



***Words for Life!*** 2020 worship series. There's lots of words in the Bible and in Christian faith about which we wonder or which may confuse us. For a while I've been compiling a list of those words and phrases. These are words like forgiveness, sin, grace, relationships, salvation, strangers, comfort, strength, and phrases like *do no harm* and *do good*.

In 2020, our worship focus will be on ***Words for Life***. This is a bit of a play on words—they're words that can bring us life, that stay with us throughout our lives (for life), or words that can help us grow in our relationship with Christ if we learn about them.

Rev. Sharon Ragland

**Suggestions for Bible resources:**

For print Bibles, visit ***www.cokesbury.com***, the United Methodist Church's publishing house. You can also buy Bibles at local book stores or on other websites. A pastor can also help you secure a Bible; send an email to ***sharon@umcstmarks.org***

For electronic Bibles, go to ***www.biblegateway.com***, or ***www.YouVersion.com***, or download the Bible Gateway or YouVersion app for your telephone or tablet.















Wednesday, February 26, 2020

## **ASH WEDNESDAY**

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 26. This sermon series during Lent pairs words each week that are the “cry of our hearts” – heart-wrenching, reflective or inward-looking words paired with words that turn us toward healing and joy.

Psalm 119:169-170

Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word. Let my supplication come before you; deliver me according to your promise.

***Prayer: We trust that you, O God, are with us in our longings and our joys. We turn our hearts toward you this Lenten season, and our souls wait for your mercy, forgiveness and joy. Amen***

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from February 26-29.

## **LENTEN DEVOTION—WEEK 1**

### ***“Sadness and Joy”***

Psalm 30:11-12

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

***Prayer: My thanks is overflowing, O God, for the joys you bring into my life. If there is sadness today, may you clothe me with protection and mercy, so that I may see you in the midst of it. Amen***

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from March 1-7.



## LENTEN DEVOTION - WEEK 2

### *“Sorrow and Comfort”*

Psalm 119:28

My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

**Prayer:** *Comfort me, comfort me, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer, my savior and my Lord. When I am downcast, help me turn my eyes toward you so that I may be comforted and strengthened by your presence and your love. Amen.*

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from March 8-14.



## LENTEN DEVOTION - WEEK 3

### *“Repentance and Grace”*

Luke 15:22-24

But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. (23) And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; (24) for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

***Prayer: Sometimes I feel lost, Holy One, and can't find my way back to you. Sometimes I have said or done something that has hurt others or pulled me from you. Forgive me, God, and help me return to you. Thanks be to you, for your abundant grace that longs to enfold me and welcome me home. Amen.***

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from March 15-21.



**LENTEN DEVOTION - WEEK 4**  
***“Greed and Contentment”***

Philippians 4:10-13

I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

***Prayer: Gracious God, free me from greed, from longing to have more and more and from envying those around me. Help me reach out to those who truly do not have enough food, clothing and shelter and who are suffering with great need. Strengthen me with your mercy. Amen***

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from March 22-28.



## ***LENTEN DEVOTION - WEEK 5***

### ***“Doubt and Faith”***

John 20:27-29

Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Prayer: My Lord and my God, increase my faith in you. Help me know you with every breath and heartbeat and trust in your unending presence and love. Turn my doubts into faith as I see your work and wisdom all around me. Amen.

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from March 29-April 4.



## LENTEN DEVOTION - WEEK 6

### ***“Were You There?”***

Luke 19:37-40

As Jesus was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power 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 heaven!”

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

***Prayer: Help me, O God, to listen to your words of caution, and not be silent in the face of injustice or harm. Mobilize my courage, O God, to speak for you, to praise you for your mercy, and to work for your love in the world. As we stand at the brink of Holy Week, fill me with your longing and your hope. Amen.***

You are encouraged to read this Scripture and prayer daily from April 5-11.











*Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.*