

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW  
**ABOUT THE CROSS**

2025 LENTEN DEVOTIONALS



**St. Luke's**  
METHODIST CHURCH



## Wednesday, March 5

I love the season of Lent. There is a beauty in the practice of self-reflection that helps us to become the people we are created to be. The season is a time to examine our lives in a way that directs us to a deeper understanding of the love that God has for us. It is one of the reasons that I appreciate the writings of Peter Abelard. Abelard lived from 1079 - 1142 and was a French philosopher and theologian. One of his most important contributions to Christianity was labeled as heresy - his views on the cross. In his time, the leading thought on why Christ died on the cross was that it was necessary for the forgiveness of sins.

In addition, it was thought Christ had to die in the place of all humanity. In very logical arguments, Abelard showed scriptural accounts of Jesus forgiving people before He was ever crucified, thereby proving that the Crucifixion was not a requirement for forgiveness. Instead, Abelard wrote that God revealed in Christ the ultimate expression of His perfect love. God did not need to have Jesus die before God would love people - for God had always loved people. Peter Abelard thought Jesus died on the cross as the example of perfect love, God's love. Put simply, Abelard thought that the cross was not to change the mind of God, but the hearts of humankind.

With that in mind, Lent is a season to reflect on one's life, not for the purpose of feeling guilt in the death of Christ, but instead, to know that the unconditional love of Christ frees and empowers us to live as the people we were created to be. We were made in God's image to be children of God. The goal is not perfect actions and thoughts for every moment of our lives (none of us is up to that task!), but rather a journey that strives to fully love God by the way we love our neighbors (all of humanity) in the way that we love ourselves.

During this Lenten season, remember Christ has set us free from guilt and fear. We are free to explore our lives for any and all ways that we can love God more completely by the way we love the people around us as well as caring for our own health as children of God. It is the most important thing we can do each day!

*Dr. Robert Long, Senior Pastor*

## Thursday, March 6


My first Sunday as the new organist of St. Luke's was March 5, 1989. I remember it well. It snowed five inches that day. As a Texan, Oklahoma was one of those "Northern States," and I was very excited for my first Oklahoma snowfall. However, my fondest memory of that Sunday was meeting and greeting the members of St. Luke's. It was immediately evident that this was a warm and welcoming body of believers. I was 27, and it was my first job out of state, but I already felt I had made so many new friendships and "adopted" grandparents. Thus began the first of many years of building relationships.

To help me better know the wonderful people who engaged in worship each week, I made it my mission to find out what music genres inspired them. As to be expected in a large church, there were varying replies to my inquisition. As a classically trained musician, it excited me to set out and explore the realms of music genres beyond sonatas, partitas, fugues, etc. A church should never be defined by the style of worship or what the musical selections are from week to week, but that it is done with the utmost quality and that worshipers are inspired and uplifted to praise and give thanks to the very Lord and Savior in whose holy space we gather.

A church body is much like a choir. A choir is divided into four main sections: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Usually, the soprano section carries the melody line while the other three parts support it with varying harmonies. Standing alone, the melody would be a lovely melodic line. But when you add in the harmony, that melody suddenly comes alive, much like a well-known hymn. Occasionally, a composer will distribute the melody in another voice part or intertwine it amongst all four parts. This is teamwork at its finest. Like a choir, church ministry thrives when teamwork is in action: worship, music, missions, education, and fellowship. The Holy Spirit is the divine melody that all of us join together and harmonize to make come alive.

It is one thing to read or hear scripture. It is yet another to actually live scripture. I learned early on that St. Luke's is a church that does just that: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. With God, all things are possible. The golden thread of varying harmonies that makes us alive in God, the church, and each other is love. When we love and accept each other, powerful ministry experiences are endless. I am so glad I made the decision thirty-six years ago to move to that "Northern State" of Oklahoma and begin my journey of harmonizing with fellow Christians to live out an amazing Symphony of Life. God loves us. We love God. The song is simple: love each other and be a part of the most magical, harmonic chord the human ear has ever heard.

*Robert Fasol, Organist and Choirmaster*



## Friday, March 7

As we approach Easter, we are reminded of God's boundless love for us, demonstrated most profoundly in the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, on the cross. It's a time to reflect on God's grace - grace that is unearned, undeserved, and yet freely given.

At St. Luke's Community Market, we have an opportunity each week to share a tangible expression of that grace with our neighbors in need. Every Friday, our volunteers gather at the Community Market, where we provide fresh produce, dairy, protein, and other essential food items to people who may struggle to access these resources elsewhere. Many of our clients live in areas where grocery stores are scarce, and for some, getting enough food means choosing between necessities like rent and utilities or putting food on the table. We're not just giving out groceries; we are offering grace in the form of provision, compassion, and understanding. The work we do becomes an extension of God's love in action.

As we interact with our clients week after week, we come to know their names, their struggles, and their hopes. We become part of their community, and they become part of ours. It's not uncommon for a conversation to center around a recent illness, a job search, or the challenges of living paycheck to paycheck. And it's in these moments, when we listen, offer encouragement, or provide a small gift, that the work we do transcends simple food distribution. We're sharing the love of Christ.

Lately, we've been blessed with the opportunity to offer even more practical assistance, such as hats, gloves, and socks, as the cold winter months have made it even harder for many to stay warm. A few weeks ago, we were able to give a grocery cart to a client who walks to Community Market every week to collect food for his family. When he received the cart, his eyes welled with tears. He couldn't believe we would give him such a simple yet invaluable gift. In his eyes, that cart was more than just a tool for carrying food; it was an act of grace, a tangible sign that he was seen, valued, and cared for.

This act of kindness, this simple gift of food or a cart or a pair of gloves, reflects the grace that Jesus extended to us on the cross. In this season of Lent, we are called to reflect on how we can offer grace to others in the same way Christ has shown it to us. The work we do at St. Luke's is more than just a service - it is an opportunity to live out the love of Jesus in our community, offering grace not just in words but in action. May we continue to serve with open hearts and hands, sharing God's love with those who need it most.

*Lori Hall*, Executive Director of Missions

## Saturday and Sunday, March 8 & 9

*Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.*

*Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"*

*Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me."*

*When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

## Monday, March 10

Did you know that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in January has been dubbed National Quitters Day? It's the day most people abandon their New Year's Eve Resolutions. I learned this from author Bob Goff's new devotional, *Catching Whimsy!* Like some of us, Bob Goff was always taught to not be a quitter. I vividly recall my parents telling my siblings and me, "If you start something, you need to finish it!" This is excellent advice for many things but certainly not for everything! Not wanting to be a quitter kept me in a difficult marriage for many years. It kept me in a job that I should have quit sooner! It kept one of my friends in piano lessons for a long time, and she was miserable. I'm sure we can all think of something we've started and discovered just wasn't for us!

Something I truly love is working crossword puzzles. I do at least two every day and would likely do more if I had the time. According to experts, completing crossword puzzles can improve cognitive functions and may slow the decline of brain function! What a great thing, and I absolutely love it! During the season of Lent, we are encouraged to give up (or quit) something as an act of sacrifice, just as Jesus fasted before His crucifixion. This can help us grow spiritually as we reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made for us. I've been praying about what (if anything) I should give up this year, and guess what? I'm going to be a quitter! I'm giving up my crossword puzzles. Oh, how I'll miss them! My routine will need to change completely.

But you know, this will be completely useless unless I use the time to remember and consider Jesus' selfless act on the cross. How will I do that? By meditating on God's word, praying, and reading my daily devotionals instead of doing the puzzles.

Just as crossword puzzles aren't necessarily bad for me, perhaps there's something, maybe even something good for you, that consumes a lot of your time and attention that you could quit during this time. Is God nudging you to be a quitter this Lent? Is there anything you could stop doing for these 40 days that would draw you closer to Him?

*Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. - Hebrews 12:1 - 2*

Susan Meharg, Assistant to Executive Team

## Tuesday, March 11

When I began to write this devotional, I wasn't sure what to write it about and was just staring at a blank page. So I decided to get some inspiration from some of the most reliable people I know: the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday School class. They never let me down when I need to get an idea moving or when I need to be humbled. They're very good at both!

When we began talking about Lent and what it meant to us as Christians, they had some good comments and questions. The first was, "Lent? Like the stuff in your pockets?" But once we got that squared away, the helpful questions and comments started flowing!

We all could agree that 40 days is a long time, and we'd rather spend 40 days getting closer to God in the comfort of our own home than on a boat full of stinky animals like Noah, or in the desert with no food or water like Jesus. Once we really looked at it, 40 days didn't seem that long! We discussed the differences between Good Friday and Black Friday, and they believe the two names should be swapped!

We talked about some things we could give up to help us grow closer to God. Once they realized they were supposed to give something up for that period of time, ideas started flowing; "I could give up talking to my sister. I could give up eating vegetables. I could quit taking showers!" But then I explained that it's not just about giving up something, but it's about giving up something that would be an actual sacrifice to you. Think of something that would interrupt your everyday life and help you put your focus on God. You can't just give up broccoli and call it a day! There can be no loophole when getting closer to God. You have to put in the work, just like in any relationship.

Once we all agreed that everyone needs to be kind to their siblings, eat their veggies, and shower, we began the real conversation of what would be actual sacrifices in our lives. We know Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us, and now we can show our love for Him by giving up something that now seems extremely small in comparison.

We all agreed that 40 days without something you're accustomed to having or doing can seem kind of scary and difficult. If you need an accountability partner, just tell a child. I promise you they won't let you forget!!

*Taylor Easttom, Downtown Campus Director of Children's Ministries*



## Easter Offering

Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) before Easter and serves as a time of preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection. In the early church, Easter Sunday was the time for anyone entering the church to be baptized, so Lent became a time for baptismal prospects to fast and pray to prepare themselves for their Easter baptism.

Lent remains the holy season of preparation wherein people practice spiritual disciplines to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the love Jesus displayed through the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

This everlasting love of Christ offers us the gift of salvation; salvation is life lived with God here and now and forevermore. We have so much for which to give thanks and celebrate. One of the ways we express our gratitude to God is through our gifts to the church to support the missions and ministries of St. Luke's. For more than 30 years, St. Luke's has taken up an additional offering during Lent, called the Easter Offering, as an act of thanksgiving for the love that Jesus has given to the world through the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Since this is a gift that is completely for missions, we hope each and every person and family can make this a second-mile gift beyond their gifts for the operations and ministries of the church. When we all do something, it becomes larger than any one of us can do alone.

100% of the Easter Offering goes to support the missions of St. Luke's and the many different missional programs we support. Every year, a few of these ministries are highlighted so we can hear how our gifts go to transforming lives. This year, we will look at El Sistema Oklahoma, Cleats 4 Kids, Skyline Ministries, Music Education at St. Mark's Methodist Church in Kisumu, Kenya, and Neighborhood Services Organization.

When we support the Easter Offering, we become a part of all of these incredible ministries. If each of us will do what we can, it will be a gift to God and transform lives through the many mission programs.

Learn more at [stlukesokc.org/EasterOffering](http://stlukesokc.org/EasterOffering).



## Wednesday, March 12

*Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish. - Esther 4:16*

The season of Lent is set aside for us to spend intentional time with God. Focusing on our faith strengthens us for the days ahead. Often, the practice of fasting is used during the time of Lent. It is the practice of setting aside one thing to be filled with God's word and connect with God in prayer. I want to encourage you to consider a fast this season of Lent. It is a valuable tool as we seek to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. God wants to draw close to us; let us take time to draw near to God.


Perhaps one of the best examples of fasting takes place in the Book of Esther. The Book of Esther tells the story of a plot against the Jewish people by one of the advisors to the king. Mordecai discovered the plot and sent word to Queen Esther. Esther was raised by Mordecai and wanted nothing more than to help her people. However, she feared for her life if she approached the King uninvited. She reluctantly agreed to put her own life at risk for the sake of her people.

When Esther committed to approaching the King with the news of this plot, she asked that the Jews and her attendants fast in preparation for going before the King. Esther took time to draw close to God so that she could be strengthened for "such a time as this." Strengthened by her time fasting and praying, she approached King Xerxes and began the work to save her people and herself.

Fasting is a tool people of faith have used for thousands of years. It sets aside things that distract us and allows us to focus on God. We do this to draw close to God and to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter. Fasting does not have to be 40 days without food and water. Fasting can be as simple as forgoing lunch, giving up a significant part of your diet (coffee, soda, chocolate), or turning off social media and electronics for a while. Fasting is not simply skipping out on food or drink; it is also intentional about using the time we would have spent eating to focus on our faith.

Throughout the Bible, great stories of faith are accompanied by acts of fasting. Let us look to their example this season of Lent. The most important thing is not what we eat or drink but how we devote our time to fall deeper in love with our God who first loved us.

*Rev. Keith King, Pastor of Worship*



## Thursday, March 13

At the start of each class, one of my yoga teachers encouraged us to “make best use of this time.” My son, Ian, recently turned 30. It still boggles my mind that three decades are gone. When you are a young parent, everyone tells you how quickly they grow up. It was hard to comprehend at the time, but now I understand!

To honor Ian’s big milestone birthday, I made a scrapbook with one page highlighting each year of his life. It was a roller coaster of emotions as I sat in my mom’s office, reliving those 30 years of life. I never truly appreciated her incredible attention to detail until I began this project. She has pictures and scrapbooks catalogued down to the month and year from before I was born! I could easily find something like 1998, Ian with the Easter Bunny.

A recurring theme was our epic family Easter parties. All the siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, extended family, and many friends found their way to my parents’ home each year. The food was amazing. The games were silly and fun. And we all looked forward to spending time with family members we didn’t normally see.

My mom ALWAYS wrangled us together for a big group photo. And we ALWAYS feigned disdain because we briefly had to leave our overflowing plates or pause the current game to line up for the obligatory family photo. Now, those images are beyond priceless. As I wandered through those decades of pictures, I was filled with joy as I remembered our young ones filled with awe and wonder. And my heart felt heavy when I saw those who are now in the Kingdom of Heaven: precious cousins and sweet grandmothers.

My parents gave us the gift of togetherness. My mom spent the weeks leading up to Easter preparing by baking pies, cookies, and cakes from scratch. My dad prepared the property for us to run and play. They made the best use of Lent to be ready for what we now remember as precious family time.

I believe God is calling us to make the best use of this time. He sent His son to show us the way by reminding us to forgive, give thanks, be kind, and, of course, love with our whole hearts.

As we journey through Lent, perhaps you will give something up or add a devotional time, cook a meal, and spend quality time with a friend. Each of these is a simple yet powerful way to prepare for the great celebration of Easter and connect to God’s amazing grace.

How will you make the best use of your Lenten journey?

*Tisha Tate Garcia*, Hospitality Team

*But they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.* - Isaiah 40:31

Last year, for the first time, I decided I was going to be very intentional and give up something for Lent that would give me the opportunity to be more focused on my health and well-being as I was approaching the age of 65. I have always worked out and eaten fairly healthy, but for this season, I decided I would give up gluten (bread, pasta, cookies, cakes etc.) and make a conscience effort to lift weights and try to strengthen my bones and not just be a cardio junky as I was recently diagnosed with osteopetrosis and osteoarthritis.

Now, bear in mind that I was always the first one in the kitchen at the church each time they made cookies, or first in line when our chef made his homemade bread. These are some of my favorite foods, and who doesn't love a big bowl of any kind of pasta? The removal of these foods was definitely going to be a struggle for me to accomplish.

At first, this was really hard, and I struggled as everyone around me was still consuming these wonderful foods. Going out to eat was even harder as I had to be careful about what I ate as I was determined to complete this and focus more on my relationship with God.

My workout routine also changed, and I started lifting more weights and doing less cardio. I noticed as the weeks went by that I got stronger. I also started walking the dog and noticed that this was a time that I could use for reflection on my life and a time for me to pray and speak to God. This time became very precious to me, and I continue to do this every day. My dog, Shasta, also loves the walk and really needs the exercise.

It has been almost a year since I started this journey. I have continued to be gluten-free in my diet, and I feel much better. I have also continued lifting weights and have found that my strength has continued to develop. I am hoping for an improved bone density scan this year. My relationship with God has also improved, and I continue with my daily prayer walks with my dog.

*Gabrielle Moon, Executive Director St. Luke's Children's Centers*



## Saturday and Sunday, March 15 & 16

*And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power." And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them.*

*And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid.*

*And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.*

- Mark 9:1 - 10

## Monday, March 17

The cross is an important symbol for Christians. It's often one of the main focal points in a church worship space and might be one of the most treasured personal items for a family or individual. You can find crosses on all kinds of décor, jewelry, clothing, and more. I don't think the early followers of Jesus would disagree on the importance of the cross, but they might find it odd that this instrument used for crucifixion is displayed on t-shirts, journals, and on the walls and bookcases in many homes today.


The cross is important for us today because while we know that the cross was a place for pain and death, the cross is also a symbol of hope and resurrection, of peace and promise. The cross can remind us of our sin and shame, but it doesn't leave us there. Instead, the cross brings forgiveness, grace, and new life.

The structure of the cross is simple: a vertical beam and a horizontal beam connected together. This is also a simple structure for us to remember about our faith. The vertical beam can remind us of our relationship with God. We may look up to God in praise or bow our heads in prayer, giving reverence to His name, a connection that can be symbolized by a vertical line. The horizontal beam can remind us of our relationship with others. We reach out with open arms to embrace and love those around us. Faith is lived out in both of these expressions, loving God and loving others, the most important commandments.

The cross is a symbol of grace, and this is one of the most important matters of our faith. As we experience God's grace, we are connected to the gift of God's loving kindness and acceptance. And as we experience God's grace, we are encouraged to share that kind of love and mercy with others.

This Lenten season, take some time to look around and notice the crosses that are in your path. Each time you see a cross, remember all that the cross symbolizes, but especially focus on God's love and sharing that love with others.

*Amy Givens, Director of Discipleship and Youth Ministry*



## Tuesday, March 18

*Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." - Luke 9:61 - 62*

What does this scripture mean? Did this man make a mocking claim to follow Jesus but then slip away in the crowd? Just before this scripture, Christ left a town that would not receive Him and His followers. Jesus and the disciples continued on to Jerusalem, and on the road, they ran into some men. I have always imagined this as a busy road (since it leads to Jerusalem) and that the people knew who Jesus was already. I feel like Jesus' responses to the men here may seem cold, and that could be because He was refused a place to "lay His head" in the town they just left, and along the road, the passersby continued to mock and disrespect Him.

What gives us the strength to carry on when we feel dejected, disrespected, mocked, belittled, etc.? Christ was on His way to enter Jerusalem as the King of Peace. He was "meek," and to show His meekness and peaceful nature, He did not lash out at those who were mocking. He answered with difficult statements that get to our very core reading them today.

Do we believe in the Resurrected Christ? Have we chosen to act and follow Him? How are we living out our own lives of being loving servants to others? We must strive each day to move forward without looking back in doubt, insecurity, or shame... We find strength in the love and sacrifice He shared with the entire world.

*Logan Fish*, Edmond Campus Director of Hospitality, Director of Poteet Theatre



For over 10 years, El Sistema Oklahoma (ESO) has served the children of the Oklahoma City area. In addition to the original orchestral program, ESO has expanded to offer a second vocal program for students of all abilities. Two hundred students are served each year from 16 partner schools. Since 2020, 52 graduates have received over \$3 million in college scholarships.

The mission of ESO is to serve the community by engaging children within an ensemble-based music program so they can share the joy of music-making and grow as responsible and productive citizens. Using a holistic approach, ESO provides opportunities for each of their students to enjoy brighter futures.

One example of the difference we can make by supporting ESO through the Easter Offering is seen in a young boy who had difficulty engaging with people when he first started attending ESO. He made little eye contact and had trouble sitting still long enough for him to make progress with his instrument. However, the staff of ESO operates with patience and compassion. Over the days and weeks, they worked with the young boy and began to gain his trust. They gave him the space and interaction he needed, and slowly, he began to open up.

Today, he is a student leader, having learned the necessary coping skills and becoming proficient in music. From a shy young boy who didn't make eye contact and rarely interacted to a young leader who engages easily with his peers and adults alike, the ministry of El Sistema Oklahoma has opened a world of opportunities for him.

When you support the Easter Offering you become part of the life-transforming ministry of ESO. To learn more about their program and volunteer opportunities, please visit [elsistemaok.org](http://elsistemaok.org).

## Wednesday, March 19

*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. - Luke 9:51*

In Luke's gospel, you can basically separate the gospel into two sections, with this verse being the dividing line. Everything before this is about Jesus establishing His ministry in Galilee. Right before this verse is the story of Jesus being with his disciples in Caesarea, where He asks them, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter answers, "You are the Messiah of God." Then Jesus takes a few of his inner circle up on a mountain where they experience the transfiguration and see Jesus in all His glory. From there, we read several other short stories before Jesus resolutely sets out for Jerusalem.

Jesus knows His disciples have now come to a greater understanding of who He is and have seen Him in His glory. The time has now come to fulfill His mission on earth, which will lead Him to Jerusalem, where He will be crucified and resurrected three days later.

Have you ever felt like you struggled to know your purpose in life? Where is God wanting to lead you? Do you feel resolute in where you are heading the same way Jesus was resolute in heading to Jerusalem to carry out His purpose?

Lent can be a time for us to refocus spiritually. It is a time to listen for God speaking in our lives so that we can hear where God wants to lead us. It is a time to commit ourselves to trusting in God and being obedient to God's call on our lives.

During Lent, I often participate in some form of fasting. I have found it to be a helpful spiritual discipline to refocus, make sure I am obedient to God above all else, and to help me listen for God speaking. Fasting may or may not be the right spiritual discipline for you. Maybe it's spending more time reading the Bible, participating in a Bible study, focusing on your daily prayer life, journaling, or some other spiritual discipline. Make sure to use this season to draw near to God so that you, too, can set out resolutely to follow where God wants to lead you.

*Rev. Josh Attaway, Edmond Campus Pastor and CFO*



## Thursday, March 20

I think I have discovered a new love language! Though I'm sure that it might fall into acts of service, there is nothing quite like the thought, effort, and time that it takes to plan, prepare, and execute a well-balanced meal that serves your family. And then to do it again every single day for the rest of your life.

Over the last two years, I have really fallen in love with cooking in a whole new way. I've always loved cooking, but only recently has it become more than just making dinner every single evening. I have poured myself into making all three meals and snacks! All the moms unite on the never-ending snack requests. Regardless of how hard it has been, I have fallen in love with finding whole foods and creating them into nourishing meals for my family, finding new ways to prepare from scratch when possible.

At times, it has felt overwhelming, daunting, and hard when I just want to stop for takeout, but watching the way our minds and bodies have responded makes it all worth it. My girls love to be in the kitchen with me; they love to help knead dough, mix sauces, cut vegetables, grate cheese, and season meat.

Most recently, the conversations have turned to where food comes from, and in turn, the stories turn back to the Bible and how God created earth and what He created for us and how we use it to be good stewards to the bodies God created for us. Sometimes, the conversations led to talking about our days, what went wrong, and how we can still show God's love and kindness in any situation.

Other times, in the stillness of the kitchen, as I wash the dishes each night or make breakfast Saturday mornings, I pray and talk to God and thank Him for allowing me the skills and resources to pour into my children in this way.

How much more does God desire to pour into our lives than we, as parents, could ever wish to give to our own children? How much harder must it have been for God to plan ahead for what happened at Easter? We are so grateful for the sacrifices He made for us.

*Mandi Coleman, Director, St. Luke's Children's Center*



## Friday, March 21

As we walk through Lent, our focus is drawn to the cross, one of the defining moments of our faith, the turning point of all history. But what is the most important thing about the cross? At its heart, the cross is a picture of God's love and grace, a love so deep and a grace so extravagant that it is almost beyond comprehension.

In our world today, love is often based on what we do, what we achieve, or how much we deserve. But the cross tells a different story. God's love isn't earned. His grace isn't something we work for. In Romans 5:8, Paul reminds us: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God didn't wait for us to clean ourselves up, to fix our mistakes, or to get our act together before He forgave us. No, He pours out His grace upon us "just as we are." That is grace.

A few years ago, a story made headlines that captured the world's attention. In a small courtroom in Dallas, Texas, a young man named Brandt Jean faced the woman who had killed his brother. Amber Guyger, a former police officer, had been found guilty of entering the wrong apartment and fatally shooting Botham Jean, an innocent man who had been eating ice cream in his own home.

At the sentencing hearing, many expected anger, condemnation, or perhaps words of bitterness from Botham's family. But what happened next stunned everyone. Brandt Jean looked at Amber and said, "I forgive you. I love you just like anyone else. I want the best for you... I don't even want you to go to jail."

Then, in a moment that left the courtroom in tears, Brandt asked the judge for permission to hug Amber. As they embraced, the world witnessed a powerful image of grace - undeserved, unmerited, and unexpected. That moment reflects, in some small way, the greater grace of the cross. Just as Brandt forgave the person who had wronged him, Jesus embraced us through His love given on the cross. He offered love not based on what we deserved but in spite of what we deserved.

In our world today, where division, anger, and judgment often prevail, the cross stands as a call to live differently. It reminds us to love when it's hard, to forgive when it feels impossible, and to show grace when it's undeserved. The cross transforms not just our relationship with God but also how we live in community with others.

This Lent, as you reflect on the cross, remember that it is not just a symbol of sacrifice; it is a declaration of God's unshakable love for you. It is a reminder that no matter where you've been or what you've done, God's grace is greater... something that's very important about the cross!

*Rev. Linda Harker, Pastor of Connections*

## Saturday and Sunday, March 22 & 23

*And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.*

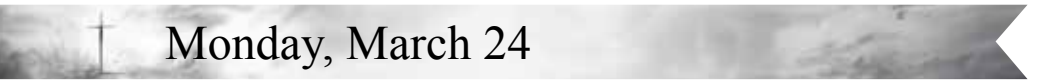
*And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; rise, he is calling you."*

*And throwing off his mantle he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master, let me receive my sight."*

*And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.*

- Mark 10:46 - 52



## Monday, March 24

It's been two and a half years since my dad passed away. It's difficult to put into words what you feel when you lose a parent. I felt grief, of course. But also, there is this feeling that everything is less sure and less secure than it used to be. For me, my dad was a constant in my life, steadfast and even-tempered. He was the most kind and patient person I've ever known.

I've had to navigate this balance of managing my grief while making sure my two small children (ages four and one) know stories and pictures of their Grandpa Lonny. As a result, my oldest son Jonah has asked me a lot of questions about death. And they don't always come at opportune times. One day, after a long morning at church, we ran to the grocery store on our way home. As we were in the checkout line, he asked, "Mommy, where is heaven?" In the midst of checking out our groceries while wrangling two squirmy boys, I didn't have a great answer for him. I was on the spot and said something like, "I'm not really sure." And he asked, "Is it far?" "It feels far sometimes," I said. That seemed to resonate with him.

So, where is heaven? Every major religion describes it, whether it is the Good Kingdom of Hinduism, Jannah (Paradise) of Islam, or various other names and descriptions. Now, I'm not a Biblical scholar by any means, but my understanding of the Bible's description of heaven is that it is a place where there is no pain, no evil. A place where we are at one with God and can be in unity with those around us.

Every week, we pray the Lord's Prayer in worship, which ends with, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Here, Jesus teaches us an important key to our life here on earth: make it more like heaven. Heaven doesn't have to feel so far away, as long as we are working to make our home here on earth as close to heaven as possible.

As we journey through this Lenten season, I invite you to think of ways you can make our earth more like heaven. Show kindness to others. Relieve the pain of those who are suffering or in need. Share God's love with others and help them to know they are not alone. Learn more about our world and the people in it, and work to restore relationships, both with the people around us and with God. To see if we can make heaven feel a little less far away.

*Candace Fish*, Edmond Campus Director of Traditional Worship

## Tuesday, March 25

During Lent in 2023, I was in my third trimester of pregnancy with our daughter, Corrie. As a way to both center myself mentally and ensure that I was taking care of myself and my baby physically, I went for many walks in our neighborhood throughout this season.

Around the middle of February, it was finally a bearable temperature outside, and the days had gotten long enough for me to squeeze a walk into my schedule with some regularity. It was at this time that I noticed all the trees I saw were bare. Some even held onto the last few brown leaves from the previous fall. As I was filled with anticipation to meet our baby girl, I started paying close attention to the trees. Since she was due in May, I took any sign of spring as one step closer to holding her in my arms. After a few weeks, it happened – I saw blooms on some of my neighbors' Redbuds and Bradford Pears!

The following spring, though I was no longer pregnant, I still found myself looking for these trees to begin blooming. Something about the resurgence of life around me brought hope and excitement for the season ahead.

As we move through this time of Lent, I know that we will all be looking for reminders of God's mercy and love for each of us. We all come to the cross with our own "brown leaves" – doubts, guilt, insecurities. The promise of Easter gives us the gift of grace. As we read in Romans 5:8, "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us." What a blessing it is to know and share this truth.

*Morgan Jones, Associate Director of Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City*



## Cleats for Kids

*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. - Colossians 1:13*

Like most parents, Mark and Stacy McDaniel spent lots of time at the ball fields, watching their three children play the sports they loved. Mark and Stacy also spent lots of money so their children could have the clothes, shoes, and equipment they needed to participate in their teams. As each child outgrew their shoes and equipment, they placed them in the garage. The older the children got, the bigger the pile of good, but used sports equipment grew.

Mark and Stacy wondered if they could find a way to share the gently used equipment with other kids who might need some help. Surely, the pile in the garage could be used for something better than taking up space. Cleats for Kids (C4K) was born from a pile of used equipment in the dark corner of their garage and a desire to make a difference in the lives of others. It was in 2011 that the work began to develop relationships with schools and the community to provide the equipment that would help to ensure students would have the opportunity to participate in life-changing sports.

The McDaniel family is a big believer in youth sports. More importantly, they know that when children and youth are given the opportunity to compete, they are healthier and develop the skills one needs to succeed in life. Since 2011, Cleats for Kids has helped students in schools in all 77 counties of Oklahoma. Over 390,000 children and youth have been blessed by the work of C4K. They not only provide an opportunity to compete, but they bring the hope of possibilities to students with their tremendous generosity.

This wonderful ministry is a reflection of the grace of God at work in the world. God takes the discarded mess we pile in the corner of our lives and turns it into blessings. God's grace redeems what is often considered used up and makes a new creation, filled with the renewed possibility for blessing life. The grace we celebrate at Easter, the grace that comes through the cross, is the power of God at work to renew His children so that we may love as He first loved us.

When you support the Easter Offering you become part of the life-transforming ministry of Cleats for Kids. To learn more about their program please visit [cleatsforkids.org](http://cleatsforkids.org).

# Wednesday, March 26

Have you ever wondered how many kind acts are done without anyone knowing? On any given Sunday at St. Luke's, we hear so many stories of folks in our family of faith who do random acts of kindness and care for others without receiving any credit. That, of course, is the model Jesus calls us to in Matthew 6 in this very loose translation. Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding. When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself.


That is also the model practiced by those who took the body of Jesus and buried Him in the tomb. The Gospels portray Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus as "secret" disciples of Jesus who go to Pilate with little fanfare and ask for the body. They were members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the ruling body that had already condemned Jesus. But in the Gospel of John, the two men seem not to care who finds out about this final act of kindness they perform for Jesus.

I came across a story recently that also reminded me of the good people do that may go unrecognized for years. It is the story of Sir Nicholas Winton, of German-Jewish heritage. It was shortly before WWII broke out in Europe that Winton helped to rescue refugee children, mostly Jewish, whose families had fled persecution in Nazi Germany. Known as the "British Schindler," Nicholas Winton was able to help move 669 children from Czechoslovakia before it fell into Nazi hands. He worked diligently to find new homes for these children in Britain. In September of 1939, the Nazi's invaded Poland and the war officially began and all borders were closed. Winton expressed his utter and complete frustration that 250 children set to leave on another train were turned back. Only two of those children survived the concentration camps.

For 50 years, Winton's virtuous deeds largely went unnoticed. In February of 1988, Winton was invited to be an audience member of a BBC television program called "That's Life." During the show, Sir Winton's story was revealed, and the host asked whether there were any of the children in the audience whom Sir Winton had saved. They were asked to stand, and unbeknownst to Winton, about two dozen had been sitting all around him. They stood and applauded his long-forgotten acts of bravery and mercy.

This Lenten season is a reminder that because we have been extended God's grace through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we too are called to extend kindness to others even if no one other than God knows.

*Rev. David Poteet, Pastor of Congregational Care*



## Thursday, March 27

When I was eight years old in elementary school, I learned about Lent. I had a friend who said that her family had given up sugar for Lent, and that was why she was unable to partake in the festivities of a classmate's birthday celebration. It befuddled me because there was absolutely nothing on earth that was going to stop me from enjoying a piece of Wal-Mart cookie cake that, in my mind, was going to be the greatest treat I had ever received in the vast eight years of my existence. She said Lent was a celebration that honored Jesus and the time He spent fasting in the desert for 40 days before beginning His ministry. I will admit boldly that I could not understand, at the time, why anyone would give up cookie cake to celebrate something like that, but I continued to stay curious.

At lunch that week, I watched her pray and was even more curious. She didn't do it for show; she would just quietly sit down and bow her head and close her eyes and wait for a few short seconds before diving into her meal.

Suspicious, I knew nothing of faith, religion, prayer, observing Lent, or really anything about Jesus other than He was correlated with Christmas, which made Him a favorable character in my child-mind. Watching her through the weeks was an interesting transition of curiosity, frustration, envy, and then finally wanting to copy everything she did. I couldn't explain it, but she drew me in with her quiet confidence. She had bold faith in the face of looking different than other people. Her joy even when she had to say no to things unimaginable (the infamous cookie cake). For an indescribable reason, I felt left out and wanted to be a part of it.

On the final week leading up to Easter, she invited me to church. Maybe it was that her family loudly and jubilantly got into their mini-van, and it felt so welcoming, or maybe it was the promise of brunch afterward, but entering that church was something that has stuck with me. It felt like when you walk outside for the first time after a long winter, and it's suddenly warm. My heart was warmed by the presence of God.

Lent is a celebration meant to warm your heart toward God. I pray your heart be warmed this season, whether you're giving up that delicious cookie-cake or diving into the Word to experience newness in the way 8-year-old Kelsey did.

*Kelsey Paul, Downtown Campus LifeLight Worship Leader*



## Friday, March 28

One of the most meaningful parts of Lent for me is the Good Friday service. I grew up in the Methodist Church, so I've been to my fair share of Good Friday services, but it's only in the past few years that I've started to really understand the weight of what it means for Christ to give His life for me. It wasn't until recently that I fully grasped how significant that sacrifice really is. The service at St. Luke's has helped me see the gravity of it all. The tone of the service and the space for quiet reflection help me slow down and truly think about what Jesus did for us.

During the service, we usually sing the hymn *Were You There?* It's beautiful but also haunting, and it paints such a vivid picture of Christ's final moments. When I hear that song, I feel like I'm right there with the disciples, the followers, and the crowd, watching everything unfold. I can almost feel their sorrow and longing as they watched Jesus' life slip away. It makes me pause and reflect on how deeply that moment must have impacted them. It refocuses my heart on the sacrifice Jesus made for all of us.

When I really stop and think about it, Jesus' sacrifice is overwhelming. He didn't just die for the people who were there in the moment; He died for all of us. He took on all the things we've done wrong and all the ways we've fallen short. We're never going to be perfect, and we'll keep messing up, but the amazing part is that His love doesn't change. He carried all of that for us anyway. Because of His sacrifice, we don't have to be defined by our mistakes. We have the freedom to keep moving forward, knowing we are forgiven. Every time I think about that, it shifts my perspective and fills me with a gratitude I can't even describe.

As much as Good Friday helps me reflect on the weight of Christ's sacrifice, I can't help but look forward to the hope that comes after. The story doesn't end at the cross. The resurrection is the promise that death isn't the final word. Jesus' sacrifice wasn't just about His suffering; it was about conquering death and giving us the gift of eternal life. That hope is what carries us through Lent, reminding us that the pain of Good Friday always leads to the promise of Easter morning.

*Madison Woods*, Edmond Campus Director of Welcoming Ministries

## Saturday and Sunday, March 29 & 30

*Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people; but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."*

*And he laid his hands on them and went away. And behold, one came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."*

*He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother; and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

*The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."*

*When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

*When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

- Matthew 19:13 - 26

# Monday, March 31

One of my older sisters, whom I admire and who has a great impact on my faith journey, once told me that she tried to make it a tradition each year leading up to Easter to watch the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. At the time, I hadn't ever seen it but felt inspired by the way she spoke of its impact and the mindset it provided for her going into the holiday. So, I took the challenge a couple of years ago, rented the movie on Amazon Prime, and watched it a few days before Easter. I definitely was not prepared mentally or emotionally for the experience of seeing this movie, but it absolutely left a lasting impact on how I viewed the crucifixion and the tremendous blessing Jesus' sacrifice is to us all.


For those who have seen *The Passion of the Christ*, I think it is safe to say it is not an easy movie to watch. For me, it was almost unbearable watching the scenes that fully display the horrific nature of Jesus' suffering. However, it has made me feel strongly that as believers, it is necessary and important that we engage in some sort of practice around Easter that reminds us of the price that was paid. Whether it be watching a movie like this or studying and meditating on the scripture that it derives from, doing so humbles us and helps us to refocus our hearts and minds on the main points of the cross.

The main point is through Jesus' death, He endured the full penalty for our sins. This act on the cross displays God's mercy and the profound love that He has for you, me, and for all people. We certainly do not deserve it, but from Jesus' sacrifice, we are free from the shame, guilt, and bondage of our sin and are given the gift of forgiveness and everlasting life with Him in the kingdom of heaven, if we continue in our faith. (Colossians 1:21 - 23, 1 Peter 2:23 - 25, Galatians 2:20)

In addition to this, the journey of the cross gives us a renewed purpose and serves as an important example of the actions we are all called to take as believers, which is to do the same as Jesus (metaphorically speaking) - deny ourselves, pick up our own cross, and follow Him. (Matthew 16:24)

This Lenten season, I am challenging myself to take time and step away from the day-to-day demands of the world in order to focus on the meaning of the cross. I hope you will join me in doing the same and thanking God for Jesus' sacrifice - what an example and blessing to us all.

*Jessie Parker*, Director of Childcare Administration



## Tuesday, April 1

*A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. - John 13:34*

At the start of this year, along with my stepmom Liela, who's deployed overseas, and my siblings, CJ and Gia, in Kentucky and Tennessee, we committed to a 40-day challenge: 40 miles, 40 readings, 40 days. Each day, we walk one mile, read one passage from the book of John, and check in with each other.

For me, this challenge has been a way to stay close to my family, especially my younger siblings, CJ and Gia, who have been without their mom since August. Living in Oklahoma, I can't always be there for them. It's tough, and I often feel the distance. I've realized that sometimes my relationship with God can feel the same way - distant. But Lent reminds us that even when we feel far off, a little effort can make all the difference.

It's been really fun to see Liela, even with her busy medical schedule in Kuwait, complete her miles and readings (eight hours ahead of us) and leave us a message of encouragement each and every morning. My siblings and I don't always hit our miles or readings, of course, and that's okay. The challenge isn't about perfection; it's about nurturing our relationships with each other and with God. Thankfully, God isn't keeping a tally of all the days and miles I've missed!

Lent is a season to add intentional effort to our lives. Whether through prayer, fasting, or a new commitment, the goal is to draw us closer to God. As we walk through this time, remember that God doesn't ask for perfection; He asks for our hearts. Every prayer, every step, and every moment of intentional effort brings us closer to Him.

*Lord, thank You for the opportunity to grow closer to You. Help us to embrace the added efforts of Lent, trusting that You meet us where we are. Strengthen us to stay connected to You and to each other, and may our hearts reflect Your love in all we do. In Jesus' name. - Amen.*

*Ashley Carr Soter, Co-Director of Young Adult Ministries*



*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these. - Mark 12:30 - 31*

When I was a freshman in high school, my youth group from Lawton, Oklahoma, loaded onto the bus and headed to Oklahoma City. We gathered with other students from around the state to work on homes in the community. We gathered at Skyline Ministries, collected much-needed supplies, and set out to work on the homes of people who needed help. This was my first of many experiences at Skyline, a ministry committed to helping the least of these in our community.

Skyline has been serving the working poor of Oklahoma City since 1968. At Skyline, families can receive food, clothing, and household supplies. Skyline continues to help families as the price of food and necessities rises. In addition to food and supplies, Skyline has medical resources that bless many in the community. The eye clinic at Skyline provides free exams and, if necessary, low-cost or no-cost glasses.

Skyline is working to bless so many people in our community. Just over 54,000 people have come through their doors this year to shop in the food pantry, find fresh vegetables harvested from the urban garden, receive help with eyeglasses, or shop at the style shop. The number of people coming through their doors has significantly increased in the past two years. St. Luke's is proud to work alongside the incredible team at Skyline to help feed the hungry, bring sight to those in need, and clothe people who are working hard but need a little help.

God's love inspires us to be the people who care for the most vulnerable among us. Skyline helps to remind us that many of our neighbors need our love and care. Thankfully, Skyline has been there for 57 years, providing the necessities of life. At this ministry, I began to learn how to care for others. Now, my daughters have loaded into our church vans and volunteered at Skyline. I am grateful that St. Luke's partnership with Skyline is demonstrating we understand the most important things: to love our God and to love our neighbors.

When you support the Easter Offering you become part of the life-transforming ministry of Skyline Ministries. To learn more about their program please visit [okcskyline.org](http://okcskyline.org).

*Rev. Keith King, Pastor of Worship*



## Wednesday, April 2

I have very vivid memories of my parents waving goodbye to me as I would leave their home in Tulsa after a visit. Over the years, as we had kids, they would still be waving to us as we drove away. Now, my wife, Kelly, and I are the ones waving to our children and now our grandchildren as well. We stand outside and wave as they drive away, and the moment is not complete until my kids honk their horn, signaling one final goodbye. It is an important ritual I'm glad we still do, and no doubt some of my children will continue the tradition with their little ones in years to come.

Not too long ago, I saw a story on the network news about a photographer who chronicled the memories of her parents waving goodbye to her. From 1991 until 2017, she took pictures of every departure from her parents' home in Sioux City, Iowa. Now her collection of pictures entitled, "Leaving and Waving" is being shown in art galleries around the country. The pictures tell the story of a family and how we age and the sorrow of saying goodbye. The pictures reflect the visits in the summer and in the snows of an Iowa winter. They show her parents waving goodbye to their only grandson... first as a baby, then a teenager, and finally a young man in college. Deanna Dikeman says her Dad passed in 2009, and now there was just her Mom waving. After her Mom died, Deanna took one more picture of the empty driveway. In this story, she said, "I hope that everyone appreciates the ordinary moments with their dearest ones. Tell them you love them, and don't wait until tomorrow."

Of course, at Easter, we celebrate the empty tomb and the hope that goodbyes are never the last word in our lifetimes. We say goodbye to loved ones, and yes, there is sadness, but the power of that Easter morning means there will be reunions one day. There will be a time when goodbyes are a thing of the past and we are gathered together in the arms of a loving God.

There are only so many moments we have on this earth, and none of us know with certainty when our last one will be. So, remember to celebrate those ordinary moments with those we love the most. It is one of the most important things we can do in this life.

*Rev. David Poteet, Pastor of Congregational Care*


Growing up in a Methodist family, I have always observed Lent. But it wasn't until I was much older that I truly understood its meaning. I remember one particular year, as a freshman in high school, when I decided to give up Dr. Pepper. I was miserable. If you know me now, you know my ongoing love of that soda! At the time, it felt like Lent was just a long stretch of self-inflicted misery, not a spiritual practice. It seemed more like a challenge to see how much I could tolerate rather than a way to grow closer to Christ.

Looking back, I realize how wrong my understanding was. Lent is not about depriving ourselves just for the sake of suffering. It's about intentionally creating space in our lives for God. It's about stripping away distractions and comforts to allow more room for Christ to shape us. Yes, sometimes this involves giving up something we enjoy, but it's not the absence of the thing that matters; it's the opportunity it creates for us to refocus.

In 2020, I began to have a clearer understanding of Lent. That year, I decided to give up social media. As the pandemic unfolded, the time I'd once spent scrolling through endless posts was now spent in more meaningful, real-life connections. Without the constant buzz of social media, I found myself more engaged with the people around me and more present in my own life. The absence of distractions allowed me to focus on my relationship with God and others in a way I hadn't before.

Lent is an opportunity not just to give something up but to add something in. It's a season to cultivate deeper practices of prayer, reflection, and connection. I encourage you to ask yourself: What is God calling me to surrender, and how can I make space for something new in my life that draws me closer to Him? Whether it's giving up a habit, adding time for prayer, or serving others, let this season be a time of true transformation.

*Schuyler Henderson*, Edmond Campus Youth Director



## Friday, April 4

Nearly twenty years ago, I was thinking about getting my first tattoo. I wanted it to reflect my faith, something that would serve as a constant reminder of my walk with Christ. After much thought, I chose a cross. It was more than just ink on my skin; it was a declaration of my devotion, a mark of the faith that has shaped my life.

Lent is a season of reflection and repentance, a time when we journey with Christ toward the cross. When I see my tattoo, I am reminded of the profound meaning behind this symbol. The cross is not just an image; it represents the ultimate sacrifice, the depth of God's love, and my commitment to follow Jesus.

Jesus speaks of the cross not as a distant reality but as a daily calling. To follow Him means to surrender, laying down my own desires, pride, and self-sufficiency. My decision to mark my body with a cross reflects this surrender, a visible sign of the inner transformation Christ has worked in me.

The cross is not just a symbol of suffering but of ultimate love. It is where Jesus bore our sins, where mercy and justice met, and where our redemption was sealed. Each day of Lent invites me to consider: What does it mean for me to take up my cross today? How does this outward mark reflect the inward reality of my faith?

As I meditate on Christ's sacrifice, I remember that He calls me not just to admire the cross but to embrace it. To take up my cross is to walk in obedience, to love sacrificially, and to trust Him fully.

*Brian Morgan, AV Tech*



## Saturday and Sunday, April 5 & 6

*One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*


*Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?"*

*"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?"*

*Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."*

*Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."*

*And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*



## Monday, April 7

I can't believe I've worked at St. Luke's for over 10 years now! Being the worship director for the contemporary service at St. Luke's Edmond has been such an honor, and preparing for the Lenten season is one of my favorite times of the year. We get to reflect on life, death, and the eternal and everlasting love that Jesus offers all of us. Without fail, the hymn *How Great Thou Art* always comes to my mind during this time of year. Even though I absolutely love singing and rocking out to our contemporary worship music, this traditional hymn has always been near and dear to my heart and soul. The words are beautiful, and each verse depicts the story of God's love for us and our adoration for Him.

Through the years, I have had the privilege to sing for numerous funerals at St. Luke's. It's one of the greatest honors to be there and hear the stories of the lives of those we are celebrating and ushering into the kingdom of heaven. I often get to sing *How Great Thou Art*, and every time we get to the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, it touches my soul so much that I have to remind myself to 'sing' so as to not get choked up from the beauty of the words. When I sing the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, I cannot help but imagine all of us and the loved one we are honoring coming into heaven and being embraced by Jesus; restored, joyful, healed, free, and eternally loved.

That is the story of the cross. The story of life, death, love, resurrection, and the hope that we can all share in heaven.

*When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration  
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art*

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art*

*Savannah White-Lewis, Edmond Campus LifeLight Worship Leader*

Tuesday, April 8

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

- Micah 6:8

When I was a freshman at OCU, I was doing my best to navigate conversations and egos surrounding my early success and whether my race had anything to do with that. I was sensitive about racial topics, and even more so after another student attended an event in black face. I was lucky to be in a school near my family, and sensing I needed support, my mom started to come to campus once a week to have lunch with me. One day, another student commented,

“Ashleigh, what age were you adopted?”

“What do you mean, I wasn’t adopted?”

“Oh, you said that lady was your mom, but she was white?”

“Some white people have babies with black people, and when they do, they look like me, you racist idiot.”

I stormed off immediately, but after cooling down, I decided to talk to him about it. It turned out he has an adopted sister that isn’t the same race as his family, and he was simply trying to connect with me, assuming I was in the same situation. He apologized for the assumption, and I apologized for losing my temper. We became best friends and share candid conversations to this day.

Forgiving him was much easier than forgiving myself. The grace we extended to one another resulted in years of great friendship. The grace extended to us all on the cross gives us the opportunity to love others the way Christ loves us.

*Ashleigh Robinson*, Director of Church and Community Engagement



## St. Mark's Methodist Church, Kenya

St. Mark's Methodist Church in Kisumu, Kenya, is part of the Kenya Methodist Church. Although Kisumu is a large metropolitan city, the church is located in a poverty-stricken area of Kisumu. While Kenya offers free education, there are required fees for uniforms, books, etc., an expense that many struggle to pay for their children.

St. Mark's is committed to improving the lives of children, youth, and adults in their part of the city. In conversations with St. Luke's, St. Mark's believes that a music education program can be a way that will draw children and youth to their church, and subsequently their parents, to develop trusting relationships. As these relationships develop, they can better determine individual needs that the church can address.

On the last St. Luke's Kenya Mission trip, our team discovered that the church plays a formative role in the life of a boy who attends their worship services. Church members discovered that the boy had to leave the school he had been attending because his family could not afford the fees. So the church received a special offering to keep him in school and encourage him.

Weeks after getting the boy back in school, Pastor Monica issued a challenge to find a guitar player to help in worship. She said if any youth was willing to learn to play the guitar, she would find the funds to buy them an instrument. She shared with our team that she didn't see the boy for a few weeks but discovered when he came back that he had taken the initiative to borrow a guitar, find a teacher, and learn the basics of the instrument. He then told Pastor Monica he was ready to receive the guitar she had offered; he said he was so grateful the church kept him in school, and he wanted to work hard to learn guitar so that he could give back to God by helping in worship.

Our team was able to give Pastor Monica the money for a new guitar, and we are looking forward to seeing and hearing the new addition in their worship service.

When you give to the Easter Offering, you will be helping St. Mark's Methodist Church in their ministry to help improve the lives of those in their community. Learn more at [stlukesokc.org/EasterOffering](http://stlukesokc.org/EasterOffering).

Several images may come to mind when we think about the Christian faith. You may envision a cross, ichthys (Christian fish), a dove, or a triquetra. As for me, the image of a cross is the first that comes to my mind.


For most, when we see this symbol, we think about the unrelinquishing love, the ultimate sacrifice, and unimaginable hope Jesus gave to all of mankind. God sacrificed His own son so that we may live forever. However, when I was a child, I did not understand why people loved the symbol of the cross. I was very confused why people would celebrate Jesus Christ dying. Not only did Jesus of Nazareth die, but He was put on trial, found guilty by the Jewish leaders and Pontius Pilate, and was ultimately crucified. So, in the eyes of a child, why was the cross a powerful symbol of God's immense love and sacrifice?

As a child, I had amazing Sunday School teachers and went to church every Sunday with my family. The amount of knowledge, love, and faith that was poured into me at my childhood church was immeasurable. Even though I was not a "lost sheep" as a child, I still struggled with why Jesus was crucified, and every time I saw a cross, I felt deep sorrow. I went as far as not wanting to wear a cross necklace, in fear it would remind me of the pain and tragic death Jesus had to suffer.

Logically, I understood why people loved the cross, but unfortunately, I still struggled with the imagery. Emotionally, it took me becoming a parent to my own two beautiful daughters to fully understand why we cherish that symbol of Christianity. There is no greater sacrifice than giving up your own child for the greater good. Jesus was God's flesh made new. As a parent, I would do everything humanly possible for my daughters, if it meant ensuring they would never be hurt or suffer. God's love extends beyond Jesus. He wanted all His children to know that He was our heavenly Father, not just to Jesus.

I participate in the Women of Faith Bible study that meets on Thursday afternoons in the St. Luke's Mansion Library at our Downtown Campus. We have been reading, studying, and discussing the book, *None Like Him: 10 ways God is different from us*, by Jen Wilkin. While I always enjoy our studies, the first chapter, Infinite: God of No Limits, was eye-opening. It reminded me that the cross is an undeniable symbol that there are no limits to God's immense love and sacrifice.

*Jocelyn Morgan*, Edmond Campus Director of Children's Ministry



## Thursday, April 10

There is a power in the cross that we can't totally understand. Certainly, there is love in the cross, forgiveness, hope, and a promise that love is bigger than evil and greater than the worst thing we can imagine. But there's something else about the cross. The cross beckons us, calls us; a call that is so deep, often it creates this ongoing battle of wills. Jesus said it this way: "deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow me." And then Jesus tags on that weird sentence: "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it." What is it about the cross that calls us to deny ourselves, to live differently on this side of the cross?

There's a remarkable cross that graces the auditorium in an Old Greenwich, Connecticut church. What makes this cross significant? Not its height; about ten feet. Not its weight; lifting the cross out of its place would be challenging but not impossible. Not its composition or appearance; no one has hammered this cross out of some gleaming, precious metal. Not its location; it does not loom from the building's spire, nor does it form the pinnacle of its steeple.

This cross has been constructed from two pieces of raw, untreated wood. It is rugged, sturdy, hard, and bare, and most of all, IN THE WAY. This cross stands bolted into the concrete floor between the pews where the people sit and the chancel, where the pastor customarily stands. Picture it: A ten-foot cross of raw wood stands between the pastor and the people. It is in the middle of everything: weddings, funerals, concerts, baptisms, and Sunday morning worship services. It cannot be moved.

Everything the pastor says to the congregation must pass through the cross. The praises the people offer and the prayers they pray must pass, symbolically, through the cross. How unusual! And, yet, how appropriate! I kind of like it. A cross right in the center of our worship... a cross to remind us of God's grace - and what it cost.

Imagine what our lives would look like, what our world could be like, if we saw everything through the cross; that it impaired our vision so much that we would never speak a harsh word without remembering that day when Jesus hung on the cross and never uttered a harsh word, but rather said: "Father forgive them." That we would never pass another in need without hearing Jesus say: "when you do it unto the least of these you do it unto me." Imagine what the world could be like if the cross marked our every action. Surely, we would be closer to the kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. That's really the call and a most important thing about the cross.

*Rev. Linda Harker, Pastor of Connections*

When I was going into middle school, everyone was reading the Percy Jackson series. For those of you who haven't heard of it, the series is essentially the Greek epics of Homer and Hesiod retold for a pre-teen audience. They did incredibly well. Over 180 million copies were sold, it was adapted for film in 2013, and Disney+ recently released a new series based on the books. They did so well that the author, Rick Riordan, went on to write three more series based on Roman, Egyptian, and Norse myths. Why did these series all do so well? What is it about these ancient stories that still hold us captive today? I think it's because of the insight they offer us into the pre-Christian world.

During the time Christ and the New Testament authors walked the earth, Zeus and Hades and all the other gods were very much alive. Civilizations were centered around temples and the service of these gods. The whole model of civil hierarchy was based on this misguided understanding of the divine. They believed a "hero" was a conqueror who exerted their will over others. They thought the weak were made to serve the strong. They believed that some were born divinely better than others. They taught that if you wanted power and authority, you should take it by any means. Christ and His relationship with the Father teach us the opposite.

A theme that you will see repeated time and time again in the creation stories of ancient cultures is a divine rebellion where the most high god is defeated and replaced by another god, usually his son. You see this in Greek myth when Chronos destroys his father Uranos and then is defeated in turn by his son Zeus. This is why much of the ancient world mocked Christ and said, "If you are truly God, show us your power." They could not fathom a gentle divine ruler.

Knowing all this, think of how radical Christ truly was to ancient people. He submitted to His father, God the most high, and gave His life willingly for our sake. He taught that the strong should serve the weak. He offers His Divine spirit freely to all who would take it. In His death and resurrection, we see the model of the ancient world flipped on its head.

At His ascension, Christ is enthroned at the right hand of the Father and given dominion over all of creation, not by way of divine coup but by submission to God's will. At Pentecost, he gives the Holy Spirit to all who are baptized in Him. He freely allows us to share in His divine rule and power. The promise of Easter is that we may, by grace, become what Christ is by nature if we submit to His will. Thank God our God is not like the other gods.

*George Soter, Co-Director of Young Adult Ministries*

## Saturday and Sunday, April 12 & 13

*And when he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat; untie it and bring it here. If any one asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this, 'The Lord has need of it.'"*

*So those who were sent went away and found it as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it."*

*And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their garments on the colt they set Jesus upon it. And as he rode along, they spread their garments on the road. As he was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

*And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."*

- Luke 19:28 - 44



*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. - Philippians 4:13*

There are times in life when we face challenges so overwhelming we feel like we're holding onto the frayed end of a rope, ready to give up. It's in these moments, when the weight feels unbearable, we need to remind ourselves of God's strength and love. He has a plan for each of us, even when we cannot see it clearly. Over time, I've realized that those difficult and messy times are often when God is closest, offering His love and strength to see us through.


Reflecting on my life, I can see the knots in my rope – those moments when God held me steady and gave me what I needed to keep going. Even when I felt lost, His love never failed. I'm one of those who have had to learn that lesson several different times. As I've gotten older, I have learned hard lessons about impossibilities. I often found myself looking for strength beyond what I had and asking God for that strength. I have learned to trust Him to provide what I need – a knot to hold onto when I'm at the end of my rope. I am constantly learning. God doesn't promise a life free of hardship, but He does promise His strength and presence.

My family is older, and my challenges have changed. I'm still dealing with life changes - aging parents, my own aging, and now helping my kids who are walking through their own struggles. Last year, God blessed us with a new family member; we adopted our granddaughter. It was an opportunity to give her a stable home and a better foundation for her life. But being a parent to an active 8-year-old is a challenge I wasn't quite prepared for. I struggle with things that I thought were way behind me. I often call for God's strength and help to tie a new knot in my rope! I've questioned God's plan more than once, and I am given a new knot each time! With each challenge I am presented with, God is always there.

I have discovered that I *can do* the impossible, but only with God's strength. God understands our struggles intimately and is always with us. When we feel frayed or on the edge of giving up, His presence reassures us, offering the strength to persevere.

During Lent, use this time as a season of reflection and renewal to draw closer to Him and appreciate the depth of His love and strength. Trust in His faithfulness, knowing that He transforms all our impossibles into possibilities through His sacrifice.

*Bev Barnes, Administrative Assistant, Communications Team*



## Tuesday, April 15

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. - Matthew 4:1 - 2*

The season of Lent is a special time in the life of the church. It mirrors the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness. There, Jesus spent forty days and nights fasting and praying. At the end of this time, he faces three temptations. This is where it is recorded that Jesus says, *It is written: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Matthew 4:4)

I have often wondered what that time was like for Jesus. Growing up around the Sea of Galilee and having just been baptized in the Jordan River, Jesus was used to beautiful water surrounded by fertile land. Now, He has been led onto a dry and desolate land. This had to be a challenging time for Jesus.

The time Jesus spent in the desert reminds us of the important practices of our faith. You see, we each will face difficult moments in life. The unexpected challenges of our lives can feel like being led into a barren land, void of hope. It is at this time that we need the comforting anchor of our faith. It is our practices of prayer, study, worship, and intentional time with God that offer us strength amid trials, hope for the future, and comfort in the promise that God is with us wherever we may venture.

Life is full of extraordinary moments. We have times of great joy and times of hard-fought battles. Lent is a season that allows us to focus not on our settings but on the practices that secure our faith in the One who has been in the wilderness Himself.

*Rev. Keith King, Pastor of Worship*



*Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."*

- Matthew 25:37 - 40

Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) has a vision to bring the love of Christ to the homeless and working poor and empower them to break the cycle of poverty. Their mission is transforming lives and encouraging independence through safe, healthy homes, dental care, and nutrition. NSO is an incredible ministry that has a variety of programs to offer housing and teach skills to transform lives.

NSO programs include:

- Transitional housing for those who need assistance temporarily, as in the case of women who are escaping domestic violence and young adults who have aged out of the foster care system.
- Permanent and supportive housing for homeless adults with mental illness.
- Rental assistance programs to try and prevent homelessness.
- Dental clinic that offers affordable dental care for those without insurance.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinic to provide supplemental nutritional food as well as education for pregnant women and children up to the age of five.

When you support the Easter Offering, you become part of the work of Neighborhood Services Organization. Your gift to the Easter Offering will help provide care for those who are in the most need in our community. It can help to prevent homelessness before it begins. It can help to care for those with mental illness. It can help pregnant women and young children get the nutrition and support they need for a brighter future. It can help 18-year-olds who have been dropped by foster care find housing and opportunities.

When you support the Easter Offering you become part of the life-transforming ministry of Neighborhood Services Organization. To learn more about their program please visit [nsookc.org](http://nsookc.org).



## Wednesday, April 16

*And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

- Luke 23:34

As Jesus was hanging from the cross, there were several statements the gospel writers record Him saying. We often refer to these statements as "The Seven Last Words." They include statements like the one above in Luke 23: *Today you will be with me in paradise. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? It is finished.* I have always found myself particularly intrigued by these words of Jesus. They were the last things we know of that He spoke out loud on this earth prior to His death. They seem to carry extra weight.

As Christ is hanging on the cross, He spoke the powerful words that Luke captured by asking His Heavenly Father to forgive them because they don't know what they are doing. Who was "them" and "they"? Some think He may have been talking about the Roman soldiers carrying out the execution. Others think it's referring to the Jewish leaders who handed Him over and demanded He be crucified. Still others think Jesus was talking about those of us who are in sin.

I believe it was all of the above. It was Jesus interceding on our behalf, asking God for mercy and forgiveness for all of us. Too often, I find it easy for us to look at the cross and be consumed with feelings of guilt, judgment, and fear. Instead, when I hear the words of Jesus on the cross, I believe the overwhelming message is one of love and grace.

As we approach Easter, use this time of Lent to grow still daily, focus on the words of Jesus in the gospels, and you will hear God speaking that ultimate message of redemption, love, and hope. Let go of fear, judgment, and guilt. That is not what God desires for you. Instead, embrace the new life that God offers to you each and every day. Going through Lent with a focus on that message will change the way we experience Easter.

*Rev. Josh Attaway, Edmond Campus Pastor and CFO*

The Bible, if you will, is a love story. It's roughly 840,000 words that tell us how special we are to God. Everything's going well in the beginning. God has created the heavens and earth, and His favorite part of the day is spent with Adam and Eve in the garden. But, by the end of the third chapter, only 2,100 words in, they have sinned and been separated from God's presence.

In Genesis 13, God promises Abram that if he is obedient, all nations will be blessed by his descendants. In those days, covenants were literally signed in blood. The two parties divided animals in two and walked through the blood, each signifying their part of the contract. God was the first to pass through. The Bible says, "a deep and terrifying darkness" came upon Abram; he was scared to death. So, God walked through the blood again, in effect saying, "I will keep the covenant for both of us." God understood that we would never be able to fulfill the covenant. God was more concerned about a relationship with Him rather than perfect behavior.

You don't have to read far, and you won't be surprised to find out we did not hold up our end of the bargain. But of course, God understood that we would never be able to fulfill the covenant. God was more concerned about a right relationship with Him rather than perfect behavior. The purpose of the Crucifixion wasn't to change God's mind about us but to change our hearts toward God. There are numerous examples in the Old Testament of God forgiving people; God's love is the theme of the Bible.

At the Last Supper, Jesus tells the disciples, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Hebrews tells us, "For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant."

God relentlessly pursues a relationship with us. Our response to this profound love story is not passive but active. It is a call to surrender our lives to Him, to walk in obedience to His word, and to share this good news with others. Just as God has extended grace to us, we are called to extend it to others, reflecting the transformative power of the cross in our daily lives.

*Chris Lambert*, Director, Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City



## Friday, April 18

Good Friday is called “Good” because of the day’s connection to Easter. Certainly, the actual day of Jesus’ death did not feel “good” to any of His family or friends. But then, on Sunday morning, resurrection redefined His death. Since then, every Holy Week Friday has been called “Good Friday” because it occurs after the Resurrection of Christ. The Good Friday worship service is a solemn remembrance of the Crucifixion done in the knowledge that death is the precursor of the Resurrection.

During the service, the worship space is stripped of the Lenten purple, and black cloth is brought in to remind us of the death of Christ. Throughout the evening, candles are extinguished one by one, shrouding the space almost completely in darkness - with the important exception of the Christ Candle. The Christ Candle is never extinguished during the Good Friday worship service because even though we are remembering the death of Christ, we know of His resurrection. We remember His death but know it was His death that made the Resurrection possible. We remember His death, having celebrated and remembered far more Easter mornings than we have Good Fridays. It is what makes the Friday before Easter, Good.

Through His death on the cross, Jesus showed us the ultimate example of God’s love for us. His resurrection was not for His sake but for ours. He conquered death on our behalf to help us to “see” that death is not the end but rather the beginning of eternal life. We remember the death of Christ on Friday through the resurrection of Easter Sunday.

Good Friday reminds us death is not the end but rather leads to everlasting life. And if that was not great enough, everlasting life with our loved ones in the presence of God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

As you experience the worship service on Good Friday, pay attention to the Christ Candle leaving the worship space. For as the darkness envelops the room, you can still see the Light of Christ; for even though Christ died, Christ the Lord is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Easter is what makes Good Friday, Good.

*Rev. Wendy Lambert, Senior Executive Pastor*

## Saturday and Sunday, April 19 & 20

*There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus.*

*He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.*

- Matthew 27:55 - 61

*Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.*

*But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you."*

*So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*

- Matthew 28:1 - 8

# EASTER SERVICES

## SUNDAY, APRIL 20

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### **Easter Worship**

Each service features St. Luke's musicians, an encouraging message of hope, and a joyful celebration of the good news that Jesus Christ has risen.

### **Downtown Campus**

- 8:15 a.m. Traditional Service
- 9:30 a.m. LifeLight Contemporary Service
- 10:50 a.m. Traditional Service

### **Edmond Campus**

- 5 p.m. LifeLight Contemporary Service (Saturday, April 19)
- 6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service
- 9 a.m. LifeLight Contemporary Service
- 11 a.m. Traditional Service

### **Online Campus**

[stlukesokc.org/live](http://stlukesokc.org/live)



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**Downtown Campus**  
222 NW 15th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 232-1371

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**Edmond Campus**  
900 N. Sooner Rd.  
Edmond, OK 73034  
(405) 285-2002

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[stlukesokc.org](http://stlukesokc.org)

A large, weathered wooden cross stands against a bright, cloudy sky. Several small birds are seen in flight around the cross. The background has a soft, painterly quality with warm tones at the bottom.