

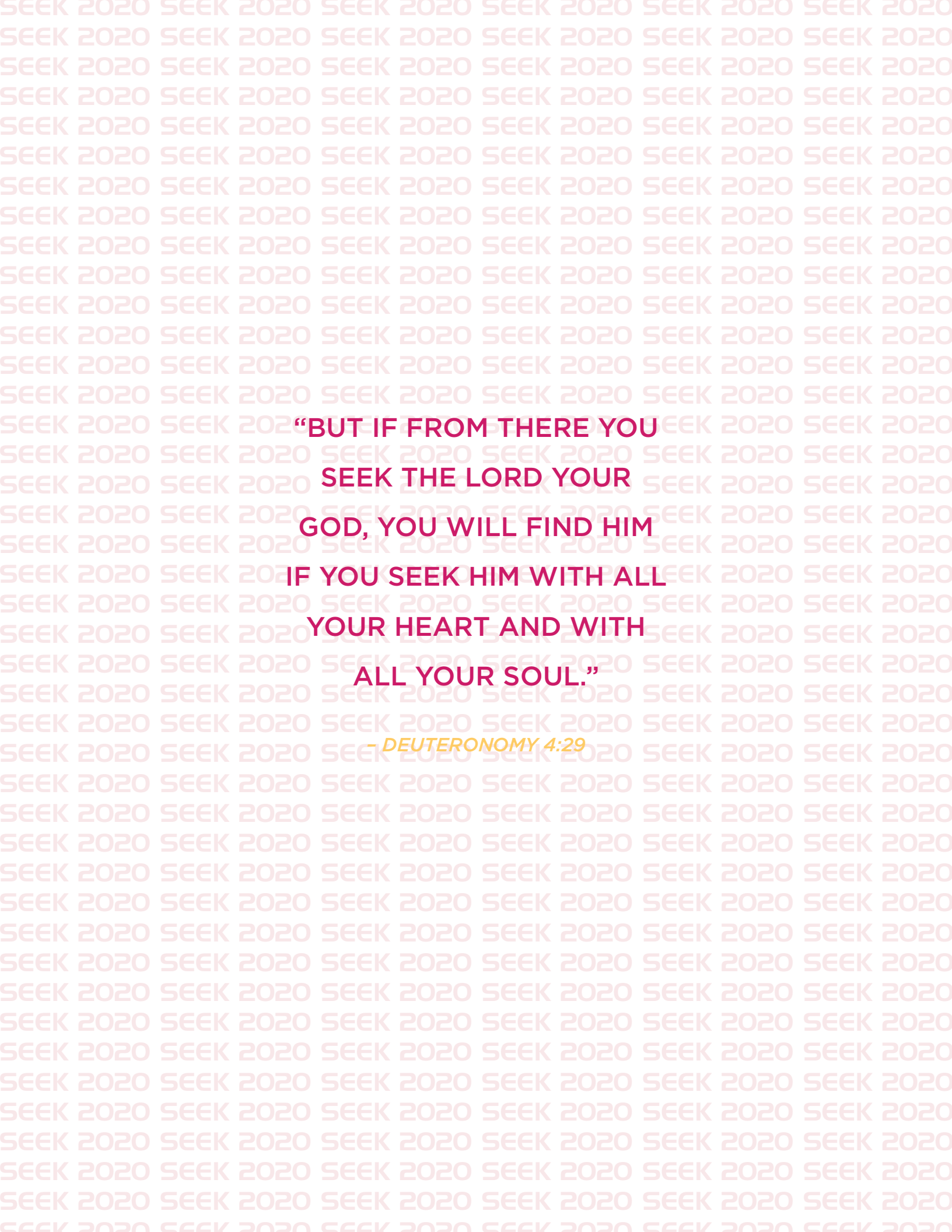


ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

SEEK
2020

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

MAR
1-31



**“BUT IF FROM THERE YOU
SEEK THE LORD YOUR
GOD, YOU WILL FIND HIM
IF YOU SEEK HIM WITH ALL
YOUR HEART AND WITH
ALL YOUR SOUL.”**

—DEUTERONOMY 4:29

DEAR COVENANT PARTNER,

Grace and peace be unto you in the name of our Lord Jesus, who is our resurrected, risen, reigning, and returning redeemer. Once again, we pause as a collective church family to seek the face of God, through our SEEK fast. Whether this is your first time fasting or if fasting is frequently a part of your spiritual discipline, I pray this fast would be a significant milestone in your spiritual journey. During our time of fasting, we are focusing on three areas of our lives—the physical, the social/technological and the financial.



While fasting, please keep in mind that this journal is created so that you can track your progress throughout your fast. You should plan to read your devotional, watch the devotional videos, and then write in your devotional journal. Additionally, throughout the month of March, you have five opportunities to meet us every Tuesday for March Gladness Revival! During March Gladness, we will have a special prayer for all of our covenant partners! We cannot wait to experience the power of revival during our season of prayer and fasting!

I am especially excited to be partaking on this year's fast while on our season of SELAH. Make no mistake, while I am on sabbatical, I am still very much so fasting, praying, and believing God with and for you! This year, you will notice that each devotional topic is also accompanied by a SELAH word of the day. Our prayer is that God will replenish you during this fast, as God is simultaneously replenishing me during this season of SELAH!

I want especially to thank all of our devotional writers, assistant ministers, associate ministers and the Kids' Street, Higher Ground, CrossOver, College, Deaconate, Communications, AV/Media, and Culinary ministries for coming together to offer our church a unique collection of voices that truly represent the intergenerational demographics of our community.

Selah,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard-John Wesley". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Pastor Howard-John Wesley

FAST INSTRUCTIONS

FAST OPTIONS

Please choose at least one option from each category as your action items for the duration of the fast.

Physical

Physical Option 1
Daniel Fast

Physical Option 2
No Food 6AM-6PM

Physical Option 3
Eliminate Sweets, caffeine, and alcoholic beverages

Social

Social Option 1
Eliminate Social Media

Social Option 2
Eliminate Television and Movies

Social Option 3
Total of 1 Hour of Technology a day

Financial

Financial Option 1
Eliminate daily routine purchases (coffee, breakfast, newspaper, etc.)

Financial Option 2
Eliminate non-essential personal items

Financial Option 3
Eliminate fast food purchases

PRAYER TIME GOALS

Week	Date	Prayer Time Goal (uninterrupted)
Week 1	March 1-7	Pray for 10 minutes a day
Week 2	March 8-14	Pray for 20 minutes a day
Week 3	March 15-21	Pray for 30 minutes a day
Week 4	March 22-28	Pray for 40 minutes a day
Week 5	March 29-31	Pray for 50 minutes a day

DAILY THEMES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Gifts Repurpose	2 Gratitude Reflect	3 Pride Repent MARCH GLADNESS	4 Authenticity Realign	5 Faith Restore	6 Integrity Redeem	7 Kindness Refresh
8 Teamwork Reunite	9 Excellence Reenvision	10 Trust Repair MARCH GLADNESS	11 Commitment Reestablish	12 Forgiveness Reconcile	13 Joy Rejoice	14 Support Reinvest
15 Peace Reclaim	16 Aspiration Refocus	17 Imagination Reimagine MARCH GLADNESS	18 Community Reengage	19 Strength Rejuvenate	20 Love Rekindle	21 Grace Reorient
22 Creativity Recreate	23 Resilience Reignite	24 Determination Renew MARCH GLADNESS	25 Legacy Remember	26 Recovery Recover	27 Fellowship Revive	28 Confidence Rebuild
29 Perseverance Reassure	30 Sacrifice Rededicate	31 Contentment Rediscover MARCH GLADNESS				

WHAT IS FASTING?

As you prepare to embark on Seek 2020, you may be shocked to find out that scripture does not require Christians to fast. You might ask yourself, if scripture doesn't require us to fast then why should we? While scripture does not require Christians to fast, scripture does reveal the importance of fasting. In the Old Testament, fasts were frequently called forth by leaders of a congregation during critical and despairing times (Jeremiah 26:9, Joel 1:14, Daniel 1:8). In the New Testament, Jesus' earthly ministry is preceded by 40 days of prayer and fasting (Matthew 4). Likewise, in the early church, Christians would couple prayer and fasting as a means to hear from God, especially before making important decisions (Acts 13:2; 14:23). Fasting is an opportunity for Christians to practice the fruit of self-discipline, by abstaining from personal pleasure and fixing their entire attention on God. Although many people will choose to abstain from food during their fast, food is not the only means of fasting. Believers can choose to abstain from anything that can potentially serve as a distraction in their pursuit of seeking God.

HOW TO FAST?

Before embarking on a fast, participants should prepare themselves mentally, physically, and spiritually. Keep in mind that fasting is not a form of dieting, and all participants should consult their primary care physicians before making any changes to their diet. We also suggest preparing your meals in advance, in order to maximize and focus your time and energy. Remember, the objective of fasting is not only to eliminate things from your

daily routine, but also to replace them with prayer. If you usually eat breakfast at a certain time of the day, spend that time in prayer instead. If you normally watch TV when you get home from work, consider replacing that activity with reading the word of God. As you fast, it is important to be consistent. However, if you break your fast by accident or even miss a few days, don't beat yourself up or give up. Rather, get right back to your fasting objectives. Remember, the objective isn't to be perfect, the objective is to be transformed.

WHAT IS THE DANIEL FAST?

The Daniel Fast is a spiritual fast based on two biblical accounts of the Prophet Daniel (Daniel 1:15-16, Daniel 10:2-3). In the first biblical account, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, underwent a 10-day "fast" in order not to defile themselves with the King's choice meats that went against their dietary restrictions. Instead, they ate vegetables and drank water. At the end of the 10 days, they looked healthier and more fit than the other men who ate from the King's choice foods. In the second biblical account, the Prophet Daniel underwent 21 days of fasting in order to receive an interpretation for a vision he received. Daniel refrained from eating meat and drinking wine. As a result, at the conclusion of his 21 days of fasting, he received a message from an angel that interested his vision. In both biblical accounts, Daniel undergoes a fast in order to hear and remain true to his God. The purpose of the Daniel Fast is not to mimic Daniel, but rather to seek and focus on God. In reality, today's food industry is much different from that of Daniel's time. However, changing our habits and leaving our comfort foods and zones, we allow ourselves to place our entire attention and dependency on God.

FOODS TO EAT ON THE DANIEL FAST

- All fruit – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- All vegetables – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- All whole grains – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- All nuts & seeds – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.
- All legumes – canned or dried; black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.
- All quality oils – avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut.
- Beverages– distilled water, filtered water, spring water, fresh fruit or vegetable juices.
- Other – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg’s Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.

FOODS TO AVOID ON THE DANIEL FAST

- All meat & animal products – bacon, beef, buffalo, eggs, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.
- All dairy products – butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt.
- All sweeteners – agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups, and sugar.
- All leavened bread & yeast – baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey).
- All refined & processed food products – artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, and white rice.
- All deep-fried foods – corn chips, French fries, and potato chips.
- All solid fats – lard, margarine, and shortening.
- Beverages – alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea, and tea.

– by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

Which version of the fast are you participating in? Write out each commitment!

Physical:

Social:

Financial:

What steps will you take to assist you in meeting your goals? Complete as needed.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

What are you believing God for during Seek 2020? Complete as needed.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

SEEK 2020 DEVOTIONS

DAY 1: GIFTS

“ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”

– 1 Peter 4:10–11

WE GOT IT MADE

Anyone who knows me knows I love hip-hop, especially from the 80s and 90s. In 1989, Special Ed had a song called “I Got It Made.” Part of his lyrics say, “I’m talented. Yes, I’m gifted...” and he goes on to make the case for why “he’s” got it made. It’s really a catchy song and, if you grew up in this era of rap music, this is a song you can recite word for word. Ed really makes the case for why “he’s” got it made.

So many of us are talented and gifted. However, when we consider the Giver of these gifts, we soon realize that these gifts are not given to us so that each one of us can individually have it made. Rather, these gifts are given to us so that we can have it made! Wherever we see scripture discussing gifts, we read that God would intentionally spread gifts among God’s people with the express purpose of serving and edifying others. God’s gifts help to increase faith, build up the body of Christ, equip the people for service, and reach the “knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Having these gifts and using them to serve one another puts us in a position where “We” got it made.

Rev. William Spencer
Associate Minister

DAY 2: GRATITUDE

“A dinner was prepared in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair.”

– John 12: 2–3a

IN PLAIN SIGHT

While enjoying the company of the Lord in her home, Mary was surrounded by reminders of God’s grace. Jesus had previously raised her brother Lazarus from the dead, and now he was sitting there eating dinner with them. In Luke 10, we learn that Jesus had also defended and showed favor towards Mary in front of her sister Martha, because Mary chose to sit with Jesus rather than be bogged down with the distractions of life like her sister.

The tangible reminders of these gifts right in front of her ushered her into a prostrate position before Jesus in both worship and gratitude. While doing this she gave of her most valuable gift available, expensive perfume. We can learn two important things about gratitude from Mary’s response: it’s sacrificial and uncoerced. Gratitude is our visceral reaction of appreciation for God’s gifts to us.

This year’s fast provides us the opportunity to give two valuable gifts to the Lord: our hearts and our time. It’s in our intimate moments with the Lord that we can truly be reflective on these gifts without distraction, and Mary is an amazing example of what this looks like! It’s during this time of reflection that we should seek to fill our hearts with gratitude and allow ourselves the opportunity, like Mary, to thank God for the gifts sitting right in front of us—in plain sight.

Min. Michelle N. Udeli
Associate Minister
(CAYA Ministry, Higher Ground)

DAY 3: PRIDE

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”

– Philippians 2:3

THE FALSE COMFORT OF PRIDE

1 John 4:8 teaches us that God is love—a love said to be so strong that we seek it from birth. In fact, the Bible mentions four gifts of love from God which describe our relationship with Him and our fellow man: Agape (unconditional “God” love), Storge (empathy bond), Phileo (friend bond), and Eros (romantic love). Interestingly, it is the insertion of ourselves—or essentially what we bring with us as we establish relationship with God – that can serve to limit or take away our maximum enjoyment of these gifts of love from God.

Simply said, in order for us to be in “relationship” with others we are required to address our self-interest and pride. While our fragile individual selves may perceive value through pride, the Bible reminds us that pride can mean arrogance, conceit, presumption, or superiority. This kind of pride is based on self-centeredness, and is destructive—ultimately only serving to rob us of a closeness and intimacy in our relationship with God and others.

Let us remember that God opposes pride. Instead, be encouraged to live courageously in love and humility.

Felicia Morant Fowlkes
Richmond E-Village Facilitator

DAY 4: AUTHENTICITY

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”

– John 8:32

AUTHENTICITY....NURTURING THE MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

As we journey through life, it is essential that we nurture our mind, body and spirit. Now past my young adult years, I have learned an important principle in life: you need all three to survive.

If you're well educated with the tenacity to grasp your piece of the American dream but your body and spirit are malnourished, you will be unable to have the stamina and care it takes to maintain altitude. If you are physically out of shape, you may have the career you've been praying for but you're tired all of the time, which makes it difficult to sustain long days that require you to have endurance. And if the mind and body are nurtured without a spiritual connection, you will undeniably lack insight for the plethora of decisions you are called to make.

...and the truth will set you free!

Being authentic comes from one's natural self, set apart from any external influences, with a willingness to stand alone for one's core values—no matter the circumstance.

Testimonial consciousness in the world has a simplicity about it. Our actions are based on godly sincerity, truth and grace. To be authentic, we must be mindful as to how we think, what we eat (mentally and physically) and how we innately process. Be strong, not hostile. Admit and learn from our mistakes. Be thoughtful and accepting of oneself and other people while being steadfast in our beliefs and values.

Theron Johnson
Director of The Voices of Triumph Choir

DAY 5: FAITH

“Jesus said, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.”

– Matthew 17:20

FAITH: IT'S NOT THE SIZE

A friend of mine was going through some challenging times and called me to talk. As the conversation progressed, I soon realized that he was engaged in a wrestling match with God. Like the Psalmist David in Psalm 13, he was not sure if God was present in his situation. He confessed, “maybe I don’t have enough faith.” Like many, he based his perceived absence of God on his limited faith. How many of us approach life’s awkward moments believing that God’s showing up depends on the size of our faith? We attribute shortcomings and failures to not having “big” faith.

Matthew 17:20 lets us in on a little secret. Size doesn’t matter. The truth is, faith is not knowing that God can, but believing that God will. For the most part, we have confidence in the power of God, but when it has to do with us on a personal level, we raise the question, will God? That is where most of us struggle. Is my faith big enough to grab the attention of God? Yes! R. T. France states: “It is important to observe, it is not the ‘amount’ of faith which brings the impossible within reach, but the power of God, which is available to even the ‘smallest’ faith.” As you go through this fast, my prayer is for you to have the confidence that the same God who walked with the faith giants of old will take baby steps with you, “dancing today, to the music of tomorrow.” Keep the faith, no matter how small.

Rev. Emmett L. Dunn

Assistant to the Pastor for Global Cultural Awareness

DAY 6: INTEGRITY

“Keep my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in you. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.”

– Psalm 25:20–21

THE BENEFIT OF INTEGRITY

One of the benefits of a fast is the opportunity to rely on the Lord and draw closer to Him while reducing dependence on a myriad of things. It’s not surprising that most of us want to come to the Lord with a clear conscience. We sometimes want our neighbor to believe that we’ve been perfect during the fast, following every rule and guideline to the T. However, many times, we find ourselves vulnerable and deceitful due to a lack of closeness in our relationship with the Lord. If we repented for every sinful thought in our mind, we’d find ourselves in prayer more often than not. Think of it this way: without integrity, you can’t be blessed! While lifting our whole hearts to Him during our fast, we wait in full expectancy that God will keep us.

Psalm 25:20–21 teaches us that we must depend on God, desire toward him and allow integrity and uprightness to infiltrate our being while we wait. Integrity during this journey means we remain honest while covenant to the promises we made. Each day is a new opportunity to start fresh and trust in the Lord by demonstrating integrity in everything we do.

Mia Manson
Assistant to the Church Administrator

SELAH WORD OF THE DAY: REDEEM

JOURNAL QUESTION: What are the areas in your life that you've allowed to become too common?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

Lined writing area consisting of 25 horizontal yellow lines for journaling.



DAY 7: KINDNESS

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

– Ephesians 4:32

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER

We live in a world where there are so many haters and thus we seem divided from each other and from doing what is right in the sight of God. This is also true in our schools and in many communities where violence is taking place on a daily basis. I believe social media is a major culprit for negativity, which plays out in how we treat others.

Sometimes it is difficult to be kind when others talk about you behind your back, do not like you, and may be jealous of you for whatever reason. I believe God wants us to be imitators of Him. We are to show love to others as Christ loved us and gave His life for our sins. When we are kind to others, we are able to let go of our hate, anger and malicious words. As Christians we must learn how to have a change of heart—not just an external change, a change from within the heart to love everyone. When we are kind to others, we have less time to focus on self and our own problems. What about a warm smile, courtesy, and encouraging words?

It was Abu Bakr who said, “If you expect the blessings of God, be kind to His people.” When we are kind to ourselves, it will be easier to be kind to others.

Zachary J. Gunn
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 8: TEAMWORK

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing — Life forevermore.”

— Psalm 133

THE DREAM TEAM

We often utter the words “teamwork makes the dream work.” However, they are usually uttered in the context of our jobs and tasks we engage in with our friends. As we participate in “Seek 2020,” let us use this phrase in the context of our spiritual growth. Could it possibly be that when we share the joys of our salvation with others, we open ourselves to the opportunity to witness to someone and lead them to receiving life forevermore? Life forevermore is a priceless gift that should humble and excite us enough to share the good news of salvation wherever we go.

Psalm 133 speaks of the joy experienced when we come together sharing our salvation that connects us, one to the other. The salvation that Jesus gives us is the seal that unites us forevermore. The joy of our salvation is Jesus and life with Him forevermore. Let us now come together and share the salvation of our Lord!

Rev. Marla C. Hawkins
Assistant to the Pastor for Children’s Programs

DAY 9: EXCELLENCE

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”

– 1 Corinthians 12: 27–31

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

We all strive for excellence, but is your excellence God’s excellence? Our individual skills, achievements and titles mean nothing if we are not unified as a body. However, your gift isn’t my gift and your life isn’t my life. So how does a community of eclectic individuals move as the body of Christ when we barely know each other’s names? God gave us all uncommon bodies, divided minds, unique hearts, and dissimilar experiences. But at the end of it all. He Gave. This means we are all eternally affixed to this body of Christ in unity. As long as we maintain the mission of Christ, using the gifts he gave in a cohesive fashion, we will move as one body under God, as one force for the Lord, as the body of Christ, and everything we do will be excellent.

Bobby Lacy
Sound Engineer

SELAH WORD OF THE DAY: REENVISION

JOURNAL QUESTION: How is God asking you to reenvision your goals?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 10: TRUST

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.”

—Matthew 6:16

LOOKING GOOD

I am very excited that you are joining in this year’s church-wide fast. Your commitment to strengthen your relationship with God the creator will not only make you a better follower of Jesus the Christ, but will surely bring you closer to becoming the servant He is calling for in these troubled times. God expects His people to fast. It’s not an option. Matthew 6:16 says when you fast, not if you fast.

Whether this is your first or one of many, I can assure you that if you trust the words of God you will be a blessing to others and be blessed yourself. One of the most important factors of fasting is not what you stop doing, but what you start doing. Not what you give up, but what you take in. Placing God’s will for your life at the top of what you take in, spending time listening to the voice of God, and studying His word will not only bring you closer to the will of God in your life, but will cause you to rejoice in anticipation of hearing Him say one day “Well Done.”

Rev. Edward Y. Jackson

Assistant to the Pastor for Pastoral Care and Visitation

DAY 11: COMMITMENT

“I don’t know about you, but I’m running hard for the finish line. I’m giving it everything I’ve got.”

– (v.26–27) - 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

COMMITTED TO FINISH

I’m a huge fan of the Summer Olympics, especially the track and field events. I try to watch all the races whether marathons or sprints. Athletes train for years to race in front of the worldwide audience and be known as the best in the world. One of the most memorable moments in Olympic history was in the 1992 Barcelona games. Derek Redmond, a British athlete, was set to run the 400m semi-final. Everyone was set on their blocks, the gun was fired, and the runners took off. About halfway, Derek tore his hamstring but was determined to finish the race. Not knowing the severity of his injury, he shrugged anyone trying to help him because he would be disqualified for the relay. The pain became too great. Someone came running up behind him and when Derek saw that it was his father, he began to cry and lean on his dad as he continued to limp in his lane. His father jogged, holding up his son through the finish line. Derek finished last and was disqualified because his father helped him, but he finished his race. No one remembers who won that day but everyone remembers Derek Redmond and his father finishing their race together, persevering through pain, anguish, disappointment, and heartbreak.

Derek’s father had been “running” alongside his son for years. He supported him emotionally, spiritually, physically, and, as with most parents, financially. He saw the love and commitment Derek had for and to the sport and he was committed to his son because he loved him. Commitment goes beyond love. You can love something or someone but your commitment to it/them can fluctuate between 0-100%. Commitment is the perpetual action that follows the promise to do; it is the “do.” Whatever God promised to do, God will do because He is committed to you and your process. Whatever you promised God, whatever covenant/agreement/vow you made to each other, stay committed to it and God will help you across that finish line.

Rev. Marcia Norfleet
Assistant to the Pastor - Missions

DAY 12: FORGIVENESS

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

– Jeremiah 29:13

FINDING GOD TO FORGIVE OTHERS

I LOVE THIS STATEMENT! **Making the choice to forgive someone does not mean that they are not guilty!** This means that we can retire from the task of making the fact of the offense public knowledge. We can let go and stop carrying the burden of proof and instead, we can work to revert that energy towards our own personal healing. This happens when we make a choice to start the process of forgiveness. Keep in mind that forgiveness does not ask us to forget, however, it does charge us to control our actions.

It is a process just like this SEEK fast. Once you heard about the fast, you had to make a choice to participate or not. Once you made a decision, you had to then choose what part (if not all) you were going to participate in. You began thinking about what you could, should, might and what you absolutely would not give up. LOL, you get the point... it is a process and the same goes without saying when it comes to forgiveness. The act of forgiveness causes us to have to sit with, consider what, and determine why and how we will proceed.

By bathing in the word of God, we find help in seeing Jesus walking out the process of forgiveness for us and the Holy Spirit consistently working on our behalf to guide, remind and encourage us. In the word, we uncover keys to overcoming that hurdle called forgiveness. We learn that all of us have sinned and fallen short and stand in need of forgiveness (Romans 3:23). We learn that grace has been applied to us multiple times over. We find that from our heavenly Father's perspective, forgiving is a prerequisite for our own forgiveness. We learn that resentment and bitterness are heart blockers that interrupt healing (Matthew 6:14-15). We learn that God gives us the ability to forgive and just as we did not deserve it, we still received it. We should depend on God as an aid to help us apply this same grace to our offenders (Matthew 18:15, Luke 23:34).

Rev. LaTasha Morgan
Assistant to the Pastor for Counseling

DAY 13: JOY

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

– Luke 15:7

THE JOY IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we lift our heads to the hills from when cometh our help we thank You right now for Joy that You have already blessed us with thus far this day and in our lives.

Lord, when we have lost our direction and we don't know which way to turn, thank You for giving us Joy.

In the many choices that we make in our lives, Lord, it's that sweet soul-saving Joy that brings us through it all.

We thank You and You alone for being the center of our everything, the one who places Joy within our hearts and our souls.

Lord, we count it all Joy as we face each day that You have already anointed. Oh, how sweet it is to know that there is a God who loves each of us so much that our Joy is renewed each day.

There is Joy in the morning, at the noonday hour and even at the midnight hour as we rest in Your arms. We pray for Joy for tomorrow, a day that is not promised, but a day that You hold in Your hands.

Do you know about that joy?

Can you feel that joy?

Help me celebrate that joy!

Susan G. Kelly-Bing
Women's Usher Ministry, President

DAY 14: SUPPORT

“When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up – one on one side, one on the other – so that his hands remained steady till sunset.”

– Exodus 17:12

SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER

I love this story of the Israelites in battle. Everyone had a role to play. Joshua’s job? Fight. Moses’ job? Hold up the rod of God. When Moses’ arms grew tired, Aaron’s and Hur’s job was to hold up Moses’ arms. Notice that neither of them took the rod from Moses or said, “It’s my turn now to hold up the rod.” Rather, they found a rock for him to rest upon and they supported Moses’ arms. They stayed in their divine roles!

In providing or seeking support, it is important to support without removing responsibility. Support does not mean that someone will do the task for you. Rather, it means someone comes alongside to hold up your arms in the middle of the fight... when you think there’s no strength left. Thank God for those people He uses to hold up your arms. Better yet, find someone whose arms you can hold up!

Father, thank you for those supporters who hold up my arms when the battle is intense. Open my eyes to those who need me to hold up their arms without taking over the assignment. Help me stay in my role so that you can bring victory. In Jesus’ name, AMEN.

Lynda Jackson
Intercessory Prayer Ministry

DAY 15: PEACE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”

– Galatians 5:22

PERFECT PEACE?

Years ago, I was a news junkie—watching the news before I went to work, watching the news when I got home from work, and reading news online throughout the day. I ended up with a severe medical condition due to stress and was told to eliminate the stressors in my life. I realized all the negative news I ingested caused me to be stressed out and was robbing me of peace. I prayed and fasted for healing, studied and leaned on God’s word, and the Spirit healed my mind, body, and soul and restored the peace in my life.

The world projects negativity toward us on a daily basis through the news, social media, people, and even our jobs. As we journey through life, we must not internalize this evil and let it rob us of the peace that God gives us. It is our responsibility to protect our minds and guard our hearts from the turbulence of this world.

God’s desire is for us to live in perfect peace. The closer we draw to him through prayer and fasting the more peace we have. Whenever the pressures of the world are weighing you down, turn to Philippians 4:6-7: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Katrina L. Kaufman
E-Villager from Michigan

DAY 16: ASPIRATION

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

– Romans 12:2

#GOALS

If there was a time capsule holding all that we considered to be aspirational in the year 2020, I would guess that we would simply find a variety of social media posts. You may find the tag #fitnessgoals under a picture of your favorite workout guru. Beneath a picture of Barack and Michelle Obama, you might find the hashtag, #relationshipgoals. You may even come across a post of a picturesque home in the Hamptons with the caption #vacationhomegoals. The evidence of what people strive to have and desire to be is all in what we consider “goals.” As Christians, our foremost goal is to be like Christ. However, it would be naïve to not think that some of our goals are also shaped by what we see in the world. It is easier to aspire to a version of our lives that looks like the patterns and images of the world. Paul teaches us in Romans 12:2 that our goals for our lives should not just look like Christ but that they should NOT look like the world: “Do not conform to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In this season of fasting and praying, “goals” may look like discerning which of your aspirations come from God and which come from the world. “Goals” may be figuring out what your goals should no longer be in order to experience true renewal of your mind. Consider on this day: What visions for your life have come from conforming to the world rather than being transformed by God?

Min. Barbara Florvil
Assistant to the Pastor for Youth

DAY 17: IMAGINATION

“Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

– Ephesians 3:20

That scripture alone gives us permission to imagine and dream of more than we see before us. My prayer for each of you is that you begin to activate your imagination again and trust that God will give you the desires of your heart.

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

Have any of you noticed that the older we get, the less we tend to dream? When we're kids, we have such high hopes and dreams, which products of an active imagination. Some might argue that it's childish to give life to our imagination as we get older because...life can be tough! It comes with hard times, misfortune, disappointment and BILLS! At some point, we start to focus more on what IS rather than what COULD BE. A few years ago, I was challenged by a mentor of mine to start dreaming again and to imagine the kind of life I wanted for myself. It was at that point that I realized I had stopped dreaming.

Brooke Watson
Director of CAYA (Come As You Are)

DAY 18: COMMUNITY

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

– Hebrews 10:24–25

BETTER TOGETHER

Better Together is a daily television show made by women, for women! But more than a television program, Better Together is a community built on love, friendship, and encouragement.

I experienced being “better together in community” while growing up in a little town called Greenwood, South Carolina. If someone needed a cup of milk or sugar, bread or eggs, or even a ride to the doctor or grocery store, all they needed to do was ask and someone would be happy to assist them with the need. No one went lacking. It wasn’t that people had so much but they shared what they had because they understood the art of neighboring. We were a community built on love!

Hebrews 10:24–25 reminds us that we are much better together than apart. It is important that we not neglect the time we spend with one another. So today, let us find ways to join together in fellowship, motivating and encouraging one another, with acts of love and kindness.

“I need you and you need me. We’re all a part of God’s body. It is His will that every need be supplied. You are important to me. I need you to survive!”

We are Family! We are Community! We are Better Together!

Rev. Montrez Nicholson
President, Women’s Ministry

DAY 19: STRENGTH

'He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."'

– 2 Corinthians 12:9

WHEN I AM WEAK, HE IS STRONG

In this world you will have trouble. There will be days when you are faced with difficulties that stretch beyond your breaking point and you have no more give—when you are struggling through grief of the loss of a loved one; when the news of yet another injustice breaks your heart that was just starting to heal. Perhaps you've been there, or today's that day for you. God reminds us that in life we will go through seasons when our physical abilities, our intellect, our resources, or our networks just won't cut it. In those moments God reminds us that while we will face trouble, we do not face it alone. He is right there with us.

He is by our side comforting us in our time of need, and is not dismayed by the size of the obstacle. He has seen that which troubles us, and the good news that He shares in John 16:33 is that He has already conquered it. So, when you find yourself in times of weakness, and you will, resist the temptation to hide behind the mask of "I'm fine" or "I've got this." Do not despair. Instead, let's accept His invitation to surrender our fight to Him. Let Him take full control of the situation, all the while covering us in His all-sufficient grace. We can stand on His promise that when we are weak, His strength is perfect in our time of need.

Sandrine Rukundo
Deacon

DAY 20: LOVE

“Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that time had come to leave this world to go to the Father, having loved His dear companions, He continued to love them right to the end.”

– John 13:1

LOVE IS WHAT LOVE DOES

Love woke up this morning to taste our thoughts, endure our pace, embrace our spirit summoned in the plumb line of the night. Love envisions our wherewithal appetite emerging to conquer the wanting. Is one really that hungry? What brings on this sacred metabolism to digest the anecdote washed down with a sip of living water? The body tells us it's a permanent appetite; an irresistible hunger, but God says it's nature's reoccurring salvation to heal unattended pieces of Him, keeping hope alive.

All things considered, Jesus illustrates love can be understood inside dilemmas of life in John 13; presenting humility before honor despite His current state of affairs, His cadence towards death, acknowledging the presence of God. Jesus unveils the manifold from his waist amplifying, love is entitled to nothing, love distills the impurities of separation but restitution; washing our feet. Love releases jurisdiction of our soul-embracing creation, compensating desires of possession—lobbying accumulation. Love is the stronghold which silhouettes the heaviness of yesterday to put it down. Love is the power of silence, burgeoning exilic vitality—cultivating death. Love remembered the beginning because God knew the end would be difficult, repairing the breach of His own until the end—trafficking Jesus! You can't keep what you have unless you give it away. Are you on display? You have to show love to get love!

Reggie Hayes
Men's Homeless Ministry

DAY 21: GRACE

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”

– Ephesians 2:8–9

GRACE PERIOD

In the financial world, a grace period is a second chance. When we cannot meet our debt, the grace period offers additional time to pay the debt without penalty. Students who cannot turn in an assignment on time may request a grace period called an extension, which is extra time to complete the work. A grace period in the political world is the time of transition between administrations when everyone is on their best behavior, for the good of the order. All of these models operate on the rubric of time—that for a set number of days, the regular penalties and way of doing things is suspended. The consequences that should have happened have no power within the grace period.

But God’s grace is not limited to a few days on the calendar, and we never have to make up our deficit. God’s grace is forever available to us because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. As a result, we are in an ongoing grace period. Any lapse in judgment, any poor decision, any weakness is already covered by grace. Grace does the work of filling in all of our gaps and shortcomings. All we have to do is remember we are under the shadow of grace and move on to the next day, knowing we are surrounded by God’s grace-period.

Rev. Dr. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D.
Senior Assistant to the Pastor

DAY 22: CREATIVITY

“And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

– Genesis 1:31

BE CREATIVE

In my life, one of the greatest gifts God has blessed me with is the gift of music. Being a musician for over 25 years, I've experienced creativity in many forms. From making melodies, writing lyrics, to producing albums and performing around the world, I've witnessed and been a part of some wonderful creations. However, for some creatives, we are held back by our own fear. It's a mind-blowing thing to create something that you're passionate about, and then hide it from others because of fear. Fear has taken many brilliant ideas to the grave. Fear has gripped many creatives to intellectual death. While fear claims many, there are people who are waiting to witness your creativity. Creativity brings about a new way to view things. In creativity, there is life. If we stop creating, how then can we continue to be like God? Yes, we were created in His image, but if we don't carry His spirit, everything we do means nothing.

In Genesis 1:31, we see God having confidence in His creation when He says, “It was very good.” God never wavered in His mind about what was wrong with His creation, or how others would judge His creation; God just created! How would you be if you took on the mentality and confidence of God? I challenge you to be fearless in creativity. Be bold in your quest for originality. Lastly, be daring in innovation, for we serve a God who never feared—He created.

Marcus R. Johnson Sr.
Musician and Director

DAY 23: RESILIENCE

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But you must let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”

– James 1:2–4

BEING RESILIENT

In this passage of scripture, James gives us a lot to consider. Imagine you’ve just endured or perhaps are still experiencing one of the most difficult times of your life and someone has the audacity to tell you to “consider it pure joy.” How could pain from hardship actually have a purpose? As believers, we don’t rejoice because we have tough times, but we can choose to rejoice when we accept God’s perspective. His plan does not leave us hopeless and we know that there is nothing too hard for God...not even a comeback! You were not built to break. We must remember not to be so distracted by our pain that we forget to ask God to help us understand His purpose in the pain. When bad things happen to us, our resilience is tested, but God can use hardships to help us grow, mature and be made complete in ways we could never imagine! We have the ability and the capacity to recover with a sense of purpose, determination, and a renewed faith in Him. As difficult as it may seem, we have to find the “pure joy” that resides beyond the pain. As I often reflect on some of my most challenging life events, I stand on this side of those experiences knowing that God faithfully brought me through each one of them. I did not break and neither will you!

Gerald Holden
Worship Service Coordinator

DAY 24: DETERMINATION

'Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, . . . When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.'

– Mark 5:25 and 27–28

BEING DETERMINED

Every morning I awake in pain. It ebbs and flows, sometimes a mild annoyance and other times searing. It never stops. But as with the woman with the flow of blood for 12 years, I cannot bring myself to give up. I am blessed with the determination that can only be a gift from God.

This woman unnamed spent 12 years on the outside of society. By Jewish law she was declared unclean, unable to even enter the temple for prayer. So, when Jesus, who had just driven out a legion of demons from a man across the Sea of Galilee, arrived by boat, He is greeted by a crowd. Among this crowd were Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood. They were literally on the opposite ends of the spectrum. Jairus was named, she was not; he was the leader of the synagogue, she was an outcast; Jairus had a family, she appeared to be alone.

This woman had determination fueled by faith. She broke the law of her society knowing as she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." And with determination and faith through Christ, we can be made whole.

Rev. Keith A. Perkins
Associate Minister and Worship Arts

DAY 25: LEGACY

“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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

– Jeremiah 29:11–13

LIVING A LIFE FOR LEGACY

Legacy means the passing down of money, property, tradition, etc. from an ancestor or predecessor to another. My daughter, who joined my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., is called a legacy because she chose to follow in my footsteps in making that choice. Psalm 127 says that children are God’s most generous legacy. 1 Corinthians 15 even stated that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is the first in a long legacy of those who will be raised from the dead when that day of reckoning comes.

Jeremiah 29:11 teaches us that God passes down to us many things to include peace, a future and hope. He also passed down to us his beloved son, Jesus Christ, to live as a human and experience what we experience daily. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for a long and difficult time of testing. However, through fasting and praying for 40 days and nights, God showed his strength in Jesus’ weakness to help Jesus resist temptation and endure. With the acceptance of Jesus as our savior, we become his legacy just like my daughter is mine.

In this month of March and during this season that we call “Seek 2020,” let us follow in the tradition of Jesus. We will fast and pray over many days and nights. In our physical and perhaps mental weakness, however, expect to find the same strength that God gave to Jesus. We will learn to resist temptation, which is a part of the human spirit. We will also seek to get closer to God and learn to know His voice so that we can hear the plans that he has for us. Therefore, let us seek Him with our whole heart and accept our position as legacies of Jesus Christ. That is what God wants us to be.

Deacon Patricia Wallace
Diaconate Ministry

DAY 26: RECOVERY

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

—Romans 8:1

RECOVER IN CHRIST JESUS

When you choose Jesus Christ, know there is no condemnation. Plainly speaking, there is no room for guilt or blame in your life. When you feel you have failed God, yourself, or others, your place before God does not change. When God looks at you, He doesn't see the sins you've committed, the hurt you've projected on others, or the things you haven't done. When you are in Christ, you are clothed in the clean, and He only sees His holy, blameless child.

How can this be possible? It's possible because Christ died in your place. Your sins were placed on Christ's shoulders and buried with him. Acknowledge that Christ's work on the cross cleansed and purified you. God promises that when you acknowledge Him in all your ways, He will make your paths straight. Your sins are no match for Christ's sacrifice; therefore, they have been washed completely away. You can come into the presence of God with great joy. Worship Him on your journey throughout your challenges and let go of your guilt and regret...and Recover! Live in peace, knowing that no one and nothing can destroy your relationship with God. What a beautiful thing to know that no matter what happens in this life, you have unspeakable joy as a blameless and loved child!

Dr. Nicole Hayes
Parents Association President

DAY 27: FELLOWSHIP

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

– Acts 2:42

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

– 1 John 1:3

#FOODFUNANDFELLOWSHIP

I have often heard youth ministry programs advertise events with the tagline “Food, Fun and Fellowship!” I’m quite sure good ol’ church food and a chance to hang out with friends persuaded my kids to attend many church events. But what exactly is fellowship? Is it just a social activity or event?

The idea of Christian fellowship is found in the Greek word *koinonia*. The first appearance of the word in the New Testament appears in Acts 2:42, where Luke tells us that early Christians devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer. Fellowship or *koinonia* was one of the primary reasons for getting together. The essential element of *koinonia* is the relationship believers have with God through the new life gained by accepting Jesus Christ, His Son, and in turn, the relationship believers can have with each other because of our common bond in Christ (1 John 1:3). Therefore, fellowship is first and foremost a relationship, rather than an activity.

The early church demonstrated the importance of fellowship by their devotion to it. When you gather for food, fun and fellowship you are cultivating your relationship with God and your Christian community. These activities and togetherness are opportunities to grow in God’s Word; pray, love and encourage one another; and remind us of our shared unity and purpose. Fellowship helps to build stronger disciples for Christ. So, the next youth lock-in, harvest festival, retreat, or skate-night, as you enjoy the food and fun, know that you are making valuable connections to Christ and friendships that will support you on your Christian journey.

Deacon Angela Moore
CrossOver Volunteer

DAY 28: CONFIDENCE

“I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.”

– 2 Corinthians 7:16

COUNTERFEIT CONFIDENCE

Our current culture encourages us to project confidence, however, in this season, the countercultural God we serve is calling us to allow Him to impart it. Whether we put our confidence in our own gifts or in what we project through the masks we wear on social media, the only place where our confidence can rest is in the Lord. Everything we’re doing to cultivate counterfeit confidence must cease. Many of us are buckling under the pressures of life because we’ve developed a fraudulent imitation of confidence that cannot sustain us. Yet at the same time, we must also silence the lies that steal our confidence. Do you struggle with not feeling smart enough, not having enough time or money, or not being good enough, period? Remember: The Lord is enough. So how do you develop real confidence that only God can provide? Trust God’s process and timing.

Paul writes this letter amid everything the church was then (and you might be now) experiencing—sickness, hardships, stress, bondage, sleepless nights, and pain. Despite what’s going on in your life, God has a secret to tell you: He’s never been defeated! We must put the full weight of our confidence in the promises of God and His character. Don’t feel like a failure if some situations didn’t happen as you had hoped; that’s everyone’s testimony. No matter the good and the bad, the peaks and the valleys, or the wheat and the tare that grow together in your life, rejoice knowing there’s a blessing in everything. Trust the process and be confident in the One who allowed it.

For those of us who have too much confidence or not enough, the revelation is the same—Your confidence is in God’s faithfulness. Whatever stands in front of you, has hurt you, or whatever the enemy meant for evil, the Lord is turning it for good. The plans of God are revealed in the presence of God, therefore seek the Lord for real confidence while letting go of the counterfeit. God will never fail, so neither will you.

Rev. Dr. Shelley E. Brown, PhD, MDiv,
Associate Minister, Higher Ground Ministry, IPM

SELAH WORD OF THE DAY: **REBUILD**

JOURNAL QUESTION: What has you doubting?

PRAYER GOAL: 40 minutes

Lined writing area with horizontal orange lines for journaling.

DAY 29: PERSEVERANCE

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

– Romans 5:3–5

CREATED FOR MORE

Suffering, defined as one’s capacity to endure trials, sustain loss, or to be put at a disadvantage, is not only inevitable but I would argue necessary. It is necessary to know that you can walk away, get through or give up some things and live on. Your ability to see beyond and push through your present circumstance is what cultivates the qualities that will inform who you will ultimately become.

Have you ever questioned whether or not you would be able to survive, get up from, or outrun challenges that confront you? Whenever you commit yourself to something, it always seems as if the test soon follows. But rather than fretting about the test, take comfort in knowing that you already have the answer!

You were created for hope. You were created for love. It is this hope and this love that should compel you not to give in nor to give up. How much easier is it to face whatever you may have to endure when you know and serve a God who has promised that you will never have to go it alone?!

Melissa Krothe
Senior Administrative Assistant to the Ministers

DAY 30: SACRIFICE

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.”

– Romans 12:1–2

LONG-TERM SACRIFICES

Sacrifice comes in many shapes and sizes. Sometimes it’s going the extra mile. Sometimes it’s lending a hand when you yourself are tired. Sometimes it’s giving up the things that bring pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction. Sometimes it’s refusing to take the easy way out of a difficult situation. Sacrifice comes in many forms, but it always yields one constant result: a strengthened spirit.

On the 30th day of this fast we pray you’ve begun to feel the reward that comes in sacrifice. Perhaps it’s been a difficult journey, but every step in this imperfect struggle has brought you closer to a perfect God. When we overemphasize what we’ve given up, we can miss the beauty of what we’ve gained. Today we pray that you will take a moment to rejoice in every small victory, every act of resistance, and every improvement in your health. These are the seeds that will serve as a catalyst to your growth far beyond the end of this fast.

This season of sacrifice isn’t coming to an end. The beauty of the sacrifices you’ve made this month is that they have transformed your inner spirit. God orchestrated some things in this Seek fast that have prepared you for challenges coming down the road later this year and throughout this new decade. We give God thanks for the resilience, determination, and favor—all of which are the fruit of our sacrifice. May we continue to sacrifice as we strive to draw closer to God, the one who proved His love for us in making the greatest sacrifice of all.

Min. Elijah McDavid
Assistant to the Pastor for Village

DAY 31: CONTENTMENT

“I am not saying this out of need, for I have learned to be content regardless of my circumstances.”

– Philippians 4:11

IT'S OKAY

I hate losing. In fact, I hate losing more than I enjoy winning. Whether it is competitive sports, running challenges, a game of chess, or Uno, I hate the feeling of coming up short. No one sets out to lose. Even the most underprepared people can prayerfully envision seeing themselves coming out on top. Yet, although we all expect to win, the reality is that we do not always win. In fact, I would submit to you that we probably fail more than we succeed. Just because we don't accomplish our goals, just because we don't come out on top, doesn't mean we haven't learned anything.

During this fast, I'm sure you made some mistakes. If you didn't, shout out to you! But for the vast majority of us, we failed, and maybe we failed more than once. But our failure doesn't mean that we have to throw our experience away. Perfection was never the goal, transformation was. Every time you decided to get back into the swing of things, you were making a decision not to give up! Celebrate that! Every time you felt guilty for watching TV, that was you hearing God's voice. Celebrate that! You can either choose to dwell on what you did not do correctly, or you can choose to celebrate all the times you prioritized the fast over your flesh! Don't be so hard on yourself! If you won't celebrate yourself, I will!

Congratulations, you did it!

Rev. Marc Lavarin
Assistant to the Pastor for Online & YAM

DANIEL FAST RECIPES

BAKED OATMEAL

1½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats
1½ cups unsweetened almond milk
½ cup unsweetened applesauce
¼ cup chopped dried apricots
¼ cup chopped dates or raisins
¼ cup chopped pecans or walnuts
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put all ingredients in a large bowl and stir well. Transfer to an 8 by 8-inch baking dish that has been lightly rubbed with olive oil. Pour oatmeal mixture into dish and bake 45–50 minutes or until slightly browned and crispy on top.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 2 squares)

by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

BLUEBERRY MANGO SMOOTHIE

1 cup water or unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk
1 cup fresh or frozen mango chunks
1 fresh or frozen banana, peeled, sliced
½ cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1 tablespoon flaxseed meal, optional
1 tablespoon unsweetened coconut flakes

Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth.

by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

APPLE-CINNAMON HOT CEREAL

1 (14.5-ounce) can coconut milk
2 cups cooked brown rice
1 apple, chopped, unpeeled (about 1½ cups)
1 banana, mashed (about 1 cup)
1 cup roughly chopped dates
1½ teaspoons cinnamon
Pinch nutmeg
½ cup toasted pecans or walnuts

Add coconut milk, brown rice, apple, banana, dates, cinnamon, and nutmeg to a medium saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat about 10 minutes or until heated through. Stir

frequently to prevent burning on bottom of pan. Sprinkle 1-tablespoon pecans or walnuts over each serving.

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1/2 cup)

by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

STIR-FRY VEGETABLES WITH BROWN RICE

1 tablespoon sesame oil
3 green onions (finely chopped)
3 tablespoons fresh ginger (minced)
4 cups fresh broccoli (chopped)
½ pound fresh green beans (chopped)
2 carrots (peeled and sliced on diagonal)
1 bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange)
2 cloves garlic (minced)
4 cups greens (chopped kale, bok choy, spinach, collards, etc)
1 can sliced water chestnuts (drained)
3 cups cooked brown rice
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 ½ cups peas (if frozen run under water to thaw)
½ cup toasted sliced almonds

Heat a deep skillet or wok over medium heat for about 1 minute. Add oil and heat for 1 minute. Add green onions and ginger. Sauté for 5 minutes. Add broccoli, green beans, carrots, bell pepper, and garlic. Stir fry for 8–10 minutes. Add greens and toss for about 2 minutes or until greens are wilted. Stir in water chestnuts, brown rice, soy sauce, peas, and almonds. Serve as a complete meal

by Susan Gregory “The Daniel Fast”

CHIPOTLE BLACK BEAN BURGERS

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 cup mashed cooked sweet potatoes (about 1 large sweet potato, peeled)
¼ cup oat flour (see Recipe Notes) or brown rice flour
½ tablespoon dried parsley
¼ teaspoon chipotle chile pepper seasoning
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper

Preheat oven to broil setting. With a potato masher or fork, mash black beans in a large bowl, leaving about 1/4 of the beans whole. Mix in sweet potatoes, oat flour, parsley, chipotle chile pepper seasoning, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Scoop out 1/3 cup of bean mixture, and place on an 11 x 17-inch baking sheet that has been rubbed with olive oil. Flatten and shape into a circle with spatula. Repeat with the remaining bean mixture to make 6 burgers.

Broil 4 inches from heat about 7–8 minutes or until golden brown. Flip burgers carefully with spatula. Broil 2–3 more minutes, and serve.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 burger)

by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

GREEK-STYLE STUFFED PEPPERS

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ cup chopped onion
 ½ cup diced zucchini
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
 3 chopped canned artichokes, drained
 ½ cup chopped black olives
 1 teaspoon dried oregano flakes or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
 1 teaspoon dried parsley or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 medium bell peppers (green, orange, red, and/or yellow)
 2 cups cooked quinoa
 ½ tablespoons pine nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place artichokes in a food processor, and pulse until artichokes are chopped well. Set aside. Heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and zucchini. Cook 3–5 minutes or until vegetables are softened.

Lower heat, and add garlic. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly so garlic doesn’t burn. Add tomato sauce, artichokes, olives, oregano, parsley, and salt. Cook 15 minutes, or until sauce is thickened. While sauce is cooking, prepare peppers. Cut in half lengthwise, and remove stems and seeds. Place peppers in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain in colander, and place in a large baking dish. When sauce is finished, mix in the quinoa and pine nuts. Stir well. Spoon mixture evenly into pepper halves. Add hot water to dish to a depth of 1/2 inch. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes.

by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

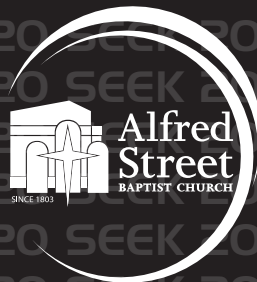
CAJUN RED BEANS AND RICE

½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ cup chopped green pepper
 ½ cup chopped red onion
 ½ cup sliced celery
 ¼ cup water
 2 teaspoons Creole Seasoning
 1 (15.5-ounce) can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
 2 cups cooked brown rice

Heat olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add green peppers, onions, and celery. Cook until vegetables are softened, about 3–5 minutes. Add water and Creole Seasoning. Stir well. Mix in kidney beans and rice. Lower heat and cook another 5 minutes or until heated through.

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1/2 cup)

by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”



ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

301 S. ALFRED STREET, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY, *SENIOR PASTOR*



@alfredstreetbc

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