

# *Second Sunday in Lent*

Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 ~ 10:00 AM

*"If you know how to give good gifts,  
how much more will our God  
give the Holy Spirit to all who ask!"*

*—Luke 11:13*

**The Rev. Caleb McGregor, Pastor**

Bill Parks, *song leader*

Leo T., *Lay Leader*

Judy M., *Accompanist*

Colby G., *Media Technician*

Candy P-T., *Liturgist*

Rose W., *Greeter*

Sue T., *Usher*

Diane S., *Guest Relations*



## THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

"The one who kneels to God can stand up to anything." -*Louis H. Evans*

"I used to believe that prayer changes things; but now I know that prayer first changes us and then we change things." -*Mother Teresa*

"May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." -*Psalm 19:14*

**Please silence your mobile devices. Thank you!**

L – Liturgist / M – Minister / **P – People** / † - words are on the TVs / \* – stand in body or spirit  
UMH – *The United Methodist Hymnal*      TFWS – *The Faith We Sing*

(1) *The Body of Christ gathers to worship God!*

WORDS OF WELCOME  
FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

~Time of Centering~

†\*HYMN OF PRAISE:      *Sweet Hour of Prayer*      UMH 496



(2) *We listen to what God is saying to us!*

YOUNG-AT-HEART

SCRIPTURE † *Psalm 122 (read)* / \**Luke 11:1-13* ("*Take Time to Be Holy*")

SERMON      **Gaze Your Soul Upon God**

(3) *We respond to what God is saying to us!*

†\*HYMN OF RESPONSE: *What a Friend We Have* UMH 526

† A LENTEN PRAYER OF CONFESSION

SHARING OF CONCERNS, with Prayers of the People

(4) *We prepare to leave and be doers of God's Word!*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

†\*HYMN OF MISSION:      *Seek Ye First*      UMH 405

\*CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

\*A BLESSING AND GOING FORTH

(You are invited to place any offerings in the **Offering Box** as you leave the sanctuary; you may also give online at [peumc.org/donate](https://peumc.org/donate) or use the **QR Code** in this bulletin.)

# Prayer List:

**Pray for these members throughout March:**

**Mykisens Sue & Ken B. Marge & Randy B. Mayeks Haddows**

3164 Swanson Rd. 8311 St. Hwy 13 S, Unit 3 1129 Bridgewater Dr. 1930 County Rd W. 6621 Cama Dr.  
W.R., WI '95 W.R., WI '94 W.R., WI '94 Bancroft, WI 54921 W.R., WI '94

**Our Shut-Ins:** Mabel J.; Jim H.; Mary & Ed H.; Chris L.; Lynn R.

**Our Children:** Addisyn, Brynlee, Eliza, Ella, Gabriel, Gabrielle, Gracie, Sawyer, and Symphony.

**Our College Students:** Michaela W.; Ethan B.; Danial H.; Carson P.;  
Melanie & Lilyann S.

**From 2/16:** Prayers for **the residents of Port Edwards**, that we have wisdom when voting for the village board president in the primary election on Tuesday (anonymous).

**From 2/23:** Prayers for two young friends, **Sarah & Brittney**, who are expecting babies very soon, please pray for safe deliveries & healthy babies (Candy); prayers for our daughter, **Kristin**, who works for the Dept. of Defense and for **all government workers** as they go through this time of uncertainty about their jobs (Thomasgards); prayers for an **expectant mother** experience complications with her pregnancy; Lord, pour Your blessings upon mom, baby, and entire family with healthy outcome (Becky); prayers for the **Mel Potter family**, a friend who passed away yesterday (Mike).

**From 3/2:** Prayers for the **United States** (Diane); prayers for **Pope Francis**.

**From 2/16:** Prayers for my good friend, **Lois**, who is recovering from serious foot and ankle surgery (Sue T.); prayers for our daughter, **Gracie**, as we try to figure out what makes her so sick, she has more sick days than good ones (Nikki); JOY: my friend, **Gordy**, celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday (Sandy).

## Daily Scripture Readings (based on Sunday's Scripture)

**Monday** (3/17): Luke 13:18-30

**Tuesday** (3/18): Luke 13:31-35

**Wednesday** (3/19): Luke 14:1-6

**Thursday** (3/20): Luke 14:7-14

**Friday** (3/21): Luke 14:15-24

**Saturday** (3/22): Luke 14:25-33

**Sunday** (3/23): Psalm 119:167-176 / Luke 13:10-17

## **Sermon Notes & Prayers from Today:**



## **March Mission Project:**



1. Collect money for our membership with Wisconsin Council of Churches.
2. Collect items for the FOCUS Hygiene Drive (FINAL DAY)

# A Call to Discipleship:

(refer to this list throughout the week to keep you accountable!)

- Prayer theme:** Pray that God will help open you up to concerns and situations you had not considered before.
- Consider:** Finding a prayer book or guide to stretch your prayer life.
- Action:** Try a new prayer model or routine this week.
  
- I will invite these person(s) to church: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will visit/call these person(s) this week: \_\_\_\_\_
- Donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ to a mission/charity/cause this week.
- Set aside \$\_\_\_\_\_ for my church offering next week.
- Volunteer at Neighborhood Meals; food pantry; Meals on Wheels.
- Sign up as a greeter / usher / liturgist for a future service.
- Pray over the prayer list in this bulletin.
- Read a daily devotional, like the *Upper Room* (take a copy; it's free!)

## Sunday Services – 10a

### Today - March 16<sup>th</sup>

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

*Third Sunday Refreshments*

*Leadership Council – 11:20a*

(Script.: Jesus Teaches How to Pray)

### April 6<sup>th</sup>

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT - COMMUNION

(Scriptures: Rich Man & Lazarus)

### March 23<sup>rd</sup>

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

**WOMEN'S HISTORY SUNDAY**

(Scriptures: Jesus Heals a Woman)

### April 13<sup>th</sup>

PALM-PASSION SUNDAY

*Second Sunday Refreshments*

*Leadership Council – 11:20a*

(Scriptures: Jesus on a Donkey +  
Suffering of Jesus)

### March 30<sup>th</sup>

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

(Scriptures: Three Kin'dom Parables)

### April 20<sup>th</sup>

EASTER SUNDAY

(Script.: Jesus Rises from the Grave)

## Wednesday Lenten Services

Noon Lenten Study/Service – continues THIS WEDNES. (5 weeks)

12:15-12:45 PM – Centralia Center –

Lois Cantin Studio Theatre – bring your lunch!

Evening Lenten Services – continues THIS WEDNES. (5 weeks)

7:00-8:00 PM Theme: "Meeting Jesus at the Table"

3/26 / 4/9 – at Port Edwards

3/19 / 4/2 – at Nekoosa

# WEEK 3 (WEEK OF 3/16)

## 46 DAYS OF KINDNESS A LENTEN CHALLENGE

*Directions: Keep 1 per person—couple should not share!*

*Put this in a prominent place in your home!*

*each challenge that you complete.*

*They do not have to be completed on the day listed.*

### RETURN THIS TO CHURCH BEFORE THE END OF LENT!

*Goal: Each week, after all cards are collected, we will total up the number of “acts of random kindness” or “ARK” from our cards. Our congregational Lenten goal is 350 acts! (You do \*not\* need to put your name on this.)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	12	<b>3/16 (Sunday)</b> <i>(Technically, Sundays are not part of Lent, but I've included them—making it 46 days)</i>	Pray for our elected officials by name (don't forget our local ones!)
<input type="checkbox"/>	13	<b>3/17 (Monday)</b>	Clear your closet. Make a donation of clothes or other items.
<input type="checkbox"/>	14	<b>3/18 (Tuesday)</b>	Call someone in our church directory whom we haven't seen in a long time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<b>3/19 (Wednesday)</b>	Give someone a hug OR smile at someone you don't know.
<input type="checkbox"/>	16	<b>3/20 (Thursday)</b>	<i>Your choosing. List details:</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	17	<b>3/21 (Friday)</b>	Pay it forward at a local business (buy the person's order behind you in line).
<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<b>3/22 (Saturday)</b>	Pick up some litter around your neighborhood.

**My weekly total is (circle):**    1    2    3    4    5    6    7

*\*You will receive “Week 4” in next week's bulletin, and so on. If you know you will be gone on any of the upcoming Sundays, you can pick up that week's challenge card right now on the front table near the main entry. If you miss a week, you may go back and get a previous one, too.*

# The Contemplative Tradition: Discovering the Prayer-Filled Life

We all hunger for a prayer-filled life, for a richer, fuller practice of the presence of God. It is the **Contemplative Stream** of Christian life and faith that can show us the way into just such intimacy with God. This reality addresses the human longing for the practice of the presence of God.

We think of the early believers who went out into the desert or wilderness to confront temptation. The very purpose of going “away from the world” is for intentional set-part training in the spiritual disciplines. For the early “Desert Fathers,” this involved solitude and fasting for the sake of intense, internal focus; meditation and prayer for the sake of deepening spiritual communion; Scripture study and reflection for the sake of the transformation of the mind; and manual labor for the sake of taming human temptations. So the purpose of these Disciplines of the Spiritual Life is to train the body and the soul in righteousness. This, in turn, produces people who can stand firm when the going gets tough.

*Can this contemplative way of life be experienced in our time, especially among those of us who must constantly face the demands and pressures of ordinary life? We can do no better than to consider the life of **Frank C. Laubach**, a modern man of prayer and action.*

Like so many hymn-writers and religious poets and deep thinkers before him, Laubach kept a journal of his away-from-the-world meditations. One glorious experience occurred on 24 May 1930: *“The day had been rich but strenuous, so I climbed ‘Signal Hill’ back of my house talking and listening to God all the way up, all the way back, all the lovely half hour on the top. And God talked back! I let my tongue go loose and from it there flowed poetry far more beautiful than any I ever composed. It*

*flowed without pausing and without ever a failing syllable for a half hour.”*

The Contemplative Tradition is a **journey inward**, and a constant awareness of God in life. On 11 March 1937, while working, Laubach wrote, *“Of all today’s miracles, the greatest is this: To know that I find Thee best when I work listening, not when I am still or meditative or even on my knees in prayer, but when I work listening and co-operating.”* This, you see, is a marvelous contemporary expression of the ancient Benedictine rule *ora et labora*, “pray and work.” (*Set-aside training for prayer helps to make prayer a natural part of one’s life.*)

As Laubach worked to form in himself a habit of having God in mind each minute he was awake, he experimented with what he called **“flash prayers.”** At a train station in Allahabad, India, he wrote, *“This morning, as I came from the train and prayed for all the people on the street, I felt new energy surge into me. What it will do for those who received that instant prayer, I will never know. What it does for me is electrical. It drives out fatigue and thrills ones with eager power.”*

On 27 April 1937, at Kikuyu, Kenya, he felt God speaking to him: *“My child, when you pray to Me of your own little troubles and doubts, your prayer is pretty thin and small. But when you reach out to help other people by offering yourself as a channel for Me, your prayer becomes at once large and noble.”*

Always Laubach kept trying to learn how he could pray for others better. *“I want to do more than just pray; I want to give one my soul filled with Thee, O Christ.”* He wrote, *“I am learning that the best way to pray for people is to go and sit near them and pray while I’m with them. Or perhaps holding their letters or photos in my hand is effective, too.”*

The Contemplative Life does not just stay inward. It must also **journey outward** again. Laubach brought the life of contemplative prayer directly into the world of action and social

concern. He traveled the world forming programs of literacy for impoverished communities.

Laubach's own words speak most eloquently about the Contemplative Tradition: *"What is our best gift to humankind? To harbor a beautiful soul and then let people see it."*

How do we achieve that "beautiful soul?" The contemplative life is the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us. It is *"an intimate sharing between friends,"* said Teresa of Avila.

*There are four strengths to this tradition:*

1. **It constantly fans the flames of our "first love"** (Rev. 2:4). It keeps us falling in love with Jesus over and over and over again. It's a reminder that the Christian life comes not by gritting our teeth but by falling in love.
2. **It forces us beyond merely a cerebral religion.** Intellectual formulation alone is insufficient. It is to move beyond language and ideas *about* God, to encounter God in the nakedness of pure trust, to surrender our own poverty and incompleteness in God. This Stream teaches us the truth of George Matheson's hymn-prayer: *"Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free; force me to hand o'er my sword, and I shall conqueror be."*
3. **It centralizes prayer.** Prayer is not a good thing, or an important thing; it is an *essential* thing, the *primary* thing. But prayer is not simply requests and intercessions. As Brother Lawrence shares, *"I do nothing else but abide in God's holy presence. A wordless and secret conversation between the soul and God which no longer ends."*
4. **It emphasizes the solitariness of our life with God.** As the old spiritual says, *"No one else can walk [this lonesome valley] for me, I must walk it by myself."* Solitariness does not mean *individualism*; but it does mean that there are limits to the role of community. I myself am responsible for developing my own personal history with God. You, too. Nobody else can do it for us. We cannot pay someone else to do it on our behalf. This Stream forces us to explore the desolate, barren landscape of the soul – a landscape that most people



studiously avoid (for it can be the stuff of nightmares). Here we find true hope, but only after we see true despair. Here, the cross means mercy and not cruelty, life and not death.

**Warning #1:** The Contemplative Tradition has a tendency to separate itself from ordinary life. You do not need to become a monk and live in a monastery to drink from this Stream. We need to be absolutely firm in our insistence that smack in the middle of everyday life is precisely where prayer and intimacy with God need to be developed.

**Warning #2:** We do not fast for fasting's sake, but fasting helps us to learn how to feast upon God. The disciplines of the spiritual life are a *means*, not an *end*. The end is "to glorify God, and to enjoy God forever." We train in the spiritual life so that we have the ability to live rightly.

**Warning #3:** Do not devalue intellectual efforts to articulate our faith. In our attempt to correct intellectualism devoid of life, we must not debunk the necessity of right reason and clear thinking. We love God with both our *heart* and our *mind*.

**Warning #4:** Do not neglect the importance of the community of faith. The contemplative stress upon our solitariness before God – a message we all need to hear – can lead us, especially in Western cultures, into an individualism that thinks only in terms of "God and me."

### PRACTICING THE TRADITION

1. **Varied Venues for Solitude:** Take a re-dawn walk. Listen to sounds awakening in the world. Limit your speaking for one day and see what you learn about yourself and others. Sit in a public space and observe people, reflecting on what you see. Take a one-day, or multiple-day, silent retreat. Keep your radio off for a month, or stay off social media. Skip the news for a night or two. Make your morning commute an *en route* mini-retreat. Arise at 2:00 AM, light a candle, listen to the sounds of the night. There are other ways to discover "wilderness time" for yourself.
2. **Pray the Scriptures.** Don't just "study" the Bible, read slowly, quietly, prayerfully, pausing at any word or phrase

where we feel the Spirit's drawing. Instruction from the Spirit may come. Or a song or dance. These are only hints.

3. **Continuously expand the boundaries of your prayers.** Notice what, or who, is never mentioned in your prayers. Pray for situations, locations, people, races, cultures, the nameless & voiceless.
4. **Have Holy Leisure.** Take a nap. Spend an hour visiting a neighbor about nothing important. Watch the sun go down (or come up). Take a walk for sheer joy. Listen to the birds. Sit in silence, doing nothing, needing nothing. Soak in a bath. "Waste" time with God.