help us to live a life that honors God according to God's will. God wants us to have faith, because this tests and challenges our traditions and conventions to believe in something that no one can see, yet we know exists. Having faith means I have peace with God by God's grace. I did not earn this peace but rather through trust and belief, I have learned that regardless of the situation, God is going to help me work it out.

God provides opportunities for us to build faith, not just in God but in one another. Having faith allows us to boast in our afflictions, because we go from one faith building situation to another. As God prevails in our lives, we want to talk about it. Endurance is not just for building strength and stamina. Endurance requires your use of the strength and stamina to keep running, without seeing the ribbon to run through at the end. If the race was all about

Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Justified by Faith

If the race was all about winning, we would miss it, because not every runner is going to win. But every runner is going to run. However, if we look at the race as journey, the people that God is going to bring into our lives to help us stay focused on God, those who don't we will most likely run past, but they are all a part of the journey and we are all on that journey, in community, to encourage and share faith with one another, it helps us to endure life.

God expects us then to walk in, build up and share the faith. God expects us to walk in the faith. Meaning that when situations may come, let your faith be the first thing you proclaim, shout it out and wear it boldly. God expects us to build the faith. Work hard to assure other believers that it is by faith, we will be delivered, it is by faith that we gain our being and identity in Christ. True believers, believe! You are identified as a follower by the faith you speak of, by the trust you demonstrate by investing in God, God's kingdom and the people of God. By sharing the knowledge that you are justified by faith, God has already invested God's consciousness and being into your will and intention, so walk in what you know to be true, it will set you free. Free from worry and doubt, at least you know beyond a shadow or doubt that God is with you and by your Faith, God's faithfulness, hallelujah, will never leave nor forsake you. Amen.