

2021 LENTEN THEMES...AND A PHOTO CHALLENGE!

Below is a summary of the themes we will use in worship each week during the season of Lent. We would like to invite you take part in worship leadership by reflecting on a theme each week and then **submitting a photo** that you feel represents or symbolizes that theme. We will share these photos during our online worship services on Sunday mornings.



We hope you will be creative with this and use this exercise as a spiritual practice during Lent. As you and your camera look for a way to capture a theme (example: “Again & Again, God Meets Us”), we hope your heart and mind will connect with God’s sacred refrain of steadfast love and faithfulness.

To participate, submit your photo to kelly@wattsstreet.org by the Friday before the Sunday worship service. (Example: photos for the First Sunday in Lent on February 21 are due on Friday, February 19.)

AGAIN & AGAIN: A LENTEN REFRAIN

from sanctifiedart.org



In Lent, we’re reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation we exclaim, “Again?! How long, O God?” And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: “I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair.” Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

This theme provides a clear invitation in a time when much is unclear. Even if worshipping apart, we come to God again and again with our prayers, our dreams, our hopes, and our doubts. Even if from a distance, we will continue to be community to one another—especially when it’s hard—by choosing each other over and over again. We will continue to love God with the same persistence God chooses and claims us. Our sub-theme, A Lenten Refrain, speaks to the ways God can make music of our lives. “Refrain” also reminds us that Lent is a season of abstaining from certain or harmful practices in order to take on new rhythms and habits.

In this season, we need rituals—both old and new—to remember and be transformed. Embodied practice builds muscle memory. Repetition helps retrain our neural pathways. We need the 46 days of Lent because this season shapes us into more faithful disciples. Join us this Lent as again and again, we bring all of who we are to God and trust that God will meet us, time and again, along the way.

ASH WEDNESDAY: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE’RE INVITED IN

February 17 – Matthew 6:1-16, 16-21, Isaiah 58:1-12

As Lent begins, we’re invited in—to community, to this season, to our own spiritual journey, to true transformation. We’re on this journey together, but we’re invited to turn inward. Therefore, spiritual practices are not for show. Matthew 6 and Isaiah 58 remind us that performative acts (of piety and justice) are not the way.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT: AGAIN & AGAIN, GOD MEETS US

February 21 – Mark 1:9-15, Genesis 9:8-17

God meets Jesus at the water before he is tempted in the wilderness— this is important. First and foremost, God claims us. God meets us in the liminal space, at the water’s edge, at the threshold of something new, and names us Beloved. God’s covenant with all of creation reminds us that God meets us where we are—in the midst of our reluctance, doubt, eagerness, or weariness—and proclaims we are good.

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE ARE CALLED TO LISTEN

February 28 – Mark 8:31-9:8, Psalm 22:23-31

Like the disciples, we are often stuck in the pattern of messing up over and over again. We cling to power, we climb the ladder, we memorialize Christ’s teachings rather than embodying them. However, we can’t be trapped by shame, guilt, ignorance, or inaction. Humility is required for transformation. Again and again, we are called to listen—to God and to others.

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE ARE SHOWN THE WAY

March 7 – John 2:13-22, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

According to John, Jesus begins his ministry by showing more than telling. In the temple, Jesus disrupts and overturns the systems of corruption and profiteering taking place, but ultimately points us to the promise of restoration. Paul reminds the Corinthians (and us) that God's wisdom is more expansive than we can imagine. We are shown the way, even if God's "way" feels foolish, counter-cultural, disruptive, or uncomfortable.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT: AGAIN & AGAIN, GOD LOVES FIRST

March 14 – John 3:14-21, Ephesians 2:1-10

After inviting Nicodemus to be born anew, Jesus tells him in John 3 that God so loved the world that God sent his son to restore it. Therefore, when we read John 3:16, we remember that Jesus is speaking in metaphor and poetry. Ultimately, love is where God begins and ends. This love, like grace, is a gift we do nothing to deserve. Again and again, love is our refrain. Before we act, think, or believe, can love be first for us too?

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE ARE REFORMED

March 21 – John 12:20-33, Jeremiah 31:31-34

We desire for God to write on our hearts so that God's law can re-shape and re-form us from the inside out. Reformation is a journey of letting the old fall away for something new to emerge, of returning to God's words over and over, of being drawn into the heart of God. This is the process of justification and sanctification; transformation must be internal and communal.

PALM SUNDAY: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE DRAW ON COURAGE

March 28 – John 12:1-19

On Palm Sunday, we remember that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was not a riskfree, palm party. It was a protest parade—a protest against those in power, a parade to prepare the way for a different kind of king. And this was all happening with plots to kill Lazarus (and Jesus) building in the background. We're reminded that the crowds were brave to show up that day, and that Jesus drew on courage to face his journey to the cross. The root of courage is cour, meaning "heart." Courage is deep within us; we often find it when we most need it, when everything else has been stripped away.

MAUNDY THURSDAY: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE ARE HELD TOGETHER

April 1 – John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Footwashing is a practice of radical vulnerability, of being seen and known. Jesus loved the disciples "to the end." In this act, we remember that God holds all of our pain, vulnerability, doubts, and sufferings. As we venture toward the cross, we can lean into God's everlasting arms, knowing we are held.

GOOD FRIDAY: AGAIN & AGAIN, WE FIND OURSELVES HERE

April 2 – John 19:1-30

Again and again, we find ourselves at the foot of the cross, at the pit of despair, in the face of death, in the grip of state-sanctioned violence. "Here" is an emotional place. "Here" is grief. "Here" is the reality of sin and brokenness. On Good Friday, we are called to sit in the silence of death, knowing that God is here.

EASTER SUNDAY, AGAIN & AGAIN, THE SUN RISES

April 4 – Mark 16:1-8

According to Mark, on the first day of the week, the women rise with the sun and buy spices to anoint Jesus' body. They are shocked to find the tomb empty, and leave in fear and terror. Mark's resurrection story is less triumphant than the other Gospel testimonies (as scholars believe the remainder of Mark's gospel was a later addition). In Mark's version, we are reminded that Easter comes to us, again and again, even if we don't know what to make of God's resurrection ways. Again and again, the sun rises. And some days, that is enough.

AGAIN & AGAIN: A LENTEN REFRAIN

Daily Devotions

Prayers by Rev. Sarah Are, sanctifiedart.org

Wednesday, February 17 – When you pray...

Read: Matthew 6:1-21

Reflect: What are your spiritual practices? What spiritual practices need new life?

Pray: Teaching God, you remind us to avoid going through the motions on autopilot so that we can engage our faith with our whole hearts. You are worth our whole hearts. So today I pray: Be there in my fasting. Be there in my praying. Be there in my walking and waking. Make this journey real. Make it rich. Make it yours. Amen.

Thursday, February 18 – Those who dream...

Read: Psalm 126

Reflect: What dreams do you have for this world? For yourself? For your community?

Pray: God of tomorrow, brokenness weighs on us. No one is left untouched. And so, we lift our eyes to you, dreaming of the day when love is all we carry. Give us the strength to be those who dream – today and tomorrow. Amen.

Friday, February 19 – Come and see...

Read: John 1:35-42

Reflect: In a world that loves certainty, where could you practice curiosity? How might curiosity be a spiritual tool?

Pray: Inviting God, you are a God who is up to something good, always thinking ahead, always inviting us to join. So spark curiosity in me today so that I might ask, “Where are you going? I want to tag along.” Amen.

Saturday, February 20 – Gentle

Read: Titus 3:1-15

Reflect: Can you think of a person in your life who is gentle yet strong? How are they impactful? How might you adopt that character?

Pray: Gracious God, being people of faith has never been easy. From the very beginning, we have needed reminders—to be gentle, to show courtesy, to devote ourselves to good works. In a world of division, help me be gentle. May that gentleness be a power for good. Amen.

Sunday, February 21 - Selah

Read: Psalm 84

Reflect: The word “selah” is used 74 times in scripture. The meaning is unclear, but many believe it indicates a pause. Where or how do you need to pause in your life?

Pray: Holy God, some truths are so good that we need a moment to let them sink in, otherwise they risk running off of us like water. So today we slow down. We whisper, “selah.” We pause, and we remember—one day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. Amen.

Monday, February 22 – Keeper

Read: Psalm 121

Reflect: What images of God are comforting to you? Where does your spirit need comfort?

Pray: Gracious God, Scripture says that you are my keeper, which floods me with images of cradling hands softly catching me. I imagine I could slip through your fingers if I wanted to—the freedom is there. However, as long as I want to be here, you have me. What a comforting idea that is. I think I will stay. Amen.

Tuesday, February 23 – Temple

Read: John 2:13-22

Reflect: What angers you deep in your bones? Where is God in that anger?

Pray: God of justice, you flipped tables in the temple, and then immediately spoke to people who were eager to listen. We seem to only be able to do one or the other—we can be prophetic or pastoral. We can be angry or be gentle. We can speak or listen. Help us to hold both at the same time. Teach us your ways, so that we too can be agents of change. Amen.

Wednesday, February 24 – Healing

Read: Psalm 147:1-11

Reflect: What corners of your heart need healing? What pains you?

Pray: God of the stars in the sky, I cling to the fact that you are a healing God. You are a God who longs for our wholeness. So just as you are with the stars and the sky and all creation, be close to me today. Heal the fragile parts of me, and help me see the next right step. Gratefully I pray. Amen.

Thursday, February 25 – Rest

Read: Hebrews 4:1-10

Reflect: When was the last time you truly rested? What practices are restful for you? What changes in your life need to be made to protect rest?

Pray: God of rest, what a gift it is to us that you rested on the seventh day. Oh, how we need that example. Oh, how I need that example. I am weary, so today I pray: Give me the strength and the wisdom to rebuild my life with rest at the center. Amen.

Friday, February 26 – Commandments

Read: Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Reflect: What distractions in your life pull you from the core values of your faith? How can you recenter?

Pray: God of our ancestors, take me back to the beginning. Take me back to the foundation. Remind me of the core of faith—to serve, to love, to walk with you. When I lose my way and find myself caught up in matters that do not matter, bring me back to your center. Amen.

Saturday, February 27 – Words

Read: Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Reflect: What is the hardest part about opening your Bible? What goals do you have for your relationship with scripture? What can help you get there?

Pray: God who speaks, as a people, we seem to have forgotten your Word. Those who went before us knew scripture like the back of their hands, but I admit, I can struggle to remember stories and verses. I know you're in there—inside the pages of my Bible. Help me find you. Help me crave your word like I crave connection. Amen.

Sunday, February 28 – Speak

Read: Jeremiah 1:1-10

Reflect: What words do you need to say to yourself today? What things are you so passionate about that you can't help but talk about them?

Pray: God of invitations, you invite me to speak—to speak kindly to myself, to speak up for justice, to speak words of hope and good news. It's easy to let the world do the talking. It's defeating to imagine I might not be heard. Nevertheless, give me the courage to speak. Amen.

Monday, March 1 – See

Read: Jeremiah 1:11-19

Reflect: If God were to ask you, "What do you see?" What would you say? How would your answer impact your actions?

Pray: God of visions, you ask me, "What do you see?" And in this moment, I'm not sure how close I've been looking. There is so much suffering in the world. It's easy to turn away. It's tempting to curate our lives to see what we want to see. Open my eyes to truthfully and honestly see what you see. Amen.

Tuesday, March 2 – Live

Read: John 4:43-54

Reflect: When do you feel most alive? What does it feel like? When are you the furthest from feeling alive? What can you change?

Pray: Jesus of Nazareth, over and over and over again, you choose life. You heal us with your hands and your words, saying, "Go, you shall live." So now that I have this wild and wonderful life, help me to use it to the best of my ability. I see now—this is a gift. Amen.

Wednesday, March 3 – Well

Read: John 5:1-18

Reflect: What would life look like for you to be well? What visible or invisible things in your life need healing?

Pray: Patient healer, I need your healing words, but the things that ail me are not obvious to the eye. They are internal—hurtful narratives, doubt in myself, doubt in you. I long for you to see all of me and to make me well. Show me how to get off my mat. Gratefully I pray. Amen.

Thursday, March 4 – Shelter

Read: Psalm 27

Reflect: Psalm 27 is a morning song, designed to start your day. What is your favorite part of your morning ritual? Where could you include more gratitude and praise?

Pray: God of the dawn, if you were a home, I would pray: Put me inside those four walls. Open the door and pull me in. Let me walk your hallways and sit on your couch. Teach me the flow of the floors as I memorize the flow of your voice. I want to be close to you. Help me get there. Amen.

Friday, March 5 – Answer

Read: Psalm 22

Reflect: What hurt do you take to God? Knowing that Jesus quoted this passage on the cross, how does that change your perspective of this psalm?

Pray: Creator God, I cry out to you, but I often hear nothing. I want easy answers, but I am coming to see, you are not a vending machine. I cannot always force what I want. Are you silent? Are you speaking and I'm missing it? Are you trying to teach me how to rest in you without frantically finding solutions? Whatever the answer, I trust that you're here. Grant me peace. Amen.

Saturday, March 6 – Speak Openly

Read: John 7:1-13

Reflect: What prevents you from speaking openly? What would it look like to be empathetic to your neighbor, affirming of all, and still authentic to yourself when you speak?

Pray: Holy God, there are all sorts of narratives about what it means to be a Christian. I am quick to defend myself, but am I quick to defend you? Do not let me be silent, allowing false truth to hang in the air. Let me be one who speaks openly of your love for all, and how your love has changed my life. Amen.

Sunday, March 7 – Name

Read: Mark 5:1-10

Reflect: Take inventory of your soul. What do you carry that weighs you down? What do you carry that brings you to life? Know that God sees it all and calls you by name.

Pray: Gracious God, you see me when I am down, and you invite me to tell you about it. You ask me, "What is your name?" And in that moment, I can respond with the lies that cover me, or I can respond, "I am a child of God." No matter what I say, I know that you love me. What a gift to be seen and called by name. Amen.

Monday, March 8 – Dwell

Read: Jeremiah 7:1-7

Reflect: When do you feel the closest to God? When do you feel the furthest from God?

Pray: Holy God, it is easy for me to go through the motions, to say the words without feeling, to act the part without conviction. But I don't want a life that lacks feeling or conviction. I want people to know I'm a Christian by my love, not by an outward shallow appearance. So dwell in me, God. Dwell in me, dwell in me, dwell in me. Amen.

Tuesday, March 9 – Thirst

Read: John 7:37-44

Reflect: What in your life feels like water—thirst-quenching, healing, renewing? What leaves you thirsty?

Pray: God of renewal, you invite me to the water's edge. You invite me to drink big, messy, two-handed gulps of your living water. You invite me to wade in, to float, to no longer feel thirsty. I want all of that. I want it more than I can say, but I don't know how to get to the river. Show me the way. Amen.

Wednesday, March 10 – Gathers

Read: Psalm 147:1-11

Reflect: When was a time when you felt gathered in? How can you be a gatherer alongside God in your own life?

Pray: God of wide arms, sometimes I feel scattered, a little like an outcast, a little too familiar with the edge. I long for you to gather us up and pull us together into community, into you. For you are the God of the brokenhearted. You are the God of the edge. For that, I am eternally grateful. Amen.

Thursday, March 11 – Free

Read: John 8:31-32

Reflect: When you think of the word free, what comes to mind? What things in this world prevent you from being free—spiritually, mentally, and emotionally?

Pray: God of truth, I long to be free. I long for an untethered heart, for an unbound mind, for the freedom to move toward you with every breath. Help me to see where I am confining myself. Help me to break the patterns and systems that confine. Help me to see the truth, to follow you, and to be truly free. Amen.

Friday, March 12 – Wait

Read: Psalm 130

Reflect: What do you wait for in this life? What do you long for? Make a list of these things.

Pray: Holy God, I am waiting for the sun to rise. I am waiting for the day with no more pain. I am waiting for peace and joy like a river. So as I wait, give me the will to move my feet. I will watch for morning. I will watch for morning. Amen.

Saturday, March 13 – Stones

Read: John 8:47-59

Reflect: People throw stones at that which they do not understand. What is something you have struggled to understand that you could learn more about?

Pray: Patient Jesus, when you walked this world so many people did not understand. They tried to pin you down with logic, throwing stones at their confusion, throwing stones at what they did not understand. I know I am guilty of the same. So today I pray: Stretch my mind. Open my heart. Give me the strength to imagine that which I cannot understand. Amen.

Sunday, March 14 – Remember

Read: Psalm 42:1-6

Reflect: Remember a time when you felt truly yourself. Where were you and what were you doing? Remember a time when you felt closest to God. Where were you and what were you doing?

Pray: God of yesterday and God of tomorrow, you gave us the gift of remembering so that we might learn from the past, practice gratitude, and remember who we are. In this Lenten season, help me to reflect and remember your story, my story, and the way the two connect. Amen.

Monday, March 15 – Satisfied

Read: John 6:1-15

Reflect: Take a moment to practice gratitude. List five things you are grateful for—beyond what might be obvious or common answers.

Pray: Miracle worker, you fed 5,000 people until they were satisfied. At times I wonder, am I ever truly satisfied? Am I always reaching, planning, or wanting for more? Am I always hustling for my self-worth, striving to be the best? Teach me to sit in the grass at your feet. Teach me to eat with my neighbor. Teach me to be satisfied. For this is enough. If I slow down, I know, this is surely enough. Amen.

Tuesday, March 16 – Afraid

Read: John 6:16-20

Reflect: What do you fear? Research shows there is healing when we write, so write down your fears. Let it be a prayer.

Pray: God of promise, there is so much that I fear. I am afraid of failing. I am afraid of hurting those I love. I am afraid of relationships falling apart, and of time passing too quickly. I am afraid that I will never reach my dreams, or that I'll choose the wrong path altogether. I am afraid that the environment will continue to suffer, and that justice for all will never be reached. I have so much fear, and the sea is deep. Please walk toward me. Amen.

Wednesday, March 17 – Clay

Read: Jeremiah 18:1-6

Reflect: What relationships and events in your life have shaped you? Where was God in that?

Pray: Great potter, if I am clay, then I fear I am being molded by the world. I fear that I am in the hands of news feeds, social media, to-do lists, and social pressures. However, what I want is to be clay in your hands. I want to be shaped by you. I want to see your artist's signature on me and know that I am yours.

So do what you do best. Kickstart the potter's wheel. Start this pot over and mold me back toward you. Amen.

Thursday, March 18 – Bread

Read: John 6:41-51

Reflect: What are the most meaningful meals you have had? What made them holy?

Pray: Bread of life, this Lenten season, I want to practice seeing you at every table—every place where food is shared, hands are held, and laughter is exchanged; every quiet table where I eat alone. I want to see you in all of it—the holiness and the ordinary. Open my eyes to you in my midst. Amen.

Friday, March 19 – Joy

Read: Psalm 105

Reflect: What brings your soul true, abiding joy? Can you incorporate more of that into your life?

Pray: God of deliverance, you brought your people out of Egypt with joy, so I know that joy is part of what you want for us. Help me to practice sparking joy in my own life. Give me the wisdom to pursue not the things that make me momentarily happy, but that which brings deep, abiding joy. Amen

Saturday, March 20 – Trust

Read: Psalm 31

Reflect: Complete these sentences: I believe God is _____. I believe Jesus is _____. I believe the Spirit is _____. I believe faith is _____.

Pray: Trustworthy God, there is so much that I do not understand about this world, but still, I trust in you. I trust that love is real, and that you are in love. I trust that joy is real, and that you are in joy. I trust that justice is real, and that you are in justice. So help me to be in those things too. Amen.

Sunday, March 21 – Setting your mind...

Read: Mark 8:31-33

Reflect: What conversations are hard for you to hear? Lean into active listening today.

Pray: Holy God, how often am I Peter? How often do I set my mind on human things, as opposed to what you would have me think of? Help me shift my gaze to see the bigger picture, to see you, to see my neighbor. Forgive me for the times when I get caught up in my own sight lines. Amen.

Monday, March 22 – Mud

Read: John 9:1-17

Reflect: What are you passionate about? What do you have, and what can you use that is right at your fingertips, to lean into that passion?

Pray: God who breathed life into dust, I should have known that you would use mud to heal. I should have known that you would use what was right there at your fingertips to change the world. Teach me to do the same. Amen.

Tuesday, March 23 – Breath

Read: Psalm 146

Reflect: As you inhale and exhale, reread verses 8 and 9. Allow those words to sink into your bones so that you can sing God's praises all day long.

Pray: God of the air in our lungs, at the end of my life, I will ask, "Did I do enough?" Will there be less prisoners, less widows, less orphans, less suffering? Will I have cared about the people you care about? Will I have made a difference? Keep your words in my mouth until I do. Amen.

Wednesday, March 24 – Know

Read: John 10:14

Reflect: Think of someone who knows you. What are three things this person does not know about you? Remember that God knows us fully.

Pray: God who knows, most of us walk around begging to be seen, begging to be known. However, I don't have to beg with you. You know me completely. You see me. You hear me. You walk with me. There is no fighting for your attention. I have it. What a gift that is. Help me to appreciate the gift of this love. Amen.

Thursday, March 25 – Fear

Read: Psalm 27

Reflect: What things do you worry about? What do you fear? Take a moment to acknowledge those fears and lift them up in prayer.

Pray: Creator God, fear is like water, it runs on its own. It is powerful. A little bit of fear is a good thing. Too much fear and you'll drown. There is much to be afraid of in this fragile life, so today I bring you the fears on my heart. See them. Relieve them. Be with me. And if at all possible, grant me peace. Amen.

Friday, March 26 – Build

Read: Jeremiah 29:4-7

Reflect: What needs building up in your life? How can you start?

Pray: Creator God, you invited the Israelites to build houses, to build gardens, to build relationships; so there is something holy about building. Help me survey my life to imagine what you might be calling me to build today. Is it community? Is it a home? Is it new relationships? Is it deeper relationships among the people I already know and love? I want to build. Help me see. Amen.

Saturday, March 27 – Unbind

Read: John 11:28-44

Reflect: What do you grieve in this world? What does that grief feel like? What unbinds or loosens that hurt?

Pray: Jesus of Nazareth, you wept tears for Lazarus, which means you know what grief feels like. We wish that you could miraculously heal all losses like you did with Lazarus, for death is never fair or convenient. However, we ask that you simply grieve with us. Cry with us. Go to the graveside with us. Unbind our grief and walk with us. Amen.

Sunday, March 28 – Hosanna

Read: John 12:9-19

Reflect: Imagine yourself at the parade. Would you sing Hosanna? Would you be afraid? Picture the sights, the smells, the crowd. For a moment, put yourself there.

Pray: Great teacher, you rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. It was a peaceful protest, but it was risky. You had to have known that this would end in violence, for who could stand against the state and survive? I imagine your bravery and pray: Grant me a portion of that courage. I want to love the world as fiercely as you. Amen.

Monday, March 29 – Overturn

Read: Matthew 21:12-17

Reflect: What rhythms, habits, perspectives, narratives, or ways of thinking need to be overturned in your life?

Pray: God of justice, you have never hesitated to overturn unjust structures—power systems, tables, stereotypes. In many ways, this can feel shocking to us. We humans are known for moving slowly when it comes to change or progress. So today I pray, help me let go of the need to control the tempo. I want to help you overturn. Amen.

Tuesday, March 30 – Wish

Read: John 12:20-21

Reflect: What wishes do you have—for your faith, for your relationship with God, for your relationship with yourself?

Pray: Gracious God, there is much that I wish for. I wish for longer Sabbath days, for starry nights, for peace in my bones, for love in this city. However, above all else, I wish to see you. I wish for a closer relationship with you, O God. So scoop me up. Hear this wish. Hear this prayer. For I am like the Greeks who said, "We wish to see Jesus." Amen.

Wednesday, March 31 – Anxious

Read: Philippians 4:4-9

Reflect: When have you experienced anxiety in your life? What did it feel like? What steps do you take to center yourself? Where is God in that?

Pray: God of peace, we are all a little bit anxious. Our world moves so fast. How could we not be? I know anxiety is not what you wish for us, because you have always wanted whole, full, peaceful lives for your people. So today I ask for your deep breaths and a calm spirit. Relieve my anxiety. Center me. Help me slow down in a fast-paced world. Amen.

Thursday, April 1 – Light

Read: John 12:34-36

Reflect: Who or what serves as a nightlight in your life—helping you see where you are, helping to guide your path?

Pray: God of light, if I am walking, I want to walk toward the dawn. I want to walk into the sun. I want to walk closer to you. There are many long shadows that can distract and deter. Help guide my feet. Be my light. Gratefully I pray. Amen.

Friday, April 2 – Tend

Read: John 19:38-42

Reflect: When have you witnessed someone tending to a difficult task?

Pray: God of grace, in the aftermath of violence, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried your son. They tended to the body, because even after death, your incarnate life mattered. Help me to tend to the difficult tasks that honor you. Amen.

Saturday, April 3 – Deny

Read: John 13:36-38

Reflect: When have you been in denial? When have you denied others? When have you denied God?

Pray: Holy God, Peter denied. I understand why. Being a Christian in this world is not easy. People have assumptions about what I believe, who I am, who I include. I find myself tempted to defend my beliefs, or to downplay how much I long for you. Forgive me, for I am like Peter. I have been ashamed to tell this story. Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me. Amen.

Sunday, April 4 – Recognize

Read: Luke 24:13-35

Reflect: Where have you seen God this week?

Pray: Holy God, you are right in front of me. So often we are face to face, and yet so often I miss it! I want to recognize you, but more than that, I want to walk with you. I want to eat with you. I want to rejoice with you. You are on the loose—out in the world. Thanks be to God. I will keep my eyes open.