

From Ashes to the Cross...



A Call to Repentance

March 27—April 1, 2023



5263 Warwick Road Richmond, VA 23224
(804) 303-6291

Website: www.maabc.org

Facebook: [maabcva](https://www.facebook.com/maabcva) YouTube: [maabc-rva](https://www.youtube.com/maabc-rva) Instagram: [maabcva](https://www.instagram.com/maabcva)

Pastors:

Roscoe D. Cooper, Jr., Barbara E. Ingram, Darryl E. Walker

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, April 1, 2023
That You May Have Life

- I am the Vine (John 15:1,5)

Also pay attention to the signs that are mentioned in the Gospel of John. They point to the demonstration of God's glory in the works of Jesus which lead people to have life and to put their faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

- Turning Water Into Wine (John 2:1-12)
- Healing the Royal Official's Son (John 4:46-54)
- Healing the Man at the Pool (John 5:1-11)
- Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-15)
- Walking on Water (John 6:16-21)
- Healing a Man Born Blind (John 9:1-12)
- Resurrecting Lazarus (John 11:1-45)

Prayer

Eternal God, thank you that the truth of the glorious gospel of Christ through John has been written that by being led by the Holy Spirit to confess our sins and to receive forgiveness, we now have eternal life. Praise God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. *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 Fifth Sunday in Lent (Monday, March 27) to the Saturday (April 1, 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 27, 2023	John 1:1 to 2:24
Tuesday, March 28, 2023	John 3:1 to 4:54
Wednesday, March 29, 2023	John 5:1 to 6:71
Thursday, March 30, 2023	John 7:1-8:59
Friday, March 31, 2023	John 9:1 to 10:42
Saturday, April 1, 2023	John 11:1-57

Monday, March 27, 2023
*The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

In Luke 1:26-38, Luke writes about the Angel Gabriel appearance to the Virgin Mary who was engaged to a man of the house of David named Joseph. Gabriel greeted her by saying, “The Lord is with you. Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” He told her that she would bear a son and his name would be called Jesus, one who would be Great and the Son of the Most High. Mary couldn’t understand for she knew she was a virgin. The Angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be Holy; He will be called the Son of God.” Mary said, “Here am I the Servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your words.”

O what a mighty story as foretold by Luke of the birth of Jesus. When reading and studying these words, I was reminded of the times in my life that I knew it had to be angels that spoke life, deliverance and joy over me and my family. At times when it seemed that everything was going wrong, God and angels camped around us and brought us through. Thank you, God. Yes, I believe in angels and in the will and works of Lord Jesus Christ. Just like many, I say, “Here am I, let it be with me according to your Words. Amen.

Prayer

Sometimes my heart is so overwhelmed. God, I don’t know where to begin my prayer. Help me to quiet my head, my soul and remember that you know everything

Saturday, April 1, 2023
That You May Have Life

The lection for the Fifth Sunday in Lent is the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-45). This account speaks clearly to our faith that God in Jesus is able to bring life in a deathly situation. During this season of Lent, our attention is given to the stories from the Gospel of John that point to Jesus as the one who brings about life. Recall the stories of Jesus’ encounters with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman and the blind man.

For the last two weeks of Lent, the focus of our Gospel reading is the Gospel of John. the writer of the Gospel of John has stated as his purpose for his writing

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:30-31 NRSVUE

As we read this Gospel, note that Jesus teaches and brings about life in word and deed. Note the “I am” sayings which speak to Jesus’ teachings about life.

- *I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35)*
- *I am the Light of the World (John 8:12)*
- *I am the Door (John 10:9)*
- *I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14)*
- *I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)*
- *I am the Way and the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)*

Friday, March 31, 2023
New Life

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of hope. We thank you for your love and your grace. We thank you for not giving up on us even when we give up on ourselves. Help us to accept new life and your anointing that we might live as your people. Help us to do your will and to recognize you in every situation. Thank you, God, for your Son and the promise of eternal life. In Jesus' name we pray, *Amen!*



Deaconess Ashley LaVerne Garner Walton

Ashley is the daughter of the late Cynthia Mobley Garner and the granddaughter of Deaconess LaVerne Mobley; sister of Kristen Garner. She is the wife of Brandon Walton and the mother of Brayden Michael Walton. She is a member of the choir, dance ministry, Diaconate ministry, the Pastoral Leader of Digital Arts, and a member of the Worship Committee.

Monday, March 27, 2023
*The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

Prayer

inside of my mind before I ever come to you with it. Still, I need to tell you about it. I know you want to tell you. Thank you for being such a faithful listener and for caring about everything that concerns me when I remember that it helps me to slow down, take a deep breath, and begin my conversation.

Every day I blow it. Every day I need your grace, Lord. I am thankful that it isn't necessary to live a perfect life to have access to your grace but instead of turning your back on me when I veer from the path. You are always ready to welcome me with open arms. You simply teach me to trust in your saving relationship--restoring grace. That is where I am standing right now in the amazing grace of yours, asking you to forgive and restore me once again, so I can resume in good fellowship with you. I thank you daily for all you have placed in my life. The good, the bad and the evil. Continue to cleanse me to be your child, so one day I can hear you say, "Well done." In the name of Jesus, I pray.

Amen



Trustee Margaret Owen

Margaret is the mother of one daughter, Georgette, the grandmother of three, LaVasia, Almesha and Shakiera and the great-grandmother of three, IiAshya, Zamari, and Zayden and the love of many, David, Justin, Montreal and more. As a part of the MAABC family, Margaret is a trustee, Pastoral Leader of Christian Women with a Vision, member of Let's Talk Ministry, and a singer of the Daughters of the Most High.

**This meditation is based on the Gospel lection for the Annunciation of the Lord, Saturday, March 25, 2023.*

Tuesday, March 28, 2023
*Set my feet upon solid ground**

As I reflected on Psalm 40

I WAITED.... I WAITED patiently on the Lord and the Lord has inclined his ear unto me.

Where evil doers had their aha aha moments God kept his loving arms with his protection around me. Where I sacrifice doing evil for evil for those who was doing evil against me the Lord kept me in his loving arms and protected me from them.

When there are times that I can only scream...O my God...at that moment I can only continue to give you all the praise and the glory.... Again, you delivered me.

I will continue to keep the faith and I will continue to call on your name. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Friday, March 31, 2023
New Life

me, “Ashley why don't you have your degree? Ashley, what would it take for you to finish school?” I had so many doubts, but they continued to encourage me. I hadn't shared with anyone how hopeless I was and how unfulfilled I felt because of not finishing school. I knew I could do it and longed for an opportunity for redemption. After some time and with much encouragement I started to look into how I could finish school. Things looked different going back because I was no longer seventeen. During this time, I had gotten married and two months after starting school found out I was pregnant. I decided that this time I wasn't going to give up, I would stay the course and finish the race. I thank God for the people he used to speak life into a situation that I thought was dead. God gave me NEW LIFE and I am proud to say that not only do I have my bachelor's degree, but I will be graduating with my master's degree in May. God did all of this so I could know it was God who acted on my behalf, and it was God who made it possible for these things to happen. I used to avoid talking about school and why I hadn't completed it but now I find joy in my story and see it as an opportunity for me to testify about God's grace and how he will restore our hope that we might continue to live for God.

God continues to give NEW LIFE!

Friday, March 31, 2023
New Life

“What does the Lord our God expect of us? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

God gave them NEW LIFE!

I started at Virginia Commonwealth University in the fall of 2006. For several reasons, including a series of bad decisions, I left VCU after the fall of 2007. I lost hope in finishing school and felt so much shame and embarrassment. I started working for Richmond Public Schools as a Title 1 Assistant and stayed there for five years. I was just going through the motions because not being in school and not working just wasn't an option. An opportunity to work for Henrico County Public Schools was presented to me by my friend and sister in Christ (Trustee Tinkhani White) and I was excited about the change of environment. I was hired as an assistant for English and Math classes. God was already working to change things; he was positioning me to give me new hope. After just a few weeks there was an opening in the self-contained classroom (Special Education), and I agreed to go in there until they found a replacement. My time in that classroom changed my life. It let me know God still had plans and a purpose for me. It was in that classroom that I found a passion for those children and realized I could be more than a tutor, it wasn't too late, God had not given up on me. The first month after I started at HSHS I had teachers and administrators asking

Tuesday, March 28, 2023
*Set my feet upon solid ground**

Prayer

Father God, thank you for keeping and delivering me from all evil and doubt that has come before me this day and every day. Thank you for sacrificing your son that we may have the gift of life. Thank you for not letting me fall short where those aha moments have come upon me. Continue to bless my family, my church family and for the people that I will meet on an everyday basis. Please let them continue to see your love in me even through all the trial and test I have been through. I ask all these blessings in your precious and holy name. *Amen*



Renee Young

Renee serves on the 4th Sunday Hospitality Ministry Team and a part of the G/H Covenant Discipleship Group. She is the proud wife of Darius Young of 31 years and the mother of 2 young adults, Darius Young and Brittany Young Bell (Markeith Bell), and the grandmother of 3 grandchildren; Uriah, Kyra and London.

**This meditation is based on the Psalm for the Annunciation of the Lord, Saturday, March 25, 2023*

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

*The Importance of Praise, Worship and Faith Sharing**

Psalm 40:5-10 reminds us of the importance of recognizing and appreciating God's wondrous works in our lives. It encourages us to show gratitude and to acknowledge the many blessings that we receive and to praise God for all God's goodness.

The scripture also talks about the importance of true and genuine worship. We need to focus on building a deeper and genuine relationship with God. We need to strive to be obedient to God's will. We should seek to deepen our faith. We need to incorporate God's principles into our daily lives

It also reminds of the importance of sharing our faith and experiences with others. In a world that is increasingly connected through social media and other communication channels, we have various opportunities to proclaim God's love, faithfulness, and saving grace. By sharing our testimonies, we can inspire and encourage others to seek a relationship with God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your goodness, and your mercy. We thank you for everything you have done and everything that you are going to do in our lives. We thank you for loving us when we didn't love ourselves. Guide us and direct us Lord. Give us a heart to worship you. Open our hearts and our minds. Make us obedient to your will and to your way. Show us the way Lord.

Friday, March 31, 2023

New Life

He has taken his hands off us. This story reminds us that this is not the case. God is always with us and can speak life even in times when everything appears dead!

As African Americans, we know the story of captivity all too well.

"Our ancestors were Africans, whose families were taken out of their land. We were few in number when we were brought to this land, but we became a populous people. The people who ruled this land treated us harshly and forced us to work as slaves. Then we cried out for help to the God of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah and the Father of Jesus Christ."

They were in a hopeless situation, but they still held on. It was their hope in God that helped them imagine that there could be life in such a deathly situation. They believed in the promise God made to Israel, a promise of freedom.

"God heard us and saw our suffering, hardship, and misery. By God's great power and strength, God saved us from sin to righteousness, from death to life, from slavery to freedom, and from oppression to liberation. God worked miracles and wonders and caused terrifying things to happen."

God did all this so that they could know it was God acting on their behalf and that they might worship only Him.

Friday, March 31, 2023
New Life

The Lord actively participated in Israel's defense when other countries engaged in conflict with them as long as the Israelites honored the Lord, destroyed idol temples, and kept God's commandments. He provided them with a king when they asked for one. They worshiped those things and rebelled against God after getting everything they had prayed for, so God let them be taken captive once more. Captivity made the people of God lose hope and when we no longer have hope we are "dead," not living toward the eternal life promised by God.

"Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. 13 Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.'"

The valley of dry bones is a story of hope. It's a story of promise. God gave them NEW LIFE! There are situations in life where we don't feel the presence of God. We are hopeless and feel as though God is no longer involved in our circumstances. We stay in that place for so long that we start to believe there is nothing God can do,

Wednesday, March 29, 2023
*The Importance of Praise, Worship and Faith Sharing**

Help us to live our lives pleasing to you. And then Lord help us to share your Word with those around us. So that they may come to know your goodness and your mercy. Lord help us to trust you and to know that you are always there to help in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. *Amen.*



Crystal Webb

Crystal is a member of the MAABC family. She is the mother of three beautiful daughters, Aaliyah, Ja'Liah and Harmonnee'.

Thursday, March 30, 2023
The Spirit Lives in the Believers of God

As I meditated on Romans 8:6-11, I waited for the Holy Spirit to give me what to say. At this age and time in my life I realize that I belong to God and that I have been accepted into a right relationship with God and I know God's Spirit dwells in me. On the other hand, people who don't acknowledge God in their lives or they know God and don't serve God because of their own desires are separated from God.

This Scripture talks about our minds being ruled by our own desires, which leads to death. When we follow our own desires, we are out of sync with God. When I was young, I was doing what I wanted to do. I knew some of the things I was doing were wrong, but I didn't think it affected anyone but myself. Until one day I looked up and there I was in my early twenties. I realized there had to be something greater than just having fun. One afternoon I was sitting on my father's car enjoying the sunshine. A procession of cars came rolling down the street. It was a funeral going up the street to the church. I am bothered that death is passing by. I started to wonder if there was more to life. I didn't know if there was a God or not but that night I prayed and asked if there was a God. When Sunday morning came, the Spirit woke me up. I walked up the street to the church and went through the double doors and took a seat on the pew. I listened to the songs, prayers, and the sermon. The invitation to accept Jesus Christ was extended. I accepted Jesus and was baptized.

Thursday, March 30, 2023
The Spirit Lives in the Believers of God

I was a new babe in Christ, but I was determined to put my faith and trust in God. I still had desires but gradually my desires to please God had given me faith to believe that God can change and has changed my life and gave me peace.

Every day since Lent the Spirit has awakened me early in the morning to read the Scriptures for the day and to pray. God repairs me for the day and for what's ahead. I can honestly say that Christ is alive in me. I have no doubts that I am walking in the Spirit with God, and I believe I will be raised to life just as Christ was raised.

Prayer:

Come Holy Spirit Come! Dwell within us as the Spirit is stirred up in our everyday lives and especially in our mind, body and soul. It is our desire to act according to your will and not our will. Have your own way, Lord, in our lives and allow us to be the instrument that you use to glorify and lift your name up in all that we say and do. Let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight. O Lord, for you are our strength and our redeemer. In the name of Jesus I pray. *Amen.*



Trustee Denise Jones

Denise is the Pastoral Leader of the Trustees and the Curriculum Specialist for Kindom Village. She is the mother of two daughters, RaShawyn Jones and Jessica Jones-Tucker (Richard Tucker) and the grandmother of two grandsons, Daijon Jones and Sir Richard Tucker. She loves the Lord and loves Gods' word.