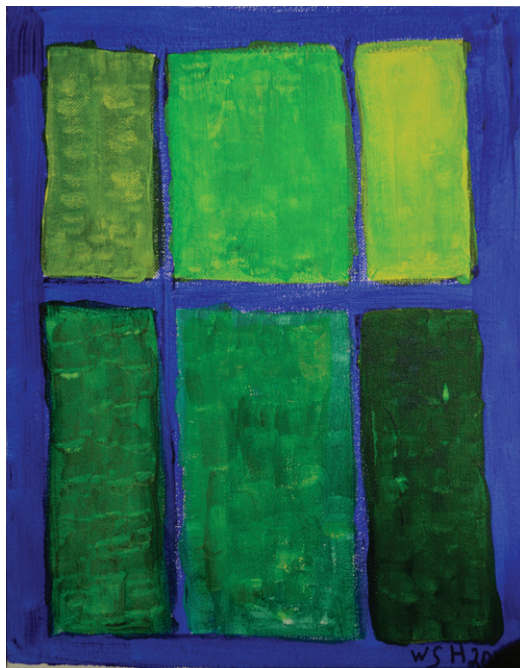


# A Lenten JOURNEY

20  
years



A COLLECTION OF DEVOTIONS • VOLUME XX



## *Lent*

Lent may begin with a murky sense that Christ is hidden from us.

As we look within and seek Christ, we find His light lifts us upward.

His glory of forgiveness coupled with hope gives us a true reflection of our eternal life through God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

— Winifred Hazelton, RESIDENT

# Introduction

This wonderful little book, *A Lenten Journey*, intends to guide the community of Westminster Canterbury Richmond, and others who use it, through an important season in the Christian year – LENT. The Lenten season begins with ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday and goes to the glorious celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter.

This booklet intends to be used in these Lenten days to nurture habits that give foundation to faithful Christian life. There are Scriptures for each day and honest and insightful comments from members of the Westminster Canterbury Richmond community. There are prayers and personal reflections that inspire our faith, our thoughts, our actions.

For centuries, Presbyterians did not focus much on liturgical seasons. John Calvin, the pastor, theologian, and reformer of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, considered the father of Presbyterians, maintained a suspicion of anything that smacked of Roman Catholic tradition and practice. But Calvin would certainly celebrate and appreciate faithful reflection, sincere devotion to prayer and the reading of Scripture, and increased focus on piety and purposeful living in the ways of discipleship. Of course, these kinds of efforts would not be “seasonal” but perpetual, sincere habits and practices.

We are all shaped by habits and practices. As we move through this Lenten Journey, perhaps we can each give attention to how new practices (Scripture reading, prayer, faithful reflection, etc.) can replace old practices. Perhaps we can each strive to discover new habits that connect us to God, to one another, to discipleship. Perhaps we can instill in our hearts and lives new rhythms that deepen our faithfulness. And as we move through Lent toward Easter, we will be primed for a glorious celebration of life and eternal life through Christ our Lord. We can even anticipate our arrival at the empty tomb on Easter. We seek to be full of energy and eagerness for the important work of loving and serving God in the world and promoting the light and hope of Christ our Lord. May it be so.

– The Rev. Dr. Alex Evans

PASTOR, SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## THIS PLACE OF SPRINGS

More than a century ago, prominent Richmonder Lewis Ginter owned in the northwest of our city great swaths of land, which we know today as Ginter Park, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, theological seminaries, and other neighboring places dear to us. The property with meandering stream and shady woods that would become Westminster Canterbury Richmond was at that time a farm – and eventually a hospital – embraced by acres of blackberry bushes, honeysuckle vines and other tangled wild green things.

In time, mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century church leaders in central Virginia were drawn here to create the lovely dwelling place for older people they had dreamed of. Here, in a broad field of Johnson grass, the Westminster Canterbury community was bravely and faithfully founded. By the hundreds, people came to live and work.

Years later, in 1997, a collection of devotions and life-stories of diverse Westminster Canterbury people, *A Lenten Journey*, was born. During all that time till now, residents, employees, family members, clergy, doctors, nurses, townspeople, volunteers and so many others share their personal thoughts and stories here of life, faith, hope, understanding, courage. Page after page, volume after volume, they tell of joy and frustration, of thanksgiving and longing, of strength and helplessness, of laughter and tears. These heart-felt devotions, gathered together each year in *A Lenten Journey*, give voice at home and abroad to much of Westminster Canterbury's own living story.

Today the Johnson grass is replaced by wide green lawns, towering trees, and mosaic gardens as this lovely dwelling place, our community of people, grows with grace, flourishing through the years. Our Place of Springs is renewed every day and every year by the men and women who live, work and visit here, by the children who learn and play here, and others who come and go. Each one has a story to tell, a spiritual Lenten journey.

– Lucy Boswell Negus, RESIDENT

## THE STRANGE THING

Isn't it strange that they thought He would die,  
And that would be the end of it.

To think they went to all that trouble,

Soldiers and  
Government officials and  
Executioners and  
Just people.  
And they really thought He would die.

Amazing how they'd never noticed how the world is, and life:  
Even a blade of grass, dry brittle blade,  
Springs forth anew glad green,  
Seeding, reseeding,  
Resurrected in the spirit of the grass world.

And does not man do likewise,  
Only a multi-magnified moreso?

Strange they did not know.

The timeless  
Power of life begetting life,  
Spreading life, bestowing life,  
Enhancing life,  
Sustaining life, renewing life  
Was nothing new. But Old as God.

How could they have ever really believed  
They could extinguish  
The inextinguishable?  
Destruct the indestructible?  
Decree death on the eternal?

The strange thing,  
When you think of it, after all,  
Is not that He lived on  
But that they had thought-  
Really thought!  
That He wouldn't.



— Lucy Boswell Negus, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT  
Submitted for the first edition of *A Lenten Journey*, 1997  
(on staff from 1977 – 2007)

## BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

I have always admired athletes who run marathons – not just because I have horribly flat feet and can't imagine the 30,000 pounding steps that *Runners' World* magazine claims would be required of me to cross the finish line. I admire them for their strength of mind, as well as body. Their vision.

Marathoners' first day of training begins before the gym—before that first step of training. It begins in the mind: They picture themselves crossing the finish line. They begin “with the end in mind,” as educator and author Stephen Covey would say.

Lent is a marathon, of sorts. It's 40 days of spiritual training. Some Christians devote themselves to traditional practices such as praying, fasting, and almsgiving. Others “give up something for Lent,” to remind themselves of Christ's suffering and of their dependence on God. Many devote themselves to greater attention to reading the Bible and deepening their devotional life.

A few years ago, one of my friends decided that, during Lent, she wouldn't say anything mean about anyone! She claimed that, for her, holding her tongue was the utmost challenge (Ask me if she made it!).

Be honest about what you think God wants your life to look like—that's the vision part. Lenten training itself is instructive, but a deeper relationship with Christ, who suffered death for us, is the point. Whatever it takes to get to the goal of deeper communion with a penitent and joyful heart is what Lent invites from us.

What's your vision? How would your life be different if you walked more closely with God? Would you be kinder and more compassionate? Compliment rather than criticize? Trust rather than fear?

What will the Easter victory look like for you? Hint: God has already made it possible for you to win.

– The Rev. Dr. Lynn McClintock, DIRECTOR PASTORAL CARE



## WHY DO WE CALL LENT “LENT”?

To my ears, “lent” is an odd word for Lent. Although I could do a riff on “living on borrowed time,” Lent really has nothing to do with the fact that our time on this earth is lent to us (not given), and that we need to steward it well. Nice idea, but no cigar. So, maybe, ‘lent’ is old Aramaic for “forty days” or something like that? Not really. The “forty” business started with forty hours of strict fasting by converts after their baptism, before taking first communion on Easter Day. And the word for that wasn’t “lent” at all that came centuries later.

In fact, the label found its way into our language from Old German, by way of Old English. Basically, it means spring. Since the earliest days of recorded history, humans have marked the turning of the seasons and the cycle from death to new life with feasts and celebrations. And, as they did with many such traditions, our Christian ancestors assimilated this one and re-fashioned it into a symbolic representation of their faith – in this case, of the death and resurrection of Christ. Over time, they melded that into another image – a reflection of Christ’s 40 days in the wilderness, preparing for his entry into Jerusalem. But the key image was still a world transformed in the spring with new life.

T. S. Elliot once said, “April is the cruellest month, stirring dull roots with spring rain.” But the dull roots of winter and sin cannot withstand the outpouring of grace that comes with spring rains. But that is not an easy transformation; so we can be glad that we have forty days to work our way through it. Are we ready for the new life that God has to offer? Well, with prayer and fasting, we can be.

— James H. Hall, RESIDENT

*Friday*

ISAIAH 58:1-9A  
PSALM 51:1-10  
MATTHEW 9:10-17

## SCRIPTURE - ISAIAH 58:1-9A

In today's reading, Isaiah obeys God by speaking harsh words to his countrymen. Hundreds of years later, we who live in this great land – and who believe in the separation of church and state – still have the freedom to speak out when justice demands.

I confess that I have not done it often. I have simply admired those who did – many at a great cost to themselves.

In this season of contemplation, I pray for my country. I thank God for those who serve us by their willingness to govern, and for the many who minister in difficult places. May God guide and empower them all. And may I have the wisdom and the stamina to support them and to “cry out” at appropriate times.

O Gracious God, help us to speak the truth in love...

– Betsy Rice, RESIDENT



## COMFORT

God is always with us. Several years ago after a friend died, I read the following poem which was included in an obituary in the newspaper. The poem gave me much comfort then, and it does still today.

“When I come to the end of the road and the sun has set for me,  
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room, why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little, but not too long,  
and not with your head bowed low.

Remember the love that once was shared,

Miss me...but let me go.

For this is the journey we all must take, and each must go alone.

It's all a part of the Master's plan, a step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick of heart, go to the friends we know.

And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.

Miss me...but let me go.”

Author Unknown

Those words and the words from John 14:18 – “I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you” – give me peace. I know that God is with me always.

– Marilyn Ferneyhough, RESIDENT

IN THE GARDEN

Working in our garden over the years, I have often found spiritual inspiration. While picking figs from the large tree in our former yard, I was reminded that the fig tree is mentioned more than fifty times in the Bible, and that God's people were picking figs over 2,000 years ago.

Last fall I planted pansies in a large pot at our front door. The heavy snow we had in January left six inches of snow and ice on top of the pot. Two days later I removed the snow and uncovered the pansies. The pansies looked wilted and weepy, but they were still alive! Several days later they were holding their heads up to the sun and looking as good as the day they were planted.

When I feel saddened and a little "down," I think of those pansies and the hymn we sing in church, "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me; Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me."

— Gail Miller, RESIDENT

# Monday First Week of Lent

LEVITICUS 19:1-2,11-18

PSALM 19:7-14

MATTHEW 25:31-46

## A SURE WELCOME

Early this past summer, my husband, Kurt, and I made our weekly trek to the soccer fields to cheer for our 4- and 6-year-old grandsons. One Saturday morning as we approached the child-swarmed fields, we suddenly heard an ear splitting yell: “GIGI!!!! PAPA!!!!” Across three fields ran little Caleb, charging into my waiting arms for a big hug and a spin of joy.

Dozens of people stopped to get out of his way and watch. “How long since he’s seen you?” one parent asked. “Six whole days,” I answered. “I thought maybe it had been a year!” that parent responded. Caleb’s enthusiastic greeting will always be one of my favorite memories.

The Bible tells us that God runs after us with joy and determination and open arms wide for each of us - loving us fully and completely. God’s love is so great the sin that separates us has been removed as far as the east is from the west. We can run uninhibited toward the God who loves us unconditionally and be utterly sure of full welcome.

But what about when we haven’t the energy to run toward God? What about in the rough patches of life? Corrie ten Boom, a Holocaust survivor who faced deep persecution, wrote that in the concentration camp she learned that there is *no pit so deep that God’s love is not deeper still*. In the darkest times of my life, I have relied on this promise and let go, feeling the fall and ultimately the safe catch of God’s love.

For all times and circumstances, God can be counted on - good days and dark, when we run into an embrace or are caught as we fall. Thanks be to God for the gift of all-sufficient grace.

– Gayle Hunter Haglund, DIRECTOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

## *Tuesday First Week of Lent*

ISAIAH 55:6-11  
PSALM 34:15-22  
MATTHEW 6:7-15

### ONENESS

John 15:12: “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

Ten years ago my husband and I came to Westminster Canterbury Richmond. At that time we became members of the Westminster Canterbury family and learned the beauty of what I like to call “oneness.”

Our housekeeper and dear friend cared for us. When my husband was a patient in Mary Morton Parsons Health Center, her mother, a nurse, was with him and a source of comfort for our entire family. When I was in healthcare, her mother was there both times.

When our housekeeper had surgery on both knees, all who knew her admired her courage and remarkable recovery. During that time our granddaughter was her physical therapist.

The Westminster Canterbury community has affirmed my son who visits Parsons Health Center with Brandy and Bob, his therapy dogs. He is as much at home here as we who live here.

I would like to climb to the top of the highest steeple and call to our wounded world, “Are you listening? It’s as simple as oneness while celebrating diversity! Please listen!”

We are blessed. Thanks be to God.

— Trigg Archibald, RESIDENT

THE BURDEN HAS LIFTED

There was a time when I tried to get out of bed but I could not, so I began to use a cane. I thought, “I can’t help my parents if I can’t walk.”

My parents need me. Both are diabetics. They were both hospitalized so I waited two more years. I walked in stores where people would stare. Kids would ask their parents why I walked like that, but I kept my head up high.

One morning I woke up and said, “This is it!” I had the surgery needed for both knees. After my stay in the hospital, I needed therapy at home. Even though my mother is a nurse, she suggested home healthcare. I agreed.

I want to tell you how God moves. My mother took care of the husband of one of my residents and also of her during a difficult time. When I came into the room there was an angel! It was my physical therapist who was my resident’s granddaughter that God had sent to me!

So there is a God and He is good, very good!

— Selana Stevens, HOUSEKEEPING

## TRUST YOUR FAITH

Racing to the hospital, I prayed for a safe delivery, I prayed that you and we would be okay, I prayed they wouldn't cut me but that I could have you naturally, I prayed you were healthy and handsome, I prayed you would be molded just as Jesus was. When we finally got there, I continued to pray, and then your heart stopped and I could no longer hear you but I prayed, panicking, "Lord remove the cord from his neck, please Lord I haven't even got the chance to meet him, your gift to me Lord, please," then I started hyperventilating and here we are, you and me, struggling to make it, but I prayed and I knew we would be okay. After a few tosses and turns we finally got your heartbeat back. Thank you, Lord! They rushed us back to surgery to safely start a C-section and I think please hurry, save him, forget me, save him. They put me under since I wouldn't and couldn't stop shaking and crying, crying for you, praying for you. I remember your fuzzy little black hair and falling back asleep praying YOU were safe. Five hours later, finally waking up from the surgery, I got to finally hold you and kiss your little precious face, you looked just like your dad. May 31<sup>st</sup> you came into this world and, all through Lent that year, I fasted and prayed. Prayed for your safety, your health, prayed that you would be a man of God and that God would safely deliver you to me. As a Catholic, and a believer of God, I knew God and our Lord Jesus were in the room that day, and they would keep you and me covered. Here we are 3 years later, and I couldn't be more thankful for you, Mason C. Taylor.

— Besarta Gjeloshi, ASSISTED LIVING

# *Friday First Week of Lent*

EZEKIEL 18:21-28

PSALM 130

MATTHEW 5:20-26

## RICHLY BLESSED

Not long ago I had my 17<sup>th</sup> great grandchild. I have 13 grandchildren and 5 children (one deceased). I thank God every night in my nightly prayer for their safety and health.

— Mary Easterly, RESIDENT



*Saturday First Week of Lent* DEUTERONOMY 26:16-19  
PSALM 119:1-8  
MATTHEW 5:43-48

BLESSED

I began working at Westminster Canterbury Richmond in July 1992. For twenty four years this has been a good place to be for me. I have friends here who make work fun, but more importantly they give me support. My co-workers in the laundry and housekeeping accept me as I am and make me feel good about myself. These very special people make me laugh, and they do not judge me. My friends here are good listeners. We make a great team. I am blessed to be here.

— Regina Quade, LAUNDRY

## Second Sunday in Lent

GENESIS 12:1-4A

PSALM 121

JOHN 3:1-17

### PREPARATIONS

We are preparing for the big one in the Christian year. We fast a bit, give up some stuff, attend some special services, and spiritually, if not physically, wash the feet of others. We celebrate VICTORY over death, disappointing disciples, blundering political bureaucracy, corrupt religious establishment, and the misleading headlines of the *Jerusalem Times*.

We try to hear again, see again, and feel again, the mission and message of the Anointed One. How shall we prepare ourselves for this? Here are a few suggestions to add to those above:

1. Let us clear our heads of complex religious ideas and make room for the clarifying visitations of the promised Comforter who followed the Word made flesh.
2. Let us light witness candles to displace some of that darkness that hides God's ever-ready illumination.
3. Let us allow the central work of the Anointed One to displace obstructionist guilt with loving courage and hope.
4. Let us seek ways to revisit those missed opportunities to demonstrate the kind of love the Anointed One made manifest.
5. Let us make serious connections with the kind of communities that accept, refresh, guide, and energize the Kingdom through lives made possible by the King of Kings.

The tomb is empty. He lives in and among us! Our preparation is not for something new, but for newness in the "somethings" of our lives.

— Irving R. Stubbs, RESIDENT

"The anointed one," is the literal meaning of the Greek word Χριστός (Christós, or Christ in English form). This word was originally used to translate the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (Mašiah), which means "Messiah."

THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN ME

Some of my reflections are events when I experienced the blessed spirit within me. This review engages Clinton, my god son, Renee, Clinton's sister, my niece and Gloria, their mother, my sister.

About twelve years ago, Gloria was in the hospital with severe diabetes, with one leg that was amputated. Her two children visited me to request that I speak with Gloria who was depressed and wanted to die. Clinton and Renee knew that I would convince her to continue to live, to give her hope and courage to let go of these bad feelings for the love of her children and of God.

The next day, I visited Gloria and began the task I was destined to accomplish. It was during my discussion with her that I became aware of the Holy Spirit working through me. I spent three hours at Gloria's bedside. My thoughts and efforts convinced her to live. Near the end of my visit, the children entered the room. Gloria revealed her revelation of living. Clinton and Renee were amazed and in tears. When I left the hospital, I was drenched with perspiration, fatigued and emotionally drained.

Clinton called me soon after I arrived home. He asked me, "What did you say to my mother? How were you able to convince her to live?" I replied, "I do not fully recall. My lips and mouth were moving, but it was not me actually talking. It was the Holy Spirit speaking through me."

During the time of Lent, be fully aware of the Holy Spirit. It is God who, in many ways, directs the spirit. Believe in the love of God.

— Sal Anselmo, VOLUNTEER

## *Tuesday Second Week of Lent*

ISAIAH 1:2-4,16-20  
PSALM 50:7-15,22-24  
MATTHEW 23:1-12

### HEALTH AND LOVE

In the old days we were “hard shell” Baptists. I grew up going to Pine Street Baptist Church. Families sat in the same pew, in the same spots, week after week. I remember the minister suggesting where families should sit. We had to memorize scripture and recite it. Over time, our church became less strict.

The Lord’s Prayer has been my special prayer since I was a little girl. I have said it daily for as long as I can remember. I taught my three sons the Lord’s Prayer and said it with them when they were young boys. As my sons got older, they added their own concerns to the prayers.

Even today, at age 99, the words of the Lord’s Prayer mean the most to me.

— Kitty Bryant, RESIDENT (1917-2016)

## A GRATEFUL JAR

Several years ago our daughters gave their father and I “A Grateful Jar.” In the jar we found fifty-six small pieces of paper. On these bits of paper they had written something we had taught or given them. Ray and I were supposed to daily take one slip of paper from the jar and read what that daughter had written. Over a period of time we have read and reread everything on these pieces of paper.

This special gift is a reminder that we, too, need to express our gratitude daily for our many blessings. Lent is a season of penitence and contemplation. Not only do we need to ask God to forgive our sins, but thank Him for the gift of His beloved Son who died for us.

Everyone needs A Grateful Jar filled with daily blessings.

— Charlotte Lovelace, RESIDENT

## LENTEN MEDITATION ON II TIMOTHY 1:8B

“Take your part” is St. Paul’s word to his young helper, Timothy, in the early Christian church. There’s more. Paul’s next two words are like a knife in the side – “in suffering.” “Take your part in suffering.” Ugh! What suffering? Whose suffering? How? How much is my part? It is as though the apostle were saying, “There is so much pain in the world that if we don’t ‘take our share,’ others will have an overwhelming amount.” Seeing to it that others do not have such a killing load is at the heart of the gospel. Indeed, Paul’s next phrase says, “for the good news.” “Take your share of suffering for the good news.”

Do you remember Christ’s criteria for our future, expressed in such dire terms as “eternal life” and “eternal punishment,” in his parable of the last judgment? The church has often made it seem as if it had to do with believing and asserting the correct doctrinal propositions or undergoing the required rituals. But the criteria that Christ gave in his Matthew 25 story asserted that it was how well we took upon us the miseries of others – the hungry, thirsty, stranger, the naked, sick, prisoner. Fasten your eyes on that list. Think of the suffering involved with each. Focus upon the many ways you and I can address those in each category.

How much of the world’s suffering should you take upon yourself? A family fleeing from its war-torn neighborhood who had been living for months on the barest essentials - the members taking a turn drinking out of a single glass of milk. Finally making their way out, they were being aided by the Red Cross. The nurse handed a fresh glass of milk to one of the little boys, who, with piteous eyes, looked at the nurse, and asked, “How deep can I drink?” The nurse with great compassion replied, “Son, drink as deeply as you can.” How much is your part? “Drink as deeply as you can.”

— Bill Blake, RESIDENT

MY FRIEND

I want to tell you a story about my friend. He is a Christian and lives his life by the word of God.

This friend of mine had what some would call a very tough year. In the midst of getting sick he had several family members who also went through some storms at the same time. Instead of worrying about himself, he put himself in a place where he could help his family.

It is very hard not to be selfish these days. We have to look past a lot of bad in order to receive any blessings God has to offer.

When things got bad, my friend remembered John 14:1. Jesus said, "do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God as you believe in me." You see, this helped him to see past all that was going wrong with him and instead be able to focus on others. He believed God would not leave him or forsake him during a storm.

You see, sometimes our prayers are answered when we are ready to receive them and not when we want them. My friend always talked about waiting on the Lord.

I still see my friend, and when I ask him how things are, he always says, "OUTSTANDING."

I know he has gone through a lot, but you can always count on him for that special greeting.

You see, we all need prayer in our life in one way or another. It gives us the strength to weather the storm . . .

So I say this for you . . . God Bless you . . .and keep you from the storm . . .

Amen.

— George Gordon, CANTERBURY ROOM



## Saturday Second Week of Lent

MICAH 7:14-15,18-20

PSALM 103:1-12

LUKE 15:11-32

### BILLIE, HERB AND RAY – ISAIAH 26:3

While in hospital, hernia operation, I felt sorry for myself with spirits lower than a snake's belly until one morning when Tommy Davis brought me a sack of Christian paperback novels from his mother, Billie, a fine lady.

I still have my favorite by Grace Livingston Hill, *Homing*, written in 1938. Here is wisdom, ennobling faith, life on a high plain. I shall always remember the indelible act of kindness that Billie made on my life.

Herb was best man at Mother's and Daddy's wedding. He taught me the nursery rhyme: "For every problem under the sun, there is a remedy or none. If there be one, find it. If there be none, never mind it."

Herb brimmed over with contagious good humor, always a twinkle in his eyes. He gave me a glimpse of Jesus. I think of him every day when I look at the clock he made.

Though crippled, Ray taught me how to drive. He possessed patience that rivaled that of Job. He never complained. He never reprimanded me, nor gave up. He took me to practice all over the West End and finally to that long curvy road on the hill down to the University of Richmond.

At last I went to Ninth and Main for the DMV test. I knocked down both parking poles, flunked, and had to have the learner's permit twice.

Billie, Herb, and Ray helped me live in full awareness of God's blessing – ineffable joy of His presence.

– Grace Lindner, RESIDENT

# Third Sunday in Lent

EXODUS 17:1-7

PSALM 95

JOHN 4:5-42

## PSALM 100:4-5 – THE KEY TO GOD’S PRESENCE

Days were long for me in the 1980s when it was expedient for me to bring my mother from Virginia to North Carolina to care for her since her health was failing. I lived in North Carolina and worked daily, Monday through Friday, for the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

It was not easy looking after my mother, a widow in her 80’s, and my retired husband, at the same time. Thus, it became necessary to hire someone to look after them while I was at work. I left home for work at 7 a.m. and got home at 5:30 p.m. The sitter had to retire because of her health problems, and I decided to take early retirement at 64. All my adult life I resorted to writing poetry about my life experiences and about nature, and my belief in God, one of which I will share:

### My Retreat

When evening shadows fall across my window sill  
And all my daily chores are then complete  
‘Tis then I pause and memories my heart will fill;  
‘Tis then I steal away my Lord to meet.

Though I don’t always have a private meeting place  
Nor can I always kneel to him to pray,  
I simply lift my heart in joyful thankfulness  
For help and guidance through another day.

And though life’s toil and petty cares have vexed my soul,  
I shut out all the thoughts that would compete  
And thus it seems his loving eyes I then behold  
To comfort me and make my day complete.

For when our hearts are yielded to his strong embrace  
The cares of life will melt and fade away,  
For when you meet the Master face to face,  
You’ve strength to bear your burdens, come what may.

– Ruth Fitch, RESIDENT

## CHURCH AND FAITH

Growing up in many church rectories surrounded by ordained clergy in my nuclear and extended family (once described as “pious”), there has never been a question of where I would be on a Sunday morning – until now. And amazingly I have no guilt!

I lived in a rural area for a few years before coming to Westminster Canterbury Richmond, and I am still an official (and pledging!) member of a small church there. When I returned to Richmond to live at Westminster Canterbury, I was certain that I would find a congregation where I would feel at home worshiping God. During my many years in Alexandria, I was very active in my large church and served in just about every lay position it offered. I still miss that parish, but felt that surely I would find the same level of comfort at a church here in Richmond.

It was not to be, and this is in no way to cast aspersions on the many wonderful Richmond churches I visited. I realized I just didn’t want to start all over and build a new faith community (as they are now called). But I still needed something beyond Forward Day by Day and occasional online reflections to feed me. Voila! Westminster Canterbury has weekly services led by a variety of clergy, and on a Thursday morning yet! I have also found a lovely contemplative service on Sunday evenings that is very meaningful for me. The “community” part of a faith community is more than covered by my community here at Westminster Canterbury.

So I have discovered that a leisurely morning reading of the Sunday papers (even the funnies that my grandfather forbade!) is really all right – at least it works for me. I now find my faith is not only intact but nourished in many ways. I hope God and my ancestors are looking on with approval.

– Penelope de Bordenave Saffer, RESIDENT

THE LORD KNOWS BEST

I married my high school sweetheart, and I thought that we would be together always. However, when things went wrong and we separated, I was unhappy because I believed that if I prayed everything would work out. The Lord did not answer those prayers, and I was angry. Over the years I have realized that the Lord gives us what we need, not what we think we want. Our children have grown up to be wonderful people, and my ex-husband and I have become really good friends. Our lives have moved on in positive ways.

— Daisey Smallwood, DINING

# Wednesday Third Week of Lent

DEUTERONOMY 4:1-2,5-9

PSALM 78:1-6

MATTHEW 5:17-19

## A MIRACLE OR NOT?

One morning, I awoke with vertigo, tried to get out of bed, but my world was spinning around and around. I grabbed for my walker and in an instant found myself flat on the ground.

Miraculously, I fell on my stomach, and my head was wedged between the night stand and corner of the wall. Somehow I was able to push the lavalier around my neck to alert Security and the Clinic that I needed immediate help. The loud speaker came on asking if I was all right. I said, “No, I am on the floor and can’t get up!”

They quickly responded, unlocking my apartment door, and rushed in with a nurse asking where I was. I told them and asked that they please be sure the door was shut, so my cat couldn’t get out. Once I was found, they weren’t sure how to get me up and out of this tight spot. Security couldn’t believe that my face had not hit the corner wall, floor molding, or night stand – when there was only 17 inches of free space.

Pulling both of my legs back, they were able to free me and see my unscared face. “It was just a miracle,” they said. “How did you manage it?” An angel came and guided me in just the right place. Do you believe in guardian angels? I sure do!

— Jane Neer, RESIDENT

SERVICE IS JOY

Lent is a period for personal reflection: a time to ponder our confirmation of that which we profess. Jesus preached his story of the Good Samaritan and then followed it with three corroborative parables (Matthew 25). In each account, regard for the Son of Man was revealed in the protagonists' response to their brethren. Those judged guilty were not condemned for evil deeds. They were condemned for doing nothing! That is because guilt includes the good that is not done.

The Master Teacher declared: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." Indeed it is through the mundane things anyone can do regardless of one's station in life. In the parables, those who helped did not think they were serving Christ and thereby accumulating eternal merit. And one suspects that the heartless ones would protest: "If we'd known it was the Christ, we would have helped gladly!"

A man asked in prayer: "How can You, a loving God, see the crippled, the suffering and the marginalized, and do nothing about them?" God replied: "I did do something about them; I made you!"

Great services reveal our capabilities; the small services reveal our consecration and devotion. We know the surest way to a parent's heart is to help his child; and the surest way to delight the heart of God is to help His children. The Apostle tells us to "Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."

Divine Providence has granted us to know many such blessed neighbors, especially our unfailingly faithful staff at Westminster Canterbury Richmond.

The Hindu poet tells us:

I slept and dreamt that life was joy.  
I awoke and saw that life was service.  
I acted and behold, service was joy.  
- Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

— Stan Higgins, RESIDENT

## *Friday Third Week of Lent*

HOSEA 14:1-9  
PSALM 81:8-14  
MARK 12:28-34

### MY JOURNEY

My Lenten Journey has often begun with thoughts of giving up some small luxury that I could live without. The last few years I use it as a more intensive time to reflect on my faith, to forgive those who need forgiveness and to pray for those who need prayers. I pray for the community I live in and for the less fortunate within it, and for the earth, our island home. Thoughts of Christ's plight and what was to come remind me that life is such a precious thing and that God gave His only Son for our salvation. I use this time of Lent to meditate and concentrate on my awareness of the Holy Spirit within me and share the love of God and Christ with others.

All my life I have always seen, felt and was touched by God through the wonders of nature. My favorite time to celebrate the life and resurrection of Christ is during St. John's Episcopal Church's Easter Sunday Sunrise Service located on a lovely hilltop gazebo overlooking several ponds and the James River near where the counties of Goochland, Cumberland and Fluvanna meet. Prior to the service, I sit and meditate while listening to the sounds of the morning birds and feel the chill in the air. I can hear sparrows, cardinals, chickadees, crows, to name a few, begin to sing as I anticipate the rising of the sun over the tree lined ridge to the east of the hilltop. A small flock of Canada geese fly by overhead, honking the Good News: "He is risen!! Alleluia!!" The Spirit and love of Christ I see in our earthly world swells in my heart, and I feel the Holy Trinity everywhere!

— Susan Fletcher, HUMAN RESOURCES



# *Saturday Third Week of Lent*

ISAIAH 7:10-14

PSALM 40:1-11

LUKE 1:26-38

## RAINBOW HYMN

Studying Genesis and finding no rainbow hymn, I wrote this one to the tune of "I heard the Bells on Christmas Day."

"Behold the rainbow! Let it be  
a covenant twixt you and me!"  
Thus said the Lord, our God above,  
Who always acts in truth and love.

The colors shone across the sky  
To say that men no more would die  
from one great flood o'er all the land,  
Which could occur at God's command.

But this was not enough for Him  
To do for those whose lives were grim.  
That covenant was just the start  
of loving gifts straight from His heart.

So Jesus came on earth to dwell  
with the New Covenant as well;  
He taught of Faith and Love for all  
and how to heed the Father's call.

Behold the rainbow now in place  
beyond the cross with its embrace!  
So much for us has God to give  
He wants us evermore to live!

— Caroline Neal, RESIDENT

## *Fourth Sunday in Lent*

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

PSALM 23

JOHN 9:1-41

### LENTEN SEASON

The observance of the 40 days of Lent is one of the most holy seasons of the church year. It requires self-discipline and prayer to prepare for Good Friday, Palm Sunday and Easter day. “Hallelujah.” My faith is praising God by singing in the choir for 71 years, and the Lenten hymns are some of my favorites.

On December 11, 1934, my mother passed away leaving me at 5 months old, along with my two brothers and father. I was raised by a nanny (a retired school teacher). She lived with us for seven years, and she was like a mother to us. She saw that we were read Bible stories and saw that we went to Sunday school.

My father remarried when I was two years old, and she became a wonderful second mother who continued to see we were in church along with my brothers. My father was a wonderful dad, and we were so blessed to have a loving home. We were later blessed with a brother and sister.

On February 24, 1956, my father passed away during Lent, and it was a shock to all of us when he died suddenly of a massive heart attack. Our faith in God helped us through by knowing he was in heaven with God.

Here is a special prayer that I say everyday:

Life is short, and we have not much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us, so be swift to love and make haste to be kind; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell with you forever.

Amen

— The Rev. Charles Joy

— Mary Anne Harris, RESIDENT

# Monday Fourth Week of Lent

ISAIAH 65:17-25  
PSALM 30:1-6,11-13  
JOHN 4:43-54

## BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

“Be Still And Know That I Am God.” As I become older, these words become more meaningful to me!

Time slips by quickly and all of the modern technology, i.e. phones, computers, i-pads, etc., along with entertainment, engagements and obligations usurps time. In this hustle and bustle of living, I have to STOP, BE STILL and reconnect personally with GOD.

BE STILL AND KNOW GOD	loves you.
BE STILL AND KNOW GOD	is always there.
BE STILL AND KNOW GOD	provides peace.
BE STILL AND KNOW GOD	will guide you.
BE STILL AND KNOW	“what is impossible for mortals is possible in God!” (Luke 18:27)

— Jo Ann O’Hara, RESIDENT

LISTEN

We travel down many roads throughout life. Each road takes us to different places. Sometimes we end up in unexpected places. Sometimes we end up right where we are supposed to be. Is this all part of a plan?

I did not grow up in a spiritual family. I felt a presence, but never really knew how to deal with it. I went off to college and shared an apartment with an individual who, two weeks into school, turned his life over to Christ. What I did not anticipate was the exposure to someone who was on fire for our Lord, Jesus Christ. I had not experienced this before. I began to learn more about the Bible. Did I end up right where I was supposed to be?

I also began dating my wife-to-be several weeks before going off to college. She, too, was a spiritual person who enjoyed church. Her influence and patience definitely put me on the right road. Today, we enjoy attending Fairmount Christian Church in Mechanicsville. I work in a spiritual atmosphere and enjoy my opportunities to make a difference. It was always HIS plan. I simply needed to listen.

“Show me the path where I should walk, O Lord; point out the right road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you.”

(Psalm 25:4-5)

— Derek Oliver, DIRECTOR FACILITY SERVICES

## HUNGRY FOR THE LIVING GOD

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God. (Psalm 42:1-2)

Are you in a drought? There are times in our lives when we reach a plateau. Nothing seems to satisfy us. We go about our daily lives enjoying well-paying careers, exclusive homes with two-car garages and well-manicured lawns. On Sunday morning we sit around the kitchen table reading the paper and drinking our coffee without even attempting to go to church. There is no room for God in our busy lives. But, even with our success, we are bound within. We are gripped by fear of losing all we've worked so hard to accomplish.

Just as our bodies need food and water, our souls need true fellowship with the Lord. How do we obtain true fellowship with God? By praying and reading His word on a daily basis. As we study the word, we get to know Him intimately, and we are strengthened. We will begin to realize that He is MORE THAN ENOUGH! "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside you. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25-26)

Man cannot fill the void in our lives. They are just as messed up as we are! Only a loving living God can do that for us. "He is sweeter than honey and the honey comb." (Psalm 119:103b)

Do you have a yearning for God? Won't you allow Him to fill that void in your life? Just like the deer that pants by the streams of water... come and drink the water of the living God. Your soul will be satisfied!

— Bessie Taliaferro, RESIDENT

## GOD'S GIFT

I was 29 and Jackie was 27 when we were volunteers at the Richmond Home for Boys. Like most people, we were interested in the little kids, when we realized the older boys also needed friends. As we started working with the teenagers, many of them visited in our home, and we became attached to a youngster named Ed. The director of the home at that time was planning to have him moved out and sent back to a foster home.

We knew he would never make it back in another foster home as his prior experience in them had not been good, so we went to his caseworker and asked if he could live with us. We didn't think they would agree, because he was 15, and we were young to have a teenager. Much to our surprise, they did let him come, and he later became our son.

We have often felt this was GOD's answer to our prayers because today he has given us 5 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren. He has been very successful in life and, to him, we are his Mom and Dad.

The Lord filled our life with happiness when he gave Ed to us to make up for a child we had just lost when we became volunteers.

— Bill Hazelgrove, RESIDENT

# Friday Fourth Week of Lent

JEREMIAH 23:1-8  
PSALM 34:15-22  
JOHN 7:1-2,10,25-30

## MY HEAVEN

If, when I die, I go to Heaven  
May there be a sandy beach,  
With the surf washing upon it  
And a dune within my reach.

May my angel wings be gull wings,  
My halo be the sun  
And my heavenly music be the breeze  
That through the sea grasses hum.

I ask no gold-paved highways  
When I leave this life behind;  
Only golden beach extending on  
Beyond the sands of time.

May “my heaven” let me listen  
Forever to the roar  
Of the breakers as they crash  
Upon the battered, sandy shore.

When the Winds of God blow o’er me  
This will be my fervent prayer:  
May the breeze that lifts me Heavenward  
Be filled with Earth’s salt air!

— Nancy Omohundro, RESIDENT



## JUST A CNA

I've heard the phrase, "Just a CNA," so many times in my 30 years as a Certified Nursing Assistant. Just because I choose not to have the title of LPN or RN behind my name does not mean my role in the healthcare field is any less significant than any other. I don't need a title to care for the residents.

Each of us has a gift, or gifts, bestowed on us by God to do what He called us to do. I have the gifts for being a CNA, but I have also been trained in particular skills unique to my profession.

As a CNA, I am able to sit and talk, laugh, love, and even cry with the ones I serve. I know how to listen. I love to hear their stories about their lives and loved ones, even when I've heard them many times before. Seeing the smile on their faces when I am able to repeat them back brings me so much joy.

Being a CNA means that I also comfort the family. Families are assured that I am giving their mothers and fathers the best of me so each day they don't have to worry. Getting to know the extended family helps me to better care for the residents.

Certified Nursing Assistants are the eyes and ears of the nurses and doctors. I am the first to know when something is not right. I understand the needs of the ones that may not be able to express themselves verbally. A simple eye gesture or hand movement can mean so much more. Physicians and nurses trust me when I say something is not quite right today. My residents trust me enough to let me know when they don't want to bother the family by saying, "I just don't want to worry anyone." This helps prevent the small things from turning into bigger medical issues.

So, please don't refer to me as "Just a CNA." I am so much more. I am a CNA using my gifts in following God's commandments as in Exodus 20:12, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord God giveth thee."

— Tonya Lawrence, MARY MORTON PARSONS HEALTH CENTER

BLESSINGS

When I was asked to write a devotional for the Lenten Journey, my reply was: I can't, but then I felt drawn to the Lord and knew He expected me to try.

Life is full of blessings as well as struggles. When I am down and out, my thoughts are on things that have happened in my life. My husband died at the age of 56, I had brain surgery at the age of 66, and my precious granddaughter had pancreatic surgery at the age of 30. Then I thought about blessings. My husband was not left an invalid, my brain tumor was not malignant, and I can walk and talk. My precious granddaughter, although on a lot of medicine, is doing well. I live in a wonderful home, Westminster Canterbury Richmond, where we have a great pastoral care staff. Worshipping at First Baptist Church is meaningful and inspiring. I stand in awe of God's blessings as I look at a magnificent rose, a glorious sunset, the birds and trees. As I go through each day, may I look for what God has prepared for me, being grateful and thankful for His blessings. The song "Count Your Many Blessings, Name Them One by One" goes over and over in my mind.

Lord, help me to see you in all circumstances.

— Anne Young, RESIDENT

## BLESSINGS

My fifty-six year old husband had a massive heart attack and was in CCU. I prayed begging for his life and for the doctors, that the Lord would direct them to get my husband well again. His life was hanging in the balance; I was not sleeping and was tied in knots.

After several days of restlessness and seeing no change, my prayer was, “Lord, I want him to be whole again. I love him and need him, but if this is not Your will, give me the strength to accept whatever.” A calmness came over me and I felt at peace. I was able to share my feelings and my closeness to the Lord with my husband.

Two days later, a cousin took me out to dinner. When I returned, the doctor, chaplain, and friends met me in the hall. I knew there was no more suffering. We were ushered into a small room and I said, “Let’s have prayer,” and I did the praying. I’m not one to pray in public, but the Lord put the words in my mouth.

Although this was the most difficult period in my life, it was a happy time because a feeling of serenity came over me unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was indescribable, a wonderful feeling of being in tune with Him. I wanted to hold on to the closeness forever. Needless to say, I could not hold on to the serenity but I pray that the Lord will walk hand in hand with me daily.



— Anne Young, RESIDENT

Submitted for the first edition of *A Lenten Journey*, 1997

PSALM 34 AND LUKE 22:14-20

I occasionally attend an early morning service at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Following the reading of the Morning Prayer service, we receive communion from the Reserved Sacrament. This is a small intimate service usually led by lay people.

One morning I was very moved as I watched people receive communion. I thought about the wisdom Jesus used in offering us this special way to remember him, to connect with him and each other.

Feeding someone is a very intimate act. We are usually only fed when we are infants, not able to feed ourselves yet, or when we are very ill or handicapped in some way....unable to maneuver forks, knives and spoons by ourselves.

Having someone else feed us means that we are dependent. In the act of Holy Communion, we are dependent on another to give us the bread of life, the cup of heaven. What an intimate act this is....a person reaches out his or her hands to receive the life-giving body of Christ; the cup is offered for a taste of the divine blood of life.

The face is lifted in expectation, the hands are extended at the level of the heart, the body waits for holy food and drink.

In receiving Holy Communion we are reminded of our dependence on Jesus - for our physical life, for our food, for our spiritual nourishment - for every aspect of our existence.

We are also reminded of our interdependence with others. We need each other as friends, helpers and companions along the way in all aspects of our lives.

Jesus invites us to his table to eat and drink with him, to be fed by another human being and his Holy Spirit in this most holy and sacred act. Allow yourself to be fed by Jesus and by others in all ways. Remember your humble dependence on him for all of your needs. Enjoy him with all of your senses - in body, mind and spirit. As the psalmist says: O taste and see that the Lord is good. Amen.

HE SPOKE QUIETLY, AND THEY LISTENED

80 students, from New Community School nearby, visit our 900-resident Westminster Canterbury Richmond continuing care place several times yearly. Choosing from several activities, these your men and women, divide into groups. Twenty joined us on the Roof Terrace, with a panoramic view of the Richmond skyline. Natural disasters, disease, terrorism, are vastly destroying lives, homes, land. Unknown everyday heroes, first responders, rush in, rescue people with food, shelter, medicine.

Bob Buntin, 90+ year old resident, spoke to us as Veterans' Day nears. He stood proudly, unassisted, at lectern, and quietly spoke for 25 or so minutes, answering questions afterwards. Silence was deafening, throughout his speech. He enlisted in United States Army, deployed overseas, sent money for mother regularly. While in Germany, he was captured along with many others by the enemy, and was interred by Nazis, prisoner of war camp. They ate meager rations. He went from 160 pounds to half that size. Little communications with fellow POW's. He worked part-time on a railroad that had been bombed. His voice quieted as he recalled horrors of imprisonment, for four months. When finally freed, they were sent to a hospital to recuperate from trauma, wounds. They were later released and sent back on a hospital ship to America.

Very few of these strong men, women, are still with us today. It is imperative we not only honor their sacrifices, but work hard to reinvent the glorious honor these better angels laid down their lives for future humans on planet Earth. World War II ended 71 years ago. We must stop complaining about every little thing. Focus on giving food, jobs, clothing, shelter, to those who need it. Study hard. Count our blessings. Give, not take. God bless us all!

— Barbara Jensen Crowder, RESIDENT

## ALL SAINTS' DAY

I write this devotion on November 1, exactly four months before Ash Wednesday. November 1, as you might recall, is All Saints' Day. All Saints' Day calls us to remember the early days of the Church, to remember the people whose lives are an inspiration for us, to honor the folk who have died during the year and to recognize the saints among us. I have loved All Saints' Day for as long as I can remember. My imagination carries me away thinking about the early Church - the women and men who gathered in homes to share God's word. I can feel the excitement that they must have shared as they sat close together listening to the parables that Jesus told. I can hear them saying the words that Jesus gave us to pray. I can smell the earthen walls that they drew pictures on.

Luke 6:20-31 gives us line after line of Jesus's words spoken by him to his disciples - Jesus's words for them to live by and for us today to live by. Jesus demands love. I read this scripture on All Saints' Day as I prepare for Lent. I believe God intends this for me. God calls me to remember all of creation: the earth I walk on, nature around me, the people given to me to be in relation with. God calls me to hear Jesus' words, to absorb those words as if Jesus were standing next to me and to live those words. Hard words that require me to love my enemy and to "Do to others as you would have them do to you." I am grateful for all of the saints that have shown me (and continue to show me) the way to live with God.

— Elizabeth Franklin, PASTORAL CARE CHAPLAIN

## STORIES AND LESSONS

My dad sometimes entertained me and other children, too, by telling us Uncle Remus stories of Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Bear, Br'er Fox, of Miss Meadows and the gals. We loved these stories. And really we learned a lot about how we should treat each other from these stories. We've all known people like each of the characters: the trickster, the slow to process and slow to react, the clever and joy-filled and the people who help us to know that everything really will turn out alright.

We loved these and other stories that daddy told us. He made us feel like we were right in there and were spectators, or maybe even participants, in the stories. He told other stories too – Bible stories from which we also learned. I'm told that once when I had been listening to him, I asked "Daddy, is that the truth, or are you just preaching?" You see, my daddy was also a preacher and, obviously, I had much to learn – and I did learn much from his teaching.

Stories and lessons from our youth help us prepare for the people and situations that we encounter throughout life. We hear, "You can overdo anything," but we don't know it until we experience it. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "What you do speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say." Those wise words are rephrased again and again in our Bible. We learn from what people do. Actions speak louder than words. Love thy neighbor.

We would all do well to remember the wisdom taught through the stories – to think before we act or speak and to lead by example and, above all, to love.

– Hallie Vaughan, RESIDENT

## ONE BODY IN CHRIST

At age 5, I walked into our church fellowship hall, holding hands with my Sunday School friend from the town's only black family who lived "on the outskirts" of our community. As we joyfully skipped into a group of adults, I was scolded and told to stop holding this little boy's hand because he was colored. I innocently laid his hand in mine, both palms facing up, and replied, "No he isn't. The inside part is the same color as mine." We smiled, walked away hand-in-hand, yet I was confused. This happened in the same church where we had just sung "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world." He told me he was sorry that I got in trouble because of him.

That was 1965. Today is 2016, and I remain confused. I am grateful for the many blessings I have been given, including the myriad of people who are my family and friends - a rich tapestry of colors and textures. They enrich my life, share my highs and pick me up when I fall. Together we mourn what is occurring in our society with continued racial tensions, violence and hatred. On the inside we are the same, yet our day-to-day life interactions are different because we are not the same color outside. As we talk and pray, we remind each other that the Bible tells us to love your neighbor as yourself. We know that Jesus loves us so much that he suffered and died for each of us. We are one body in Christ and the Lenten journey and Easter good news is for all of us, regardless of our differences.

As I sing with my grandchildren, I am reminded of my childhood memories. I pray their world remains rich in diversity as we lift our voices together and continue to declare: "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, we are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

— Mary Hawley, VICE PRESIDENT WORKFORCE SERVICES



# *Saturday Fifth Week of Lent*

EZEKIEL 37:21-28

PSALM 85:1-7

JOHN 11:45-53

## BIG BANG

Our respect for one another and for the institutions we share seem to fluctuate. Last year respect dipped so low that many despaired. But despair was short-sighted. In the long run, archeology and history show respect advancing.

Respect began between children and parents. Next, people found that trading and trusting were better than stealing. When people learned to respect rules and rulers, they were able to build ancient cities like Jericho. Over millennia, they abandoned ritual human sacrifice, condemned slavery, and began treating women as equals. Progress has been interrupted by wars, tyrants and genocide, but, looking back to the beginning, we see that our better angels are winning.

In the history of respect there have been brave heroes and heroines, such as Abraham, who perceived that God opposed human sacrifice, and the Pharaoh's daughter, who saved Moses to transmit the Ten Commandments, and prophets and saints of diverse religions. But without question the greatest explosion in human civility, our really "big bang," occurred in Lent two thousand years ago.

In his Lenten journey, Jesus defined a new level for human respect. He elevated respect to compassion and love, not only for neighbors, but for foreigners, the poor and the meek. He even called us to forgive those who insult us, as he forgave those who crucified him.

Since then, despite opposition by power-seekers and distortion by some religious sects, Jesus' message has lived and inspired the hearts and acts of people who feel the true meaning of Lent.

Instead of despair, we hope and celebrate civility's greatest revolution, Lent's "big bang." We celebrate with loving thoughts and acts, with good will among people and with gratitude and reverence for gifts given us by Jesus in the first Lenten journey.

— Hunter McGuire Jr., RESIDENT

## A LAND OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

The Lenten season reminds us of God's great love for us and of his mercy that he bestows on us. Christ's sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins and offer us the gift of eternal life is the ultimate expression of this love and mercy. As we contemplate this, there is another aspect to consider. By receiving this mercy offered so freely, we are compelled to extend it to others. Scripture tells us to "Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you," "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful," and, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

As I make my way around Westminster Canterbury Richmond, I see this mercy in action on a daily basis. Friends sharing stories, checking on health issues, laughter in the hallways and dining rooms, the gathering around loved ones in times of crises, spouses caring for their loved ones, are all an extension of God's mercy. I have been ever impressed with the giving nature of our residents- to the Foundation, the Christmas Fund, the Food Bank. In addition, the giving of their time to make this such a unique place to live is remarkable. I also see God's mercy in the way each staff member helps our residents and one another, especially in times of emergency like snowstorms or power outages.

As I reflect on God's mercy to me and to the mercies I see on a daily basis, I am, at times, overwhelmed with thankfulness. The psalmist says, "He anoints my head with oil, my cup overflows." The poet says it another way, "I'm drinking from the saucer, cause my cup has overflowed." Both reflect the awesome feeling of joy when confronted by God's love and mercy.

I hope you will reflect on these mercies today and also be overwhelmed with this spirit of thankfulness.

— Tom Pyle, DIRECTOR DINING SERVICES

## FAMILY FIRST

I have the privilege of working with cognitively-impaired residents. Often I talk with families about truly living in the moment. As I reflect on my own life, I realize the advice I give and believe is not something we often practice. Life gets busy, schedules are packed. I'm committed to my career while running a household and trying to be the best mother and role model I can be to my daughters, Vaiden and Millie. Life and time pass quickly – if we don't take time to appreciate all the good in our lives, we'll miss it.

My dad died unexpectedly when I was 25, and in graduate school. My mom and I had been out for the evening and came home to find he had passed away in his sleep. I often wish he were here to talk with or to get his opinion. With each passing year I appreciate him more. I truly miss his asking probing questions (who I had been talking with on the phone or who I was going out with that night) and giving me his unsolicited (yet sound) advice. Unfortunately, that level of appreciation and understanding comes too late. As a parent myself, I can now understand why he occasionally lost his cool with us . . . All the worry that comes as an adult . . . worry about children . . . finances . . . stability . . . if we are making the right decisions for ourselves and for our families . . . our health . . . lots of pressure . . .

Live every day like it's your last, remember what is important in life – all the materialistic items we gather and value are not what matters – it will be the memories shared with the people who always will love and care about you more than anyone else and those whom you love and care about the most in return – and that is your family.

– Sloan Lindsey, ADMINISTRATOR ASSISTED LIVING

## SUNSHINE AFTER THE RAIN

There's always sunshine after the rain. I always have said this when going through something tough, but this year, it poured and stormed. 2016 brought us health challenges, my dad being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, losing a family member to cancer, and sending two of our babies straight to heaven. However, 2016 also brought us strength, faith, hope, and clarity only because we kept our focus on God.

I learned a long time ago when a friend told me something simple, "anything good comes from God, and anything bad comes from the devil." We didn't blame God at any point, instead we told the devil that he had no power over our family. He may have taken our babies with two miscarriages, taken my dad's mental acuity, and taken away our family member, and teased us with health challenges, but we refused to let him take our joy.

Our marriage has never been as strong as it is today, our clarity for what God has called us to do has never been clearer and our appreciation for what we do have in our life has grown tremendously. We had to be strong for each other, and especially for our healthy two-year-old. Praise and worship music was on all the time, and one verse especially, "even when it hurts, I will praise you."

The more I leaned into Him, the more He spoke to me. He said "just trust me" with a voice so clear that I smiled. What He has been telling us through 2016 is that we are "more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us" and we are to do good things with our testimony. Without a test, there's no testimony. Sometimes, there is the rain; sometimes, there is the storm, but when you focus on God, you won't miss the sunshine.

— Tracy DeVera, RECREATION

# *Wednesday in Holy Week*

PSALM 70  
PSALM 55  
JOHN 13:21-32

## FAITH

Some would ask; how can you believe in

Something that you can't see, feel or touch -

Something that comes not from a person, place or thing -

Something that's not bought, sold or wrapped?

And I always answer by saying, if you have a relationship with God, it's in your spirit, soul and heart.

It's the ultimate gift that's like no other, and it will guide you because it is everlasting.

— Naomi Hines, MANAGER HOUSEKEEPING AND LAUNDRY

## SPIRITUAL JOY

I begin my Lenten Spiritual Journey with thanksgiving for my privilege of being a Lay Eucharistic Visitor. At our service of Holy Communion in the Cary Montague Chapel, I receive Holy Communion. Then, with five other Lay Eucharistic Visitors, we are sent out two by two, taking a chalice holding the consecrated sacraments. We go to the three floors of the Mary Morton Parsons Health Center, two of us on each floor.

The residents we serve suffer from many afflictions and pain, physically, mentally and emotionally. Yet, so many respond with an eager willingness when the sacrament is offered. The Holy Words, the intinctured wafer on their tongue, the touch on their arm, bring a smile and an expression of joy to their face. They are comforted hearing that God loves them and often say “I love Him, too”.

I feel I am even more blessed by serving our Lord in this way than the residents who receive. As I receive his Holy Spirit in the bread and the wine, I can express my praise and thanks to Him by serving others who are ill. The Sacrament of Holy Communion renews and enriches our “remembrance of Him” each time it is received. My Lenten Spiritual Journey will be a special time for me again because I have been given this gift.

— Pat Kawana, RESIDENT

## WAITING WITH GRACE

To have faith in God and in His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be a believer. A believer by definition is “one who waits.”

Waiting might be considered second to suffering as a teacher and trainer of godliness, maturity and genuine spirituality.

To wait with grace requires two essential virtues: Humility and Hope. Humility comes from being very clear on the fact that God is God and we are merely His beloved creations. Only when we are humble can we wait with grace. Hope is the second virtue in waiting. Why wait unless there is something worth waiting for?

St. Paul tells us to: “Rejoice in the hope of the Glory of God!” (Romans 5:2)

The Bible is full of stories which illustrate the problems and solutions of waiting. Job’s humility and Abraham’s hope are two examples to explore.

During the Lenten season we experience the agony of the waiting and the suffering of Jesus. We believe and wait in our hope for the future because of His crucifixion and resurrection. Read Peter 1:1-7.



— Pat Kawana, VICE PRESIDENT

Submitted for the first edition of *A Lenten Journey*, 1997  
(on staff from 1975 – 2000)

## FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

I suffered a stroke on a Sunday morning in October 2012. I had worked at Westminster Canterbury Richmond painting in the Clinic the day before my stroke. It was a normal day – painting, speaking to residents and enjoying what I do. After work I went home, ate dinner, watched TV and went to bed. Sunday morning I woke up and was not able to move. I remember having to think really hard to make my body move. I finally was able to get out of the bed and move into my living room. Each step was shaky and difficult. When I got to the living room, I collapsed on the floor. I knew I had to get to my phone to call for help. I struggled for what seemed like forever to crawl to my phone. I could see in my mind's eye my daughter's face. I could see Myryah. I held on to her image and got to my phone. I kept thinking about her while I waited for the paramedics to break through my door.

In the days and weeks following my stroke, I was overwhelmed with the care and concern that our residents showed me. I received over 75 cards from residents. Day after day of my recovery mail arrived for me. Handwritten notes of encouragement, Bible verses and kind words gave me strength. The messages of hope and love saw me through a difficult time of healing. I will never forget that kindness. My faith and the faith of the residents of Westminster Canterbury Richmond (my second family) made me well.

— Ray Fino, ENGINEERING



## MUST BE JESUS

I was on the elevator going to visit friends in the healthcare. A very attractive aide, new to me, got on the elevator and said, “Good morning. How are you?”

I said, “I couldn’t be happier.”

The aide looked at me with a big smile and said, “Ah! Must be Jesus.”

You know, I had never had anyone tell me that my happiness was because of Jesus. (Most people attribute it to sudden good fortune, hearing from a special friend, or something like that.) I’ll never forget the good feeling that young lady’s comment gave me. It reminded me of one of my favorite Scripture verses: Psalm 34:5 - “Look to Him and be radiant.”

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if folks could see Jesus in us every day – and tell us so?



— Marguerite Wingo, RESIDENT

A LENTEN JOURNEY PROJECT VISIONARY

Submitted for the first edition of *A Lenten Journey*, 1997

## A LIFE CHANGING EVENT

God gives us grief and everyone has to go through this life-changing event in his lifetime. So how does one heal and survive the loss of someone or something that we cannot imagine living without? This loss could be a cherished pet, friend, neighbor or someone you have a close emotional bond with - a mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, or the unimaginable, a child. I experienced this life changing event in June 2016.

As I watched my beautiful wife slowly leave this earth at St. Mary's Hospital, I was comforted by everyone around me and my family. My family felt the love and prayers from all of our friends and loved ones, but I was at a loss when everything stopped and the room was still and quiet. I knew in my heart that she was without pain and suffering, but I was also selfish with my feelings of loneliness and what to do next with our daughter.

As the days passed and I was at my lowest point, realization and remembrance flooded my heart and mind: God lost his Son too, His only Son. The Father knew my loss, pain and brokenness. Can you imagine his heavy heart watching his son struggle, carrying the cross and brutally murdered for our sins?

Our Father in heaven forgives our sins and sent his Son to die for us. Jesus arose from the grave and gives us all hope for the future if we will only trust and obey him. One morning I read in the Bible, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3). As the days, months continue to pass, I am feeling more and more at peace with sudden loss of my best friend. I miss her, but I am reassured in my faith and will see her again one day.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord - plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11). Do you believe and have this hope for the future?

— Will Blackwell,

ADMINISTRATOR AND VICE PRESIDENT HEALTH SERVICES

## FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE

Westminster Canterbury Richmond rose out of what Lucy Negus called “a broad field of Johnson grass” to become home to many. It became a place of comfort, serenity, and faith, where residents could be nourished and, in turn, nourish others in the name of God.

Former employee and now resident Pat Kawana finds joy and blessings serving the Eucharist to residents in Mary Morton Parsons Health Center. Her life plan evolved from executive leader to pastoral care, although these two attributes were intertwined all along. In her 1997 *A Lenten Journey* devotion Anne Young recalls her hardest moment and counts her blessings in this year’s writing – health, roses, sunsets, and God’s sustaining love. Lucy Negus writes of how *A Lenten Journey* is a group of stories of strength, helplessness, joy and longing. These stories are true and real and fulfilling.

Looking back to 1997 calls us to look forward. For residents and employees, what vision do we have personally and collectively? What does God have in store for us? What nourishes us as individuals? What is rising in the community that needs a solution? How can we all care better for those who are coming behind us? What legacy are we leaving? Will they find us faithful to our Westminster Canterbury Richmond mission, and more importantly, to our Creator?

Easter Monday is the reflection of hope and joy, and anticipation of Christ coming again. Look forward. Look forward to Christ in us, beside us, ahead of us, and over us.

*Prayer: Gracious God, Creator and Sustainer, help us to see what you see, to listen to your voice, and to know that you walk with us in love and hope. May we be faithful as we look forward. Amen.*

– The Rev. Charlotte Evans, PASTORAL CARE CHAPLAIN

## WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY AND ME

Many thanks to the Pastoral Care Department for inviting me to participate in the special 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of our Lenten Journey booklets. I feel honored to be a part of it by sharing my personal feelings of joy in living in this beautiful home with so many loving and caring folks.

I looked through our 19 volumes and read the many lovely stories of what Westminster Canterbury Richmond has meant to so many happy, thankful residents. That made me realize how much Westminster Canterbury has meant to me and my family throughout these twenty years – thus my title, “Westminster Canterbury and Me.”

Thank you, again, Pastoral Care Department, for this opportunity.

– Nancy Omohundro, RESIDENT

# Acknowledgments

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PASTOR, SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

20  
years

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *A Lenten Journey* – the Westminster Canterbury Richmond Lenten devotion booklet. This booklet was created by residents with the help of the Pastoral Care Department. Over the years its distribution has grown. Last year 62 churches throughout the Richmond Area received a total of 4,554 copies. Approximately 800 copies were given to residents and 650 copies were given to staff. 75 copies were distributed to visitors, trustees and community vendors. In 2016 there were 6,325 booklets printed.

With the help of our resident committee members, and the resident and staff contributors, we hope that the 2017 *A Lenten Journey* will be an inspiration to all.

# Taking A Lenten Journey

20  
years

Twenty years ago Marguerite Wingo had a vision. The result was the *A Lenten Journey* publication. This small booklet has gone on to become, and remain, one of Westminster Canterbury Richmond's largest outreach projects.

Below is an excerpt from an article by Alberta Lindsey in the February 1997 issue of the *Times-Dispatch* about Marguerite Wingo and her creation.

## BOOKLET GIVES VOICE TO STORIES OF FAITH

Last summer, Marguerite Wingo asked three friends to write Psalms to enrich a Bible class she was teaching.

Out of that request grew a 51-page Lenten devotional booklet written by residents and employees of Westminster Canterbury, a retirement facility in North Richmond.

"This has made me cry. I just get so excited," said Wingo, 81, as she dabbed at her eyes. Westminster Canterbury has been her home for 17 years.

The 1,200 people who live and work at the retirement home have received copies of the booklet, "A Lenten Journey." And about 15 area churches have requested more than 3,000 copies – provided free by Westminster Canterbury – to give to their members.

The collection has 47 writings -one for each day from Ash Wednesday (tomorrow) through Easter (March 30). Each devotion includes a suggested reading from the Common Lectionary, a set of designated Bible readings.

"This is one of the most inspiring things I've ever done," Wingo said. "I thought I knew these people, but after reading and talking with them about what they wrote, I feel closer to every one of them."

Before the book, she had been impressed by the Psalms written by her three friends, and she wanted to do something for people in the home's care center. She thought of Lenten readings and bounced the idea off The Rev. Ray Inscoe, who said, "Let's ask the people who live here and work here if they will write

Lenten meditations.”

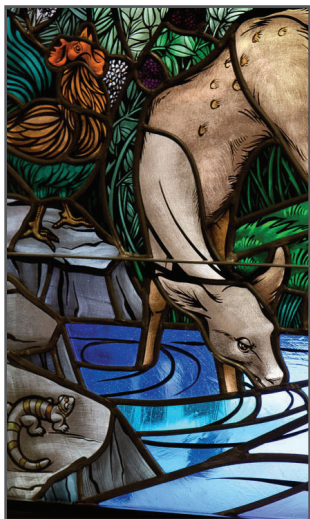
Wingo, a retired schoolteacher who works two part-time jobs, said patients in Westminster Canterbury’s care center are always on her mind “because some of them have so few visitors.”

“Most Lenten meditation booklets are expansions of Bible verses,” she said.

“I didn’t want it that way. I wanted people to write something from their experiences that meant so much to them that it would inspire someone else to come closer to God.”

Wingo added: “The Lord led me to do this for a reason. If you follow what God wants you to do, he will multiply it and multiply it.”





## WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY RICHMOND

was founded in 1975 by the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches as a faith-based charitable organization. Today, the continuing care retirement community serves more than nine hundred residents, who enjoy a wide variety of housing options and amenities such as

performing arts and cultural programs in the Sara Belle November Theater and the Center for Creative and Cultural Arts. Westminster Canterbury Richmond is accredited by the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission and has been named “one of America’s 20 best” by *New Choices Magazine*. Westminster Canterbury welcomes all regardless of race, religion, or nationality.

**WESTMINSTER  
CANTERBURY**  
RICHMOND

LIVE  
LIFE  
WELL.<sup>SM</sup>

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