

*You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.*

*Psalm 51:6-9*

## **Words of Wisdom**

**Devotions to help you navigate your  
Lenten discipline**

*until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

*1 Timothy 4:13-16*

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Mark 2:18-22**

***And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.***

***No, he pours new wine into new wineskins.***

***Mark 2:22***

Fasting is a concept that is foreign to most of us; however, it is a reoccurring theme in the Bible. The thought of fasting doesn't please many people; after all, why suffer if it is not necessary? We live in a country where it is impossible to go a mile down the street and not pass a fast food establishment or some kind of restaurant, so why fast? What benefit will we gain from fasting? How does fasting help us become better Christians?

As Jesus stated in Mark 2:22, it is not wise to put new wine into old wineskins. One must put the freshly made wine into new wineskins, so that the wine will not become ruined. Much like a wineskin, our Spirit and relationship with the Lord must be renewed every so often so that He can continually fill our Spirits with fresh wine. We fast not only to remind us of how blessed we are to receive a hot meal three times a day every day, but also to revamp our wineskins so that we can more readily accept what God has to offer us. When we fast, our lives become more centered on Him as we are not worried about that special diet, what to make for dinner, or what time dinner must be ready. We have more time to focus on prayer, study, and action rather than centering all our attention on us. Fasting is not a time of suffering and starvation, but a time of healing and rejuvenation.

I have personally participated in the 30 Hour Famine, and I am participating in it again this year. However, I never really knew the significance of fasting, and I do not think I approached the Famine the correct way. I now know that fasting is a time of renewing your Covenant with God so that you can willingly accept the fresh wine we are all destined to drink. I plan to come to the Famine with this new attitude, and I invite everyone to take a short amount of time out of our busy lives to experience and appreciate the concept of fasting at some point during the Lenten season in order to repair your wineskin and accept God's wonderful wine!

~Trevor Miller

**Prayer Focus: Pastor Ross Carter**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Habakkuk 3:1-19**

***“He stopped and shook the Earth, he looked and made the nations tremble. The eternal mountains were shattered; along his ancient pathways the everlasting hills sank low.” Hab. 3:6***

We have all heard about the tragic and disastrous earthquake that struck Haiti earlier this year. People are struggling to live an everyday life. There are limited resources, many people have been hurt or killed and many families have been separated. When a crisis like this happens, many times it causes people turn away from God. But it is during crises like this that people need to keep believing in God. Everything around them is broken, but somehow people spirits remain unbroken. This is God in their life. Even when the earth around us shakes, we can still stand strong because of God's strength. This scripture talks about how God is great and that no matter what or no matter through what, God will always be your strength. If people in a country that has been devastated by an earthquake can have hope, so can we. As you go through today, think about why some people in Haiti are blaming God or turning from God. Think about a time in your life where you experienced a crisis and blamed God or turned away from God. Then pray that everyone who blames or turns from God will remember His strength and put their trust in Him.

~ Melissa Taguinot and Sarah Willadsen

**Prayer Focus: Staff Parish Relations Committee**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Psalm 31**

Sins – everyone has them, everyone commits them. It is how we fix them that makes us different. In Psalm 31, the Psalmist is talking about God being our savior. God listens to us. Even if you feel as if there is no sign or response from God, that doesn't mean that He's not there and listening to you. If you recognize that you sin and turn away from God, then you will want to repent for that sin and come back to God. You may think the best way to repent is by doing a good deed right? That is not always the right way. Talk to God. Pray to Him. Ask God for forgiveness and He will forgive you. God loves you and cares for you.

Our need for repentance goes further than just asking God for forgiveness. Since everyone commits sins, we should all forgive each other. Trying not to sin is hard for everyone. The Bible says Christians should stick together. We are not alone, we are together. When Christians are together we realize that we are at God's side. So, maybe we could repent together and ask God for forgiveness together. Everyone has someone. Everyone has God. So we need to accept Him as our savior and do God's work on Earth while He does it in heaven. God helps us and loves us, so we need to be sure we show Him our love!

~Danielle Parrish

**Prayer Focus: Bishop Al Guinn**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: John 17:20-26**

*...the love you have for me may be in them and I myself may be in them. John 17:24*

The “wilderness” can be a scary place, especially when you are alone. In our case, school sometimes is that wilderness. The pressure of being different or having different beliefs can make you feel alone or even exiled. Because of this feeling of separation, it can be hard to have a relationship with the people around you and with God. Even while we feel like this, God is still pursuing us. God still wants to have a personal relationship with us. Sometimes when we feel alone there is something that usually brings back from the wilderness. Maybe it’s someone inviting you to eat lunch with them or maybe it is being made the leader of a group. After some time there are things that happen that pull us out of being lonely. The cool thing is that we believe God sent that person or event into our life to make us not feel as alone.

In this scripture passage from John, Jesus is talking to God about the relationship they have with one another. In this relationship God and Jesus share their love with one another continually and are never alone. Jesus wants the relationship that we have with God to look like to the relationship Jesus and God have. There may have been times in your life when your relationship with God was fractured and you felt as if you were in a wilderness. You may be in that wilderness now. But there’s good news for you and for all of us. God sends people into our lives, or we are sent into other people’s lives, to be that link to God. We just have to pay attention to where God is leading us. So, when you are feeling alone and you come across people, think about them as your link to God, or think about yourself as their link to God.

~Peyton Bingham and Jamie Dean

**Prayer Focus: Sunrise Lay Leader, Bruce Barkley**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Genesis 37:12-24**

Has someone ever betrayed you or done something to hurt you? You might sometimes wonder why this has happened to you. Even the most unfair acts happen to people who are close to God. For example, in this scripture passage from Genesis, Joseph is betrayed by his brothers. His own family sold him into slavery. They were supposed to love him but instead they got rid of him. Even though it was a horrible event, Joseph ended up in Egypt and started his journey of saving the Jews, just as God had planned.

In some cases suffering can help us to understand better what God wants for us. When we are betrayed the best comeback is to live your life to the fullest even through you were hurt. What's even better is to make a difference in the world, like Joseph did. Do something to glorify God even through you are hurt. There will always be times with unfairness, pessimism and betrayal, but those times can lead us to something majestic. If you stay in conversation with God and pay attention to God's presence in your life, you will be better able to handle times when you are betrayed or hurt. So, even if you are betrayed find ways to stay close to God the Almighty.

~Alan Taguinot and Bryce Buck

**Prayer Focus: Creative Arts Director, Kim White**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Mark 1:21-45**

“Be quiet, come out of him!” That’s all that was said and yet a demon repelled itself out of the man’s body. Do you feel like sometimes you have a demon in you and you need someone to help you get rid of it? Maybe you say things about other people that you normally would not say. Or you act in ways that you had never acted before. Maybe even you have an uneasy feeling like you have never felt before. I’ve felt those things before. You know that something is off when your times of meditation become limited. It could even get as bad as you not being able to spread God’s love anymore. But there are people you are around, believe it or not, who understand what you are going through. Their understanding goes beyond knowing what you are going through, they understand because they can still see God in you even when all you see is a demon. Jesus still saw the man underneath the demon.

Raise up your troubles to Him and like the demon filled man, He will save you. Trust in Him and He will provide you with the strength to cast out the demons.

~Elizabeth Sheerin and Hannah Buck

**Prayer Focus: Sunrise Choirs and Praise Bands**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Psalm 55**

*Give ear to my prayer, O God;  
do not hide yourself from my supplication.*

*Attend to me, and answer me;  
I am troubled in my complaint.*

*Ps 55:1-2*

In the beginning of this psalm, the person is praying to God and begging Him to save them from their enemies and to not abandon them. Have you ever felt like God has abandoned you? We can sometimes feel as if we are in the wilderness, alone and abandoned by everyone, even God. So, do you think getting lost in the wilderness is a good thing? We don't know, but God does say that He will never put you through something you and Him couldn't conquer together.

God has a purpose for everything and everyone is part of His plan. If you go get lost in the wilderness and off your path from God, He is still with you every step of the way. He is waiting for His chance to lead you back to Him.

Just like the story of the man who dreamed he was walking with the Lord on a beach and saw flashes of his life and only one set of footprints in the worst time of his life. When he asked the Lord, he replied 'My child, I would never abandon you. When you only saw one set of footprints, those were the times when I carried you.' God will never abandon us. God still loves us even when we are stuck or off our path and away from Him. Sometimes by getting lost you have no choice but to let Him lead you back and by doing so, you may learn just how much God loves you. As Lent continues think about times you felt abandoned by God. Did that time help you to come closer to God in the end? Pray and reflect on your walk with Jesus.

~Meghan Classen and Mary Catherine Carter

**Prayer Focus: Evangelism Committee**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

All around the world we find people who don't believe in God. This constantly is testing our beliefs. What we really need to focus on is spreading the good news of Christ to relieve the pressure that some Christians feel. The anxiety of wanting non believers to know the good news, but not being the one to share it can create worry and stress. The scripture uses the example of eating food sacrificed to an idol as an example of some type of action a Christian might do. Since eating the food is really not a problem because there are no gods other than the one God, a non believer or a new Christian might see that action and think eating food sacrificed to God is okay. In other words the knowledge a strong Christian has needs to be shared with non Christians or new believers so that no stumbling blocks are created for them. As Christians we have a responsibility to share our faith and knowledge with others. Sharing the gospel is a very good thing and it brings all of us closer to God.

~Middle School Sunday School Class

**Prayer Focus: Sunrise Youth Ministry**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 7:32-40**

Do not let worldly distractions, people or relationships distract you from your relationships with God. God comes before all the things in the world.

God has called us as fallen people to put our problems at the foot of the cross and focus on our relationship with Him. During Lent we are striving to strengthen our relationship with God. God loves us very much and God wants to be our first priority. He wants us to put Him above all worldly things. When we put God first we return our love to God.

Paul is saying, “Don’t get distracted because Jesus is coming back.” Paul wants us to make sure that we focus our lives on living like God would want us to. This means putting God before any other problems or distractions in our life. We are supposed to do this because Jesus is coming back soon and we are supposed to be getting ready for him coming back. This can be very hard because we don’t know when Jesus is coming back, so we think we can do it tomorrow. Paul telling us that we should not do this. Even though we can’t see God like we can see the distractions in our lives, we have to put our relationship with Him first. It’s easy to be in a relationship with people we can touch and see. But God wants us to be in relationship with Him even though we can’t see or touch Him.

As you go through your day, think about these questions: Is there anything you put above God? How is your relationship with God? What can you do to put your relationship with God above other distractions in your life?

~Rebecca Carter and Jennifer Pride

**Prayer Focus: North Carolina Conference of the  
United Methodist Church**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-14**

I have heard people say many times that the Lord is constantly working in our lives, and I do believe that, but there are times when I lose appreciation for it. When I am struggling with misplaced burdens that I believe are the direct result of something I have not done right, my common responses are... “If only I had done something differently” or “I should have done a better job up to this point”. I am aware that in order to get relief from these burdens, I need to give them over to the one who can actually handle it...God. He has made that clear, but too often I forget that discipline, and the result of my holding on to the burden is guilt.

When I chose today from the available dates to write this devotion, I had no idea what the scripture references would be. It is interesting that that the scripture lesson was Hebrews 12:1-14. The NIV version of the Bible titles this passage as *God Disciplines His Sons*. What makes it interesting is that, Discipline, is exactly what I am currently struggling with; both as the one handing it out and the one receiving it. God is working in my life just as I am trying to work in my children’s life. He is always diligent. What I have experienced is that God’s punishment for not following His discipline is painful, but it is a sign that He loves me and wants me to share in His wonderful blessings.

As we enter the season of Lent, I encourage you to give appreciation to the one who faithfully followed the disciplines of God. Jesus “endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” It is easy to lose heart and grow weary when we are confronted with discipline. However, take comfort in knowing that God desires discipline to be a means to His abundant Love, and it was His discipline that Jesus followed to assure you and I with a chance for forgiveness and salvation.

~Donald Pearson

**Prayer Focus: Hispanic Minister, Pilar Adrianzen**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:16-27**

*If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.*

*1 Corinthians 9:19*

When hearing the word of God do you feel uplifted? Do you feel that there is hope? Do you experience comfort and peace? The answer should be yes! God gave us free choice. With free choice comes responsibility. You have either made the choice to learn about God or someone has chosen to teach you. Think about all the people who do not know about God. As we associate with different people in our life we have opportunities to share what makes us Christian people. Not all people have chosen to be Christ followers. These people have a deprived spirit. The depraved have chosen to look away from God and who He is. They look for ways to corrupt the soul. They may have made choices based on the company they have kept. Maybe they have not heard the message of the Gospel, and as a result are ignorant to the wonderful blessings available to them. Everyone needs God's love. We should take advantage of our opportunities and live up to our responsibilities by offering the message of the Gospel to the many different people we encounter throughout our life.

God's love should be no secret. You should reach out to others and teach them God's word. This is rewarding for the teacher and the receiver. It is unfortunate that some people choose not to share God's word with others. Instead they keep it to themselves.

This is a selfish act. Don't keep God's word bottled up. Instead take advantage of this Lenten Season to share God's word with a friend, relative, or even stranger. The reward will be experiencing eternal life and knowing we played a role in offering the Gospel message to those who have never heard it and desperately need it.

~Whitney Fredriksen

**Prayer Focus: Sunrise Sunday School**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Jeremiah 2:6**

*“They did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord, who brought us out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and rifts, a land of drought and darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?’”*

During Lent, we hear the word “wilderness” used over and over again, but many of us may ask: what is a wilderness to me? Most picture the biblical wilderness as a desolate place filled with the dangers of starvation, attack from thieves and the temptation of the devil; and it is. If we were to travel through the wilderness like the Israelites or John the Baptist, we would be alone, away from civilization and helpless against starvation, death and other unknown dangers.

We don't have to literally be walking through a desert to be alone and helpless. Whenever we turn away from others and God in despair, we end up alone and helpless in a vast “desert”. Whether a family member just died, your best friend is addicted to drugs, or an entire country is screaming in pain, we must remember that God will never abandon us or leave us alone and helpless in the wilderness.

~Jacob Classen

**Prayer Focus: Financial Secretary, Angie Dement**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Genesis 50:15-26**

When Joseph’s brothers saw their father was dead, they said, “what if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” So they sent word to Joseph saying, “your father left these instructions before he died, “This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers, the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly. Now please forgive the sins of the servant of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came down to him and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves” They said, but Joseph said to them, “don’t be afraid, am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me but God intended for good to accomplish what is now being done the saving of many lives, so then don’t be afraid I will provide for you and your children” and he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

We feel like this passage is about forgiveness. Joseph put aside his feelings of hatred towards his brothers even after all that they did to him, because God called to him. Joseph brought God into a tough situation. You can relate this to a real life situation, when you are in a tough situation instead of complaining about your problems you can bring God into them to help you. We would consider Joseph to be smart for knowing to bring God into a situation like this. If you ever have a situation which involves forgiving or anything that is tough on you period, always know that you can count on God to help you through it. Just like Joseph had an issue in his life where he knew he needed help and he called on God. You can do the same and you can know that you’re doing the right thing.

~Megan and Riley Pearson

**Prayer Focus: ASP Leaders and Volunteers**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Lamentations 1:17-22**

*See, O Lord, how distressed I am;  
my stomach churns,  
my heart is wrung within me,  
because I have been very rebellious.  
In the street the sword bereaves;  
in the house it is like death.  
Lamentation 1:20*

Two years ago I moved from Massachusetts to North Carolina. I was intimidated by leaving behind friends, memories, snow, and daily routines. Even though I didn't want to go, I trusted my parents to guide and comfort me.

This prospect of moving into an unknown life is similar to what God asks of us. God asks for us to follow Him and trust him for comfort and hope. Just as I had to leave behind familiar things, God asks all to remove themselves from worldly concerns and follow Him. He does not promise that this obedience will be easy or peaceful, just as His existence on earth was not easy or peaceful.

So, as Lent is ending, how are you going to trust God? Are you going to look to Him for comfort and hope? Will you trust Him even when it's not easy or peaceful?

~Ted Pride

**Prayer Focus: Missionaries**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26**

In this familiar passage from 1 Corinthians, the main point that Paul wants to make is that everyone has something different to do but it all comes together for one function. The parts of the body all have different responsibilities, but the different parts are all needed in the Body of Christ. Just because you do not have the same responsibilities as someone else, doesn't mean you are any less important or more important. You can't shut out anyone in the Body of Christ, you welcome everyone because you need everyone.

In the same way, you can't shut out yourself because you're uncomfortable with the responsibilities God had given you. God makes the decision of what you are responsible for and how you must meet that responsibility. If everyone wanted to be an eye, where would the hand be? If everyone wanted to be the hand where would the eye be? God moves you to where He knows you fit best. God puts you in places He knows will help the Body of Christ do better.

So, what part of the body are you? What part of the body has God created you to be? You may know what part you are. If you say you are the hand, but the hands stay “in the pockets,” they are not functioning. The Body of Christ can't function when its body parts refuse to work. The first step towards a healthy Body is knowing who's what. The second step is acting like the part of the Body you are created to be.

~Megan and Riley Pearson

**Prayer Focus: ZOE Ministries**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Exodus 9:13-35**

*“Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, and said to them, ‘This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong.’”*

*Exodus 9:27*

Until this point in the scripture, Pharaoh thought he was more powerful than God. He thought he could do everything that God could do. But God proved that even the Pharaoh was breakable. When Pharaoh realized this he offered up an apology for denying the power of God.

Most of the time when people become separated from God or feel distant from God’s presence, they become stubborn about coming back to Him. They think they are right and they will not give in. The Pharaoh is a good example for this attitude. He was the best and the brightest and nothing could be better than him. What Pharaoh said was always right. Over time though, God worked on Pharaoh’s heart enough that he changed his mind. Pharaoh finally admitted he was wrong and listened to God’s command. But, Pharaoh didn’t listen to God for very long. His heart was hardened again and he turned away from God’s commands. This was a very unfortunate thing because most of the Egyptians died while chasing the Hebrew people across the Red Sea. This shows that being stubborn and turning from God can hurt more people than yourself, so you should always open your heart to God.

If you have become distant from God, you should remember this story. If you harden your heart like Pharaoh you will hurt yourself, others and God. Don’t ignore people whenever they ask you about your relationship with God. Don’t ignore them just because you don’t like what they are saying, because they could be God talking to you, trying to soften your heart.

~Ryan Willadsen and Collin Drummond

**Prayer Focus: Building Committee**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: 1 Peter 1:10-20**

As we reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross, it's hard not to spend the majority of our time thinking about those hours on Friday before the resurrection. Personally the events that led up to the crucifixion give me the most trouble. Knowing that Jesus walked through crowds of people while they verbally and physically abused him, gives me pause. How did he find the strength? How did he maintain his focus? Why did he do it? Of course, we know the answer to those questions is God, but we have the benefit of knowing the story and how it ends. How the people who called themselves Disciples of Christ during that time were able to understand it is a mystery to me. They were experiencing it live and unedited.

The scripture verse from 1 Peter indicates that the prophets who came before Christ were also curious as to the when, the how and the why. However, it was their hope and belief in the Lord that led them to relay the message God wanted the people to hear. The message of Hope; The message that Jesus was going to endure great suffering and pain for them, for you and for me. The message that he was going to bridge a chasm between sin and holiness.

It just so happens that my favorite scripture verse occurs immediately before the selected passage for today. 1 Peter 1:8-9 offers me hope when I reflect on it. “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” I am eternally grateful that Jesus honored his father by fulfilling his purpose of finding a way to bring me, and sinner, before God one day.

~Donald Pearson

**Prayer Focus: United Methodist Men**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34**

Do you think God will provide an abundance of something to you? He did with Jacob. God said he would bring Jacob into Egypt and make him a great nation. God said he would make Jacobs people abundant. So, do you think God will provide you with an abundance of something? Is there a great difference between Jacob and us? God never abandoned Jacob and he has never abandoned us. He never will. God wants us to be happy in our lives. He gave us the freedom to make our own decisions and he offers us so much in hopes that we will decide to choose him. When we do choose him, we receive an abundance of his blessings. As you continue in your day think about how much God loves you and how much he offers you, when you choose him.

~Middle School Sunday School Class

### **Prayer Focus: Nurture Committee**

# **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

## **Scripture: Psalm 27:13-14**

*I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the Lord!*

Have you ever been lost in the wilderness? Some would say they have not. But if you have ever moved houses or changed locations, then you probably know the feeling. In our lifetimes, we have both lived in more than two places. We have felt lost in our new surroundings, alone, upset and discouraged because no one around us seemed to like us. Our emotional lows can easily be compared with a spiritual walk through the wilderness. You will experience this spiritual wandering at some point in your life. You will feel lost, alone, discouraged, angry, hurt and also angry at God; just as both of us felt angry with our parents for making us move. But just like someone who has had to move, you will emerge from your bleak surroundings – you will make new friends and speak to new people and become comfortable with the new situation around you. God will pull you through your time of spiritual wondering – just as we have gotten used to the new places we have had to live.

Our suggestion to you as you wander is to pray. Pray to our Lord and he will come to help you find your way back. Like a new friend in a brand new school, God will become your light in your time of spiritual darkness. So, do not worry! Pray. Read the Bible. God declares that those who wait upon Him will receive the greatest prize of all – the confidence that their Lord, Jesus Christ, has brought them through.

~Lizzy Rabon and Mary Catherine Carter

**Prayer Focus: Finance Committee**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Mark 9:2-13**

*“See I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.”  
Malachi 4:5*

*“Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things.” Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? “But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.”  
Mark 9:11-13*

Throughout the Bible, God is continually doing what He said He would do. The way we understand our God is predicated on what we read in scripture. There are stories throughout scripture that give us glimpses into how God spoke to His people, how God continues to speak and will speak in the future. In each of these stories we get the opportunity to watch God’s will unfold. We get the chance to see how God fulfills His promises.

In the story of the Transfiguration on the Mountain, we get to watch as Jesus is revealed as the fulfillment of all things that have been spoken of by Moses and the prophets. In this passage from Mark’s account, the Scribes believed that Elijah must come before the Messiah. They believed that Elijah had not come yet, and therefore Jesus could not be the Messiah. However, because of the experience on the Mountain, Christ can proclaim with certainty that this scripture had been fulfilled. When we steep ourselves in scripture we open ourselves to new understandings of God and new ways of seeing how God is working to fulfill His word in the world. Recognizing those places in your life where you act as a fulfillment of scripture strengthens and continues to build upon your faith. May your interactions with God through the scripture give you comfort in knowing that God is control of His plan.

~Julie Fredriksen and Audrey Wilder

**Prayer Focus: Disciple Bible Study Classes**

## **“Walking through the Wilderness: A Reflection on Sacrifice”**

### **Scripture: Psalm 69**

*Save me, O God  
For the waters have come up to my neck  
I sink in miry depths,  
Where there is no foothold  
I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.  
I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched.  
My eyes fail, looking for my God.*

#### **\*Why do people second guess God and what he does for us?\***

I have always been a believer in Jesus Christ, but this summer of 2009 really made my love stronger for him, and made me realize how much I depend on him.

To make a long story short here is how I depended on God this past summer. Last February my mom, her husband, and my two little sisters had moved here to North Carolina. I had stayed back with my dad and grandparents to finish the school year. In June I had moved down here with my grandparents to live with my mom and my sisters. My mom's husband and I were never on good terms. I always had a problem with him and never liked him, my grandparents had felt the same way.

Through that summer things didn't go well. My mom and grandparents took my two little sisters, Brennan (6), Broghan (2), and me (15), and left. Every night we would all pray about the situation with family and friends. We prayed harder than we have ever done before. I would sit and listen to everyone pray and just think about "Yea, something did happen, but it brought everyone closer together and really made us all think". I know for myself and my mom, we really got back into church which is really great. I would pray for everything to be better for us as a family. This is when I depended on God. It really made me think, through your whole life your family is there for you and so are your friends, but God is ALWAYS there no matter what. When you can't count on anyone, depend on him. So in the end, you don't win everything but you never lose your faith.

~Alex Dhal

**Prayer Focus: United Methodist Women**