

SPRING 2024 ISSUE 7, VOL.11

The Road

Devotional Readings for Lent Through Easter

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace: An Ash Wednesday Devotional

February 14, 2024

As we enter this sacred season of Lent, let us reflect upon the profound words found in Psalm 51:1, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.” These verses invite us into a posture of humility, acknowledging our need for God's mercy and grace. As we bear the mark of ashes on our foreheads, may we be reminded of our mortality and the transformative power of God's love.

Isaiah 58:11-12 further illuminates our theme of Abundant Love, Amazing Grace:

“The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
¹²Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”

These verses offer a promise of renewal and restoration, emphasizing the abundant love and grace that God freely bestows upon us.

As we embark on the Lenten journey, let us not only seek forgiveness for our shortcomings but also embrace the hope of transformation. God's mercy is not a scarce resource; it flows abundantly, quenching the parched areas of our lives. The ashes on our foreheads symbolize both repentance and the potential for new life to spring forth.

In the spirit of this season, may we become “repairers of broken walls” and “restorers of streets with dwellings” in our communities. Let the love and grace we receive from God compel us to extend the same to others. As we reflect on our mortality and God's unfailing love, may we be inspired to live with a profound awareness of the abundant grace that surrounds us, shaping our Lenten journey with humility, repentance, and a commitment to be vessels of God's transformative love.

Bob Lee

Ash Wednesday



Scripture Readings for the Week

- Wednesday, February 14 - [Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10](#)
- Thursday, February 15 - [Psalm 25:1-10; Daniel 9:1-14; John 1:3-10](#)
- Friday, February 16 - [Psalm 25:1-10; Daniel 9:15-25a; 2 Timothy 4:1-5](#)
- Saturday, February 17 - [Psalm 25:1-10; Psalm 32; Matthew 9:2-13](#)

Daily Bible readings are from the online Revised Common Lectionary, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library.

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace:

Guidance and Grace in Lent: A Journey with Psalm 25:10

February 18, 2024

In this season of Lent, as we intentionally draw closer to God, let's reflect on Psalm 25:10: "All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies."

As we embark on this journey of reflection and repentance, we find solace in the assurance that every path the Lord leads us on is adorned with steadfast love and unwavering faithfulness. Lent is a time to ponder the depth of God's covenant and testimonies, seeking a more profound connection with Him.

In the moments of uncertainty and self-examination, let's remember that God's love is the compass guiding us. His faithfulness is the steady rhythm of our Lenten walk. Like a gentle shepherd, God leads us along paths of righteousness, urging us to keep His covenant and embrace His testimonies.

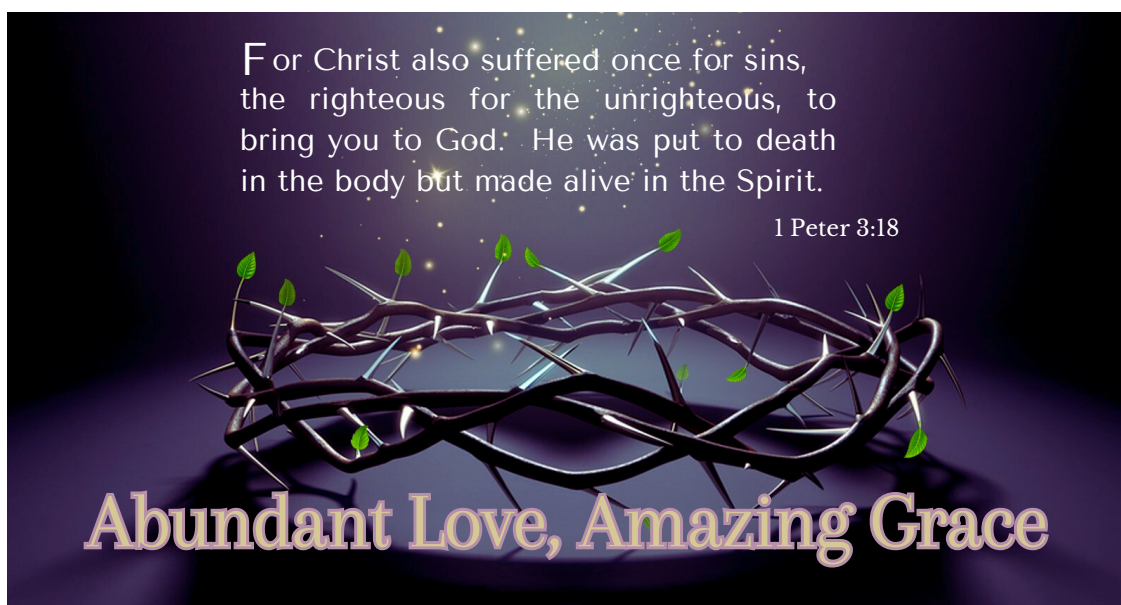
During Lent, we often focus on surrender and repentance. As we do so, let's not forget the grace embedded in Psalm 25:10. God's love is not just a destination; it's the very path we tread. His faithfulness is not a distant promise; it's our constant companion.

May this Lenten season be a time of embracing the divine guidance that surrounds us, acknowledging the grace that accompanies every step we take. In our commitment to keeping God's covenant and testimonies, let's find comfort and renewal in the steadfast love and faithfulness that pave the way before us.

As we navigate this Lenten journey, may we be reminded that each step taken in God's love and faithfulness is a step toward transformation, redemption, and a deeper communion with the Almighty. Amen.

Kyara Kelley -Jones

First Sunday of Lent



Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, February 18 - [Genesis 9:8-17](#); [Psalm 25:1-10](#); [1 Peter 3:18-22](#);
[Mark 1:9-15](#)

Monday, February 19 - [Psalm 77](#); [Job 4:1-21](#); [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

Tuesday, February 20 - [Psalm 77](#); [Job 5:8-27](#); [1 Peter 3:8-18a](#)

Wednesday, February 21 - [Psalm 77](#); [Proverbs 30:1-9](#); [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

Thursday, February 22 - [Psalm 22:23-31](#); [Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18](#);
[Romans 3:21-31](#)

Friday, February 23 - [Psalm 22:23-31](#); [Genesis 16:1-6](#); [Romans 4:1-12](#)

Saturday, February 24 - [Psalm 22:23-31](#); [Genesis 16: 7-15](#); [Mark 8:27-30](#)

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace: Love Anyway

February 25, 2024

Scripture: John 13:34-35

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not boast. Love is not proud. This key scripture, found in the book of 1 Corinthians, seems to leave out one key fact. Love is hard.

In the book of John, during the Last Supper, Jesus tells us that we are to love one another. Not those we like, not those with whom we always get along, not those who look or talk or act like us. Jesus doesn't say "Love the people you want to love." Jesus tells us to love one another. It's a simple suggestion, yet one we struggle with so greatly, because love is hard.

We are not perfect human beings. We are flawed. We make mistakes. We are bound to slip up in our journey to truly loving our neighbor. So what should we do when we encounter an individual who is particularly difficult to love? Should we ignore them? Should we avoid them? No, we should love them anyway.

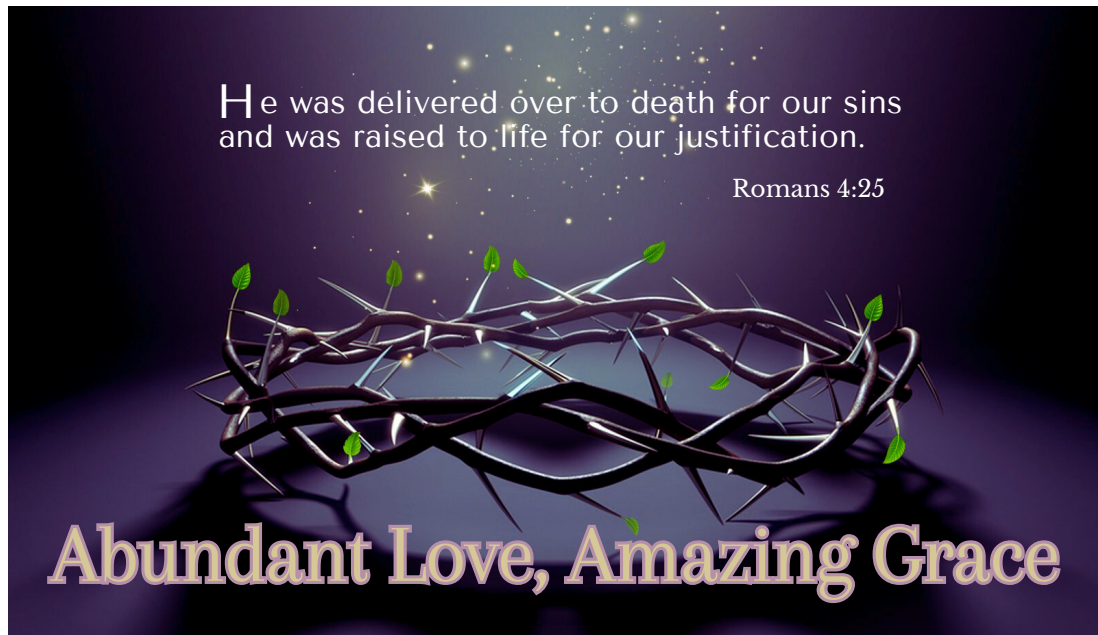
At Camp Alkulana, we end each day with a staff meeting to discuss hiccups during the day and information we think is important for all of the staff to know. One night, we began to discuss a particularly difficult camper. This camper was creating lots of issues for the staff, and the majority of the counselors were feeling the frustration of trying to work with this particular child. As we lamented how hard it was to love him, our boss gently informed us of some details of his life outside of camp, and how he probably didn't know how to accept our love because he wasn't used to receiving it.

In that moment, it was clear that we needed to love anyway. No matter how hard it was for us, no matter the strain it put on our day, that child needed the love we had to offer. So, this week, when you encounter someone who is difficult to love, don't avoid them or ignore them. Love them anyway.

Kate Wakeland



Second Sunday of Lent



Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, February 25 - [Genesis 17:1-7,15-16](#); [Psalm 22:23-31](#);
[Romans 4:13-25](#); [Mark 8:31-38](#); [Mark 9:2-9](#)

Monday, February 26 - [Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45](#); [Genesis 21:1-7](#);
[Hebrews 1:8-12](#)

Tuesday, February 27 - [Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45](#); [Genesis 22:1-19](#);
[Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19](#)

Wednesday, February 28 - [Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45](#); [Jeremiah 30:12-22](#);
[John 12:36-43](#)

Thursday, February 29 - [Psalm 19](#); [Exodus 19:1-9a](#); [1 Peter 2:4-10](#)

Friday, March 1 - [Psalm 19](#); [Exodus 19:9b-15](#); [Acts 7:30-40](#)

Saturday, March 2 - [Psalm 19](#); [Exodus 19:16-25](#); [Mark 9:2-8](#)

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace:

Why I Observe Lent

March 3, 2024

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” - 1 Cor. 1:18

I grew up in a Baptist tradition that did not observe Lent. For us the high holy days were Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Lent was something we left to the Catholics. Ashes on the forehead and “giving up things” for Lent were foreign to us and not part of our tradition. However, as my Christian journey has progressed, I have come to appreciate how the observance of the 40-day period called Lent can deepen my faith. Lent culminates with Holy Week, beginning the Sunday before Easter and going up to Easter Sunday, that great day of celebrating our Lord’s resurrection. Observing Lent adds to the celebration.

Like most Christians around the world observing the Lenten season encourages me to spend time in introspection, self-examination, and repentance. But, beyond the inward looking that Lent requires, today’s selected scripture (1 Cor. 1:18) reminds me to also remember the central message of the Gospel as I journey through Lent; “the message of the Cross.” You can’t get to Easter without going through the cross.

But what is the “message of the cross”? Paul says that “to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” The message of the cross is that Christ died for you and for me. He died in our place. He took the punishment our sins deserved and secured for us eternal life. Without the message of the cross, says theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, we end up with “a view that insists on a God without wrath bringing men and women without sin into a kingdom without judgment through a Christ without a cross.”

The message of the cross also says that God comes along side of us when we suffer. The German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed for resisting Hitler and the Nazis, was right when he said “Only a suffering God can help.” The cross is proof that God suffers with us.

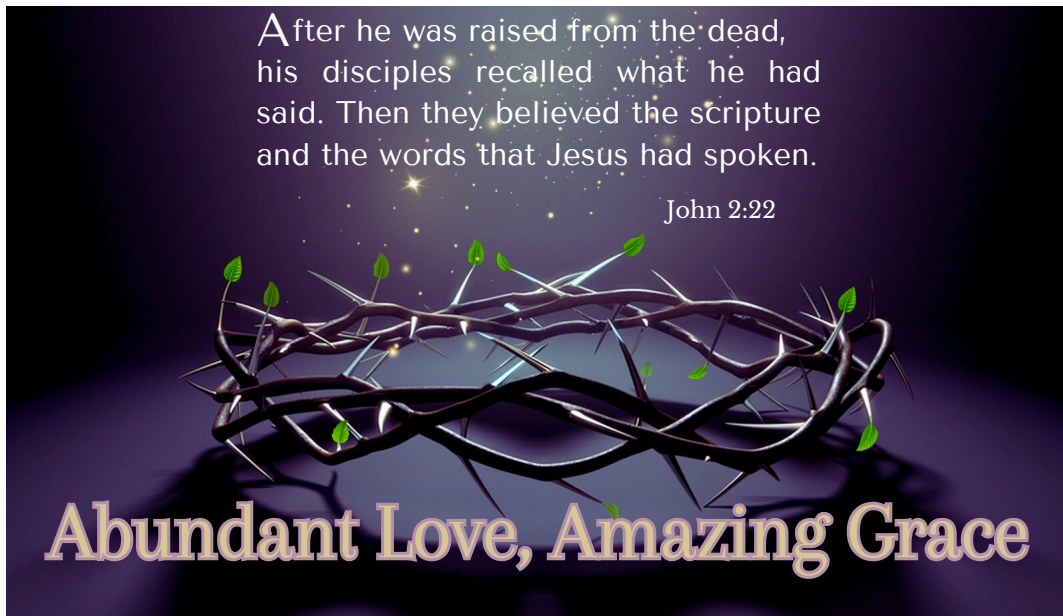
One of my favorite preachers, Fred Craddock, explains it this way. “Sometimes a child falls down and skins a knee or an elbow, then runs crying to his mother. The mother picks up the child and says, ‘Let me kiss it and make it better,’ as if mother has magic saliva or something. She picks up the child, kisses the skinned place, holds the child in her lap, and all is well. Did her kiss make it well? No, no. It was that ten minutes in her lap. Just sit in the lap of love and see the mother crying. ‘Mother, why are you crying? I’m the one who hurt my elbow.’ ‘Because you hurt,’ the mother says, ‘I hurt.’

That is the message of the cross and why I observe Lent.

The message of the cross is that the Son of God was crucified to atone for the sins of mankind and secure pardon and salvation for all who would believe in Him.

Jim Townsend

Third Sunday of Lent



Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, March 3 - [Exodus 20:1-17](#); [Psalm 19](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18-25](#);
[John 2:13-22](#)

Monday, March 4 - [Psalm 84](#); [1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22](#); [1 Corinthians 3:10-23](#)

Tuesday, March 5 - [Psalm 84](#); [2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19](#);
[Hebrews 9:23-28](#)

Wednesday, March 6 - [Psalm 84](#); [Ezra 6:1-16](#); [Mark 11:15-19](#)

Thursday, March 7 - [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#); [Genesis 9:8-17](#); [Ephesians 1:3-6](#)

Friday, March 8 - [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#); [Daniel 12:5-13](#); [Ephesians 1:7-14](#)

Saturday, March 9 - [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#); [Numbers 20:22-29](#); [John 3:1-13](#)

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace: The Joy and Wonder of Working with God's Very Young Children

March 10, 2024

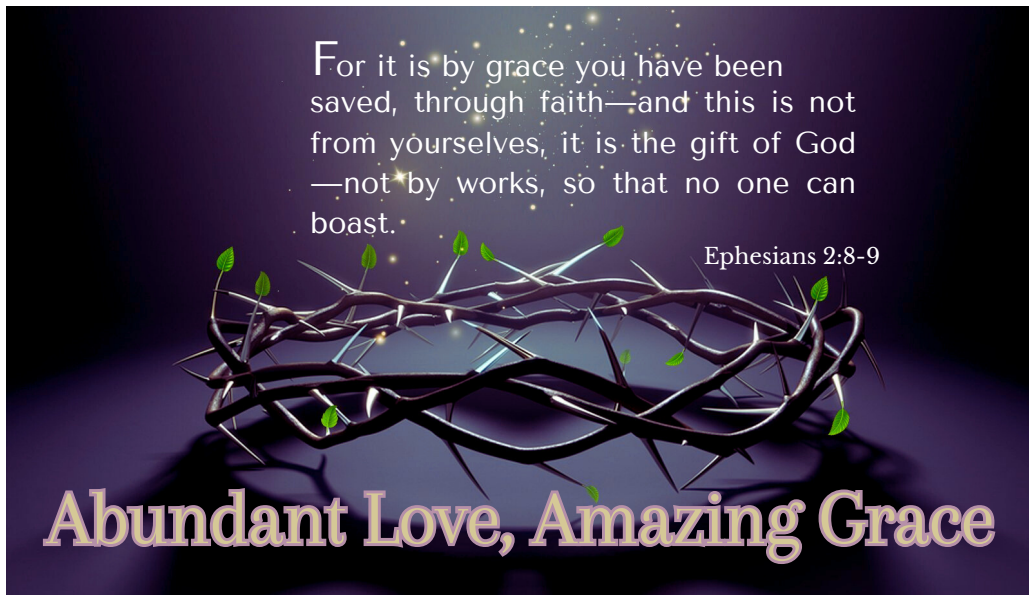
Loving children has always been easy to do. They are each one a unique little person that God has created and allowed to cross my path in life. Full of curiosity, energy, and a sense of wonder about every little thing. From the use of a toy to bugs in the dirt, to paints, glitter, and glue, oh my, what a wonderful joy to watch little hands create (and yes, tear down) their own creations. Those same little eyes watch everything we do, every word we say and as they grow, they learn to fold those little hands in prayer, they hold a new friend's hand, or share a hug of comfort, and lead friends to play outdoors. And when they are not together sometimes, they are sad and miss their school family. Building relationships not only with each other but with our church, other families and with God too.

Each day we enter the preschool building with a plan, a plan for how the day should go, a plan to learn and grow and plant tiny seeds of trust, faith, and hope. Of course, you must always be prepared to change that plan and meet the children right where they are. Some children have overcome unimaginable events early in their young lives, others will need special care and support throughout life. And yet it is some of those children who remind us to simply smile, share a hug, and remember that God is with us every step of the way. We all have a role to shape the next generation with each class and every child. It is an honor to share our faith and love for Christ and the church in the lives of all our children.

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” (NRSV)

Tanja Cottrell

Fourth Sunday of Lent



Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, March 10 - [Numbers 21:4-9](#); [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#); [Ephesians 2:1-10](#); [John 3:14-21](#)

Monday, March 11 - [Psalm 107:1-16](#); [Exodus 15:22-27](#); [Hebrews 3:1-6](#)

Tuesday, March 12 - [Psalm 107:1-16](#); [Numbers 20:1-13](#); [1 Corinthians 10:6-13](#)

Wednesday, March 13 - [Psalm 107:1-16](#); [Isaiah 60:15-22](#); [John 8:12-20](#)

Thursday, March 14 - [Psalm 51:1-12](#); [Isaiah 30:15-18](#); [Hebrews 4:1-13](#)

Friday, March 15 - [Psalm 51:1-12](#); [Exodus 30:1-10](#); [Hebrews 4:14-5:4](#)

Saturday, March 16 - [Psalm 51:1-12](#); [Habakkuk 3:2-13](#); [John 12:1-11](#)

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace: Forgiveness = Freedom

March 17, 2024

Scripture: Genesis 45:1-15

Today on our Lenten journey is the day that our CAST Community Children's Chorus will lead us in worship. They will do this with a creative retelling of the Genesis story of Joseph and the coat of many colors. After years of being estranged from his family – even sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph finds it within his heart to forgive them. Weeping loudly, Joseph releases all of the hurt and burden he has been carrying for so long.

Can you imagine how much better and lighter we would all feel if we let go of past wrongs done to us? We are fooled into thinking that holding a grudge against someone harms them and keeps them at bay. The opposite is true. It takes all of our energy as individuals to keep up those barriers, dislike, disapproval, jealousy, and maybe even hatred toward others. It consumes every fiber of our beings to hate or despise someone or something for which we feel wronged. In the end, we are the ones self-incarcerated or self-enslaved by the very actions we use against our enemies. Aren't we exhausted by all of this? Aren't we just so tired at the end of the day, we wish the world would just go away?

Find a private place, weep loudly, let it go, forgive what needs to be forgiven, let it all out, let yourself be emptied of everything weighing you down, and then let the light of Christ fill the empty space. You will feel cleansed. You will Be cleansed. Then your heart will be prepared for the passion of Holy Week. You will be prepared for the death of our Savior who made it so that we can forgive and be forgiven – that's the order the Bible says it has to happen – we are forgiven as we have forgiven others. Then finally our hearts will be ready for the celebration of our risen Lord.

You will be light! You will finally be free!

Phillip Brown

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 51: 1-2



Abundant Love, Amazing Grace

Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, March 17 - [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#); [Psalm 51:1-12](#); [Psalm 119:9-16](#);
[Hebrews 5:5-10](#); [John 12:20-33](#)

Monday, March 18 - [Psalm 119:9-16](#); [Isaiah 43:8-13](#); [2 Corinthians 3:4-11](#)

Tuesday, March 19 - [Psalm 119:9-16](#); [Isaiah 44:1-8](#); [Acts 2:14-24](#)

Wednesday, March 20- [Psalm 119:9-16](#); [Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23](#);
[John 12:34-50](#)

Thursday, March 21- [Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#); [Deuteronomy 16:1-8](#);
[Philippians 2:1-11](#)

Friday, March 22 - [Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#); [Jeremiah 33:1-9](#);
[Philippians 2:12-18](#)

Saturday, March 23 - [Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#); [Jeremiah 33:10-16](#);
[Mark 10:32-34, 46-52](#)

Holy Week 2024

Palm Sunday

March 24

9:15 Bible Study

10:30 Worship!

Maundy Thursday

March 28 at 6pm



Good Friday

Bon Air Christian Church

March 29 at 12:00 noon

Easter Sunday

March 31

9:15 Bible Study

10:30 Worship!



Abundant Love, Amazing Grace: Hearing God's Word Through Music

March 24, 2024

There is an inherent musicality in scripture. The Holy Bible in itself is a magnificent work of poetry that covers a vast emotional landscape. The word of God lives and breathes like a chorus singing at the top of its lungs. Indeed, He sings, too, to those who will listen.

Consequently, scripture has been set to music for hundreds of years, enabling Christians to connect with God's word in a special way. Psalm 24, vv. 7 and 8 are set in traditional baroque style by G. F. Handel in his renowned "Messiah." Numerous composers have emulated his style and set this text to reflect their own times. These verses depict the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem as well as the eventual arrest and trial.

Palm Sunday quickly evolves into Passion Sunday marking the start of Holy Week. Through musical settings of these verses, we may hear the harmony that Christ promoted as he entered Jerusalem.

Bob Ford and Jacob Giancaterino

Palm Sunday

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ
is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11



Abundant Love, Amazing Grace

Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, March 24 - [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#); [Psalm 31:9-16](#); [Philippians 2:5-11](#);
[Mark 14:1-15:47](#); [Mark 15:1-39, \(40-47\)](#)

Monday, March 25 - [Isaiah 42:1-9](#); [Psalm 36:5-11](#); [Hebrews 9:11-15](#);
[John 12:1-11](#)

Tuesday, March 26 - [Isaiah 49:1-7](#); [Psalm 71:1-14](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#);
[John 12:20-36](#)

Wednesday, March 27 - [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#); [Psalm 70](#); [Hebrews 12:1-3](#);
[John 13:21-32](#)

Thursday, March 28 - Maundy Thursday
[Exodus 12:1-4, \(5-10\), 11-14](#); [Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19](#);
[1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#); [John 13:1-17, 31b-35](#)

Friday, March 29 - Good Friday
[Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#); [Psalm 22](#); [Hebrews 10:16-25](#);
[Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9](#); [John 18:1-19:42](#)

Saturday, March 30 - Holy Saturday
[Job: 14:1-14](#); [Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24](#);
[Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16](#); [1 Peter 4:1-8](#); [Matthew 27:57-66](#);
[John 19:38-42](#)

Abundant Love, Amazing Grace: A Devotional for Easter

March 31, 2024

He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! On this blessed Easter Sunday, let us rejoice and be glad, for this is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24). As we gather to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the essence of our faith comes alive, and the profound truth of God's abundant love and amazing grace shines brightly.

The Apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, reminds us of the core of our faith—that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-11). The resurrection is the pinnacle of God's abundant love, a divine expression of grace that transcends our understanding.

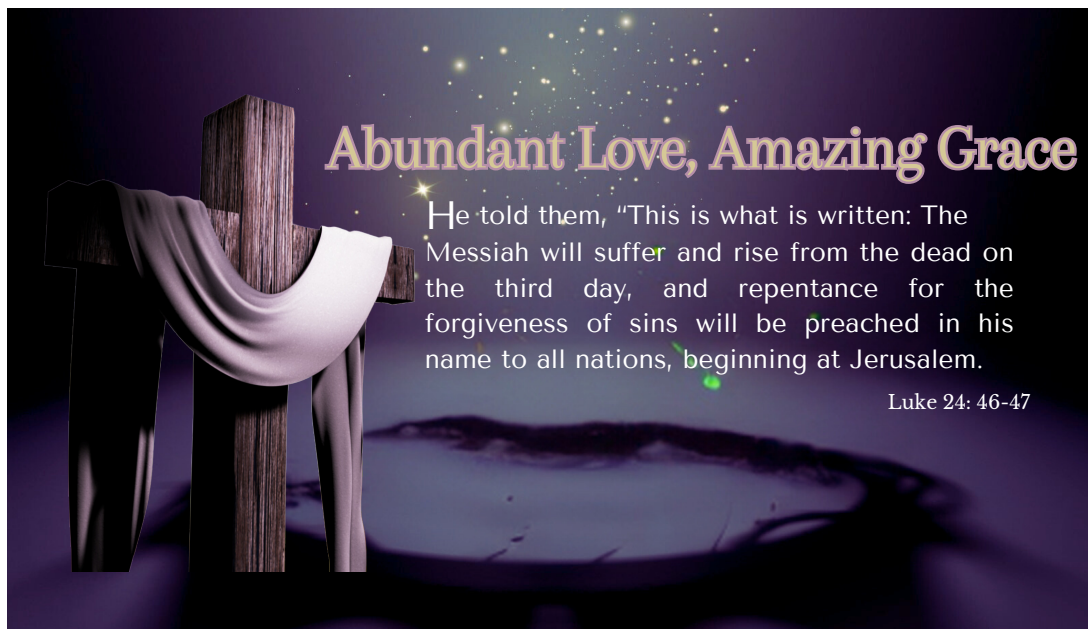
In Acts 10:34-43, we are reminded that God shows no partiality, and in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. The message of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus Christ is proclaimed, emphasizing God's abundant love, which extends to all people.

Turning our attention to the Gospel of Mark (16:1-8), we witness the sheer awe and astonishment of the women at the empty tomb. The angelic proclamation, “He has risen!” echoes through the ages, resonating with the unmerited favor of God—the amazing and unending grace that triumphs over sin and death.

As we reflect on these passages, let us embrace the reality of God's sacrificial love, poured out on us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His victory over death assures us, as the hymn writer states, of the grace that is greater than all our sin. This Easter, let the joy of the empty tomb fill our hearts, knowing that we serve a risen Savior whose love and grace abound beyond measure. May this day be a testament to the enduring truth that in Christ, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. The old is gone and the new is come!

Bob Lee

Easter Sunday



Scripture Readings for the Week

Sunday, March 31 - [Isaiah 25:6-9](#); [Psalm 118:1-2,14-24](#); [Acts 10:34-43](#);
[1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#); [Mark 16:1-8](#)

Monday, April 1 - [Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24](#); [Genesis 1:1-19](#);
[1 Corinthians 15:35-49](#)

Tuesday, April 2 - [Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24](#); [Genesis 1:20-2:4a](#);
[1 Corinthians 15:50-58](#)

Wednesday, April 3 - [Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24](#); [Song of Solomon 3:1-11](#);
[Mark 16:1-8](#)

Thursday, April 4 - [Psalm 133](#); [Daniel 1:1-21](#); [Acts 2:42-47](#)

Friday, April 5 - [Psalm 133](#); [Daniel 2:1-23](#); [Acts 4:23-31](#)

Saturday, April 6 - [Psalm 133](#); [Daniel 2:24-49](#); [John 12:44-50](#)

Save the Date

May

- 2** Bon Air Interfaith Trialogue
- 5** High School Senior Recognition
C.A.S.T. Performance
First Sunday Food Offering
- 8** Wednesday Night Programming Ends
- 9** Bon Air Interfaith Trialogue
- 15** Called Congregational Meeting For
2024-2025 Budget
- 16** Bon Air Interfaith Trialogue
- 18** Family Ministry Trip to King's Dominion
- 19** Pentecost Sunday (Ovation in Worship!)
- 23** PrimeTimers' Annual Spring Picnic
- 27** Memorial Day (Church Office Closed)
- 31** Youth Lock-In

June

- 2** First Sunday Food Offering
- 9** Heritage Day 60th Anniversary
- 12-15** Passport Kids
- 16** Father's Day
- 30** Fifth Sunday Benevolence Offering

July

- 4** Independence Day
(Church Office Closed)
- 7** First Sunday Food Offering
- 7-12** Passport Youth
- 8-19** Building Sabbatical
- 15-19** Music and Arts Camp Eagle Eyrie
- 22-26** Vacation Bible School

August

- 1-3** Family Ministry Team Retreat
- 5-9** C.A.S.T. Camp
- 4** First Sunday Food Offering
- 11** End of Summer Bash
- 18** Blessing of the Backpacks