



Society of St. Andrew
GLEANNING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

Daily Lenten Devotions
scripture readings • reflections • prayers

Walk Humbly



Lent is a time of self-examination, evaluation, and sometimes drastic personal changes.

How quickly the joy of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday turns to the horror of his arrest, the mourning of his crucifixion, and the joy of seeing Jesus alive, Easter Day! What a mix of emotions the followers of Jesus must have experienced. What uncertainty!

Consider others as they are in the midst of their own drastic changes. Some have lost jobs while others have lost their homes. Finances have been depleted, but their children are still hungry. Where are they to turn?

As we step into Lent in 2021, chastened by nearly a year of living with and through the Coronavirus pandemic, the theme of this year's Lenten devotions may seem a bit strange—Walk Humbly. It comes from the book of the Old Testament prophet Micah, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8) What does "walking humbly with God" mean in these days? Perhaps it is just treading lightly on the earth, realizing that our time here is short and we are all more fragile than we previously realized. Over the next 47 days, as you read these devotions, you'll share in the reflections and prayers of a diverse group of writers and thinkers, all contemplating Micah 6:8 from within the time of the pandemic.

Over the last year, hunger needs in the U.S. have risen dramatically. At the time this booklet goes to press, 23% of American families don't always know where their next meal is coming from. And that percentage rises to nearly 31% for families with children. The Society of St. Andrew, in bringing these daily devotional messages to you, asks for your help in meeting those hunger needs. As you consider what "loving mercy" means in this difficult time, think about a financial contribution to the Society of St. Andrew to share fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables with hungry people this spring and summer. Your financial support and your prayers for those needing food assistance mean so much!

Every \$1 that you donate provides about 30 servings of healthy food to those in greatest need! Consider donating \$47 for the 47 days in Lent. You will provide more than 1,500 servings. What a way to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and give hope to our hungry neighbors! Thank you for all you do to feed others through the Society of St. Andrew!

Paying Attention

Scripture: Psalm 51:16–17

Several years ago during the season of Lent, I was observing a time of contrition with a morning devotion about sacrifice. I do not remember the scripture, but the prayer that I offered to God was “all that I have, I offer to God to do with as God pleases”. I remember praying that prayer with sincerity, thinking about material things that can always be replaced. I could offer all to God trusting that God would take care of me.

However, as I drove to work that morning I was still thinking about that prayer, and I realized that my family could be a part of that prayer. What had I done by offering everything I had to God? God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac. Would God test me in this way? My family was more important to me than any of my possessions.

As I continued to think about that prayer, I remembered the sacrifice God wants is a broken and contrite heart—and that I am willing to give. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for all of humanity. Self-examination taught me to pay attention to what I said in my prayers and to remember to trust our merciful God.

Prayer: God of mercy, I offer you my heart. Guide me with your Holy Spirit as I examine my thoughts and prayers this Lent and always. Amen.

Doris Hedrick - Natural Bridge, VA

Thursday, February 18

“Be Bright in the Corner Where You Are”

Scripture: Micah 6:8

“Be bright in the corner where you are” can be heard ringing through the church doors in melodious chorus before even entering the sanctuary. This is a well-known and loved song in South Africa. It is sung by men, women and children marching and dancing with hands raised in the air.

This song and those images always come to mind when I read the Micah verse and ponder “acting justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with God.”



Justice, mercy and humility are qualities of Christ that we are all called to embody. With this calling comes responsibility. We are called to act with justice, ensuring everyone has access to an abundant life. We are called to love our neighbor with mercy and grace. We are called to walk humbly with God in all things.

This is a big responsibility. It can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially in these days of a pandemic, but one day at a time... we can be bright in the corner where we are. We can seek justice in today's decisions that we make. We can love those with whom we come into contact today with grace and mercy, and we can walk humbly alongside our God in all we do today. One day at a time, be bright in the corner where you are!

Prayer: Fill us today with your justice, your mercy and your humility, oh God. Amen.

Dawn Barnes - Indianapolis, IN

Finding Trust in 2020

Scripture: Matthew 6:26

At the start of the pandemic last year we thought, “Oh, construction is essential, we’ll be fine!” Reality quickly set in. New construction was no issue, but remodeling and additions—my husband’s bread and butter—THAT was a whole different ball game. As he called on his clients, we heard over and over again, “We’re just going to hold off a while until this whole virus thing is over.” We certainly understood; we just weren’t prepared for it. I began to worry. How would we make ends meet? We certainly couldn’t live on one income.

My husband quickly reminded me that God has always taken care of us, and this time would be no different. His reassurance brought Matthew 6:26 to mind, and if he looks out for the birds, surely he will look out for me. Believing this is easier said than done, so one must be reminded...walk humbly.

So I trusted. Each time worry crept in, I would pray and leave it with God. Then, time after time, God sent along the jobs we needed to make ends meet, just in time. Every. Single. Time. God amazes me and keeps me coming back for the grace, love and abundance he offers.

Prayer: Loving God, please help me remember not to lean on my own understanding and the ways of the world. Remind me I am a child of God, you have all my days planned out and you care for me. I will trust in you. Amen.

Renée Scott – Bedford, VA

Saturday, February 20

Show Me the Way

Scripture: John 14:6

After morning readings, I walk a nature area of more than five miles of wonderful trails. I make a concerted effort to keep my prayers going with Jesus as I walk. One morning, I was deeply in need of the conversation for my heart was heavy with the direction of The United Methodist Church. For some years, we as the church were on a path that seemed foreign to us. Fewer people, especially younger people, were attending, and those who did attend, did so infrequently.



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The Best Food to Those Who Need it Most

Society of St. Andrew began in 1979 in the hills of Virginia and has grown into the largest field gleaning organization in the country. Working in a collaborative effort with thousands of farmers, tens of thousands of volunteers, and thousands of feeding programs in all 48 contiguous states, SoSA provides healthy food to those who have little or no access to it.

This nutritious, but excess, bounty is sent directly from the point of surplus (field or packing facility) to food banks or feeding programs that will share it directly with people in greatest need. The Society of St. Andrew's remarkable and efficient programs have proven extremely successful at providing nutritious food to those who need it most.

Your gifts make this possible!

2020 STATISTICS

**Pounds Distributed:
Over 42 million**

**2.6 billion servings shared
in our 42 year history**

9¢ a pound

Average cost per serving 3¢

Overhead: 6%



Then the COVID-19 pandemic came and accelerated the process of change for all churches. After a few months, it became clear the meaning of church would have to change. These were the things on my mind during that morning when I struggled with discerning a direction.

As I walked, I came to a familiar crossroad. I asked myself which way today? Then I heard in my head “take the path I have given you” meaning be humble and content with the path ahead. Then the verse John 14:6 came to me, and it became clear I should continue to shepherd the church down the path, laid out for us by Jesus, to be the witness to the “way, the truth, and the life in Christ Jesus.”

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for your presence and guidance. Help us to trust your Spirit to take us down the right path. In your precious name, we pray. Amen.

Andy Brock - Winchester, VA

Sunday, February 21

Biking Humbly

Scripture: Micah 6:8

Rev. Ferd (not Fred, but Ferd) was my example of one who walked humbly—except he was on a bicycle! Ferd was the founding pastor of a church in an expanding neighborhood, where new homes popped up in what had been fields between older houses and families.

Ferd biked through the area, waving to all he passed, often stopping to meet people on the road, in their yards, or waiting at an intersection. He made sure people learned about the new church. Far more often, he ministered from his two wheels.

Sometimes Ferd saw people working too hard in their yards, and he stopped to walk behind the mower or to pick up an extra rake while he visited. He would see if someone who looked lonely and discouraged needed a few friendly words or even a prayer. Once or twice, he found people arguing over the right of way at an intersection with no lights, and he just stood between them for a while.

The people of Ferd’s church always remembered their founder on two wheels. He always acted justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God.

Prayer: God of mercy, thank you for guiding us into your way, your life, and your ministry. Help us to see you in those we meet. May our daily walk always be with you and be shaped by your love for all. Amen.

Bill Olewiler - Fleming Island, FL

Monday, February 22

Walk Rightly

Scripture: Micah 6:8

“Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn, the sheep’s in the meadow, the cow’s in the corn; but where is my church, that seeks my sheep, under the church spire fast asleep.”

Is the Church asleep, or are we, as Jesus says to Sardis, “You are dead”? God’s people must be called out of their stupor and waywardness. The eighth-century Old Testament prophet, Micah, was a bullhorn calling wayward Israel back to God.

Like a prosecutor, the Lord God lays charges against his people: you go to bed dreaming up evil; you covet someone else’s field and house; you bully your neighbor to get it; in your business deals you overcharge; you lie and deceive; leaders pervert social justice for pay offs; religious authorities receive money to tell you whatever you want to hear. Is this you?

Our generation today is like Israel’s and like Germany’s in the late 1600’s. Like the prophet Micah, Pastor Philip Jacob Spener called all states of society—government, business leaders, everyday folk, pastors and church members alike—from spiritual and moral laxity to faith in Jesus Christ.

Likewise, through Micah, the Lord tells Israel and us to do what is good and what the Lord God expects. Do what is right. Live your daily life spiritually, morally, and ethically before your God.

Prayer: O Savior, with your grace I surrender my whole life to you and determine to live spiritually, morally and ethically before you. Amen.

Tom Thomas - Forest, VA

Never Too Old to Learn

Scripture: Romans 12:3

When I was six weeks old, my mom went to work, and hired a loving woman to care for me and our home. This woman's name was Leour. She loved and cared for me as her own. I spent my childhood with her and spent time in her community. Leour taught me many things about life. I learned a great deal about respect, love, and about her culture.

Now in my 50s, I believed that I was anti-racist, but I'm still learning things that I didn't know. I'm learning about redlining, white privilege and systemic racism. When the pandemics of COVID-19 and racial tensions struck last year, they revealed ongoing racial inequities and our/my ignorance of racism. Reparations? How do you repair it? How do you heal the hurt? Pray, forgive and learn.

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

As the saying goes, you're never too old to learn. I've learned that I don't know everything, but I do want to heal the hurt. I've learned not to think more highly of myself than I ought. Let us humbly pray, ask forgiveness for our ignorance, and teach others about the inequities and disparities. Pray for the Holy Spirit to heal the hurts of the past, the present, and to bring His peace to our nation.

Prayer: Lord, move us to educate ourselves, acknowledge the hurt, pray and forgive one another, and work together for solutions to all inequities, not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought. Amen.

Chesley Vohden - Forest, VA

Unsearchable Judgments and Inscrutable Ways

Scripture: Romans 11: 33-36

I have written many devotions over the years, but find this season's to be particularly challenging. Living in a time of a pandemic, social and political upheaval, and global climate change has brought about much self-examination and questions for God.

In many ways, I find myself wrestling with God over these issues much like Jacob in the Old Testament. Why, God? Why are we living through these frightening events? Like the Psalmist, I cry out for answers in these dark and troubling times.

My searching through scripture has brought me to Paul's letter to the Romans, 11:33. "O the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" I realize my questions for God have a timeless quality that have preceded my life and will continue forever. In humbleness, I am drawn back closer to God, the sovereign ruler of the universe.

As I take my daily walks with God, I am again reminded of the beauty of His creation. I know God is in control today, yesterday and for all our tomorrows. I may never understand God's ways, but I know he loves me. I know he loves each one of his children. He sent his only son, Jesus, to die for us so we might have eternal life beyond this world. He walks with us, now and forever. Thanks be to God!

Prayer: Lord, remind us to place our faith and trust in you always. Amen.

Bob Brooks - Fredericksburg, VA

Called to Prayer

Scripture: Philippians 4:6

In January 2019, I was a happily married senior in a marriage that had lasted 55 years. That month my serene life was shattered to pieces as my husband was diagnosed with cancer and the prognosis was not good.

I prayed, but more often I depended on the prayers of others. Despite the many prayers sent to heaven, nine months later my life partner was gone. After the funeral, I was numb and existed in the warm embrace of family and friends while I tied up myriad loose ends. “Stay busy” was my motto. Then reality struck. For the first time, the running of the household, and indeed my life, fell to me without the assistance of my loved one. Grief and desperation engulfed me. It was then that I turned to prayer in earnest.

With social activity limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, my consolation came by means of televised daily mass and rosary. Peace settled on me. I discerned that my calling was to pray for people in my life, even more intentionally than before as a Prayer Advocate.

I clearly realized God had not abandoned me! I trust in the Lord because he keeps his promises to be with me always. Now that my purpose is clear, I walk humbly with God. I feel a true sense of fulfillment. I pray that I may serve God for many more years, after all, I’m only 79!

Prayer: Dear Lord, continue to guide me along the path you have laid before me. Help me to remain steadfast in trusting and loving you. Amen.

Eva C. Kalke – Maricopa, AZ

Friday February 26

The Healing Prayer Shawl

Scripture: Matthew 5:43–45

I was being forced out of a job that I loved by false accusations and rumors instigated by a woman who wanted my position. I felt angry and frustrated and knew I would soon be gone.

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As a Christian, I know I must forgive and pray for my enemies, but it was so hard. As I was knitting a prayer shawl, I tried praying for her with each stitch but ended up dropping lots of stitches instead. One day when I was particularly unforgiving, I asked God to help free me from these feelings. That's when my cat jumped into my knitting bag and peed on the prayer shawl. At first, I was angry with my cat; then I burst out laughing as I envisioned giving my nemesis that shawl and watching her wrap herself in its unpleasant smelliness!

Then, I heard God asking me if that was who I was. Embarrassed and humbled, I knew my thoughts were not worthy of a child of God. I threw the whole knitting bag and prayer shawl in the trash, and strangely, my hatred, anger and frustration went with it. I felt free and at peace for the first time in a long time.

Prayer: Father, thanks for helping me do the right thing and freeing me from my unforgiving spirit. By the way, that new job you led me to, is totally awesome, and so are you! I love you! Amen.

Susie Brack - South Hill, VA

Saturday, February 27

Center of My Universe

Scripture: Micah 6:8

In *The Message*, I love the way Eugene Peterson states the “walk humbly” phrase. “Don’t take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.” I am 100 percent guilty of taking myself too seriously. I am indeed the center of my own universe—which is completely human, but Micah would encourage me to rise above my humanity to see with different eyes.

In the movie *Princess Diaries*, Mia is telling a crowd of people how she was weighing her decision of whether or not to accept the crown when she shares this, “I realized how many stupid times a day I use the word ‘I... when there’s like seven billion other people on the planet.”

Impressive insight and wisdom in an unexpected place: How many stupid times a day do I focus more on how the world affects me instead of focusing on how I might affect the world? Like grains of sand on a beach, there are far too many to count. We are naturally inclined to be self-focused, but can’t we rise above that to imitate God, to take seriously what God takes seriously?



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Preventing Waste, Feeding Hungry People

With your help, the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) addresses this crucial issue in two ways. In each, SoSA gathers up food that would otherwise be wasted. This fresh and nutritious food is then provided, at no cost, to food banks, pantries, and programs that feed or provide food to those most in need.

SoSA distributes food donated from a variety of sources including farms, fields, orchards, packing houses, and grocers. This is accomplished through the coordination of thousands of volunteers and events, each year.

Volunteers serve in a variety of roles. This includes gleaning fields and orchards, delivering packaged produce to hunger relief agencies, and unloading and distributing truckloads of food directly into the local community. In 2020 alone, SoSA distributed more than 42 million pounds of good food to families who might otherwise have gone without.

Often the food is surplus, inconveniently- sized, or cosmetically imperfect. Sometimes, it's marketable but the farmer or grower wanted to share it with the local community to address urgent needs.

Society of St. Andrew

GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS ~ FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

Prayer: Lord, when we are confronted by a choice of serving self or serving God, the choice should be easy. Because God has promised to take care of us, we have plenty of time to care for others. Help us show you to the world. Amen.

Chris Howell - Lynchburg, VA

Sunday, February 28

Closer to God

Scripture: Matthew 11:29

Humble. Humility. Humiliation. Words from the same root and yet they mean very different things to different people. Interpretation of these words, now and historically, especially from Scripture, has been the subject of many lively discussions!

From the beginning our human tendency equated being humble with being weak. God thought otherwise as the humble were chosen to lead. Cries for powerful kings echoed throughout the ages. Jesus being born in a humble state, in a humble stable continued the journey of paradox. His life was one of humility, yet one of great strength.

At the end of an intense, silent Centering Prayer retreat, I shared my inner turmoil in asking the late Fr. Thomas Keating about humiliations and how to deal with self-disappointment. He responded, "Be glad for them! They let you



know you are not God!" I realized being on my knees in repentant humiliation wasn't the worst place to be. In life's humiliations, we are shown the grace of daily redeeming, turning us again and again to the light of God.

Jesus said, "Learn from me. I am gentle and humble of heart." The promise of rest for our souls is the peace and grace of true Love. Jesus as God, gentle and humble, offers us the same assurance that as we are gentle and humble of heart, we offer the same love to each other.

Prayer: Lord, God, continue to bring me closer to you with a humble and grateful heart. Amen.

Nancy Severin - Ft. Morgan, CO

Monday, March 1

The Four "Rights"

Scripture: Philippians 2:3

In the Bible, the word "humble" sometimes is used to refer to a situation of lowness or affliction and sometimes to a characteristic way of acting toward God and others; i.e. opposite to pride, arrogance, and violence.

In our church there are people that model humility. Their light shines to show God's love and not on themselves. If you asked, people would tell you that they want to be more like them.

In a book I once read, *First Things First* by S.R. Covey, A.R. Merrill, and R.R. Merrill, it talks about three "rights" in relation to working and living with others regardless of any faith tradition. I have added a fourth, and how I view each of the "rights" from my faith tradition.

1. Do the right thing: the thing that God would have us do.
2. The right way: the way God would have us do it.
3. At the right time: when God wants it done.
4. For the right reason: to bring attention to God and his love for all his creation.

If we are following these four "rights" others will see God's light shining and not us.

Prayer: Loving God, help us to see others as you see them, and then to act as you would have us act, so that they see your love for them in our action and not us. Amen.

Alvin Jenkins – Lenoir City, TN

Tuesday, March 2

The Essential Qualifier

Scripture: Matthew 5:3–12

I painfully realized I had drugged myself with my own definition of success: tackling tasks, leading diverse groups, comprehending complex data, while insisting “It’s OK, I got this!”

Inevitably, the isolating effect of my success had tempted me to make a hasty decision without the support of other people, and I made a mess. The phone call was hard: “Can you meet me for breakfast? I’ve made a mess.” Before I said a word, his face told me he was aware of my mess. He patiently heard my stumbling confession, offering grace so undeserved.

“Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly”, these are requirements, not suggestions. I must start with humility. Humility begins when I lower the wall and let another in. Humility begins when I search out the depths of my arrogance and confess it aloud. Humility begins when Jesus is the Way, Truth, and Life for me. I pray humility will be the essential qualifier for leadership at all levels of church and government.

Arrogance makes for splashy appearance and loud achievements—but emptiness will be revealed. Jesus models humility in his actions and words, in his obedience and sacrifice. Humility requires our hard work of trusting God to love us even though we are less than stellar.

Prayer: God of grace, grant to me for today, the courage to first be humble, then to be just and loving. May the good that results become praise to your truth and glory. Amen.

Jay M. Hanke – Arnold, MD

Illuminating Roses

Scripture: James 1:17

Not being employed and primarily confined at home for several months have given me time to better appreciate the multitude of gifts we're given from God. I'm taking time to smell the roses again—literally.

Every afternoon while watering the rose bushes in our back yard, I enjoy their beautiful fragrances. In doing so, I've re-awakened to the beauty of the roses, in nature all around us, and have been reminded of how Scripture tells us that every good and perfect gift is from our steadfast God.

Likewise, I've realized how easily we can take so many of these gifts for granted and not give proper gratitude, like being able to get up out of bed every morning, to see, to hear, food to eat, the roof over our heads, and our God-given skills and talents. We can find ourselves caught up in the busyness of our days, centering more on our problems, demands on our time, or the strife engulfing our nation and the world.

James 1:17 Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

It's easy to take our focus off the giver of all those good and perfect gifts. It's harder to realize perhaps we're not walking humbly enough with Him or serving those in need enough. That, in itself, is a humbling experience. Moreover, do we ever show enough gratitude for the One who sacrificed everything for us? Nothing is more humbling to me than thinking about what Jesus endured for us all.

Such illuminating roses!

Prayer: Lord, may we always appreciatively walk humbly with you. Amen.

Julie Erickson - Olathe, KS

Thursday , March 4

Have This Mind in You Which Was in Christ Jesus

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11

Men of three different religious orders were discussing humility. Finally, a Cistercian monk said, “There may be others who are more scholarly than we, and others who do more good works than we, but none are humbler than we!”

Humility is not an abstract concept of how we should live, and the spirit we should assume. If one knows God, or anything about God, and if God is real to us, walking humbly is the only walk one can know.

Loren Eiseley, paleontologist, author of *The Immense Journey* and *The Invisible Pyramid*, writes about exciting accounts of his research on earthly matters with astounding spiritual impact. John Polkinghorne, English astrophysicist, author of *Quarks, Chaos, and Christianity*, was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 1982. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Science and author of *The Language of God*, is a person of deep faith.

I cite these three men, and of course there are many women, including Hildegard of Bingen, Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, Harriet Tubman and Mother Teresa who walked humbly with God.

Walking humbly with God is not a theological concept so much as it is a relationship. To know God—to really know God as Creator and Lover—“demands my soul, my life, my all.” It’s a walk, a moment by moment, day by day relationship.

Prayer: Master, let us walk with thee in lowly paths of service. Amen.

Vinson Satlive - Wilmore, KY

Friday, March 5

The Gift of Humility

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:5-7

Blessed by God with native ability and a loving and supportive family, I was admitted to the University of Virginia on an honor scholarship. For the first time in my life, I was surrounded by classmates who were from the best schools

from across the nation. So many were brighter and more gifted. It was humbling for one who had been in the top ten of his class at the largest public school in his state.

Decades later, after years of ministry, I also had the privilege of teaching Ethics and Religion courses at our local junior college for 15 years. My first year experience at the University had taught me the gift of humility, causing me to realize that it was only by His grace that I had been given the honor and privilege of teaching others.

To encourage my young students not to despair, even if they did not do well on their first test in the course, I told them of my first test in Advanced Placement Chemistry and asked them to guess what my score might have been. After they suggested multiple possible scores, I would admit that my first score was 16. Yes 16...and that was 16 out of 100! Every time my class would laugh out loud.

Prayer: Dear Lord, through your gift of humility, teach us that no one is so strong or so smart they can stand alone without the gift of others and the community of love we call the Church. Amen.

William Nash Wade - Strasburg, VA

Saturday, March 6

Hero Worship

Scripture: Philippians 2:3

Having your hero—or idol—fail in some way is devastating, no matter what the circumstances. I'm not a "royals" groupie, but I had a real admiration for Princess Diana. She married Prince Charles when our first child was a year old, and Prince William was born the following summer. Our children are close in age, and I admired how she loved and cared for her sons.

We were celebrating my birthday when we got news of the terrible crash that took her life. At first I couldn't believe what I was hearing—how could someone beloved the world over—someone who was larger than life—die in a car crash? It just wasn't possible. Things like that didn't happen to people we idolized, loved from afar, even kept on a pedestal.

When ordinary things happen to extraordinary people, it can somehow shake our whole equilibrium—the reality that no one is immune from the

trappings of life—no one is superhuman. At the same time, it brings them closer to us. They are just people with issues, problems and vulnerabilities. We are all just human. There is nothing wrong with that—life is to be celebrated. What we have is worth praising God for each and every day.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we are thankful for all you have provided us, and for the many special people in our lives. Help us to love each other, and know that we are all your children. Amen.

Kathi Wise - McLean, VA

Sunday, March 7

In the Face of Such Need

Scripture: Isaiah 1:17

Our youth group, when I was in junior high, had gone to the city nursing home one winter Sunday evening to visit, sing, and give out small gifts. The nursing home was not considered a “good one”; it was in an old building, in need of significant rehab. The patients were poor, old and sick, and I sensed, mostly alone. I remember the rooms were more like wards, with several beds, perhaps three or four.

As we made our rounds, we children of plenty (and a privilege we did not comprehend) came across one small, confused woman lying in a bed. She was picking at her covers and had done it so much and so forcefully that she has pulled them all askew; she had twisted around so that her gown was wrapped around her, and her bare backside had become exposed. Over and over she cried out for someone, “Mama?”, or something; it was hard to understand.

I still remember feeling so helpless in the face of such need, such injustice of resources, and such poverty of relationships. How could I possibly be called to offer hope or love or service in the face of all that? Then an aide appeared, speaking soothing words, and covered her again. Straightening her gown and the blanket, swaddling her so that she was calmed, for that moment anyway.

Prayer: Holy God, invite us, even compel us, to move beyond our helplessness and offer hope and love and service in Christ’s name. Amen.

Kathleen Overby Webster - McGaheysville, VA

Monday, March 8

Still In Darkness

Scripture: 1 John 2:9–11

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 was a revelatory season of loss as millions died, jobs and livelihoods were lost, domestic violence reached an all-time high, homelessness and hunger were acknowledged on a world stage as never before, and the death George Floyd exposed the racial injustices which continue to exist here in America.

As the mother of a man of color, I personally struggled throughout this pandemic. I felt so alone. I felt like my brothers and sisters in Christ professed with their mouth to love God but acted and lived in opposition to the undeniable, Biblical, commandment to love one another.

I know a recent trauma intensified these feelings of mine. In 2019, my son was the victim of a hate crime. His assailant intentionally hit him with a car and left him seriously injured in the street. To ensure the point was not missed, the assailant explained why he did this horrible thing— because of my son's race.

I realized we have allowed the enemy to divide and isolate us. We have believed or accepted the lies that one person is better than another. The only way to defeat our true enemy is to come together in humility. Through our confession and repentance, we will have victory.

Prayer: Lord, please give us spiritual vision and help us live and walk in the Light. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Tracy Porter - Pasadena, CA

Tuesday, March 9

Brought to My Knees

Scripture: Luke 14:11

I was confident. I did everything right. It was all going according to plan. I earned it.

My wife and I finished loading everything we owned into the rental truck. The only thing left in our house was a bed and two phone chargers. I impressed

myself with how well everything came together. Then I got the call...

Our realtor gave me the news. I still remember how the gravel felt when I hit my knees next to that rental truck and started praying. I was frustrated and pleading as God revealed to me that I had over-inflated my accomplishments. Now, my perfect plan was threatened, and there was nothing I could do but pray.

As I prayed, God revealed how I had foolishly exalted myself. He revealed how I had spent weeks patting myself on the back. With one call, God reminded me I was not in control.

As quickly as he revealed my pride, God also revealed his never-ending provision.

Over the next 12 hours, God miraculously worked everything out. Despite the opinions of the realtors, attorneys, and lenders, we were able to sell our old house and buy our new home with back-to-back closings in one day. God's unconditional provision for me was more humbling than my feelings of powerlessness. He humbled me and reminded me I was not blessed because I earned it, but because he loved me.

Prayer: Lord, you fill our cups until they overflow. May we never forget to give thanks for your unconditional, never-ending, all-powerful love. Amen.

Andy Lemmon - Brandon, MS

Wednesday, March 10

Just an Old Volunteer

Scripture: Matthew 19:26

A few years back, I was selected as the Parent of the Year by an elementary school in our city, and that was followed by being selected as the Parent of the Year for our entire school district. Having done volunteer work in every school in our city over the years, that award recognized mostly the work performed in the elementary school that my granddaughter was attending at the time.

As a school volunteer, simple to difficult opportunities to serve abound—everything from popping the weekly popcorn, and although not a teacher, teaching various topics (Science, Engineering, Horticulture) to first grade students, to designing and installing both landscape projects and an outdoor classroom pergola. The list goes on.

Years later, it is very humbling to get a hug from an “older” student in the upper-grades and hear the question, “Mr. Denny, do you remember me from your Science lessons and experiments in my first grade class?” Of course, there are many kids that I do remember, but sometimes it requires some prompting from the student! Often, we feel unequipped, but we are blessed by God with special gifts, both big and small, that He intends for us to use and share.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for my ‘gifts’ and the opportunities you offer me to humbly share those gifts. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Denny Engle - Gautier, MS

Thursday, March 11

Responding in Faith

Scripture: Matthew 14:16

The crowd was large, hungry and probably tired. Sending them away seemed to make sense to the disciples, but Jesus’ response was the better one...“people are hungry...give them something to eat.” Though the task likely seemed daunting to his disciples.

Early, on a hot Florida September morning, volunteers unloaded two truckloads of food boxes and began placing them into the 1,000+ cars with people patiently waiting. After an hour at a rapid pace, and what seemed like an endless line of cars, the group leader ran up to me in a panic. “I don’t think we will have enough for everyone, what should we do?” I glanced around at the dwindling boxes and cars steadily rolling in, and after a brief moment of fear, I remembered Jesus’ words ‘give them something to eat’. “There will be enough,” I responded.

By the time the last car came through, we had a few boxes left that volunteers took to shut-ins. How did I know we wouldn’t run out? I didn’t. My faith, though often tested, requires me to act justly and trust in the One who always provides abundantly.

Prayer: Oh God teach us to trust in your infinite wisdom, take away our doubt and give us the faith to respond humbly to the needs around us. Amen.

Barbara Sayles - Orlando, FL



Society of St. Andrew is



Good Stewards of God's Creation

Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) was founded in Virginia in 1979 on Christian principals of caring for the environment; living a simple, sustainable lifestyle; and caring for the “least of these” by modeling a commonsense solution to the problems of food waste and feeding the hungry.

SoSA uses the excess of God's abundance to feed those who don't get enough to eat, for just 3¢ per serving.



Saves Good Food from Going to Waste

SoSA rescues tens of millions of pounds of perfectly good, fresh produce each year, food that would otherwise go to waste, and donates it to feed the hungry throughout the nation.

Using the proven biblical practice of gleaning farm fields and orchards after the harvest, each year SoSA engages tens of thousands of volunteers who pick, bag, and deliver leftover crops that, for a variety of reasons, would not be sold.

Go Green with the Society of St. Andrew



Pray



Volunteer



Donate



the Ultimate Green Ministry



Benefits the Environment

Keeping nearly 20,000 tons of food waste out of landfills not only saves good food, but also reduces the production of methane gas, which damages the atmosphere.



Opportunities to Act on our Faith

SoSA supplies fresh fruits and vegetables rather than high-caloric “filler food,” improving the quality of food available to medically vulnerable individuals of our society.

Harvest of Hope, SoSA’s mission retreat program, teaches youth and adults how to live responsibly in a hungry world, and to care about those who are hurting.

SoSA’s Gleaning Network and Potato & Produce Project put faith into action by gleaning leftover produce from farms and bagging excess loads of fruits and vegetables, and then distributing the food to critical local feeding agencies.

SoSA offers seasonal devotions and other programs—Bible studies, Lent, Advent, Vacation Bible School, and Christmas Cards—to enrich spiritual life, and invite participants to feed hungry people through prayer, volunteerism, and financial giving.

Friday, March 12

I'd Never Asked

Scripture: Revelation 7:9

I've known him 40 years, a high school mentor, then professional colleague. I've been in his home; known his wife; followed with interest his son growing up. We've swapped God stories. We've prayed together. At his retirement party, he asked me to offer the opening prayer. I'll never forget coming before the Lord that day as a white female pastor of German and English descent with over 100 People of Color.

Recently, in the midst of escalated racial tensions, I realized there was likely much I did not know about my friend and his unique experiences during this time. I worried that talking about this might offend my friend but he welcomed me with a Christ-like attitude and it strengthened our relationship.

These days when we talk, our friendship is deeper. Conversations are more meaningful. He graciously received my apology and awkward attempts to articulate my experience as one who has benefitted from unjust systems. My heart hurts knowing that he once was fearful for his life—walking into a bowling alley—and how he once wrestled with his ability to “pass.”

I used to say I yearn for the day when we don't see color. Now I understand God created color and saw that it was good. We should name it, celebrate it, and not be blind to it.

Prayer: Lord of diversity, thank you for our siblings in Christ whose skin is different from our own, who gracefully teach us and help us live into your kingdom of heaven on earth. Amen.

Katy Yates Brungraber - Chambersburg, PA

Saturday, March 13

Losing and Winning

Scripture: Philippians 2:3-11

I'll never forget the day my daughter came home from elementary school all excited that she'd participated in a geography contest and had known all of the answers. She described how as the teacher asked questions, students dropped out one by one.

It finally came down to my daughter and one other girl. “So you won?” I asked gleefully. She shook her head no. “I knew the answer to the last question,” she said but went on to explain that the other student had wanted to win so badly that she decided to let her. I remember congratulating her but am ashamed to say I was sad. I wanted her to have the victory. Unlike me, instead of being disappointed, my daughter was proud she’d given her fellow classmate this gift. I should have been too.

In a world where winning is everything, this kind of altruism is often hard to understand. The Bible says, “Do nothing from selfishness ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others.”

Peter encourages believers this way. “Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” My daughter’s tender heart and humble mind taught me a lesson that day.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, teach us to love one another even in our ambition. Amen.

Regina Carson - Chesterfield, VA

Sunday, March 14

Resentment to Empathy

Scripture: Romans 2:1-8

Moms are quick to defend their children when necessary. Yet when the two families attend the same church, things get complicated. I observed my son being teased and aggressively pushed by a particular boy numerous times in the hall and on a school field trip. Requests to monitor and intervene seemed to fall on deaf ears. As our boys went through middle school, just seeing this kid at church raised my blood pressure! I carried my bitterness for years. When my son died months before turning 15, my anger spread to his parents.

I recognized this as part of my grief and worked hard ‘letting go’ of harsh thoughts. This relationship took another turn when this young man enlisted in the military. I recognized the fear and uncertainty in his mother’s eyes. While talking with his father about deployment possibilities, my heart sank. Sure as a boy, this young man was mean to my son. Yet, I chose to carry a yoke of bitterness for 10 years.

As I have begun to heal from my son's death, the last thing I want these parents to face is the pain of losing a child. Micah and the Apostle Paul advise us to show mercy and withhold judgment. Unless we learn to forgive ourselves and others, our lives will continue to be filled with turmoil.

Prayer: O Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of forgiveness. Remind us to live as true disciples in thought, word, and deed. Amen.

Kelly Desclos-Estes - Glen Allen, VA

Monday, March 15

New Life from Old

Scripture: Isaiah 43:19

She pointed to the large blooming plant in the lobby and told me "This is my resurrection lily." "It looks like a peace lily to me," I said. "It is, but I found this about 2 years ago when someone had thrown it out with the trash on the side of the road. It was all brown and dead but look at it now!"

The plant was green and white and huge! "How'd you do it?" I asked. "I removed all the dead parts, started feeding and watering the roots, and paid a little attention to it every day. Now look at it!" She was proud, and should be.

Remove all the dead parts, feed and water the roots, pay attention every day...sounds to me like a good formula for us. Is your life like an old dead plant? It doesn't have to be. You can show God's beauty and grace and renewing spirit to the world.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remove the dead parts, to water the roots, and to pay attention to my life in you so I may show your beauty and grace to all. Amen.

Michael Henderson - Florence, SC

Tuesday, March 16

Justice Seekers

Scripture: Mark 12:30-31

At the center of all I believe and the faith that I sustain are Jesus' two greatest commandments as recorded in Mark. "And you shall love the Lord

your God with all your heart and with all of your soul...and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

As I struggled in 2020 with COVID-19 and witnessed the devastating effects on so many people in our world, Jesus’ words echo back. They are a powerful and motivating directive. I see the poorest, weakest, the elderly and those with brown or black skin suffering the most. At first, I was consumed with anger and disgust directed toward faceless perpetrators, but I knew that I was looking injustice in the face.

When God asks me as in Micah “What does the Lord require of you?” I know the answer is to act justly. Jesus is the source of truth and justice; his life and death were a witness.

God’s truth shines a light on injustice. God removes useless anger and prepares us for action. The Holy Spirit gives us discernment and the courage to go where the greatest injustice begins, and speak truth. I depend on the God of the universe to walk before me and help me bring justice to all of his children. He calls us all to walk justly.

Prayer: Father, I thank you for loving me and giving me a heart for justice. Make each of us justice seekers, prepare and strengthen us for serving others in your name. Amen.

Deb Broadwater - Moneta, VA

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Humbly Receiving a Gift

Scripture: James 4:10

During the late 1990s, just before Christmas, while volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, we finished building a house for a young family with four small children. A couple of us decided to get the kids bicycles for Christmas and went to their house Christmas Eve to deliver the bikes.

We made the drop and were getting ready to leave when the pre-kindergarten twin girls came running out yelling our names and wanting us to wait for them to give us presents. So, a family with nary a penny to spare had gotten us each a Christmas present. The kids had wrapped each in plain paper with our names written on the outside.

Sitting here today at my desk, I can look up and still see the picture they gave me of Jesus knocking at the door. It is as beautiful and humbling today as it was that afternoon. Seeing the smiles on their faces and the joy in their eyes as they watched us open our presents was emotionally humbling for us two old and crusty retired US Navy sailors.

In life, we are all challenged to both humbly give and humbly receive, but sharing in the joy of the giver is an immeasurably humbling blessing that we often overlook.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for showing us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Denny Engle - Gauthier, MS

Repurposing a Table

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6

Being married to an accountant, tax season begins after the holiday decorations are packed away! First, there are W-2s, then our home quickly becomes “decorated” with file folders and envelopes full of tax paperwork. Soon, our great room has a small work table set up near the computer for tax work. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way clients were met, but paperwork still

arrived and needed to be completed. After April 15, 2020, that table in our great room was not needed for tax papers. When I started to put it away, I decided to use it for a different purpose.

The folding table was a perfect spot for my Bible and devotional books. Since we had been dealing with the pandemic about a month, I was feeling the stress like everyone else. Having this designated spot for morning devotionals gave me a focus to begin my day. I soon added 3 more inspirational books to my table. It became a place I could sit and read anytime I felt the need.

One day as I sat there, I started humming, “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”. A sense of calm came over me as I realized the song was correct. The pandemic is out of our control, but he’s got it in HIS HANDS. God humbled me and reminded me He is in control. What a comforting feeling!

Prayer: Thank you, God, for humbling me and reminding me that you have the whole world in your hands. Amen.

Linda M. Mays - Appomattox, VA

Friday, March 19

Blessed Beyond Words

Scripture: Proverbs 14:29–31

It is easy to make assumptions based on the few facts we may have at hand. Many times I have looked at other families—couples who find each other, marry, and have seemingly picture-perfect lives. They may be beautiful in appearance, successful in their careers, have highly achieving children,

magnificent homes, vacations abroad—the whole package, the stuff of dreams and Hollywood movies.



More than once, I have found myself envying the good fortune of others. I dwell on my personal failures, what I lack

in material things, and even wallow in self-pity. My foolish attitude is often stopped short when I learn, as Paul Harvey used to say, ‘the rest of the story.’ These supposedly beautiful and successful families have sometimes suffered horribly—the loss of a child, domestic violence, drug abuse, financial hardship, suicide, divorce, terminal illness—the painful list goes on.

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, while watching news reports of those who have lost businesses, jobs, homes, basic human necessities and comforts, food to eat (in this country!)—Americans by the thousands—I am reminded that I am much more fortunate than I deserve. I have a beautiful and loving family, fantastic children and grandchildren, a home, a job, good health. I have more than enough. I have no reason to envy anyone—I am blessed beyond words.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the many, many blessings you extend to us each and every day, and remind us to share them with those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Amen.

Kathi Wise - McLearn, VA

Saturday, March 20

Love, Loss, and God’s Perfect Provision

Scripture: Matthew 6:26

“Remember to always be humble” was advice from Lorenzo, the Christian man who raised Snead, my partner for five years. Snead often repeated those words of advice. He believed by being humble and trusting God’s love, we would find reassurance that God will provide as promised in the book of Matthew.



When Snead first became ill, the diagnosis was stage III curable cancer. After two months of intense pain, sleepless weeks, and 70 pounds lost, Snead grew tired. But he never once complained. A second opinion revealed the cancer was terminal, and predicted Snead only had one or two weeks to live. We were devastated! Talking about both his late mother and infant son, he whispered to me that he couldn’t wait to see them in heaven. Then, it seems, in the blink of an

eye, at the young age of 49, he was gone. I wept like I had never wept before, again and again. But I wasn't angry at God like I thought I might be. I understood God's intention was to provide for Snead and heal him—only to do so in heaven. It has helped me to truly understand heaven is a much better solution.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

When sadness takes hold, I am reminded of Snead's cherished verse, Matthew 6:26. I know his family and I will be provided for like the verse promises and our hearts will heal in time. Lorenzo, who is alive and well, and Snead would be proud to know that their advice to remember every day to be humble, lives on. Through this experience, I am learning to walk humbly into the unknown future, one step at a time, one day at a time, trusting that God is always good and will provide even in the midst of pain, suffering, and loss.

Prayer: Lord, please help heal our humbled, broken hearts. Remind us to trust and take comfort that you are always in control and provide. Amen.

Jenny Trevey - Lynchburg, VA

Sunday, March 21

Judge Not

Scripture: Matthew 7:1–2

I sat in the back of the church with my head bowed and tears streaming from my eyes that were covered by dark sunglasses. I felt a hand on my shoulder, reaching from the church sister who was sitting behind me. She whispered in my ear, "Why do you have sunglasses on in church?"

Her question caused me to wince, deepening the emotional and spiritual pain that I was feeling. Turning, I tilted my head so I could face her sliding my sunglasses down embarrassingly revealing my purplish black eye. Upon viewing it, she gasped throwing her arms tightly around me and sharing my pain in the moment.

I had felt that others would judge me if I shared the abuse and trauma occurring in my life. As I've moved forward, I've come to realize that so many people, like me, are afraid to reach out to others because they don't know what

response they'll receive. Shamefully, I acknowledge that I, too, have been guilty of doing what I feared—not offering open arms of grace and mercy.

As ambassadors of Christ, we must continuously examine our hearts, ensuring that we are not allowing our bias and judgments to obscure the opportunity to recognize the humanity of those we encounter, who are in need of love.

Prayer: Help me to daily meet your requirement of acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with you, God. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Tracy Porter - Pasadena, CA

Monday, March 22

In the Best Interest

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-5

I was excited to be part of a Mission Team going to El Salvador. Teaching Bible School to a bunch of kids, even with a language barrier, was right up my alley. After months of training and planning, our group flew to San Salvador where we met two local pastors.

Following a 45-minute ride in an old school bus, we arrived at our home for the week. Once we settled in, we were asked to join a meeting. There was a scheduling problem. Someone forgot that half the kids went to school in the morning, the others in the afternoon. As part of our cultural experience the leaders had planned to take us to an ancient Mayan temple and a local coffee plantation. Yet now we had a decision to make.

A team member asked the group one important question: "Why are we here? Did we come to follow a set schedule? Are some of us seeing this trip as a mini vacation?" After a brief discussion, our answer was unanimous. "We came to serve." To accommodate everyone, we facilitated a morning and afternoon Bible session each day. With God as our guide, we made it work. Everyone enjoyed themselves; we missed nothing. The kids' smiles and laughs are tucked inside my memory and will be for years to come.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we praise you for helping us make decisions to serve you. Continue to bless us with humility to enhance your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Kelly Desclos-Estes - Glen Allen, VA

Tuesday, March 23

Grounded in Humility

Scripture: Philippians 2:3

I think most of us who work in the fields with Society of St. Andrew as volunteers and deliver to local agencies feel humbled every day. We can get caught up, as most workplaces do, in metrics: How many events have we held? How many volunteers engaged? How many pounds distributed? While all of that is important, we do well to remember that numbers matter only in relation to those fed.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Sometimes, it feels like I will never give away all the food that comes to me from a hundred pounds left over at a farmers market to 40,000 pounds of watermelon rejected by a grocery chain.

What continues to stun me, year after year, is this: No matter how much food we give away, there are still hungry people in our community. Forty bins of watermelon seem like a lot until fifty agencies need a bin. Several thousand pounds of corn can disappear into our overburdened pantry system in the blink of an eye.

On days when I feel a twinge of pride in how many pounds we move, I am called to remember that none of this is about me. It's not about metrics. It's about the actual people, simply relieved to have good, healthy food for their family. It is humbling to see the hunger in our communities and humbling also to see the dedication of those who volunteer their time for SoSA. That is what grounds me.

Prayer: Lord, help me always remember that my actions are to serve your people. Amen.

Jean Blish Siers - Charlotte, NC

Wednesday, March 24

In Quietness and Trust

Scripture: Isaiah 30:15

I recently participated in a frank discussion about racism and injustice. People shared about their experiences and perspectives. One participant said:

“As a child, I was taught to fear people of color.” She went on and shared things her mother did that reinforced that irrational fear. As she spoke, another person, obviously stunned, interjected, “How silly. God doesn’t care what color our skin is. Why would God care about that?”

While I agreed with that person, I felt God leading me to quietly listen to my friend. In my humble listening, God revealed more about her fear and how she had grown since childhood.

Fear, no matter how unfounded, had negatively impacted her life. I could not shame her for being honest about her childhood. As I listened and heard her, I learned how this woman had matured to understand fear had blocked her ability to look for the Christ like-ness in God’s people. It made me ponder—Are there others to whom I need to listen and hear their stories?

For me, I also learned. There are times when I am called to listen to others on a deeper, more spiritual level rather than what at first appears to be a chance for me to express my opinion. There are those whose fears keep them oppressed and being heard is freeing.

Prayer: God of love, teach us again this Lenten season how to be both listeners and doers of your Word. Amen.

Audrey Benjamin - Mankato, MN

Thursday, March 25

Humbleness

Scripture: Galatians 6:4

No matter what Dictionary.com says, pride is not the antonym to humility. I grew up believing that being proud was sinful. That was a mistake that continues to challenge me even in adulthood. In Galatians, Paul expresses how our work can be a cause for pride...being proud of accomplishments and skills is not sinful as long as we can check our attitude.

I have been a lay speaker for seven years. Whenever anyone complimented me on my message or delivery I would deflect the remark like Venus Williams returning a hard serve. “Anyone could have done as well” or “It isn’t hard when you have good material,” but that attitude diminishes the speaker AND their message. Instead, I now respond with a heartfelt “Thank you” and allow that positive reinforcement to encourage me.

This doesn't mean that I'm going to start doing "end zone dances" after a good message... because that would be the wrong attitude. When you have worked hard on a project and accomplished a goal, do two things: be pleased and satisfied. This helps sustain you as you take on the next task. Remember to recognize where the skills came from and give thanks to God for granting you the abilities you have to share.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember all that I have comes from you. Let every accomplishment press me to continue the mission of sharing your love. Amen.

Chris Howell - Lynchburg, VA

Friday, March 26

Seek Justice

Scripture: Isaiah 1:16-17

When I consider God's justice, I think of the laws and systems that allow people to live abundant lives. When the agrarian economy came into being, for example, God's law allowed for gleaning so the alien, the widow, and the orphan could eat.

The Society of St. Andrew continues this ancient practice of gleaning, and we help hungry people eat healthy food. What laws and systems exist that allow for so many people to suffer food insecurity and need our assistance?

Part of doing justice is a willingness to speak about justice to those who create and control those laws and systems. That may mean writing a letter or making a phone call to representatives in political offices. Or it may mean speaking with our dollars—refusing to support companies that perpetuate injustice, inequality, and scarcity.

I was scared to call those "important" people or to give up a favorite brand, but with practice it feels like mercy to the truly important people—the oppressed, the orphan, and the widow.

Prayer: God of abundance, you share this beautiful world with us. May we seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow as you call us to do. Guide us and our lawmakers with compassion, mercy, and humility. Amen.

Jeannie Hunter - Nashville, TN

Saturday, March 27

Simple Things

Scripture: Genesis 18:2-5

It was a warm spring day so the door was open to the parish house as the church ladies were finishing up a meeting. A young man walked in and asked if he might rest for a few minutes. He said he had traveled down from Canada and was headed to tour the United States on his bicycle. We invited him in, gave him some water and visited with him as we finished cleaning up from our meeting.

As we left the parish house, I invited him back to my house with the promise of the opportunity to do laundry, a regular meal and a bed for the night before he headed out south again. When he left, we gave him a little food for the trip and made sure his water bottle was full. We also gave him a couple of stamped self-addressed envelopes so that he could drop us a line and let us know where he was at different places on his journey.



No, we never did hear from him, but in that simple act of offering laundry services and a meal, offering a bed for a night, we shared the light of Christ with one who was on a journey. For us, acting justly meant treating a stranger as if he were a brother.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, who asked the Samaritan woman for water, remind us that our neighbor may not look like us or talk like us, but they are still our neighbor, our brother. Amen.

Susan Keith - Rutherfordton, NC

Sunday, March 28

A Lesson in Humility

Scripture: Proverbs 11:2

When I learned that a quote from my work had been featured in a marketing graphic for a soon-to-be-released anthology, I glowed with pride. I made a cup of tea and sat down to re-read and revel in my story.

About halfway through it, I paused over a school I mentioned. Something was wrong, but what? To my horror, I realized I had inadvertently used the

name of an institution I'd attended the following year—in a different city. After weeks of writing and editing, how could I have missed such a glaring error?

The book had already gone to press, and it was way too late for corrections. Humiliated, I wrote a contrite email to the editor confessing my mistake and apologizing. Her response the next day was forgiving and kind. She said the book would have a long shelf life so we might be able to make the correction in the next printing.

A few weeks later, the editor emailed me again. She had quoted another of my stories in the forward for her next book. I replied immediately with heartfelt thanks, and I bowed my head in gratitude for grace.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your grace when I fail to walk humbly. As we celebrate the season of your ultimate grace to sinners, please bless us with wisdom by teaching us humility. Amen.

Audi Lehman - Hernando, MS

Monday, March 29

Called to Love

Scripture: Galatians 5:6

When my wife and I were searching for a church home, we struggled with finding where exactly God was leading us. After several visits, we finally gave in to a neighbor friend who had recently been hired as the mission's pastor at an inner city church. We both felt that God was leading us to that church, but little did we know how that would impact our lives.

I have been working in the non-profit field around food access for about twelve years. My wife loves serving our neighborhood kids with food including ice cream sandwiches, grilled cheese sandwiches, and take home bags. She is even lovingly known as "the Ice Cream Sandwich Lady." We love people and serving people.

As Christians, we are called to have a servant's heart and to love God's people. We are blessed that our church's mission field is right outside our front door! My wife and I are both on the church cooking team (Holy Ghost Peppers), we serve on the Foster Care Team and are known to pitch in and love on people at many events. It's incredible to be able to serve through love and

food. I challenge you to find your passion for service. Love, according to Paul, is all that counts if you are loving through faith.

Prayer: Lord, in this season of Lent, help us to set aside our human judgment, hate, and disdain. Help us to serve you through love. Let us love and be united around the cross. Amen.

Langston Moore - Jackson, MS

Tuesday, March 30

No Reason to Boast

Scripture: Micah 6:8

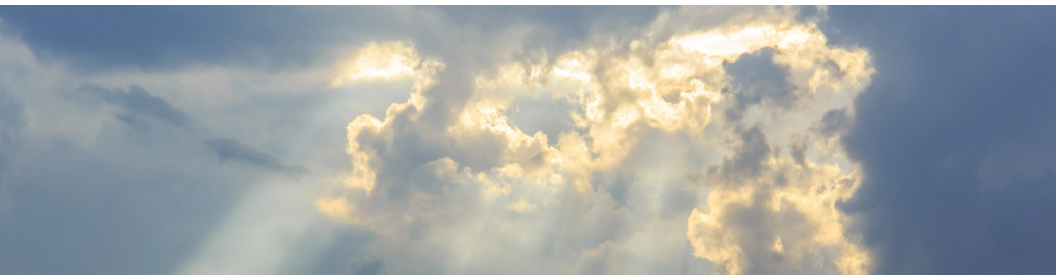
A teacher, good-naturedly, referred to a religious group known for its modesty, saying they took pride in their humility. They say, “When it comes to humility, we’re tops!” That’s a new high in low. Humility is never a reason to boast. For individuals to speak about their own humility is tricky, because it can quickly become conceit, even pomposity.

Sometimes I reflect upon good things that have happened to me, things with which I have been blessed, opportunities that have come my way, good fortune that I have experienced. These things should be credited to others: my parents, grandparents, my wife and family, teachers, friends, the church. These have lifted me up, set me on the right path, and sought to keep me there. If I have been of any benefit in life, it is because of such as these.

When I have messed up, I did it on my own. I’m not sure how all this fits in with humility, but it seems to me to be a fairly good and accurate way of looking at life. Essentially, humility is an awareness of one’s limitations. It acknowledges one’s dependence on others, and most importantly, one’s dependence upon God.

Prayer: O God, deliver us from egos that hinder us in seeking to be a servant to you and to others. Amen.

Hasbrouck Hughes - Williamsburg VA



No Greater Love

Scripture: John 15:13

On my way to a gleaning event in the fall, I spent the entire drive into the countryside making mental lists of all I needed to do at home over the weekend and mentally prioritizing tasks needing the most attention at work. It wasn't until I started digging in the dirt for sweet potatoes and felt the warmth of the morning sun on my back that I bothered to look around and appreciate the glorious fall morning.

John 15:13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friend.

As I took in the freshly plowed field overflowing with sweet potatoes, dotted with volunteers of all ages, I noticed a group of college students cheerfully gleaning nearby. All of them were wearing black t-shirts printed with the motto "service over self". This simple message was an epiphany, a straightforward truth about what it means to walk humbly.

Watching them, I was reminded that when we lay down our life, set aside our lists and self-interests, and truly put the needs of others first, we genuinely become partners in a just and merciful community. When we stop focusing on our individual priorities and make the needs of our neighbors a priority, our perspective and our actions are forever changed.

The warmth of the sunshine that morning was God's merciful reminder to act justly and to walk humbly.

Prayer: God of love, help me to lay down my life and to serve others. Amen.

Allyson Ey - Bedford, VA

Scrabble Lessons

Scripture: Micah 6:8

Recently, I have discovered that I am incredibly competitive. You see, every Friday afternoon since pandemic restrictions began, my husband and I have played Scrabble. Showing no mercy, I use every strategy I can to win. So far, I have won most of the games. No humility there, right?

Humility is not easy. Ironically when we take pride in how humble we are, we prove ourselves to be anything but humble! Even in our faith life, we compete with God. Often, we think we know better than our Creator—if it occurs to us at all to bring the Lord into our dilemma. These days, we have learned again how each of us on earth is connected. When one suffers, all suffer. Where there is injustice, none are free.

With Christ Jesus as our example, we are given the gift of humility. Emptying ourselves of “self”, as Christ did, makes it possible for us to enact justice and employ mercy for the benefit of others. Only then will we be able to walk humbly with our God.

Winning at Scrabble makes me feel good but only for the moment. What is truly and everlastingly good is the love of God in Christ for us all and that we might be as Christ to one another.

Prayer: O God, through Christ Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, grant me your gift of humility that I might love others as you love them. Amen.

Chris Suerdieck - Emmitsburg, MD

A Life of Humility

Scripture: John 13:4–9

Christ’s entire earthly life from birth to death was one of humility. He didn’t arrive as a warrior on a mighty steed or as a king as was expected. Instead, He came as a baby, born in a common stable with only His earthly parents and animals as attendants. His birth was announced to lowly shepherds tending their flocks in the fields.

He selected seventy disciples, then narrowed these down to his top twelve. He chose not scholars nor intellectuals to spread his word, but mostly fishermen who worked with their hands and backs. Many of those he associated with were the poor, downtrodden, lepers, and social outcasts. Even his parables were often about these very same people.

His last act of humility was to walk to the cross where he was crucified like a common criminal and where he gave his life for us.

Prayer: Lord, we thank you for your life which you sacrificed for us and for your example of humility at work. Amen.

Carolyn Lee Purdy - Harrisonburg, VA

Saturday, April 3

A Humble Heart

Scripture: Isaiah 1:17

In the Old Testament God raised up prophets to speak on his behalf to his people. Yes, there were many specific messages that he sent through them to his people, but in general they all were God calling God's people back to him. Unfortunately, we all need reminders in life to refocus and return our eyes to Jesus. Even in moments when we are doing many great things, we can easily find ourselves with our eyes on something other than Jesus. If we are serving others without worshiping God, the object of our service is not the good or wellbeing of others, it is ultimately ourselves.

In Romans 1:25, we learn that we can exchange the worship of the Creator for the worship of the created. When the worship of our heart is off, we can worship ourselves and our abilities. We often seek our own glory by vying for the approval of others. A right view of ourselves, when God is the point of worship in our hearts, causes us to serve others from a humble heart, not seeking our own glory but God's. A humble heart readily worships God and seeks to live a life as God calls his people to live. Hear these words of one of those prophets calling people back to God: Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause – Isaiah 1:17 ESV

Prayer: God, by your grace, may you be the focus of our worship, and the wellbeing of others be the object of our service! Amen.

Van Hardin - Jackson, MS

Risk

Scripture: Matthew 10:38–42

Spring is a time of risk. Farmers risk by planting their crops. How much to plant, where, and what? Teenagers risk by asking someone to go to the prom. Will they say yes? At home we risk by putting up winter things and bringing out summer things. Will we have another cold snap?

God took a risk. God sent the Son to see if we would respond. Even the Son took risks. Would we believe, follow, learn? What happens if loving us meant death? Would that end it?

We all want the sure thing. Most of us will trade the maybe for the sure, even though the reward of the maybe is 100 times greater than the sure thing.

We are called to risk. We risk....our power and authority when we invite new people to become a part of our community; our security when we go out on a limb to make justice, mercy, and humility our values; our self-image when we become involved with those who are poor, oppressed, or different from us; our well-being when we decide to go where Jesus is.

Where is God calling you to risk? Where are you really being put on the line? Jesus did it for us on the cross, and the rewards were not only our redemption but resurrection. If you haven't felt the power of God lately, maybe it's time you took a risk.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to risk all for you. Amen.

Michael B. Henderson - Florence, SC

Happy Easter! The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!





Society of St. Andrew
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

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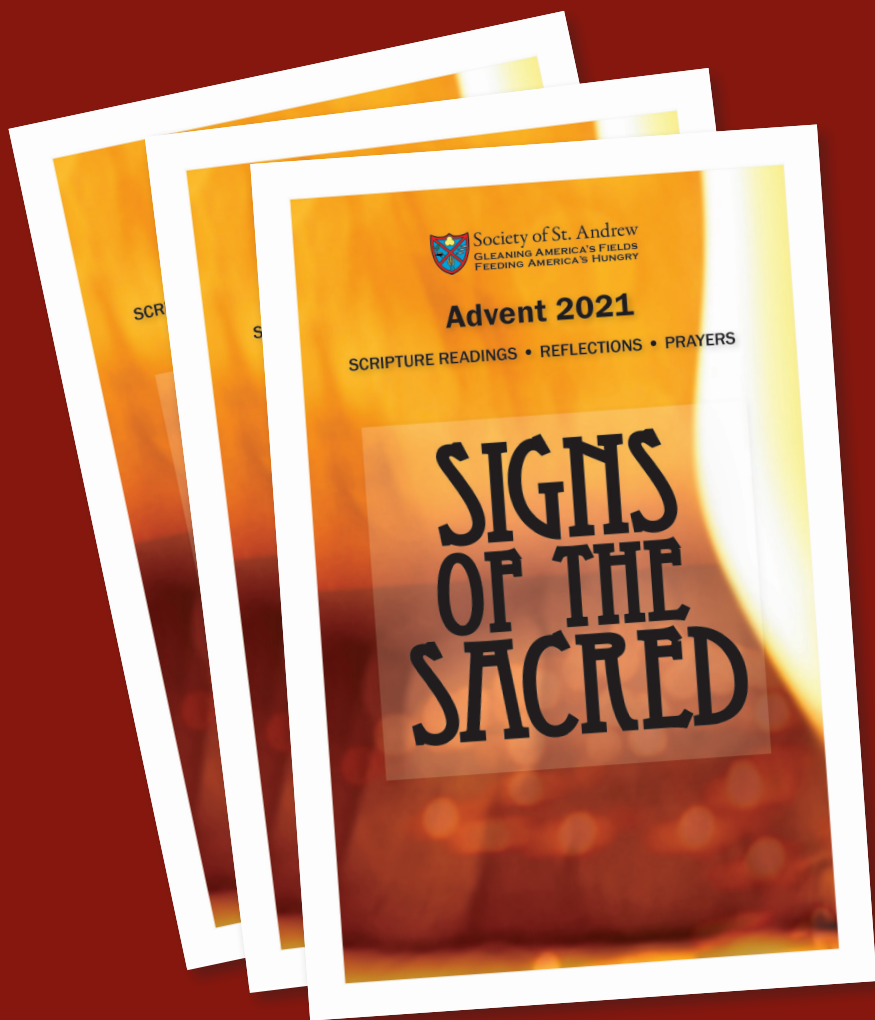
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Hunger Relief Ministries of the Society of St. Andrew

Gleaning Network — A hands-on mission program for all ages, getting healthy food directly from fields and markets to the hungry people who need it most. The Gleaning Network brings together farmers with excess produce, volunteers to glean (pick, dig, or gather) that produce, and agencies feeding the hungry. People in need glean alongside people with plenty in this community-based program, that engages individuals, congregations, and civic organizations in service.

Potato & Produce Project — A produce salvage program, providing direct food relief to our nation's poor, while addressing one of the major causes of hunger: food waste. The Potato & Produce Project salvages and distributes hundreds of tractor-trailer loads of fresh fruits and vegetables to food banks, soup kitchens, and other feeding agencies each year.

Seed Potato Project — A self-help program, providing seed potatoes purchased by Society of St. Andrew to impoverished rural communities, where people have access to land for gardening. Families plant, cultivate, and harvest their own crops, realizing a yield of about eight pounds of potatoes per pound planted.

Harvest of Hope – A hunger-focused work/study mission program. Participants glean and distribute produce remaining in fields after harvest each morning and learn about the realities of hunger each evening. Bible study and dynamic worship round out days of Christian community and service, providing a basis for on-going commitment to ending hunger. Harvest of Hope offers middle school, high school, and intergenerational events throughout the summer.

Each year, the Society of St. Andrew distributes 90–120 million servings of nourishing food to hungry people throughout the United States.

Society of St. Andrew, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, grassroots interfaith ministry, has been working toward a world without hunger since 1979.

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