

2025 Lenten Devotional Series

With fervent humility, there is much grit, faith, and determination that goes into the 200th year of our beloved Powell United Methodist Church.

We truly walk upon the footsteps of those who have built the foundation of our blessings. Assuredly, the vision of the early few have created privilege for us all. We reap the deepest of their heart imprints. And God's faithfulness is undeniable! For all of this, and more, our gratitude is abundant.

200 times our sisters and brothers of this church community thoughtfully prepared for Lent (these 40 days prior to Easter). To this day, we do the same as we lift up the miracles and sacrifices of Christ as we commit to growing disciples.

This year our devotion book themes of gratitude, ministry impact, prayer, generosity/sacrifice, and faithfulness will afford us reflection on our foundation, and our future. We value the people of our church as they share their hearts on these pages...we are thankful to the dedication of our repeat writers and welcome those sharing for the first time.

No act of service, gift or otherwise has been too small in we have built and continue to build together. What an honor to build upon the talent, treasures, and time of our Powell United Methodist church community of believers as we manifest MORE of God's love into our future.

In Christ's love, may we continue to be Great in our Faithfulness,

Dana Ullom-Vucelich

*The Lenten Devotional booklet continues to be the vision and planning of Kim LaRue, Karen Curren and Dana Ullom-Vucelich and we are thankful for our church's pastors, staff, and congregation to bring this passion to life.

The Season of Lent

Lent is the season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. The season of Lent is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Easter is the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the vernal equinox. For this reason, Easter is never the same date two years in a row.



Lent is a time for penance by all Christians. The First Sunday describes Jesus' temptation by Satan; and the Sixth Sunday (Passion/Palm Sunday), Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent suffering and death. Because Sundays are always little Easters, the penitential spirit of Lent should be tempered with joyful expectation of the Resurrection.



Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation.



Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and continues through the great three days from sunset on Holy Thursday through sunset Easter day. This is the apex of Lent and the whole Christian year, and a bridge into the Easter season. These days proclaim the mystery of Jesus Christ's passion, death and resurrection. During these days, the community journeys with Jesus from the upper room, to the cross, to the tomb, and to the garden.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26 NIV

In 1999, the Askins family provided the first Endowment gift to our Church, a gift that keeps on giving forever. It was designated to provide for the cost of sheet music. Craig Askins was a man of faith. His love for this Church, his generosity and faithfulness to God is an inspiration for all of us and he and his family will be remembered.

Alan Moore

Prayer: Life-giving God, as we live into the resurrection of your Son, allow us to live with this ongoing abundant-life attitude...remembering and moving into the future with hope and generosity. Amen.

Easter Sunday - April 20 (Continued)

These words are as true today as they were then. The resurrection story is not just about what happened then—it is about what happens now. It is about the hope that carries us through seasons of uncertainty, the faith that strengthens us when the future is unclear, and the assurance that in Christ, the story is never over.

Easter is not just a promise of life after death; it is a call to live—to trust in the God who brings life from death, hope from despair, joy from sorrow, and new beginnings from what seems to be an ending.

As we celebrate the risen Christ today, let us do so with deep gratitude for those who came before us, with renewed commitment to the ministry we are called to, and with unwavering trust in the God who leads us into the future. The same power that raised Jesus from the grave is still at work among us, writing the next chapter of Powell UMC's story.

Because He lives, we too shall live. Because He lives, we have bright hope for tomorrow. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Justin Williams

Prayer:

God of resurrection and new beginnings,
We give thanks for Your faithfulness through every season of our lives and our church's history.

As Christ walked from the tomb, may we walk forward in hope.

Where there is fear, bring courage.

Where there is doubt, bring faith.

Where there is sorrow, bring joy.

May the story of Easter not only be something we remember,
but something we live—

trusting that because Christ lives, we too shall live.

Fill us with bright hope for tomorrow,
that we may proclaim Your love with boldness and joy.

Amen.

Ash Wednesday - March 5

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21 NRSV

It was almost 20 years ago, before the addition of our current sanctuary. On Shrove Tuesday evening, what is now Fellowship Hall was gaily decorated and teaming with folks gathered around tables for the Mardi Gras style pancake supper. Children wore brightly colored beads joyously, ate well-syruped pancakes greedily and danced with abandon to jazz music. On Wednesday evening, that same space was transformed. The tables had been removed, rows of chairs were set up and the center of focus was a candle lit worship table covered with burlap and black fabric. Quiet organ music played as adults, youth and children reverently gathered. As the service unfolded, all came forward to receive the sign of the cross, in ashes, on their foreheads. Everyone, but especially those children who had smiled so gaily, laughed, and danced the night before, left knowing in ways beyond my understanding that God created us, that we will all die and that our time on earth is important to God.

Ash Wednesday and Matthew 6:19-21 remind us that our possessions, our titles, our self-described successes are not important. What is important is where we focus our deepest significance—our place as children of God called to be the body of Christ in the world. Through repentance and refocus, the season of Lent calls us to transformation.

Rev. Sandy Huber

Prayer: Holy God, on this Ash Wednesday may we begin a season of repentance, deeper belief in the gospel and service as God's forgiven children. Amen.

Thursday - March 6

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV)

Mary and I were fortunate to have been raised in Christian homes where going to church on Sunday and supporting church activities were never a question ... It was a way of life, and since that time we have always considered ourselves to be “church people.” Our relationship with God and our local church kept us focused during our early years of marriage, it provided the guidance, support, and relationships needed while we raised our children, and it has continued to bring a sense of meaning and purpose in our retirement years.

We have found that our local church is not just a building or a weekly gathering; it represents a community of people united in faith as they put their faith into practice in the world. Whether we serve through prayer, giving, volunteering, or simply encouraging one another, we contribute to the strength and mission of the church.

Faithfulness is a mark of our relationship with Christ. Just as God is faithful to us, He calls us to be faithful in our relationships, commitments, and our support of our local church. Church, to us, is a place of mutual encouragement, spiritual nourishment, and accountability. Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us that gathering with other believers is not optional—it is essential for our growth and perseverance in faith.

Our local church strengthens our faith, encourages others, demonstrates our commitment to Christ, allows us to use our gifts, and it honors God.

Chuck & Mary Ring

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of our local church. Help us to be faithful in attending, serving, supporting, and encouraging others within our church family. May our faithfulness be a witness and testimony of our love for You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Easter Sunday - April 20

"He is not here; He has risen, just as He said." Matthew 28:6

The sun rose early that first Easter morning, but the light had not yet dawned in the hearts of Jesus’ followers. They came to the tomb carrying grief, uncertainty, and fear—wondering how to move forward after all they had lost. But then, everything changed. The stone was rolled away. The grave was empty. And with a single name—Mary—spoken by the risen Christ, despair turned to hope.

For 200 years, Powell United Methodist Church has carried this same hope. This community of faith has seen times of abundance and times of struggle. But through it all, God has remained faithful.

In October of 1971, a church newsletter contained a sobering message: "The Powell Church needs immediate help. Unless assistance is given immediately, the church may close its doors before the end of this current year. . . We can barely pay the preacher, and he works cheap."

These words could have been a eulogy. They could have been the final chapter in a small church’s history. But resurrection is real—not only in the empty tomb, but in the life of this very congregation. God was not finished with Powell UMC then, and God is not finished with us now. Because of the faithful response of those who refused to give up hope, the doors remained open, the gospel continued to be preached, and the church grew into the thriving community it is today.

When Powell UMC moved into its current location in 1990, the first Easter sermon by Rev. Ed Lewis proclaimed, “He is not here... Or is He?” That question, posed over 30 years ago, still resonates today. We know the tomb was empty, but we also know that Christ is alive, present, and at work in the world and in our church. He is here—in every act of love, in every moment of worship, in every life transformed by grace.

That Easter Sunday in 1990, the call to worship declared: "From the cold and dark of winter, we emerge to discover the sunlight of promise. Spring is bursting all around us; new life is ours to seek. Death has been replaced by life; we have the chance to begin anew. Because of the victory of Jesus Christ, we have nothing to fear. Let us celebrate the burst of new life! Let us celebrate the resurrection of our Lord!"

- Continued on next page

Saturday - April 19

It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. Mark 15:42-47 -NIV

The scrape of the stone rolling in front of this tomb. The last time they would see Jesus. How heartbreaking. No one expected it to end like this.

All the walking to new experiences, the stories Jesus told, all the hope he had given. No more. All the healings... but wait, they still ARE healed. The little girl and Lazarus are still alive after death! There is something of Jesus still here. Could it be that there is more to this story?

“It was the day of preparation.” That’s referring to the Jewish sabbath in the midst of Passover. The celebration of liberation from the ancient Egyptians when God led the people out of darkness, out of bondage to a new experience through and across the Red Sea.

But now, for Joseph of Arimathea, the women watching as the stone is covering their friend and teacher, and the disciples... all has gone dark.

For us, Holy Saturday is a time of waiting - knowing that the resurrection is just around the corner. It can be a “day of preparation”. We must be ready for the resurrection and believe that that God has overcome death. We can walk into new experiences, we will understand the stories that Jesus told in a new way, there will be hope! And we can be part of the healing Jesus brings to the world. Holy Saturday is not a day to be overlooked. It is our day to be ready to do the next thing God has imagined for us.

Kim La Rue

Prayer: Holy and life-giving God, your world is not always the way you created it. But you continue to create hope, light and life that we can be a part of. Help us to recognize it and be ready to move. Amen.

Friday - March 7

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to Him. Psalm 28:7 -ESV

When my daughter, Monica, was born in 1987 with numerous special needs, I went through bouts of questioning God. It became difficult to go to church and hear over and over “just trust in God and He will answer your prayers”, while at the same time, it seemed every doctor appointment brought more bad news. My prayers weren’t being answered at all, if anything, things were just getting worse and there were no answers in sight. So I was angry at God and just gave up on the hope that He had any answers to give me.

But God didn’t give up on me! He kept nudging me in ways that I can see now, even though I didn’t at the time. And when, in the midst of all the doctor appointments, surgeries, seizure medication issues and schooling decisions, my husband asked for a divorce and I hit rock bottom, God gave me the biggest nudge of all - right through the doors of PUMC. And that’s when I discovered that prayers are answered, even if the answer wasn’t always what I wanted to hear or within my timeline. I found out that God is really good at bringing people into someone’s life just when they are needed most. I learned that a church family can not only surround you with love and acceptance, but they are there to pray for you when you are lost and can’t find the words to say.

Monica loves coming to church, she knows she’s loved, accepted and cared for even if she doesn’t have the words to say it. Her face lights up when the staff and other friends greet her. She knows that when a friend is going through a rough time, you pray for them. And if she interrupts a service to call out “Hey Justin!” as he walks up to the altar, that’s OK too. And for all of this, I am so grateful.

Nancy Cuartas

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for being with us even when we can’t feel your presence and for never giving up on us when we put distance between ourselves and you. Thank you for bringing people into our lives who can help us when we just can’t do it all ourselves. Please guide us as we strive to be your hands in this world and bring hope to others. With a grateful heart, Amen.

Saturday - March 8

*In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.
Proverbs 16:9 (NIV) We should make plans counting on God to direct us.
Proverbs 16:9 TLB*

As our congregation celebrates the 200th anniversary of the founding of our church, it is both inspiring and also humbling to read and hear the stories of the early years. The Anniversary Committee has done a remarkable job helping us to appreciate the families who traveled from Middlebury, Connecticut to Powell in the early 1800's. These early settlers established a community and anchored that community by building a church where they could gather and worship.

I have read about Middlebury, Connecticut which was first mentioned in history in 1687. And following the American Revolution proudly recognized 30 veterans from among the established community. In the early 1800's Middlebury was primarily an agricultural town which also had a growing blacksmithing trade. The dairy farms would come soon after along with the textile mills which provided industry for the townspeople...so what prompted some people to leave this rural community and risk the challenging travel west to Ohio... We may never know for sure but certainly their faith and trust in their God who would guide them along the way was a part.

It could not have been easy as they struggled to make a community here. They worshipped with the guidance of circuit riders who traveled through terrain which must have been challenging. Seeing pictures of the early log structure and then of the church building, which they even moved to a better location, shows their focused need for gathering for worship.

As we look back with deep gratitude, we also need to look forward. For 200 years the church has continued to meet the needs of this community. Planning for the future is a critical challenge. We pray to a faithful God who will surely establish our steps...

Nancy Tela

Prayer: Lord God, in gratitude we pray for guidance as we look to the future of our church and thank you for your faithfulness over the years as we responded to the needs of a growing community. Continue to guide us as we share the Good News. Amen.

Good Friday - April 18

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5-6 NRSV
Read Isaiah 52: 13- 53: 12 for context.*

Although the suffering servant passages in Isaiah were not written about Jesus, they have become a lens through which Christians have come to understand suffering and redemption. On Good Friday, as we take time to reflect of Jesus' suffering and brutal death, Isaiah's poetry helps us to consider the character of the suffering servant and the character of God.

The suffering servant passages shift our understanding of suffering as retributive, to suffering as having the power to be redemptive. The servant who suffers is despised, struck down, and weak and yet he will be lifted up and take his place among the great. It emphasizes the great reversal of all expectations. As those who witnessed Jesus' death and resurrection were trying to make sense of the experience, the suffering servant text in Isaiah laid the groundwork for them to understand how Jesus, who was brought low through his death, was now exalted in his resurrection.

God refused to let the suffering of the servant be the last word. In the mysterious ways of God, Jesus' suffering becomes the vehicle for our redemption. Jesus' death was not for naught. It has the power to save us. As we grieve the death of Jesus, we rejoice in what God has done through Him. We celebrate that death was not the end. There is more to the story.

Pastor Carrie Schwab

Prayer: God, who knows our suffering, continue to bring about redemption and restoration in our lives as you break the power of sin and death and bring about transformation in our world. Amen.

Maundy Thursday - April 17

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand'. John 13:6-7 NRSV

Peter's world was being flipped upside down. Nothing made sense of this night; it was not what he planned, and Peter was filled with questions. Peter could have kept silent and gone with the flow, but Peter was Peter, and he needed to ask his questions to make sense of what was happening.

We are people that are filled with questions about life. What is going to happen? Why did it happen? We want to know, we need to know all of the details so we can plan what will come or try to understand something that has occurred. Our world is filled with beautiful moments of love, kindness, caring, compassion, forgiveness, and grace, but it is also filled with tragedy, hate, sickness, hurt, sadness, failure, and brokenness.

We want to know why things happen to us or our loved ones and not others. We want to understand why we are in or have gone through the struggle. Sometimes, as faith-filled followers, we expect Jesus to give us the details, to give us the "why" to help us make sense of everything. However, Jesus does not promise to give us an understanding of what is happening in that moment.

What I love about this passage is that Jesus does not shy away from our questions, or desires to know and understand our situations. Jesus welcomes them. Jesus knows that we do not understand and lovingly he tells Peter...he tells us...that we do not understand this now, but later we will. Someday we will be filled with the answers to our whys, but until that day comes Jesus invites us to keep questioning and he will continue to serve us, to be with us, to walk with us, and to humbly wash our feet to cleanse us.

We are all invited to sit at Jesus' table, it is a table filled with beloved misfits, and he invites all of us to ask him our questions in this world, he promises us that someday, not now, but someday, we will understand. Jesus is the most treasured and faithful friend, he lets us say whatever we want, he serves us, and he loves us. This Lent season, choose to sit at the table with Jesus. Choose to allow Jesus to wash your feet. Choose to question and choose to accept the promise of not knowing now... but later. Choose Jesus as your forever faithful friend.

Rebecca Brownlee

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to choose you every day. Amen.

First Sunday in Lent - March 9

Gratitude

Here are excerpts from the scripture for worship today.

"The Lord spoke to Moses and said, ¹³ 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God."'"

¹³ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' ¹⁶ For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the Lord has commanded: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents."'" ¹⁷ The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed. ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, 'Let no one leave any of it over until morning.' ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul. And Moses was angry with them. ²¹ Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. Exodus 16:11-21 (NRSV)

Monday - March 10

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous hand. Isaiah 41:10 ESV

The kids and I have always enjoyed being outside. We love hiking, kayaking, sitting by campfires—all the things. It's no surprise that God chose nature to give us encouragement for 2025.

2024 was a very difficult year for our family. The kids and I decided to go on a vacation over New Years in lieu of any Christmas gifts. On January 1, 2025, we were going on a jeep tour in Aruba when we saw a full rainbow! The most glorious rainbow we had ever seen! It literally brought tears to my eyes and an immediate prayer to my heart. We felt like it was God's way of saying everything was going to be alright.

We never doubted God would take care of us, but this was a beautiful reminder that He is always with us and has a plan in store for us.

Mandi Adams

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for the beautiful reminders of your constant presence in our lives. Thank you for your comfort and strength when we need it most. We are so blessed to have a loving and caring God. Please let us be receptive to the plans you have for us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Wednesday - April 16

For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100:5 NIV

Faithfulness. That word has such meaning and strength. It brings comfort. But faithfulness is also hard to maintain. I think about how many times I've come up with a plan to exercise. I am ready, I am motivated, and I know I will be faithful to this plan. And I am for a while. But then one morning I don't really want to get up and exercise before work, so I hit the snooze button and sleep another hour. And after that, it becomes really easy to sleep late again or decide not to go to my exercise class. And just like that, my faithfulness to my fitness plan has ended. But here's what I've learned. Faithfulness requires some sacrifice. If I want to exercise before work, I need to sacrifice a little extra sleep. If I want to lose some weight, I need to sacrifice eating sweets. And if I want to spend time on my relationship with God, I need to prioritize that first. I need to be faithful to God and my time with Him.

We know that God is always faithful. Even when we disappoint Him or don't turn to Him first. He sent us his son Jesus to teach us how to live and love each other. To be our guide. And Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us by dying on the cross. I stand in awe of this sacrifice.

And I stand in awe of the sacrifice that all the earlier members of Powell UMC made to build this church. Their sacrifice was done out of faith and hope. Hope for what the future held and that what they built would be meaningful. And faith that their church would continue to grow. What an amazing legacy!

God's love does endure forever and his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Debbie Wenner

Prayer: Dear Lord, You are always with me, guiding me and loving me. Thank you for your unending love and faithfulness. Amen.

Tuesday - April 15

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21 NIV

During Lent, we are invited to examine our hearts and reflect on what we truly value. Jesus reminds us that our treasure—what we prioritize and invest in—reveals the state of our hearts. In a world that constantly pulls us toward material success, comfort, and security, Lent calls us to shift our focus back to God.

Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel once wrote, “*Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement... Get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted.*” This Lenten season is an opportunity to cultivate that same sense of wonder—turning away from distractions and toward the presence of God in our daily lives. Where do you find amazement in your faith? What practices or habits might help you treasure God’s presence more deeply? As we surrender our hearts to God, we find that true treasure is not in what we accumulate but in the depth of our relationship with Him.

Action Step: Take time today to reflect on where you see God’s wonder in your life. Pause to appreciate His presence in small, everyday moments, and consider how you can realign your priorities to treasure Him more fully.

Andres De Arco

Prayer: Gracious God, help me to seek You above all else. Teach me to live with amazement, treasuring the beauty of Your presence. Reveal the distractions that pull me away, and guide me to live in a way that honors You. Amen.

Tuesday - March 11

We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. Psalms 78:4, NIV

It’s always vital for any congregation to honor and respect those who came before. Those who paved the way for our faith, helped guide our faith journeys, and made our church what it is today. Ever since the church was founded, great men and women have shaped the world through the love of Christ. The Methodist church, along with Powell UMC, is no different. Remembering those who came before us, those who passed down their stories, and the miracle of Jesus is of utmost importance. Just as important, in David’s eyes, is to honor their legacy through our own. Whether we have been led by amazing people of faith or came to this church on our own, all of us have had our lives shaped and changed by the love of Jesus. If we allow that love to shine through us as it did to those who came before, we can become ambassadors of Christ to the next generation, just as David says. Going forward this Lenten season, be encouraged to consider the people who have helped your faith journey. Think about the qualities of Christ they embody, and the love that they share. Take in the words of King David in this psalm; Honor those who came before by sharing that same love with the next generation. God will remain ever faithful to us so that we may remain ever faithful to one another.

Connor Adams

Prayer: Dear Lord, As we go forth into this Lenten season, draw closer to us than ever before. Help us to remember those that came before, and guide those that come after. Allow us to see your love and light in the world and feel the faithfulness of your relationship every day of our lives. When we live through you, oh Lord, we spread your love everywhere in our lives and our world. Amen.

Wednesday - March 12

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runyan, 1923

Hope Publishing Co

Chorus:

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed thy hand has provided;

Great is thy faithfulness,

Lord, unto me!

The story of Great is Thy Faithfulness by Thomas Chisholm:

Thomas Chisholm was born in 1866 and became a Methodist minister assigned to Scottsville, KY until he experienced a decline in health. He had always loved poetry and after leaving the ministry he began in earnest to write hymns. Hymns are poems that are set to music. The music is sometimes written by a second person. Each of these persons is listed at the bottom of the page in a hymnal.

Monday - April 14

Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. Psalm 69:16 ESV

Psalm 69 prepares us for the events of Holy Week that take Jesus to the cross. Psalm 69:16 reminds us of God's steadfast love and abundant mercy. We often pray for forgiveness - forgiveness for our sins and for our own shortcomings which do not reflect the example set for us by Jesus Christ. We know we are forgiven and we are blessed by God's mercy.

Mercy, by definition, is "compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm." We are blessed not just because we are forgiven, but because God's love is merciful. In spite of our mistakes, poor judgement, inappropriate responses and tendency toward sin, we continually seek God's mercy. This mercy, abundant as we are promised in the Psalm, is most clearly demonstrated by the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ in this week where we journey with Jesus toward the Cross.

During this Holy Week, may we be reminded of the events that demonstrate God's love, forgiveness and mercy on us, culminating in the Resurrection of our Savior from whose mercy we are saved.

Questions for reflection

1. In what ways has the abundant mercy of Jesus been shown in your life?
2. As we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us, what are we most grateful for?

Jeff Daubenmire

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Thank you for the love and mercy we receive although we are not worthy. During this Holy Week, may we find peace in your mercy and seek to show our gratitude for your love and forgiveness in our daily lives. Help us to see your love more clearly. Amen.

Palm Sunday - April 13

Palm Sunday

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!' ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ 'Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!' ¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.
John 12:12-16 NRSV

Thursday - March 13

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

Last year at about this time, I was at my dance studio on a Monday evening for a normal night of dance classes. It was a competition week, and we were casually running our dances to rehearse for the competition that weekend. In my jazz class, I noticed that the owner of my studio came into my class to speak privately with my teacher. They told the class that one of our teammates had informed them that she was quitting the dance team immediately and would not be able to perform with our team in this weekend's competition.

My dance studio allows students who did not officially make a dance team to audit that dance team's routine for the year. This means that the person auditing attends class each week and learns the dance with the team but does not actually perform on stage. In the team jazz class, I was an "audit" for that dance season. After we learned that our teammate had quit, the teacher was rushing around trying to figure out how to re-choreograph the jazz dance to fill in the "holes" where our former teammate had been.

Suddenly, the teacher pulled me aside and asked if I would want to compete with the team in the jazz dance at the competition. She said, "Maren, we don't have to worry, as you can take the spot of our old teammate in this dance." I felt that I knew the dance from rehearsing as an audit, but I was still very nervous about taking the dance to stage unexpectedly with only a few days to rehearse. However, I was quickly comforted, as my teammates came up to me, congratulating me on this opportunity, saying "You can do this Maren. We believe in you."

At that moment, I knew I had to put my self-doubt aside and trust in the fact that my teammates and teachers had faith in me to step up to help the team. Just like God believes in us, and we in turn must continue our faith in God during difficult situations, I felt reassured that I was capable of taking on this challenge. And I did it! I performed the dance that following Saturday at the competition and it went very well. Yes, I was still apprehensive before the dance started, but I trusted in the faith that God and others had in me to succeed.

Maren Liba - age 12

Prayer: God, when I feel uncertain of myself in a new situation, please remind me that you always have faith in me. Amen.

Friday - March 14

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13: 14-15 NIV

Have you ever made a commitment to something and then questioned if you could follow through? For some, it may be impulsiveness but for others (me) it may be a lack of thinking through what that commitment would entail. Flash back to the summer of 2021. We were still trying to figure out a new normal after COVID. I had been interested in taking the Disciple study and Kim La Rue announced that Disciple I would begin in the fall. I had been doing studies for several years, so that concept was not new to me. What I didn't think through (see above) was that I was making a 4-year commitment during a time that I had a high school freshman and a 7th grader. I didn't know it at the time, but over the next four years, both my husband and I would change jobs, we would care for his ailing mother, and we would move my mother here to be closer to us – all major life changes.

Was it overwhelming at times? Absolutely. Would I do it all over again? Absolutely! The gratitude that I feel for the members of our group is immeasurable. I am in awe of Kim and Jeff Firkins, our leaders, and the wisdom they bring and the discussion they facilitate. Participating in Disciple has been unlike any study that I have done and has been truly transformative. When I think back to the past 200 years of our church and think ahead to the next 200 years, I believe that is what will sustain us – the people. We are designed to be together in worship, study and mission and for that I am truly grateful. I selected the verse above because we are nearing the end of Disciple IV and this is from our current reading. We are called to help teach others, by our actions and by our words.

Lynda Wiley

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for bringing people into my life that help me learn about you, your work and my faith. I pray that everyone in this congregation finds an experience or group that helps them know you. I ask that you continue to bless this congregation and particularly those that feel overwhelmed by everyday life. Help them find people to help them engage and feel supported. Amen.

Saturday - April 12

So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:25-27

One of the first things that comes to mind when I think of my church is community. Growing up in PUMC has been one of the biggest blessings, as I've been surrounded by my church family for the entirety of my life. The 200th year of our congregation celebrates the 200th year of growing in our faith as a community. Community is one of God's greatest gifts to the world, serving as a reminder that we are not alone no matter the circumstance.

Being a high school student, my largest community in the church has always been the youth program. I have always found our youth program to be such a comforting community, a place for everyone. I know for a fact that everyone has felt the same, because the PUMC youth program has grown so incredibly much over time. So much so, that a transition into a larger space was needed to be able to comfortably fit everyone into one space. As it had in its first years, our congregation continues to grow constantly. Whether it be moving to a larger room, or a larger church building entirely, the growth of our congregation can serve as a reminder to us that God's love is constantly being shared and passed on to others.

The Methodist Church has always revolved around community. Being a welcoming and open space for people to come and worship is what has caused our congregation to grow in such a significant way over time. We lean on our church family in times of hardship, and celebrate each other's joys as well. God encourages us to spread the word, and remain open and loving to everyone we meet, in order to create and strengthen this community that we thrive on.

Aly Sutton

Prayer: Dear God, Please be with our congregation, as we continue to grow in size as well as our faith. Help us to share your love as often and as joyfully as possible, spreading your light to all corners of the world. Remind us to lean on one another as we continue on our journey of faith, and help each other to navigate through your plan for us with your guidance. Amen.

Friday - April 11

God's faithfulness endures to all generations.—Psalm 119:90 NRSV

“Great is Thy Faithfulness” is one of my favorite hymns so I am quite excited we are honoring our 200th anniversary with it! It is a hymn I never get tired of singing. We have even added a version of it for our 11:00 contemporary worship service too! It is particularly fitting for our anniversary because the lyrics were written by a Methodist minister named Thomas Chisholm. He loved poetry, writing over 1,000 poems throughout his life.

The words are inspiring to me, and I especially love the 2nd verse: “Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above, join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.” The seasons and the universe are witnesses to God’s faithfulness! No matter what we go through or what season we are in, God is faithful. He is always with us, even when we might not feel His presence or when we wander away from him.

I love when God sends signs of His faithfulness to me. When we were holding calling hours after my mom passed, a spring thunderstorm rolled through. After the rain subsided, we went outside and saw a double rainbow! While we all know the rainbow is a symbol of God’s promise to Noah and his family, a double rainbow represents interaction between the physical and spiritual realms. God was surely there with us, and my mom was right there smiling with Him! I believe that a cardinal is a messenger of God, a sign of his comfort and reassurance. I’ve always loved their cheery songs and scarlet color, especially on a cold winter day, and I believe God sends them when He knows I need lifting up! In summer, He sends butterflies, bees, and lady bugs! The vibrant colors of fall lift my spirits. He offers us beautiful sunrises and sunsets, along with the moon and the stars to decorate the night sky! God is always sending signs of His love for us, daily and in every season, just when we need them.

Diane Emmons

Prayer: Faithful God, we thank you for your never-ending faithfulness to us and to all generations. Help us to be on the look-out for signs of Your love and faithfulness so we can feel Your presence close by, especially when You know we need them the most! Amen

Saturday - March 15

Give thanks to God, bless God's name, for the Lord is good, God's loving kindness to all generations. Psalm 100: 4-5 AMP

Let us take a moment and acknowledge the incredible legacy of faith and dedication left behind by those who came before us. As we stand on the shoulders of our foremothers and forefathers. We are reminded of the sacrifices, perseverance and unwavering commitment that paved the way for our church home, Powell UMC. We are a connected family of Christ because you paved the way. For this we owe you our deepest thanks.

There are some things we are able to do to remember our founders. Share your story! What's your story as a member of Powell UMC? Engage in acts of service. Serve your community in remembrance of the community that came before you. Reflect your personal commitment. How can you build on the legacy of faith and faithfulness in your own generation? Gratitude for our ancestors is not just about looking back, but about actively shaping our present and future with the same dedication and values they held dear.

Sabrina Melni

Prayer: Our Dearest Creator, we come before you today with hearts full of gratitude for the legacy of faith and faithfulness handed down to us through generations. We thank you for the sacrifices, the unwavering commitment and the love that our founders demonstrated, allowing us to stand where we are today. Guide us to honor their memory by living lives of integrity, compassion and service. May we continue to build upon the foundation they laid, carrying the torch of faith forward with unwavering dedication. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Second Sunday in Lent - March 16

Ministry Impact

Here are excerpts from the scripture for worship today.

³⁷ Then he brought Israel⁴⁰ out with silver and gold, and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled.

³⁸ Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it.

³⁹ He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night.

⁴⁰ They asked, and he brought quails, and gave them food from heaven in abundance.

⁴¹ He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river.

⁴² For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant.

⁴³ So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing.

⁴⁴ He gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples,⁴⁵ that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws.

Praise the Lord! Psalm 105:37-45 (NRSV)

Thursday - April 10

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2 (NIV)

This school year, I decided to step outside of my comfort zone and accept a student teacher into my classroom. Many of you are very aware that handing over control is a challenge for me, but the experience is going very well for both me and my student teacher.

The experience also caused me to reconnect with my mentor teacher from my student teaching fifteen years ago. There are so many parts of my teaching style that I have showed my student teacher this year, and I now realize many of them contain elements of what I learned from my mentor teacher...some of which she likely learned from HER mentor teacher.

Faith works the same way. While we often think of faith as the connection directly between each of us and God, faith also involves, and is greatly impacted by, our connection with others. My faith has been shaped by the faith of many mentors, who were impacted by the faith of their mentors. In answering the call to serve in youth ministry, it is my hope that I can “pay it forward” for everyone who impacted my faith by helping the development of faith in the next generation of our church.

I invite you to take time to reflect on, and give thanks for, the members that have helped you grow in your faith over the years. Ponder further on those who had a positive impact on the faith of your mentors, those who mentored those mentors, so on and so forth...and then consider how God may be nudging you to help foster that same growth in others to keep our church flourishing for the next 200 years.

Drew Thiele

Prayer: Ever-knowing and ever-present God, I give thanks to everyone whose paths you led to cross mine during our walks of faith with you. Thank you for the mentors who embodied your grace toward me, taught me of your love for us, and nudged me when I was stuck in my faith. Continue to open my heart and mind so that I may continue to grow in my own faith, and guide me so that I can honor my mentors by helping others grow in their faith. All honor and glory be yours. Amen.

Wednesday - April 9

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runyan, 1923

Hope Publishing Co

Chorus

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed thy hand has provided;

Great is thy faithfulness,

Lord, unto me!

Monday - March 17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

Spoken and unspoken, intentional and unintentional, faith leaders minister to all of us within our church family. It has been this way at PUMC for 200 years! I am a life-long Methodist, and in my formative years I would only have counted the clergy as my ministers. It didn't take long as a young adult in the church to realize that ministry is all around us!

Think of some of your early memories in our PUMC community. What do you recall? I see smiling faces! I hear upbeat voices and genuine laughter! I feel firm handshakes and supportive hugs! From our Missions team and Stephen Ministers, and on down to the first-time visitor on Sunday morning, we strive to "teach and admonish one another in all wisdom" as Paul has asked us to do. In times of great joy or profound sadness, we can find strength and empathy in our church flock.

Our Shepherd protects us along the way as we work to emulate His goodness especially for the troubled and vulnerable among us. Count me as a member of that flock who never stops learning how to give and receive that selfless, Christian love. "Love Divine. All Loves Excelling, Joy of Heav'n, to earth come down"

Todd Hardesty

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for all who minister in our church community. Thank you for our rich history filled with the Holy Spirit working through our ancestors. May that same energy abide with us at this time and for all time. Amen.

Tuesday - March 18

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd. Hebrews 11:1-2 MSG

Reflecting on two centuries of PUMC's history, I am profoundly reminded of the people who have shaped our church. Centered on God, our predecessors embraced a growth mindset, courageously taking risks to pave the way for future generations. They had experienced the transformative power of the church's ministry and desired the same for those who would follow. Their faith is both inspiring and challenging, filling me with hope.

As I contemplate the past and the faith of those who have made our present possible, I am motivated to adopt their growth mindset. For me, participating in worship and small group ministries at PUMC offers this opportunity and more. These settings challenge my thinking, foster deeper relationships, and encourage missional outreach. I consistently witness Christ's hands and feet at work through them. All of this has made an enormous difference in the peaks and valleys of my life because of the genuine support I have received.

As I look to the future, I am open to the possibilities of what God will do through the impact of ministry at PUMC. Just as those before us stepped out in faith, we, too, have the same opportunity to grow, serve, and share God's love. By embracing this, we can ensure that PUMC remains a place of hope, love, and transformation for centuries to come.

Kathy Perry

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your unwavering faithfulness and for the strong foundation of faith built by those who came before us. We are grateful for the opportunities you have placed before us today. Help us to embrace a growth mindset type of faith and remain open to your leading. Guide us forward to serve and to share your love. In the name of Christ, our Lord, we pray.
Amen.

Tuesday - April 8

What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead. Hebrews 11:1 TLB

I confess, I can lose sight of God's faithfulness in my life and there are days my faith lacks confident assurance in hope. Like most humans, I have endured hardships, the pain of loss, the uncertainty of serious illnesses, the anxiety of financial insecurity. During those situations, my reactions were not always grounded in my Christian beliefs and sometimes my reactions made my circumstances worse.

During a demoralizing personal crisis, I reached a turning point and called PUMC seeking prayers. Our children had been participating in programs at PUMC; however, we had not become members. That did not preclude us from being lifted in prayer by the pastors and staff. As the result of many prayers, my family's lives improved, and my heart was aware of God's faithfulness in my life.

Two hundred years ago, pioneers in Powell demonstrated steadfast faith and certainty in hope to form a church they could not yet see. Their hope provided me hope, and grounded me in the certainty of God's faithfulness that I now see more clearly through any difficulties I face. I pray to remain mindful that nurturing my faith and hope within a church family is crucial, not only for my relationship with God and service to others, but it is also crucial for that person in the future who seeks God's everlasting love.

Kristina MacKenzie

Prayer: Lord, help me remember that I am part of your plans versus you being a part of my plans. Strengthen my faith and the faith of those around me so that we stay confident in hope for what we cannot see. Inspire my actions to bring hope to the hopeless and shine your light to the world. Amen

Monday - April 7

I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. John 8:12 CEB

Committee or ministry impact? Let's acknowledge together that giving of our time, talent and treasure IS our ministry impact; yippee for church committees! If you are reading this, know that Kim LaRue, Karen Curren and I, are blessed to serve as the Lenten Devotional committee. In almost 30 years, I have served on many PUMC committees. Initially Staff-Parish Relations and Administrative Council complemented the business skills I'd learned. Vacation bible school, Christmas pageants, youth musicals and performing arts productions (directing, acting, dancing and choreographing) charged my childlike wonder. Pop-up planning committees like capital campaigns, strategy, vision and outreach complemented a growth focus. Whereas, missions, lay leadership, endowment and finance committee aligned passions and realities. Thankfully I've skirted participation with the Board of Trustees. (Facilities and property ministry.) God bless those who get HVAC.

I continue to feel blessed by to this very day by the stained glass committee. As the chairperson, I worked with Alan Shore, Terri Goldring, Dick Clark, Deb (Weaver) McLaughlin and Jack Parren. From November 2006 to December 2007 we forged past our differing tastes, budget planning, and vendor relations to implementation and church dedication.

Like faith, there is a mystery to glass; a fitting symbol of transformation. Simple ordinary sand exposed to fire gives us glass and metallic salts and oxides create the color. I hope the next time you sit in our sanctuary you will allow the stained glass colors and imagery of God's light (sun's rays) to reach you; the crown of thorns to ground you; and the holy spirit to connect you in heaven and earth.

Dana Ullom-Vucelich

Prayer: Holy God, Thank you for the earthly relationships we've formed in your church. Please continue to bless our time, resources and hearts to be transformed in glory for you.

Wednesday - March 19

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runyan, 1923

Hope Publishing Co

Verse 1

*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.*

The story of Great is Thy Faithfulness by Thomas Chisholm:

The hymn Great is Thy Faithfulness was written in 1923. This is Thomas Chisholm's most famous hymn. He sent this hymn (poem) to Rev. William Runyan who was the musician of Moody Bible Institute and editor of Hope Publishing Company in Chicago. Even though Rev. Runyan saw many poems come across his desk, he was very moved by this poetry of Thomas Chisholm and prayed for a tune that would carry over its message in a worthy way.

Thursday - March 20

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29: 11-13 NIV

My prayer life, over the years, has been a journey full of ups and downs like waves on the ocean. For so many years, the experience of prayer seemed just out of reach. To me there didn't seem to be anyone on the other end. The problem wasn't on God's end, it was on mine.

The first is the full realization of this precious gift God gave us at the cross. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He took all human sin upon Himself and paid the ransom in our place for all time. In this earth-shaking act, the veil between heaven and earth was torn. His resurrection after three days showed us that not even death could separate us from God. This costly gift is offered to us freely. We now can pray to God directly.

Then, there is the learning about "thin places" where you personally feel and experience the presence of God. One place for me is my living room chair when I watch Canadian geese waddle down the road to a grassy area. Each person's thin places are different. Realizing what thin places are and where they are for me has been transforming for my prayer life.

Finally, I had to understand that prayer is a lifetime journey of discovering how to pray. It takes time to develop a life of prayer in which you find that sacred space within yourself and bare your soul. Once you enter that holy place, nothing is hidden. You realize God is already there waiting for you. This Lenten season God is calling to you... "Come and find me"!

Nancy Heaver

Prayer: God, thank you for those in our congregation who help us in our prayer journey. Help us to discover those thin sacred places where we can feel and experience your love, forgiveness, and your purpose for our lives. Amen.

5th Sunday in Lent - April 6

Commitment

Here are excerpts from the scripture for worship today.

⁴The Lord said to him (Moses), 'This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, "I will give it to your descendants"; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.'⁵ Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord's command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day.'⁷ Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated.⁸ The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended.

⁹Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.

¹⁰Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.¹¹ He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land,¹² and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel. Deuteronomy 34:4-12 NRSV

Saturday - April 5

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... for where your treasure is, there your heart –your wishes, your desires, that on which your life centers – will be also. Matthew 6:19-21 AMP

Money and time. I've always had an uneasy relationship with both. Scripture says that hoarding money and time are not God's way. Instead, we are to generously share all we have with others. I've heard these messages all my life. Yet I still struggle.

Money was always a concern for my parents. Undoubtedly this impacted me and heightened my desire for "security." My preoccupation with time –rushing to do things and calculating the value of something by the time spent on it – may result from being a Type A. Years as a lawyer in private practice, where time truly is money, didn't help!

I'm guessing that who've been part of PUMC over our 200 year history also struggled with decisions related to money and time. How much money and time should be given to the church? To family? To the community? When have I given enough?

I've come to believe that I'm guided best by prayer and listening to those "nudges" from the Holy Spirit. And I've learned from the example of others who gave (and give) generously to God's work, including those within PUMC and those who have blessed my life in other times and places. I pray that whatever gifts I offer, help PUMC continue to be a place where Christ's light shines.

Faith Williams

Prayer: Lord, guide me to use all that You have given to me in ways that share Your love and advance Your Kingdom. Amen.

Friday - March 21

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7 NASB

As Paul tells us, giving allows us to participate with God in meeting the needs of others. Our church community freely gives our time, energy, attention, and financial resources to our ministry. Our church community has lasted for 200 years. It is this cheerful and willing giving that that has sustained us for these past two centuries and will continue to do so for the future.

Jeff Bernard

Prayer: God, as you have provided PUMC blessed abundance for these past 200 years, inspire us to give of ourselves freely and joyfully. Amen.

Saturday - March 22

Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. Timothy 2:1-2 NLT

One thing I truly love about our church is the variety of small groups available. From weekly groups that meet year-round, to small book and Bible studies, and fellowship groups centered around common interests, there really is something for everyone. Over the past 7 years, being involved in these groups has helped me understand what the Bible is trying to teach me. I've been able to have open discussions with peers, allowing me to explore God's word in different ways.

It all came full circle when I realized I had learned enough that it was time to share that understanding with others. This past fall, I began teaching a Disciple I class with Kim La Rue. Although I don't always have all the answers, the support from my Disciple IV group and from Kim, as we co-lead this class each week, has been invaluable. It has given me the confidence to pass on my interpretations and knowledge to others who are also seeking understanding.

The impact PUMC's ministry has had on my faith can only be described as a gift from God. The discussions I had in Pastor Larry's Bible study group during my early years, along with the lessons learned over the past four years with my Disciple cohort, have deeply shaped my faith and who I am today. I'm truly grateful for the ministry at PUMC.

Alyssa Thiele

Prayer: Heavenly Father, We come before You with grateful hearts, acknowledging the gift and responsibility of ministry. Thank You for the opportunity to serve and to be a part of Your work here on earth. We ask that You pour out Your blessings upon all who are involved in ministry—those who lead, teach, serve, and support. May their hearts be filled with Your love, wisdom, and grace. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Friday - April 4

Craig Askins' story continued from April 3rd

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23:6 (KJV)

In the early nineties, Craig would invite everyone to his farm for annual church picnics on a summer Sunday following worship service. We would spread our quilts on his large front lawn and share food and good time together. During one of these outings, Pastor Ed noticed large planks of timber protruding from the end of Craig's barn. When asked, Craig said they were cut from cherry trees on his farm and he was curing them to build some furniture someday. We also remember hay rides in late October. Craig would invite the church members to come. Families with children would enjoy riding in his farm wagon sitting on bales of hay pulled by his team of Belgian horses north thru the harvested fields as darkness fell.

I spent a Sunday afternoon with Mr. Askins. He had a large metal building built behind his home where he had accumulated and restored old farm equipment and various wagons and carriages. He explained how each piece worked and their purpose. He was all smiles as he showed me a fully restored, black, horse drawn hearse from the late 1800s. Craig had traveled to various parts of the country to buy vintage items and restore them. It was his retirement work hobby.

In 1997, Craig wanted to provide a large cross which would hang above the chancel area in the Sanctuary. His carpenter made it from Craig's cherry. It was delivered and hung the week before Easter. Mr. Askins came to the church on Saturday and sat on a pew chair to see the cross that had been built. The next morning, as Pastor Lou was giving announcements, our church secretary came quickly thru the Sanctuary and handed her a note. With sad emotion, we learned Mr. Askins had passed that morning. He was 86.

That Easter morning, Sue Moore had prepared to provide the "Children's Moments." As kids covered the Sanctuary steps, she highlighted the new cross Mr. Askins donated explaining it was a symbol of God's love for us and the love Mr. Askins has for his Church. As tears continued, she passed out miniature crosses. After the service, adults were asking her if they too could have a cross. The beautiful wood cross currently hangs in the Sanctuary entrance inside the red doors.

Alan Moore

Prayer: Gracious God, we give thanks for those who are faithful and generous to the church, growing families and building community with productive lives, willing to work and make a difference. Amen

Thursday - April 3

*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.
Psalm 127:1 (NIV)*

Craig Askins was a long-time member of our church. He owned a farm on the west end of Powell Road stretching west toward the zoo with fields extending north of the road. Craig was tall and lanky with hair thinning and graying with age. His handshake was with his large bony hands of a retired dairy farmer.

Our family was new to Powell in late 1988. We began attending the church in 1989. We considered ourselves “Johnny-come-lately” as most of the work to build a new church facility was underway by a core group of church members who had worked so hard over recent decades to provide for this transition. Craig Askins was one of those foundational members who helped make this possible.

Craig was in his late seventies when we became more familiar with him. He was the one with the wagon pulled by his team of Belgian horses transporting Sanctuary items from the church in the village to the new church on that Sunday, January 14th, 1990.

I remember one Sunday morning service, Mr. Askins spoke from the pulpit, sharing a couple humorous stories, and providing testimony to the importance of involving ourselves in the work of church and community.

Craig donated two beautiful display cases made of cherry in memory of his late wife, Marguerite Askins. Mr. Askins had a carpenter friend who would build furnishings at Craig’s request. Next, a new altar table, replacing the one moved from the church in the village, was donated. This is the altar table we use today in the new Sanctuary. There are numerous crosses visible in the beautiful design using the cherry from Craig’s farm.

Alan Moore

Prayer: Gracious God, we give thanks for those who came before us to show us the way to be faithful to you. Their joy in serving you and connecting with the community is an example of your overwhelming love. Amen.

Third Sunday in Lent - March 23

Prayer

Here are excerpts from the scripture for worship today.

¹⁷ Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, ‘Go up there into the Negeb, and go up into the hill country, ¹⁸ and see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, ¹⁹ and whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the towns that they live in are unwalled or fortified, ²⁰ and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be bold, and bring some of the fruit of the land.’ Now it was the season of the first ripe grapes...

²⁵ At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. ²⁶ And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ And they told him, ‘We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ Yet the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there...

³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, ‘Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.’ ³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we are.’

Numbers 13:17-20, 25-28, 30-31 (NRSV)

Monday - March 24

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. James 5:13 NIV

Prayer has been important throughout Powell United Methodist Church's past 200 years beginning in the old log cabin church and always present in our current location. Did you know that there is even a box of prayers written by the children of PUMC that is buried under the altar in our sanctuary when it was built? Look for the gold plaque on the steps leading up to the altar and that is where they are located!

One of the most memorable prayer experiences that I have had at PUMC was during Lent in 2006, during the Pastor Marcus Atha era. A 24-hour prayer vigil was held in the fellowship hall which was the sanctuary at the time. I selected the 1AM one hour slot for my time to participate in the vigil. I am a little bit of a night owl so this time was perfect for me! Sitting in the fellowship hall late at night was so special! I had the whole fellowship hall to myself and the candles on the altar lit the space beautifully. As I recall, there was some music playing softly and there were activities that you could do as you prayed. I don't recall what I prayed about or prayed for that night, but it was that one on one time with God and the overall experience that has stayed with me for almost 20 years now. I am going to suggest that we do another prayer vigil soon!

Another prayer activity that I have enjoyed at PUMC is when we put up the Prayer Tabernacle. In case you have not seen it in use, it is a simple pop up tent with chairs placed underneath the tent, usually in a circle with a makeshift altar made from a folding table. The table is usually topped by a lit candle and a cross. Those that visit the Prayer Tabernacle are invited to write a prayer for themselves or others on a strip of cloth and it is tied to the top of the tent. As additional prayers are written, they are tied to the other prayer strips of cloth. When 3 or 4 strips of cloth are tied together, the gentle breeze will begin to blow them gently as if the breath of God is being blown on the prayers. I just love this! It is a reminder to me that God is always with us when we pray.

What are your favorite ways to pray? Continue to pray as we celebrate the next 200 years of Powell United Methodist Church. No prayer is too big or too small for our God.

Karen Curren

Listen to this song today: "Don't Stop Praying" by Matthew West

Prayer: Lord, we lift our prayers up to you in both good times and bad times. Thank you for listening to all of our prayers and for always being there for us. Amen.

Wednesday - April 2

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runyan, 1923

Hope Publishing Co

Verse 3

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

The story of Great is Thy Faithfulness by Thomas Chisholm:

This hymn became an instant favorite amongst the Moody Bible Institute staff and students, quickly becoming the college's unofficial hymn. But when Billy Graham heard it and began using it in his crusades during the 1950s, it became very well known. What began as a simple poem from a simple man was suddenly reaching the ears of millions, and has continued to do so each year since.

Tuesday - April 1

He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it. Proverbs 11: 26 KJV

As we head into our 200th year as a church, I am reminded of a phrase I heard my Grandfather recite multiple times over 50 years ago: “may the ropes of the past ring the bells of the future”.

As products of the great depression era who grew up around the harsh realities that Southeast Ohio Appalachians faced, I am still amazed in 2025 that my Grandparents lived a life filled with such a generous spirit and loving hearts.

Financial security was never part of their life but rather financial challenges. To that end, they were forced to sacrifice their independence and pride – and live with our family the last 15 years of their life. Bitterness, anger and resentment would have been understandable traits for those in that situation. However, I was blessed with daily examples of gratitude, optimism and hope.

I do not remember a birthday or Christmas without receiving a meaningful, and often times favorite, gift from them. As a young person, I was not acutely aware then of the sacrifices they must have made to be able to pay for those gifts, but as an adult I fully understand.

Yes Grandma and Grandpa, the ropes of the past do ring the bells of the future. As we head into year 200 at PUMC, I am grateful to be part of a congregation that lives and operates with a generous spirit and I pray that our collective spirit remains as strong as yours – no matter the sacrifice.

Dave & Jane Sprague

Prayer: Dear Lord, we are both thankful and grateful for those persons in our life who help shape and lead us on our spiritual journey. We pray that we can live a life filled with unwavering generosity, especially during times of great challenges and personal setbacks. We trust that this path will lead us to be the people you intended us to be.

Tuesday - March 25

Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth and it stands fast. Psalm 119:90 (NRSV)

Did you ever volunteer to do something and then right up to the moment of truth you struggle to meet expectations? I have more than once. I awoke this Sunday morning and realized my alarm had not gone off. I had 45 minutes to get up, shower, dress and drive to church. I had struggled with an appropriate devotion for weeks, but as I went through the rushed drill and made my way to church, I realized why I wanted to be there. It was my friend's birthday, I had been travelling and missed the previous two Sundays. I didn't want to miss another. On-line worship is an advantage but being there in person sitting amongst the faithful; worshipping in person right beside your friends is really spending time with God for me.

And then the God moment when our altar cloth says “Great is Thy Faithfulness” and our message is all about faithful friendship.

Two hundred years ago someone in Powell Ohio said, “let's build a church” and here, through generations, we stand worshipping in faithfulness together.

Deb Randolph

Prayer: Thank you God for your faithfulness. Amen.

Wednesday - March 26

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

Music: William M. Runyan, 1923

Hope Publishing Co

Verse 2

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

The story of Great is Thy Faithfulness by Thomas Chisholm:

After Thomas Chisholm left the ministry he faced financial hardships but found a job selling life insurance to help keep up with the bills. He also had the loving support from his wife, Catherine Vandervere, and his two daughters.

The faithfulness theme in his hymn reflects his positive outlook on life and his observances of faithfulness around him.

Monday - March 31

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matt 25:37-40 (NRSV)

Adventures and travel are my favorite things to do. Sailing with my grandfather, horseback riding with my dad, rafting and camping are wonderful memories I will always cherish.

When my eldest child started high school and was eligible to go to Work Camp with the church, I was not shy about volunteering to go! It sounded like an adventure I could not pass up!

My third Work Camp was in New Orleans a year after Katrina hit. I was assigned with another adult and 12 teens to a house that was hit the hardest. Our house belonged to George who had lived most of his life there and was living in a FEMA trailer on his property. He brought us inside his home and showed us his backdoor. It had a water mark that reached 29" above the floor. George told us the water was there for 2-3 weeks.

Our job was to drywall. The first thing we did was pray together. We prayed that we would do our best for George so he could live out his life in his home. George would come in at noon and join us for lunch and devotions. He would share a little about himself every day. When he first saw his home, he was devastated. We finished the dry wall and George gave it the thumbs up sign. He thanked us again and we thanked him for having faith in us to do our best. The next crew would come next week and start the next project. I will never forget the sacrifice the adults and teens made to come, work hard, and to better someone's life. It was so rewarding!

Janet McGranahan

Prayer: Lead me Lord, lead me in your righteousness, make my way plain before your face. Amen.

4th Sunday in Lent - March 30

Generosity & Sacrifice

Here are excerpts from the scripture for worship today.

⁶ Therefore keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷ For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. ¹⁰ You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.

¹¹ Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. ¹² When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid waste-land with poisonous¹⁴ snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, ¹⁶ and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. ¹⁷ Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' ¹⁸ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today. Deuteronomy 8:6-18 NRSV

Thursday - March 27

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Matthew 21:22

I have always prayed and had faith in God, and He always answered my prayers. In Sunday School class we discussed Adam Hamilton's book "The Message of Jesus." He said, "I talk to God in the morning, throughout the day, and at night."

As I reflect on the 200th year of Powell United Methodist Church, I was deeply touched by the stories at our "Sharing Our Story: A Gathering of History and Memories" event. I am so grateful for what a few did 200 years ago. We have what we have today in our church because of what they did. They prayed for our church then and for the future of our church and had a strong faith in God that he would answer their prayers.

Prayer keeps us going when we talk to God throughout the day as Adam Hamilton does, and we must not just pray for ourselves but pray for our church and the future of our church, for those who will be here in another 100 and 200 years.

Carol Patitu

Prayer: Dear God, the most important thing that we need for the celebration of our 200th year of our congregation is prayer. I thank you for our past members who built the foundation that we now enjoy. I pray for each of our church members and their families as we work on the events throughout the year to celebrate our 200th year anniversary. I pray for much success for our church for those who will be here in 100 and 200 years from now. Amen.

Friday - March 28

*God's there, listening for all who pray, for all who pray and mean it.
Psalm 145:18 (MSG)*

As a child I was taught prayers to say at mealtime, bedtime, in church, and in other situations. As I got older, I was told that prayer was speaking to God. So, I began talking to God about things that bothered me, people and situations needing God's attention. Then someone told me prayer is not just talking but also listening to God. So, I added time to be quiet and listen after talking, but all I heard was silence! I told God to speak louder. Still, all I heard was the usual noise around me. God was silent. God spoke to people in the Bible, and people around me said they heard God speak, why wouldn't God speak to me!?

My prayer life became a ritual. I stopped listening for God. I just prayed because it was expected. Maybe God heard me, but I didn't hear anything back. Then my wife died and as I sat beside her body a doctor I'd never met came and sat beside me. He asked if I had any questions. I was angry with doctors and said, "No!" He gave me his card and said, "If you want to talk, call me anytime, I'll be there."

Later it dawned on me that this was God *talking* to me. Now, I realize that God uses people, nature, books, TVs, computers, all the things around us to speak to us if we have the ears to hear! God is here listening, let's pray.

Dave Woodyard

Prayer: Loving God, you know my questions, you know my fears, you know me; help my ears hear you speak through the people and things I encounter today. I ask this in the name of Jesus, the one who put on flesh to reveal you to us. Amen.

Saturday - March 29

I am grateful to God-whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did-when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self discipline. 2 Timothy 1: 3-7 NRSV

As a former pastor of PUMC, I resonate with the writer of 2 Timothy, grateful for the memories I have of serving God alongside so many faithful people. Fortunately, I don't have to "long to see you" because my wife, Kelly, and I have entered back into the life of the congregation, worshipping regularly and participating in the church's ministries. Pastors Justin and Carrie have helped to make this possible and we are deeply grateful.

This scripture celebrates how faith is obtained as a gift, not as something we do because of good choices or ethical living, but through relationships with those who have gone before us. Our parents and grandparents, our friends and Christian teachers, have surrounded us with an environment that allows us to claim faith for ourselves. This is the key to understanding faithfulness. It's not something we achieve, but something we become because of who we love and who loves us. Isn't that why we count on God's faithfulness? God's love never fails and this creates the reality for us to live the way Jesus teaches.

So, when you think about the depth of your own faith, don't focus too much on whether you read the bible enough, or go to church enough, or observe enough spiritual disciplines. Instead, give thanks to God for the way God loves you and how others have encouraged you in your Christian walk. Faithfulness is a gift and we have already received everything we need to live as faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Larry Brown

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for blessing my life with those who guide and encourage me to trust your love. Amen.