

# A Lenten JOURNEY



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A COLLECTION OF DEVOTIONS  
VOLUME XXI

# Preface

For Christians, the season of Lent is a time of reflection, penitence and preparation. The forty days between Ash Wednesday and Easter are a special gift of time—where we may read the Bible a little more, pray a little more often, be a little more honest about our humanness and how we are in need of a God who redeems us. Being reminded of the cross' power for transformation, Lent is a time to embrace rather than run from the darkness that we all experience in our lives.

*For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Romans 6:5-8)*

Our residents, staff and friends offer their reflections on life's path in this twenty-first edition of *The Lenten Journey*. May they be food for your journey toward the light.

– The Rev. Dr. Lynn McClintock  
DIRECTOR PASTORAL CARE

# Introduction

“To you all hearts are open.” We say those words to God at the beginning of the Eucharist service. “What?” My mind cries out in response. “My heart is an open book? My efforts to secure deep, dark secrets under lock and key aren’t working? God sees all no matter what I do? I’m not sure I like that!”

Yes, to God our hearts are wide open. My efforts to hide fears or secrets or failures always fail and always backfire on me. Because I can’t be all that God created me to be as long as I try to keep part of myself out of God’s sight. Because I can’t be whole and faithful when my misguided attempts at concealment cripple the soul, stunt love and stymie deep connection with God – who already knows the dark places anyway and who still loves me anyway.

So how do I learn to open my heart to God? Lent comes along to show the way, to offer up a menu of ancient practices for breaking the heart wide open. Daily prayer, reading of scripture, reflecting with writings like those you will find in this booklet, walking the labyrinth, meditating, doing art as spiritual practice, exercising self-discipline by giving things up or taking things on – all make cracks in the defenses we erect around the heart, cracks through which God seeps in with healing love.

Hands-on service to others, particularly the most vulnerable among us, has unique power to break our hearts wide open. Listening deeply, experiencing a hint of life as others experience it, and simply acting for the benefit of a stranger – all of these break our hearts wide open to create space for God to fill with more love, more life, more joy than ever before.

Allowing ourselves to be broken open to God, to other people and to the whole wonder of God’s creation reshapes our hearts. And it reshapes the world. So let God open your heart this Lent. Let God crack you wide open for the sake of the world. It may hurt a bit, as every breaking in our bodies always does, but there will be healing and blessing and wild surprises beyond your imagining on the other side.

– The Rt. Rev. Susan E. Goff  
BISHOP SUFFRAGAN, DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

LOVE: THE BEST MEDICINE

I moved to Westminster Canterbury on September 20, 2015, not knowing a soul. My neighbors all greeted me warmly, and I knew I had made the right decision to come here. But two months later on November 22, my first born son died unexpectedly on his farm in Pennsylvania. This turned my world upside down.

The unexpected love and support of my neighbors helped me at such a raw time. One neighbor insisted on driving my daughter and me to the airport for a very early morning flight to join my small family in Pennsylvania. When I returned home, there were phone calls, hugs, invitations to dinner. And every morning when I opened the door to get my newspaper, I would find cards and little gifts. Such love from those who didn't really know me touched me deeply.

“I didn't find my friends, the good Lord gave them to me.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

— Jean Aardweg, RESIDENT

Thursday

HABAKKUK 3:1-11

PSALM 37:1-18

JOHN 17:1-8

## PRAISE BE TO GOD

When I am in the Courtyard Flower Room, I am often congratulated by fellow residents on the beauty of my arrangements. I usually respond by thanking them ... and then I realize that my pride is allowing me to take credit for my talents and abilities. As a result, I am not acknowledging God's gifts.

A long time ago I read Paul's words (Philippians 4:13) - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." I try very hard to remind myself of his words. The Reverend Don Bowen, former pastor of Downtown Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, put it this way: "As with Paul and a host of others, we must learn that we can do great things when we depend on God and His strength for doing them."

Help us, Lord, to depend on you for doing your work. Amen.  
— Scottie Arnest, RESIDENT

## THE GIRL ON THE BRIDGE

June 28 started out as another hectic day. My daughter had to be taken to DMV again. New permit in hand, I dropped her off and proceeded to work. As I stopped at the light at Hermitage, a girl no more than twenty came to my truck asking for help.

I told her politely, "Sorry, baby I don't have any cash on me." She said in a desperate manner, "I don't want your money. I need your help. I'm about to jump off the bridge."

My mind starting racing. I quickly told her, "Be still, I am going to turn round and you just stay right there." As I turned my truck around, I called 911. I also began asking God to give me words to give to this young woman that would change her life.

I parked, and walked to the bridge and told the young woman my name and asked her name. She said, "It's Tomeka." I asked her why she wanted to jump. She said she just couldn't get anything right and she kept repeating that. She told me she had a two-year-old daughter. I said, "Tomeka, I'm a mom of two girls, and I don't get everything right either." I said, "No one is perfect. We are all a work in progress." I said "Do you know the Lord?" She didn't respond. I said, "Can I pray for you?" and she didn't respond. I said "I'm going to put my arms around you for a few seconds, is that okay?" So as I put my arms around her she started to cry, and I began to pray, asking God to send his angels to protect, strengthen and give clarity to Tomeka. After I finished praying, I told Tomeka, "Even if you don't know how to pray, just ask God every day, 'God please help me,'" and what she would find is that she will get through one day, then two days, etc. I kept telling her that the future was going to be bright.

Soon the ambulance came, and she was on her way.

Until this day, I ask God why he used me. I am not perfect at all; I struggle every day to be a better person. All I could come up with is that God put me in the right place at the right time. And to tell others that when God puts you in a position to help someone . . . just do it.

— Carolyn Botts, CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## THE LEADER

I am often asked, “What’s it like to be the leader of a great organization like Westminster Canterbury Richmond?”

I always answer that I love it or it’s great, without really ever truly thinking about the question or what I really think about the role of my leadership.

Leadership to me is best done from behind the team. Team members get the most from their leader when they are taught, mentored and coached, benefiting from both positive and negative feedback as they make their way through their daily work. Leaders do not control staff; leaders exist to serve staff.

There are a number of truths about leadership that inform my philosophy for leading a complex organization like Westminster Canterbury. First, leadership is not about controlling people; it’s exactly the opposite. It’s about serving them and being a useful resource. The best leaders are present for people, they are not their boss. Leaders do not tell people what to do, they help people figure it out on their own. Leadership is not territorial, but rather about letting go of the ego or pride and being truly authentic to yourself as a human. The best leaders are less concerned about pep talks and more concerned about creating a work place where people can do work they feel good about when they go home at night. Leadership, like life, is largely about paying attention, listening for what’s important to others and responding in meaningful and honest ways. Learning from Jesus, most importantly, leadership requires love – the willingness to give and receive love.

– John Burns, PRESIDENT & CEO

OUR ULTIMATE IDENTITY

Savor Matthew 22:37-40, then Milton's, "The mind is its own place, and of itself, can make a hell of heaven, or a heaven of hell."

Thought, a wonderful mode of excitement, the forerunner of all action, is a wondrous gift from the original Thinker, Feeler, Father, Mother, Creator! It is good to recall, regularly, that we are the offspring of thoughts entwined in God's dreams and DNA. Clearly we age, unconsciously absorbing patterns of thinking and feeling. When awakened to our capacity to respond with intelligence, we've entered the 'Promised Land' consciousness, Richard Rohr's unitive vision, flowing with literal and metaphorical milk, honey, nectar; unquenchable joy!

Responding to this amazing grace, we gradually make our exodus from fearful, scarcity-based, win/lose thinking. The expulsive power of this new affection and kindness empowers us; we begin to taste and perceive the Love Supreme, the Love that never fails (see Romans 2:4;8:37-39). Poet Denise Levertov provides a soul lift with, "Marvelous truth confronts us at every turn, in every guise." Likewise, Catherine of Siena electrifies with: "All the way to heaven is heaven."

So what can we do with our graced, empowered heart/mind? Quite a lot! With the Spirit of Truth as our Divine Lover within, we can direct or dissect our thoughts, hush them, or rush them, displace or replace them. There is no other place in the universe where we have such humble, yet bold mastery. We gradually learn that painful thoughts and feelings that are not transformed into compassion are inevitably transmitted from generation to generation, a virulent, peregrinating virus of the mind.

A concentration camp survivor, Victor Frankl, helps us with a germane, life-giving thought: "Everything can be taken from a person but one thing, the last of the human freedoms-to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

Clearly, the way we think keeps determining the way we live and feel and enjoy our being!

— Larry Durrett, RESIDENT



THE FINALS

The final kiss on the cheek that seems to last forever,  
knowing that I can never kiss you again

The final hug filled with love and warmth within your arms,  
not a tight hug because of your failing health

The final phone call, hearing your voice over our morning coffee,  
speaking of God and how thankful we should be for each day;  
always ending with "I love you"

The final smile filled with love and pride  
that shone through your eyes as well as on your face

The final visit, knowing that I could not walk in the house and  
hear your voice saying "My baby's baby" or "A-Nette"

The final touch of your hand, warm and gentle  
but filled with love and understanding

The final visit to church, not to sit beside you  
but to say my good bye until we meet again

The final moment when the coffin closed,  
sealing your earthly existence

The final move placing your coffin in the grave I know that I will  
not be able to hold you or to talk to you physically again.

But, Grandma, we will have a lot of one-sided conversations,  
and I know some of the drops of rain will be your wet kiss,  
when the wind blows gently across my face it is your touch,  
and dreams will allow me to have you by my side

Your spirit will live forever in my heart, I will continue  
to live as you taught me and I will never forget the life lessons  
that I learned. Psalm 23 will be the scripture that I read or recite  
when I need that extra empowerment and encouragement.

*Dedicated in memory of E. Elizabeth Brown*

– Annette Foster, DINING

# *Tuesday First Week of Lent*

GENESIS 37:12-24

PSALM 45

MARK 1:14-28

## AT REST WITH GOD

I was in church today thinking of the things I need to do the coming week: cooking meals, house chores, house projects, bills, my wife's work, my son's and daughter's sport practices along with their social life. All of these thoughts, while in church, where I should be at peace as I am in God's presence. From the beginning of time, God took the 7th day to rest and asked that we similarly take this day to be close to him and rest ourselves. Our present world is filled with distractions, television, video games, movies, cell phones and computers. We have many responsibilities and little time to reflect, love one another and relax – that is what vacation is for, right? This past summer I started work here, and on my second day, I witnessed a couple waiting for a ride. The wife had to hold a cup of water with a straw up to her husband so he could take a drink during that hot afternoon. It touched me. The genuine care she showed to ensure her husband was OK. The husband, probably upset he could not do this on his own, but knew he was in a safe place. I then wondered what was on their 'to do' list. All along our lives, God is patiently present, watching us succeed, fail, grieve the loss of a loved one, help others and receive help. He is around us always, we often are independent-thinking in that we can take life on our own, with little help as, "there is an app for that." But in the end, usually when we have trouble, we turn to God for help. This Lenten season, I want to spend time thanking God for my many blessings and not dwell on problems. I pray for guidance to care for my family, be there for my brothers, sister, parents, in-laws and extended family. I look forward to meeting more residents who are an inspiration in demonstrating unconditional love and compassion. As it is a commandment to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, this is our way to demonstrate to God that we remember Him and will indeed rest. Peace to everyone as you are loved by God.

– Tom Henning, PROJECT MANAGER

A LENTEN HISTORY LESSON

The past year for many has seemed a journey through arguments over what to do with our monuments. For some, they are symbols of a history that once seemed noble. To others, they are symbols of mistakes. History is important to Virginians because we take pride in being the first American colony, the mother of presidents, authors of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Religious Freedom and the Constitution. How can we be wrong?

Controversy begins with the mistaken idea that history can be etched in stone. In fact, dates are simply an index to events that have different meanings in the minds and hearts of individual people. Each person's take on history is different, and many important ideas change as we mature. This is the way with liberal arts, with philosophy, poetry, music and painting. It is especially true of religion.

Jesus' journey through His life, and ours through Lent today, are pilgrimages through worlds of changing and different opinions. Some people worship gods and goddesses they create in the images of mischievous men and women. Others worship and fear an angry male god whose enemy, Satan, stokes the fires of hell. And then there is Jesus, who represents our hoping, caring, forgiving and loving Creator. His patience may allow adversaries to pervert religion with gender and racial prejudices, but, like the liberal arts, Christianity thrives in the minds and souls of unique individuals who are free to grow and evolve as God created us to do. A lesson for our Lenten journeys is to have faith in Christianity and to have compassion for neighbors who disagree.

– Hunter H. McGuire, Jr., RESIDENT

# Thursday First Week of Lent

GENESIS 39:1-23

PSALM 50

MARK 2:1-12

THANKS BE TO OUR AWESOME GOD!

Oh, how I love to feel the cool, moist dirt between my fingers  
It's as if all of my worries were blown away and no longer linger  
How this familiar feeling rejuvenates my soul  
As this world can sometimes take its toll  
But I rejoice in the peace of knowing that my Lord and Savior  
Is in control and I am in his favor  
Now I can breathe easy as I sit in awe of HIS magnificent beauty  
From the mountains to the sea  
The shrubs and the trees  
The flowers and the bees  
The birds as they sing  
HIS creation includes E-V-E-R-Y-T-H-I-N-G!  
If we will only trust and believe  
HE will fill our hearts with HIS peace  
So that the temptations of sin in this world will decrease  
And the witnessing of our faith to others will increase  
Lord, hear my prayer that we might learn to be still  
And move towards YOUR will  
For your unfailing love and mercy  
Is the greatest gift for all eternity!

Psalm 56:3

John 14:1

Romans 15:13

John 16:33

1 Peter 5:7

Philippians 4:6-7

Proverbs 3:5-6

Ephesians 2:8-10

1 John 5:13-14

– Kathleen Pender, HORTICULTURALIST

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

“Life is a song, and love is the music,” is my motto. I found it on a bookmark, and I don’t know its origin. I started taking piano lessons at age 7.

As I am writing this, I am looking forward to my 89th birthday and, when I stop and think about it, it just blows my mind! I cannot believe how God has blessed me for 89 years and still does every single day. I find myself saying, “Thank you, Lord,” several times a day every day!

I have excellent health, I have a wonderful family, (2 children, 3 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren) and I live at Westminster Canterbury! At my age, what more could you want? Jesus promised, “I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Because He is, we have the amazing privilege of keeping our eyes on Him while He conducts the music of our lives. (David C. McCasland)

Many of you know about my son. He is a retired electrician who called me two months after I moved here on May 30, 2006, and told me he had throat cancer. The radiation destroyed most of his jaw teeth, and one of his jaw bones was replaced with titanium. He can’t eat or swallow and is on a feeding tube, but he hasn’t let that slow him down. He has been a dedicated volunteer fireman in Crewe for all of his adult life, and he is now 61. MCV and our Heavenly Father have cared for him for the past 11 years, and I am eternally grateful.

I want to close with a page from my Barbara Johnson calendar:

“In good times and bad, music has always been a part of my life, flowing through the laughter as well as the trials. To me, it is a gift from God – a bit of Heaven He loans to us while we live on earth – to help us survive the hard times, to celebrate the good times, and especially to praise Him in a way no other method can match.”

“My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music.” (Psalm 57:7)

– Betty Roberts, RESIDENT

A LITTLE WORD

Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

As I write, there is an increasing incivility in the world, often coupled with anger and slander. There are floods, fires, famines, and diseases—some augmented by mankind; there are inhumane acts of violence; there are wars and threats of more war.

But wait. In the midst of the turmoil, something else is happening. There are thousands of quiet heroes working to prevent catastrophes or selflessly rushing to aid those suffering.

Perhaps less dramatic but equally vital is our response to the needs of those around us—helping to provide food, shelter and clothing; visiting the sick and lonely; offering a smile, warm greeting, listening ear or hug. Offering forgiveness. The opportunities for service go on.

What is a word that embodies this quality of caring? May I suggest a tender, brave, unpretentious little word—kindness.

How else might we define kindness?

Kindness is contagious.

Kindness and love come from God.

Kindness glorifies God.

Kindness given in God's name is gratitude for God's boundless love.

Today, more gifts of time, talent and treasure—large and small, far and near—are being given to help in more diverse causes by more diverse people than perhaps ever before.

Could we build on the kindnesses already begun to help save “this fragile earth, our island home,”\* and those on it? Could we help bring the Kingdom of God more fully on earth?

With God's help and our renewed zeal, I believe we can, beginning with each one of us.

*\*The Book of Common Prayer, Eucharistic Prayer C, p. 370*

— Johnnie Lou Terry, RESIDENT

## *Second Sunday in Lent*

GENESIS 41:14-45

PSALM 24

JOHN 5:19-24

### GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS

Have you ever met someone for the first time and had much in common? When I think of the early church of Jews, they were Christians and had much in common. The word was in common. Joy was an inward trait that withstood persecution, storms of life, hatred and pain. Inward joy brings inner peace, a genuine smile of hope, encouragement, willingness to pray with someone and acts of kindness. I Peter 3:15 tells believers to sanctify oneself apart unto the Lord. That's God in the face of Jesus. Sometimes I get so busy, yet something on the inside yearns for me to read the Bible. That's another inward trait. Little reminders, "You haven't spent time with me." When I take time, I'm fueled up for his service. There in the word, time alone, he quiets me, comforts me and fills me up with such peace. Isn't that God in the face of Jesus? There are times when I fret, grumble, get disturbed about a matter, or even despair. Oh, that's why I had such yearning for Bible reading. Thank you Lord, you knew my trial coming. There the word comes to heart of remembrance. That's God in the face of Jesus. First he calls me, I listen and follow. His word tells me he calls his sheep by name. Isn't that good to know we who are his sheep are known by God? As Jesus's sheep, sometimes I make mistakes. I often feel bad, but he lets me know, I'll learn. There he teaches me honesty, humility, and patience. Then he covers me with grace. Wow, that's favor I don't deserve. He protects me from dangers and harm that could occur from my negligence. Then he lets me know he did it all to show me how he brings me out. Well, who can boast? "Not I," said the sheep. That's God in the face of Jesus.

— Yvonne White, HOUSEKEEPING

# Monday Second Week of Lent

GENESIS 41:46-57

PSALM 56

MARK 3:7-19A

## TRYST

Many people and experiences are unforgettable parts of my spiritual journey. Treasured times include summer visits to the Methodist Youth Camp in the highlands of Pennsylvania.

Tryst was a special service that took place every evening.

Gathering together at the base of one of the hills, one after another we began to climb the hill. As we climbed we sang:

“We are climbing Jacobs’s Ladder.”

Reaching the summit, we sat down quietly.

As we surveyed the glorious handiwork of God that surrounded us on every side, our hearts and minds became calmed from the business of the day’s activities. Our eyes and ears were tuned to the sounds of nature and God’s voice.

One of our leaders said a prayer of praise and a short meditation.

We descended the hill with hearts warmed, minds refreshed, and faith strengthened.

Although I cannot climb that hill this evening, I can still have my tryst with God. His beautiful world is here for me, and He remains in my heart.

— Betty Allen, RESIDENT



HOWDY, FRIEND!

Our message is that God was making all mankind his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends. (II Corinthians 5:18-19)

There is something most reassuring in St. Paul's opening, "Our message is . . ."

The expectation is that what will follow will be clear and hopeful. And, indeed, there follows the most joyful news that mortals can get, "God is making mankind his friends." Now, if you want to say "her" friends, that is all right as well. Robin Wallace, writing about a hymn by Thomas Troeger that contains thirty-nine Biblical names for God, notes that "all our names for God are metaphors. That is, they are not exactly God's name, but point to the truth that is God." Jesus' favorite word for God was "Father." St. Paul is affirming that this Passionate Loving Reality (my word for God) is "making us his friends." It is not that God would *like* for us to be his friends, or that it would *be nice* if we could be his friends, or that he *hopes* we can be friends. "Making" affirms that God is bringing it about. And if it is *God's* intention that he and we be friends, can any human forbid that? And how does he go about establishing this friendship? Jesus put it very simply, when he said, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me." How long will it take? Time is not a problem for God. But what a marvelous expectation of intimacy with the Divine.

— William E. Blake, Jr., RESIDENT

WALKING TOGETHER

God created heaven and earth, so I planted a garden when I first moved to Westminster Canterbury Richmond, February 25, 2016.

I planted all kinds of herbs, strawberries and flowers.

Each time I go down to the garden and water my garden, I sit and watch the birds, bees and butterflies stop and nibble the nectar from the flowers. As they fly away, I think they are carrying the nectar to other plants to make more.

I sit there, take pictures as I rest and thank God for all He has given me. He sent his Son, Jesus, who died on the cross to save us from sin, if we only ask for forgiveness; then He rose on the third day, so we might have everlasting life. When I die and go to heaven He will be waiting for me, so I can have everlasting life with him.

Thank you, God, for walking with me daily, so I can help others know you.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two people are better than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

– Grace Colhoun, RESIDENT

CAN WE REALLY KNOW GOD?

What is now known as Lent was in my day known as a time of “rededication.” We filled the time with services entitled “Revivals” – a time when we pledged our lives *anew* to Jesus: “the author and finisher of our faith.” This time of reflection of our spiritual nature is important. How well do we really *know* our God? The apostle Paul stated, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the *fellowship* of his sufferings.”

Hitherto in this country, we have known little about suffering for our Christian testimony, but times have changed drastically. Now, it is not popular to state that the power of God’s word has changed our behavior. However, God’s word points to a change in our outlook and behavior when we receive Him and *we can know Him!*

I am writing this in the season of joy – when Jesus was born to save us *from* our sins. God still has power – He is not dead! He lives! He saves! He heals! He is our coming king!

– Ruth Fitch, RESIDENT

## Friday Second Week of Lent

GENESIS 43:1-15

PSALM 69:1-23

MARK 4:35-41

### IN TIME, BUT NOT RIGHT NOW

I know in my head I am supposed to feel like the psalmist who wrote, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints (Psalm 116:15).” But try telling that to my heart. Loss doesn’t feel precious—it is the opposite of precious. It is a hole in my heart, my day, my life that will never be filled. I live with two holes from the loss of my brother, and most recently, my mother. I am learning to live with them- I know where they are in my heart, and sometimes I can maneuver around them. And then I will hear something or see something or think something, and my thoughts are far from precious.

I weep. I cry. I feel sad for myself. I feel sad for my sons who did not have enough time with either of them. I regret we didn’t have more talks, more memories, just more. Yes, they are out of pain, but the pain of the holes in my life and the lives of those I love are still very present.

And so I find tremendous peace and affirmation that this is how I should feel right now because John’s gospel tells us it is how Jesus felt when he lost a loved one. Jesus wept (John 11:35). Jesus didn’t wax poetic about how precious a life Lazarus lived or how he has returned to God or how it is the natural order of things to go from dust to dust. All those things are true, and perhaps I will say them in time, but right now, I weep. I weep like Jesus did.

— Pat Harris, RESIDENT SERVICES

WHEN SOMEONE LOOKS OUT FOR YOU

I have been blessed with more good fortune than many, which is a fact I try to remain aware of, but a couple of years ago I felt as if life were handing me one challenge after another. My sweet little beagle, Spencer, passed away, and before I had even adjusted to life with one dog, my old hound mix, Ringo, passed away as well. A dog is just a dog to many, but they do become a part of your life, and a pet's absence is felt daily. On top of that, 2016 also brought the passing of my last remaining grandparent. It seemed like such a surprise – it wasn't that long ago that I was picking her up to bring her to a cookout at my parents' house (and always finding an unnecessary \$10 bill in my purse after, "for gas money"). I was grateful for the surprise birthday party thrown for her just a couple weeks before, where our whole family gathered to celebrate her, but becoming a "grandparent orphan" is never an easy pill to swallow. Around this time I was also feeling unfulfilled in my previous job, so I started the tedious process of applying for a new job. One day I came across the listing for what is now my job here. Westminster Canterbury is where my grandmother worked as a nurse for most of her career, and then volunteered upon retiring, and they were hiring in visual arts, which was my field. I cannot think of an explanation other than someone was looking out for me. I was ecstatic upon hearing the news that I got the job, and my first week I met so many staff and residents who knew my grandmother. I feel truly embraced by this community, and I no longer feel that I am a "grandparent orphan" because I am surrounded by our wonderful residents every time I come to work.

– Lauren Nash, VISUAL ARTS AND PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

# *Sunday Third Week of Lent*

GENESIS 44:1-17

PSALM 93

JOHN 5:25-29

## AT PEACE

I lost my wife and best friend, Bev, a few years ago to cancer after 39 years of marriage. Losing someone we love is never easy, even if we know they are with God in heaven. Our hearts ache, and we miss them . . . their presence, their laughter, and their love. It is OK for us to weep, but there is no need to despair. They had pain here. They have no pain there. You and I might wonder why God took them home. But my Bev doesn't. She is, at this very moment, at peace in the presence of God.

John 11:25-26

Romans 14:8

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

– David Caldwell Reynolds, RESIDENT

# Monday Third Week of Lent

GENESIS 44:18-34

PSALM 80

MARK 5:21-43

## IN HIS PRESENCE IS FULLNESS OF JOY

You will show me the path of life, in your presence is fullness of joy, at your right hand there are pleasures forever ! (Psalm 16:11)

Many times we put off doing what we know in our hearts God wants us to do. Deep down inside we may be dealing with unforgiveness, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, and other things that keep us bound. We spend our lives chasing things and people in our quest to find someone or something to make us happy. Often those attempts end up being a fruitless search that leaves us feeling empty on the inside.

As we age, we find out that happiness is not in how much money we have, or how many degrees we have, or how big our houses are, but it's love that matters most...things that are of quality instead of quantity.

Well, it is never too late to search for love that passes all understanding. Love is when a man wipes away your tears, even after you left him hanging on the cross. When you fall, He lifts you up! When you fail, He forgives! When you are lost, He is the way! When you are afraid, He is your courage! In him there is love, healing, strength, comfort, and peace. He's everything that we need and more. No one will ever love you more than Christ Jesus.

Thank you, Lord, for showing me the path of life, for it is in YOUR presence that I find fullness of joy forevermore!

– Bessie S. Taliaferro, RESIDENT

## SOME THOUGHTS ON OBSERVING LENT

“So, what are you giving up for Lent?” One may hear this question frequently during Lent, the liturgical season immediately preceding Easter. For most Christians, Lent reflects the forty days following Jesus’ baptism that he spent fasting in the wilderness, undergoing temptations and (possibly) discernment before beginning his public ministry. While the season is properly a solemn one, characterized by self-examination, prayer, penance, and self-denial, it is also a time of preparation for the joyful celebration of Christ’s resurrection, Easter, the pinnacle of our faith.

How does one observe Lent in a way that honors this dual purpose? N. T. Wright, the author and retired Anglican bishop, often uses the metaphor of different mountain trails that all converge at the summit. So it is with Lenten observance, in that there is no one prescribed form. Fasting is probably the most ancient practice, having been recognized in the greater church as early as the fourth century. Originally focused on food, especially meat, today fasting often involves giving up various things, both intangible, such as bad habits, and tangible, such as desserts. (A recent online survey revealed refraining from social networking as the most popular Lenten sacrifice, with chocolate, alcohol, and junk food following in order - meat came in at ninth place). The precise method is not critical so long as the purpose is to reorient our lives, rid ourselves of worldly distractions, and so to speak, “get right with God.”

My own figurative trail up the mountain is through study and meditation. We are all invited, in the words of the Prayer Book, “to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word” as we anticipate the Easter celebration.

– Woody Woodward, RESIDENT



*Wednesday Third Week  
of Lent*

GENESIS 50:15-26

PSALM 101

MARK 8:11-26

FEELINGS AND FAITH

There are many people who are moved to tears by beautiful classical music, both instrumental and vocal. I am one of them. It feeds my soul.

My spiritual life was always filled with music since as a small child I sang, “Jesus Loves Me, This I KNOW!” To this day, as I sing in my church choir, I quite likely will find my eyes wet.

Much of the scripture I know I learned from anthems and hymns. I want to sing all verses because each verse has a special message. Not everybody knows the tune. Not everybody can carry a tune, but ALL can sing with their hearts, because God knows our hearts.

At this Lenten season, I feel grateful to those who, inspired by their faith after living through years of joy and sorrow, are able to express so eloquently their gratitude in this way.

Some of my favorite Lenten hymns are “Wondrous Love,” “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” and “Lift High the Cross.” At any time my spirit can be lifted by “Now Thank We All Our God” and “Oh Jesus, I Have Promised to Serve Thee to the End.”

Let us sing with our hearts in thanksgiving to God!

– Nancy Archbell Bain, RESIDENT

FAITH

Faith is such a short word when you see it. Easy to overlook, it is used so often. Easy to define, but such a hard thing to explain. When I try, I always seem to come up with what many people would describe as coincidences.

I don't believe God arranges coincidences. What may seem to be happenstance to us, I believe is God at work. Faith, to me, is believing in His absolute power. Events in my life, that are too personal and lengthy to describe here, have convinced me that the positive results could not have been what they were without God's hand at work.

I reflect on what happened to Jesus, not only during Lent, the pain, scorn, feelings of abandonment and injustice heaped upon him. I don't pretend to understand why his death had to be this way in order for us to be saved. I have heard many sermons, and have read the Bible and realize that all this should make me understand. I don't doubt what is said, I suppose I just feel so unworthy of His sacrifice for me. At this point, I'm sure some reading this will find me to be rather sanctimonious, but I do feel this way and I am grateful and humbled.

My faith is sometimes only the size of the proverbial mustard seed, if that, but I cling to it, praying for a greater faith and even more forgiveness. Without faith I would have nothing and, knowing I am forgiven over, and over, I am assured my faith is in the right place.

Matthew 19:20 & 11:22

— June Buntin, RESIDENT

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

One night, a few months ago, I lay awake for what seemed like hours. Running through my head over and over were the words of the 23rd Psalm, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” I hadn’t thought of this psalm in ages, and why now in the middle of the night? And this, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil for you are with me. Thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me.” I asked myself, “What does this mean? Is this a message?” Finally these words of comfort calmed my anxiety, and I was able to sleep. Two days later my husband woke me at 5:30 in the morning. He’d been having a severe nose bleed for two hours and was unable to stop it. We called security, and a nurse came immediately. She was able to stop the bleeding temporarily and urged us to call our doctor. My daughter, also an RN, came over a short time later and was a great comfort. I was thankful for the beautiful words of Psalm 23, reminding me over and over of God’s message of continuing care and protection.

Now we are in the season of Lent, and I wonder if Jesus thought of Psalm 23 during his days in the wilderness. He must have realized what he would be facing once he started his radical ministry: disbelief, betrayal and crucifixion. The words must have comforted him. His faith was not shaken even as he walked through “the valley of the shadow of death.” May we meditate on this psalm during Lent and all the days to follow— finding comfort, peace and gratitude— knowing the Lord is our Shepherd regardless of what life brings.

– Anne Foard, RESIDENT

GLIMPSES OF A SHEPHERD'S LIFE

“Thou preparest a table before me... thou anointest my head with oil . . .”

Philip Keller is a profound gifted Christian writer. I have *A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer*, *The Good Shepherd*, and *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*.

Until I read these, my sole knowledge of lambs and sheep was what I had seen in the movie *Heidi*.

A good shepherd takes utmost care of his flock. At night he carefully herds his sheep into the safe fold. They recognize his voice, helping them to feel tranquil comfort, not skittish.

“Preparest a table,” means that he carefully examines new land, going through and discarding detritus and debris that could hurt sheep in a new grazing place.

A serious shepherd cares for irritated nostrils of his sheep by using oil, thus “anointing with oil.”

A sheep is unable to turn over from his back to get on his feet. A good shepherd looks carefully for this, so he can do it.

Keller takes us to a rich faith in God, life on a high plain of peace.

Isaiah 26:3

— Grace Lindner, RESIDENT

# *Fourth Sunday in Lent*

GENESIS 48:8-22

PSALM 66

JOHN 6:27-40

## THANKFUL

I am thankful that my son and daughter get along,

And that my son and daughter-in-law gave me my first grandbaby.

I thank the Lord for being with me and my family,

And my Westminster Canterbury family.

The Lord is my strength and guide,

And my help.

I love what I do at Westminster Canterbury Richmond.

When anyone asks me how I am doing,

I say that I am lovely because the Lord is love.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world..."

Lovely.

— Yovandel Perkins, DINING SERVICES

IT LEADS TO LIFE AND HEALTH

Less than one year after moving to Westminster Canterbury Richmond, my wife, Carol, required major surgery. It was after her discharge that she suddenly became critically ill and unresponsive! I was initially told her prognosis was guarded; however, her condition rapidly deteriorated, with multi-system failures. Carol required three months in the hospital's critical care unit, and she was barely responsive. As for me, I could not fathom that I might lose my beloved wife! Finally, she recovered enough to be transferred to Mary Morton Parsons Health Center for three more weeks of recovery. When Carol returned to our apartment for her final stage of recovery, we were greatly comforted physically and emotionally.

Since we were relatively new to Westminster Canterbury Richmond, we did not closely know many of the residents or staff. Amazingly, there was an outpouring of support and consolation from this special "family" and community at Westminster Canterbury while in the health center and as we returned home. Carol and I truly experienced a very special kind of blessing, which both of us will always thankfully recall and cherish!

Isaiah 38:16

– Ben Ussery, RESIDENT

CHOOSE TODAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE

God has created us with free will – the freedom to choose – and the kind of choices that we make enable us to put God at the center of our lives or to live for ourselves. He is the One who offers us the abundant life.

One evening an elderly Cherokee brave told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, “My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one that you feed.”

Prayer: Loving God, in you we are made new. Thank you that you give us the will and the strength to live in ways that bring life and wholeness to ourselves and to a broken world. Fill us this day with the fruit of the Spirit, we pray, that we may go forth to minister in your name. Amen.

Joshua 24:14-15

Galatians 5:22-23

– Dot Apperson, RESIDENT

*Wednesday Fourth Week of Lent*

GENESIS 50:15-26

PSALM 101

MARK 8:11-26

SONNET FOR PEACE

Healing God's world, aching with pain.

Like broken record, always same.

Needs taking responsibility for our actions, bad or good.

Teaching by example, our Earth's offspring and citizens, kindness  
we should.

Humans must realize Life isn't about gratification.

Selfishness harms planet Earth's nations.

"More isn't Better," unless helping to teach.

Our global families' positive reach.

History's legendary humans had few material possessions

But tirelessly strived bringing life-changing blessings.

Planting seeds in Earth's soils, weaving clothes for our backs.

Honest jobs, providing safe homes so our families won't lack.

May God's spiritual guidance lead our vision, hearts, and hands

As we join our brothers and sisters, sharing "Peace in our hands."

— Barbara Jensen Crowder, RESIDENT



LENTEN MEDITATION 2017

It isn't easy thinking about Lent when all the stores are playing Christmas carols (and it isn't even Advent yet). But, perhaps, this isn't rushing the season. What better time than Thanksgiving is there for stopping, taking stock of our lives, counting our blessings, and asking a hard question or two?

Do God's gifts of grace that we commemorate at Christmas and Easter have practical implications for us? If God loves His creation enough to give His son to redeem it, then what would be the best way to show gratitude to Him?

Well, if God loves His creation that much, maybe we should love it too — and protect and enhance it in every way that we can. That includes loving our families and friends, but it also includes loving strangers, foreigners, all of the life forms with which we share our time, and even the earth, sea and sky themselves. Recycling may not be a dramatic way of saying “thank you” to God, but it is practical, it works and it's a good place to start. So, too, is foregoing a luxury so that someone in need can have access to a necessity. Did you ever think about the possibility that paying your school taxes cheerfully is an act of love for God and all His children?

If you try to look at life this way, then Lent is a good time to focus yourself on the joy of giving back. And it starts at the simplest level. Be kind. Say, “thank you.” Offer help. Don't begrudge. Ever. And, above all, get the frown off your face. God has smiled at you; so smile at God. Smile at the world. Smile at your own foibles (and fix them). And when you do that, you can keep a Holy Lent and (hopefully) keep it year-round.

— James Hall, RESIDENT

QUITE RIGHT

I have never gotten Lent quite right. As a child, I was taught that Lent was a time of repentance and sacrifice or giving up something. With a six-year-old's youthful enthusiasm, I announced I would give up my Brussels sprouts so that the "starving Armenians" could eat them. My parents didn't think that was quite right. In my teens, I joined other teens for a service project, but the focus soon became one of partying rather than helping others. That did not seem quite right. As a young mother I helped my children weed out toys they had outgrown for a family who was struggling and had smaller children. As my children presented their toys to the family, I heard a voice pipe up, "We brought you poor children our old toys!" That didn't seem quite right. In my middle years I tried to observe "The Hours," when four times a day at specific times the scripture for the day was to be prayed and pondered. Too often the hours would fly by, leaving only guilt in their wake, and that did not seem quite right. This year I think I will try to sit quietly for fifteen minutes sometime during the day without electronics, phone, or TV and simply listen. If I can calm the chatter in my head, I may hear the still, small voice of God, and that will be quite right.

— Jan Orgain, RESIDENT

ONE, TWO, THREE

Do not be anxious for anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV)

My dad used to say that 98% of the things we worry about never happen. I have found this to be true, but it has not stopped me from worrying that this time my problem may be in the category of the 2% that will actually happen. There is only one solution when something is weighing on my mind: “prayer and petition with thanksgiving” – discussing the problem with God.

First, just telling God what I am upset about helps me work out why the issue is bothering me, and what the worst-case scenario is. He already knows that I am worrying, and He knows more about the problem than I do. I ask for a glimpse into His wisdom, or solutions I had not thought of myself.

Second, the verse commands not only that we talk to God, but that our prayer have an element of thanksgiving. God has blessed me abundantly – beyond anything I could possibly deserve. When I am anxious, I am usually trading in thinking about all the things that are wonderful in my life for the one thing that is gnawing on my brain. Taking time to be thankful “resets” my mind on all that is good in my life. An “attitude of gratitude” may not solve my problem, but it greatly reduces my anxiety.

Which leads us to the third reward of that verse: peace. Not just peace, but a peace that we cannot even begin to understand. A peace that makes no sense given our situation. A peace of God that will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Trading in our anxiety for the peace of God is a good trade.

Could it be that God is using that thing...that situation that is stressing you out . . . that issue that is gnawing at your brain . . . to draw you closer in communication with Him?

– Virginia Van Valkenburg, DAUGHTER OF RESIDENT

# *Fifth Sunday in Lent*

EXODUS 3:16- 4:12

PSALM 118

JOHN 8:46-59

## BEAUTY IN THE SMALLEST

One morning, as I stepped into the sunlight, I was overwhelmed with a blinding golden light – reflecting off the newly yellowed and rain-washed leaves of two massive maple trees towering over the Glebe. Suddenly, in response to a strong breeze, hundreds of golden flecks cascaded off the trees – like a shower of handfuls of gold coins thrown in celebration.

Once again, I was moved by yet another manifestation of the beauties of creation – which are constantly about us – in the changing of seasons, in both night and day, in the minutes and hours of time. And, not necessarily in huge events, but often in the minutest aspects of the world around us. For example, look at the color of individual flowers, the shape of seed pods, the slick poles of bamboo, the gnarled bark of trees.

In my daily travels – in a walk to the gardens, around campus, driving about Richmond, along the highway and into the country – I’m constantly searching for inspirations to guide me in creating arrangements for the chapel. Contrary to the definite “rules” by which nature directs throughout the year, I find that in the gifts of creation, all things go together – sometimes in unusual ways, sometimes in peaceful ways, but always melding in a unique presentation that moves others.

Perhaps a message to all for living together in difficult times – a difficult world.

– Scott Boyer, RESIDENT

FRIENDSHIP

Ask residents what they like best about Westminster Canterbury and you will receive many positive answers. A very consistent response that comes readily has to do with friendship.

Regardless of the facility you find yourself living in here at Westminster Canterbury, you are sure to enjoy an abundance of friendship, of caring, of concern and love. Need a buddy? Look down the hall, across the hall or next door. A friend will pick up your newspaper, pick up your dinner, or most important, pick up your spirits. A simple conversation can enliven your day and warm your heart, challenge your mind, and inspire your imagination. Each day is an opportunity to create connections, make discoveries, and cultivate friendships.

Westminster Canterbury is the perfect home away from home. It is here you form remarkable new friendships while frequently connecting with old friends. Every activity is an opportunity to find a new friend. Join with friends to enjoy a film, a trip to the theater, exercise group or an art activity. It is great fun to take a trip about town or out of town. You might even take a trip abroad, where you are sure to widen and deepen your friendships. Friendships remind you of the power of love through a moment of laughter or a time of tears. It is through friendships that Westminster Canterbury becomes more like home, rather than a mere residence or address.

I shall remain forever grateful for the love and warmth of friendships formed at Westminster Canterbury. Unexpected times of company, a call for help or a shared laugh give time more meaning and purpose. Always remember that friends are like the songs of a bird. You cannot always see the birds singing but, if you listen with your heart, you can always hear their song.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

— Barbara Grey, RESIDENT

HUMBLE SERVICE

“It is necessary for us to pay more attention to what we have heard, or else we may drift away from it.” (Hebrews 2:1)

“Let’s also think about how to motivate each other to show love and to do good works.” (Hebrews 10:24)

I see and hear NBC News anchor Lester Holt almost every night. I appreciate the fact that, despite the disturbing news he has had to report, he ends each program with pictures and accounts of those who have made or are making a positive difference in the world. Almost all of the persons are humble, hidden from view for most of us. They have simply answered the call to meet a need. I am grateful to Holt (an acknowledged Christian, by the way) for telling us of them. They inspire and teach us.

Here at Westminster Canterbury we have such people, both staff and residents. They do not smile or listen or shop for others or offer a ride or push the wheelchair or give the gift in order to impress others; they simply are not “lazy,” a word used in Hebrews 6:12. (Another translation uses the word “sluggish.”) They make real the verses quoted above.

O gracious God, thank you for the many who serve you with no thought of self. Make us more aware, quicker to express appreciation, more willing to serve in like manner. We pray in the name of the Servant of all. Amen.

– Betsy Rice, RESIDENT

THE PRESENCE THAT NEVER FAILS

There have been many times throughout my life, as I am sure it is with all of us, that I have been faced with unexpected difficulties. Sometimes they are more than I ever think I can bear. I lost my youngest child when he was 20. I can't think of anything worse that a parent should bear. It has been said God never gives us more than we can handle, but more comforting for me is that God never leaves us to bear our burdens alone! My ability to persevere comes because of the faith of the presence of God. As it is with all trials in life.

Recently, my sister was visiting, and during this time my husband and I were struggling with the loss of his job, and still remaining firm in the knowledge that God is in control. My sister found a piece of paper on the kitchen floor, face down, and when she picked it up she put it on the counter, where I later found it. We have no idea where it came from. This is what it said, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31, verse 8.) I am forever thankful for the presence that never fails.

— Laurie Youndt, DIRECTOR CLINICAL SERVICES

BLESSINGS

Blessed are the special flowers that visit the table of the Lord; for they bring in the universal outdoors with their intimate beauty.

And blessed are all the other Westminster Canterbury flower arrangements large and small, high and low, graceful and exuberant; for they enliven their spaces, delight their admirers and satisfy their arrangers.

And very blessed are the arrangers, veterans and long-timers, novices and newcomers; for again and again they contribute beauty and balance in special places as well as in extended vistas.

And perhaps also blessed are those of us who admire these bouquets, marvel at the color combinations, breathe in the fragrances and appreciate the containers; for we share these pleasures with each other and thank God for gardens and gardeners!

— Caroline Neal, RESIDENT



## TRANSCENDENT TRUTH

Our annual Lenten journey is occasion for revitalization of our confidence, and of our inspired understanding of the eternal significance of the incarnation of the Son of God and his teaching, preaching and healing in a tumultuous world. The message of Lent is not only of the passion and the agony of the cross, but also of the glory and victory of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Modern naysayers and cynics challenge details of revealed truths at the altar of Revealed Science. They are confused by information and knowledge on the one hand, and discernment and wisdom on the other. Faith and reason are not dichotomous; both deal in truths rendered from different realms of probity. Science concerns itself with the finite: that which is measurable and amenable to the physical senses. Faith, on the other hand, concerns the infinite: that which is refractory to human reason, but accessible through divine inspiration. Therein lies the consummate rejoinder to Pilate's query: "What is truth?"

Science can go back only so far, by means of research into the physical or written record. Its dominion and authority are at their maximum in the present, through discovery and discernment. It can go forward only so far, its predictions limited by justifiable theory.

On either side of the finite there remains the "infinite wisdom of God:" timeless and available to us through faith alone. Our everlasting thankfulness to God is in the blessed assurance that the anguish of Lent at last culminates in the glory of the resurrection.

Both science and reason, or faith alone, allow us to look into the future with informal confidence. When fervent hope is realized, we speak of the miraculous, and it matters not which process we credit. It clearly matters whose name we put on it!

Alleluia! Amen!

— Stan Higgins, RESIDENT

## THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

On any given day, I find myself saying, “I love that song,” “I love that music,” “I love chocolate.” This attitude of appreciation is contagious when working with others—especially children—and often leads to positive input and interactive conversations.

When, however, these expressions are directed to a person rather than an inanimate object, what a difference! There is a giving and receiving that has no equal. We all know this, but how often do we make this happen? How often do we say: “I love the way you helped me,” or “I loved how you tried even though there was a problem.” Love takes on a different focus.

I saw these profound words: “The magnitude love achieves is measured by the depth of giving, the perception of understanding and the faith of purpose through the passage of time.” I find these thoughts to be a powerhouse that truly personifies Paul’s letters.

Each of the measures is a God-given gift, and I am learning to appreciate this each day! This love gift helps in dealing with troubled times, frustrations and irritations that continue to present themselves in our lives. The familiar words of Henry Emerson Fosdick’s *Make a Pearl*, exemplify this gift: “Most of us can take a lesson from the oyster. The most extraordinary thing about an oyster is this. Irritations get into his shell. He does not like them. He tries to get rid of them. But when he cannot get rid of them, he settles down to make of them one of the most beautiful things in the world. He uses the irritations to do the loveliest thing that an oyster ever has a chance to do. If there are irritations in our lives—make a pearl. It may have to be a pearl of patience or understanding or giving of yourself, but, anyhow, make a pearl. It takes faith and love to do it!”

God helps me to turn day to day experiences into pearls. With His help I will make a pearl to give back to Him. Lord, we are grateful that your love comes to us, not forced but freely with no measures, for us to scatter. We will strive to be worthy of your precious gift. Amen.

— Burrell Stultz, RESIDENT

## STAYING IN THE HAND OF GOD

Long time friends and I enjoyed fellowship every three months, rotating times serving as host. During our last dinner, September 11, 2011, the host couple asked me to stay after the others departed. They asked me what would make me happy. My husband, Mario, had passed away from complications of Alzheimer's in March. I immediately replied, "To live at Westminster Canterbury." That same night, I wrote a prayer stating this. I placed it, as well as two newspaper articles regarding contact information for WCR, into my Bible. Isaiah 41:10: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you..."

On a rainy night in May 2014, a truck hit my Infiniti, knocking me into the other lane, totaling my car. I suffered a concussion and bodily injuries. The nice police officer who was with me told me he didn't want to give me a ticket; but he had to give me one for not yielding right of way. The officer said the driver did not have his lights on. My God again was holding me in His righteous hand! Psalm 16:8: "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand; I will not be shaken."

I spoke to my Lord and said, "I didn't know you were going to do it this way. Thank you, Sovereign Lord, for saving me; I will now call Westminster Canterbury." Psalm 139:10: "Even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." As soon as I could drive, I called to set up a visit.

I moved in December 2014. I told Laurie the initials WC, as I called Westminster Canterbury, for me meant, "With Christ" and I would always say, "With Christ at WC!" I did cry a lot saying, "Lord, I want to go home." I missed my all-brick rancher home of 45 years. One night, I experienced vertigo for the first time in my life. I was dizzy and could not walk, trying to get from bath to bed. I fell into my chair to sit and wait. I said, "Lord, I didn't mean your heavenly home, I meant my Hanover home!" Finally, on September 11, 2017, I was able to call WC my home!

– Phyllis Dunn Rossi, RESIDENT

## WRITING YOUR STORIES

How many times have you said, “If only I’d asked my mother, father, grandmother or grandfather more questions”? We would like to know more about their lives and the times in which they lived.

We are now the older generation, and we can remedy the future situation by writing down stories of our childhood stories that our parents told us.

My mother told about the time her family was gathered at the dinner table when her father told his eldest daughter to go out to the stable/garage for a surprise. There was Gerry, a beautiful bay horse. Oh, how excited everyone was! However, the eldest daughter was more interested in boys than horses, so mother inherited Gerry. She used to show us her muscles gained from riding Gerry, as he was hard to handle. Mother rode for ten years at the Deep Run Hunt Club, then located at Staples Mill Road and Broad Street. Every Wednesday in Lent, her mother told her that she had to go to church. Her mother said it didn’t matter what she wore, so she was there in her riding jodhpurs and boots.

My father told me of the summer his family spent at Westover Plantation. His father was instrumental in helping someone buy that handsome mansion and, in return, was allowed to spend one summer there. The only drawback was there was no furniture in the house. Camping out at Westover was an adventure. I wished I had asked him how the cooking was done.

This Lent would be a good time to begin writing down the stories that your children and grandchildren will want to know after you are gone. Don’t let them say, “If only I had asked them more questions.”

— Jean Brydon, RESIDENT

FAVORITE HYMNS

All of us have favorite hymns. Maybe some of us have more than one favorite. No doubt both Christmas carols and the hymns we sing at Easter are many people's favorites. My favorite hymn is "Fairest Lord Jesus."

Many years ago, I was asked to sing a solo one Sunday when the youth choir sang during the service. To this day I can remember how my legs trembled when I stood to sing. I made it through the first verse. When I sang the second verse I suddenly felt calm. "Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands, robed in the blooming garb of spring. Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, who makes the woeful heart to sing."

Spring, a new beginning and Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. The Lenten season offers us an opportunity to meditate as we look forward to Easter.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)  
— Charlotte Lovelace, RESIDENT

WHEN WE HAFTA BE QUIET

“We hafta be quiet in church, in libraries and when Daddy’s team is losing,” says Dolly to her brothers in the *Family Circus* cartoon on November 2, 2017. The cartoon snapped me back into my childhood, and my mother was saying we have to be quiet on Good Friday. Then I recalled Mother said the same words on Baseball World Series days when the Cardinals, my Daddy’s team, played. I thought both Good Friday and Baseball World Series were connected to God’s special days.

That was my childhood understanding of faith and now, in my 80s, what is my understanding of God’s days and the concept of quiet: why do I feel the need to be quiet on Good Friday afternoon, one of God’s days? I understand that I was blessed to be married to a theologian for 55 years. I have been blessed with across the dining table discussions of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. I know the theological words, but how does the word enter my soul? Those theological words are important for my brain understanding, and quiet is important for my soul understanding.

Every year the process is different. This year I find Psalm 131, verse 2, “but I have calmed and quieted my soul like a child quieted at its mother’s breast, like a child that is quieted is my soul.” Those words form a picture. Then I can begin to feel the emotion in the picture and the quiet. It is a space connected to this world and not connected to this world.

In this quiet space of quiet in my soul I can go to Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know I am God.” In this quiet light space, I can feel the grace of Christ’s cross and a God who can turn the horrible, cruel act into a deep love for me. God does for me what I cannot do for myself, cleans me of sin that distances me from God. And I am calmed like a child at a mother’s breast. Thanks be to God.

– Nancy Dawe, RESIDENT

ACTS OF KINDNESS

Generally speaking I have had a very active and happy life with just a few bumps in the road caused by the deaths of several people who were important to me.

I attribute a lot of my happiness to the fact that I have been fortunate enough to be involved in strong Presbyterian churches— starting with my home church— Norton Presbyterian. We had a good youth group. I went to camp and youth conferences from fourth grade through high school. I am now a member of Salisbury Presbyterian in Midlothian.

I served on the Outreach Committee at Salisbury where a member introduced us to “Acts of Kindness.” Each month she would give us new ideas - for example - let a car from a side street pull in ahead of you - pay for the car behind you at a drive-through fast food, or give the empty space in a parking lot to another car. The idea is to train yourself to be alert to different opportunities to show kindness to someone.

I would like to challenge all our readers to ask, R U THE 1 who will make the choice to be kind to someone today? It just takes a minute to look for “Acts of Kindness” that you can do.

— Billy Allen, RESIDENT

## THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

When observing Good Friday, many see Jesus as passive, bowing his head in submission to evil forces who crucified him. However, the Bible and early church art depicted a triumphant Christ on the cross. Early paintings portrayed Christ with a kingly crown reigning from the cross. The Cross of San Damiano loved by St. Francis of Assisi depicted a crucified Christ, but above his head we also see the triumphant risen, ascended Christ.

Jesus, the victim, took charge during Holy Week. Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem to suffer and die to fulfill prophesy. He was not a helpless victim of evil people. Jesus said, "I lay down my life. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." (John 10: 17, 18), and "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26: 51-53). Jesus reminded Pilate, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above." (John 19: 11). The dying thief saw Jesus defeat the last of his enemies, not by warfare but by non-violent forgiveness. His mockers could not move his heart from pardon to vengeance. His love won the soul of a dying thief.

On the cross Jesus dismissed his spirit saying "It is finished"-- meaning the debt is paid. He had accomplished what he had come to do as Paul argued, "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, [Christ] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2: 15)." Satan thought he was conquering Christ, but in fact on the cross Christ conquered Satan and his demonic powers. Christ is victor over sin, death, and Satan.

— Art Thomas, RESIDENT



ATTITUDE. GRATITUDE.

One day I realized I was living my life by two words – “attitude” and “gratitude.” Those two words grew in importance to me. I began to tell friends and staff – they wanted to use them also. When you look in the mirror first thing in the morning, you have the control of what you can make of your day – good, happy, helpful, all kinds of lovely things. Then sit quietly in your room and thank the Lord for his blessings. Show your gratitude with a prayer. We all have so much to be grateful for.

– Alma Bingham, RESIDENT

## PRAYING OUR GOODBYES

In Joyce Rupp's book *Praying Our Goodbyes*, she writes about the times that we have to say goodbye to someone we love. I read this book as I grieved the loss of both of my parents in the span of 10 months. Her words were comforting and eye-opening, particularly when she asked the question: "What does the life and message of Jesus Christ tell us about the goodbyes in our lives?"

Jesus had many goodbyes in his life so he knows the painful times, the hurt and the emptiness that comes with deep loss. Jesus is fully divine, fully human. He said goodbye to the home and family he was with for 30 years. He left a secure and familiar place with friends and shelter for a life of homelessness as he sought to do the will of his Father.

His life was one of "rooting and uprooting" as he permitted himself to develop friendships. Jesus stayed with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, where he felt loved and cared for, but it was not his home. He traveled the dusty roads to comfort those who mourned and those who suffered.

As he journeyed toward Jerusalem, he wept for those people who had rejected him. He longed to "gather his people as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings," but he could not compel them. It was a goodbye to what could have been.

It was a farewell meal when Jesus gathered his friends around the table on Passover. He was coming nearer to his death, and he ached for them. The tension of saying goodbye and the struggle to go to the Father was intense and sorrowful.

He prayed alone and then walked alone to the cross. How he must have grieved as we grieve when we feel alone.

But, his goodbye became a "Hello" with his resurrection. Because of the resurrection, Jesus is a witness that when goodbyes come that we, too, can be raised from our emptiness of loss to a new hope. Our goodbyes will be our "Hellos" one day.

— The Rev. Charlotte Evans, PASTORAL CARE

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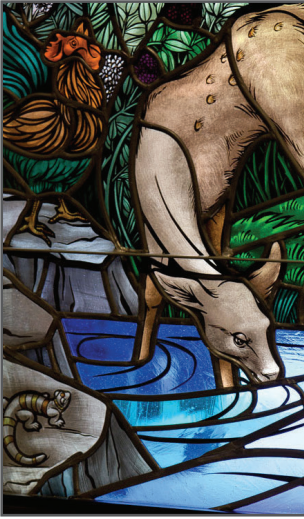
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## WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY RICHMOND

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

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