

30 Days of Prayer 2024

Praying together for Easter!

Read the verse(s) for each day. Ask God to show you how you these truths about Jesus are encouraging, or how you might apply what it teaches in your life. Then ask God to help you make it real in your life. Also, take a few moments and pray for what God would do through Charter Oak moving forward and how you might be involved with that. Begin by inviting someone to come on Easter Sunday.

March 3: Psalm 103:1-5

Psalm 103:1-5 – “Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. ² Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all His benefits — ³ Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, ⁴ Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, ⁵ Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

God truly deserves to be praised! This Psalm tells us to not forget all His benefits. He forgives, He heals, He redeems, He showers with love and compassion and He brings satisfaction to life. Take some time to thank God for His many benefits and blessings. Praise Him and enjoy the renewing He brings to life.

March 4: Psalm 139

You have searched me, LORD, and You know me.

² You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue You, LORD, know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and You lay Your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You. ¹³ For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my

mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. ¹⁷ How precious to me are Your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand — when I awake, I am still with You. ¹⁹ If only You, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! ²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent; Your adversaries misuse Your name. ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate You, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against You? ²² I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

This Psalm presents some amazing truths that bring confidence and peace to life. God knows you intimately, He formed you and gifted you, He is always with you, He made you wonderful and His thoughts for you are precious and abundant. He is in complete control. Reread these verses. Ask God to search you, refocus your thoughts and renew your heart. He will give you His very best. Take a moment too to pray for the Pastoral Search Team as they review and prayerfully consider various candidates. God is in control of the process and the person, but the PST needs to have clarity with God's leading.

March 5: John 3:16-17

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

God loves you so much He gave His only Son as a sacrifice for your sin. Accepting His gracious gift brings forgiveness and eternal life. There is no greater expression of love. Thank God for His love, His gift of salvation and the security of heaven. Then commit yourself to passing on His love to someone else today.

March 6: Romans 8:31-39

"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us

all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, Who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What an incredible promise! What a fantastic truth! As a believer nothing, not anything, can separate you from God's love. His love is greater and stronger than anything. That brings victory and confidence over every challenge, fear or doubt life may bring. Thank God for His unshakeable love and then enjoy living with the peace and hope that provides.

March 7: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:13-14

Micah 5:2 – “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Isaiah 7:13-14 – “Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.”

God promised to send a Savior, a ruler. When He makes a promise He keeps it! God fulfilled this promise through Jesus Christ. Take a moment and thank God for sending Jesus to be with us. Then thank Him for His faithfulness in keeping His promises. Think of another promise in God's Word and rest in the certainty of His keeping it.

March 8: Isaiah 9:6-7

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with

justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."

The prophecies regarding the promised Messiah were given to provide hope. This one points to the beginning of His life and ministry. Jesus fulfilled these prophecies and brought wise counsel, amazing power and wonderful peace. Everything about Him will last forever and that brings great hope and confidence. Thank God for fulfilling His promise of a Savior and all that means for you each day.

March 9: Zechariah 9:9

"Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Jesus came as a King! Though this prophecy speaks of the spiritual kingdom He rules, He will come again to establish His eternal kingdom. Think about how His spiritual kingdom brings meaning to your life. Thank Him for providing the way to have a personal relationship with God. Commit yourself to living for Him as you await His second coming so you will be ready for when He comes again.

March 10: Zechariah 11:12-13

"I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.' So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. ¹³ And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the LORD."

This prophecy describes Jesus' betrayal that turned out to be by one of those closest to Him. This can be encouraging as it demonstrates the trustworthiness of Scripture - fulfilled prophecy. It is sad in that one who walked with Jesus ended up being a casualty of unbelief. In reality, we are no different. We can get our focus off of Jesus and stray from trusting Him. Take a moment and ask God to search your heart. If there is something that is hindering your walk with God, confess that, offer it to Him and renew your trust in Him. You will be blessed as you do.

March 11: Isaiah 53:3-6

"He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem. Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted." But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

This prophecy of Jesus' death highlights the sacrifice He was willing to make for every person. Our tendency is go our own way and stray from God, but He died so our sin could be forgiven and we could experience peace in this life. Take a moment to thank God for Christ's sacrifice, your forgiveness and your ongoing relationship with Him. Refresh your focus on Jesus so you can more fully enjoy His blessings.

March 12: Psalms 22:1-18

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?" Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. ⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. ⁵ To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. ⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. ⁸ "He trusts in the LORD," they say, "let the LORD rescue Him. Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him." ⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast. ¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you; from my mother's womb you have been my God. ¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. ¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me. ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. ¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ Dogs surround Me, a pack of villains encircles Me they pierce My hands and My feet. ¹⁷ All My bones are on display; people stare and gloat over Me. ¹⁸ They divide My clothes among them and cast lots for My garment."

This is another prophecy about Jesus that we know from the accounts of the crucifixion, came true. While it points us again to Jesus' willingness to give Himself as a sacrifice for each person's sin, these verses are also encouraging

as they continue to confirm God's Word be true and accurate. It assures us that the Bible is totally reliable for our faith and practice. Take some time to thank and praise God for your forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and also for the truth of God's Word to guide you every day. Christ's death and resurrection and God's truly provide a firm foundation.

March 13: Mark 12:28-31

"²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked Him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" ²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one, ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Jesus made it quite clear in His answer to this question from the learned teacher, that what matters most is your HEART. It is not what you know, or what you do. It is your heart! Where is your heart today? Is God the focus and center of all that you think and do? Do others see God's love through you? Today would be a good for a "heart check-up". Ask God to show you where you have become distracted from loving Him. Then pray like David did in Psalm 51:10 and ask God to create in you a clean heart and renewed spirit so He will be the center of your love.

March 14: Philippians 2:6-8

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!"

The humility Jesus demonstrated and modeled is quite contrary to the pride we often exhibit. Humbling yourself (2 Peter 5:6-7) is a choice we make by admitting we cannot do it on our own and need to rely on God. Where are you trying to live the Christian by your own efforts? Take a moment and commit yourself to follow Jesus' example of humility. Admit you cannot do it alone and ask Him to show you the resources available to live life faithfully for Him.

March 15:

Luke 2:3-14

"And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."

Jesus came to earth as a baby and when the angel announced His birth he told the shepherds to not be afraid. As you read this account of Jesus birth, not only does it fulfill prophecy, it is a reminder that Jesus brings peace and takes away fear. Is something causing you anxiety and uncertainty? Be reminded that Jesus offers peace and courage. Cast those anxieties on Him (Phil. 4:6-7) and enjoy the contentment He brings.

March 16:

Luke 2:49-52

"Why were you searching for Me?" He asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what He was saying to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

Jesus is God, but He was also fully human. Though exceptional as He grew up, Luke tells us He grew in wisdom and stature and this growth pleased God and had an impact on those He encountered. Even as Jesus grew and developed, so should you be growing and moving toward maturity. How is your

progress in that regard? Ask God to show you what can improve on in your spiritual walk and trust Him to guide your growth.

March 17: John 8:48-59 [Jesus' claim to be God]

⁴⁸ The Jews answered Him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" ⁴⁹ "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ I am not seeking glory for Myself; but there is one who seeks it, and He is the judge. ⁵¹ Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death." ⁵² At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" ⁵⁴ Jesus replied, "If I glorify Myself, My glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the One who glorifies Me. ⁵⁵ Though you do not know Him, I know Him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know Him and obey His word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing My day; he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to Him, "and You have seen Abraham!" ⁵⁸ "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone Him, but Jesus hid Himself, slipping away from the temple grounds."

Do you believe Jesus is God? The Jews were having a difficult time figuring out who Jesus was, the power of His teaching or how He performed miracles. In response to their questioning He claimed that He was indeed God. Clearly the Jews understood Jesus' claim as they attempted to stone Him. He claimed He was God and then demonstrated it through His life, death and resurrection. How does knowing Jesus is God encourage you in your walk with Him? Thank Him for how this truth strengthens your life. As you do that pray that the Pastoral Search Team will have strength and focus as they continue to prayerfully consider candidates and God's leading.

March 18: John 9:1-12 [Blind man healed]

As He went along, He saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ After saying this, He spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him, "wash in the

Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. ⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." ¹⁰ "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. ¹¹ He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." ¹² "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said."

Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus took decisive action as He encountered people in need. In the process He was teaching, and preparing, His disciples to effectively carry-on making disciples. Today, we should also be following Jesus' example. What are you pursuing to become better equipped so you can disciple others? Ask God to show what your next steps should be to become an effective disciple-maker for Jesus. Then, take those steps.

March 19: John 10:9-18 [Good Shepherd]

"Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—
¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves Me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Jesus said He came that we all might have life in relationship with Him and enjoy that life with fullness. He brings this by caring for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. What an incredible promise! Have you ever thanked

Jesus for His constant care and provision? Take some to thank Him for being your "Good Shepherd" so you can experience an abundant life.

March 20: John 11: [Lazarus raised from dead]

**"³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."
⁴ When He heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷ and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." _ ¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." _ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."**

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, Who is to come into the world." ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard me. ⁴² I knew that You always hear Me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent me."

⁴³ When He had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Have you ever been surprised by God's greatness? Sometimes He truly blesses us in unexpected ways. Imagine the range of emotions Mary, Martha and the disciples must have experienced over these several days. First Lazarus was ill. Jesus delayed coming. Then Lazarus died. Then Jesus showed up. Then He raised him from the dead. Anxiety, hope, disappointment, sadness, grief, exhilaration all came into play. The end result was they all learned they could trust Jesus for amazing things. What

*are you trusting God for? Do you believe He do more than you expect?
Write down what you will trust Him for and make your regular prayer.*

March 21: Luke 18:15-17 [Little children]

"People were also bringing babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called the children to Him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Children are a great example of trusting faith. It's a faith that is simple and undeterred. It believes in the face of challenges and uncertainty. It's faith based on confidence in the object of the faith. Are you confident that Jesus can meet your every need and bring meaning and fulfillment to your life? Thank God for providing a solid object for your faith in Jesus Christ. Ask Him to help you have faith like a child so you can consistently trust Him.

**March 22: Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34
[Jesus predicts His death and resurrection]**

Luke 18:31-34 – "Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him and spit on Him; ³³ they will flog Him and kill Him. On the third day He will rise again." ³⁴ The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what He was talking about."

Mark 10:32-34 – "They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again He took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to Him. ³³ "We are going up to Jerusalem," He said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ who will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. Three days later He will rise."

Jesus knew what was coming and chose to be obedient to what God had for Him. Is there something you know God is leading you to do, or some aspect of your life where you need to be obedient? Thank God He has provided

everything you need to be obedient. Then commit yourself to fulfilling what He is leading you to do.

March 23: Luke 19:1-9 [Zacchaeus]

"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed Him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Everyone was a potential believer and disciple to Jesus. The least valued people in society needed forgiveness and Jesus was not afraid to engage them and share His love. He demonstrated this with Zacchaeus. He has demonstrated that with you. Ask God to show you someone who needs the Gospel. If they do not currently attend church invite to come to the Easter service. As you do that, look for other ways to show them His love.

March 24: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19 [Palm Sunday]

Matthew 21:1-11 – "As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd

spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of h

Him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" ¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" ¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

John 12:12-16 - "The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet Him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: ¹⁵ "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." ¹⁶ At first His disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about Him and that these things had been done to Him."

Sometimes events in our lives appear to be one thing and then turn out to be something altogether different. That's because our ways are not always God's ways. When the people hailed Jesus as king they expected a new political system. As John 16:12 notes, only after Jesus was resurrected and ascended to heaven did the disciples understand that Jesus brought ushered in a new spiritual kingdom. Where have you seen God lead, or provide, in ways different from what you understood or expected? Wasn't His way better overall? He promises to give you His best. Thank Him for His constant guidance and provision. Trust Him with doesn't seem to make sense right now and rest in His love and grace.

March 25: Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-8
 [Jesus anointed]

Matthew 26:6-13 – "While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, ⁷ a woman [Mary] came to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on His head as He was reclining at the table. ⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. ⁹ "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

¹⁰ Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have Me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. ¹³ Truly I tell you,

wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Sometimes God has a deeper purpose in our personal life experiences beyond what we can understand at the moment. The disciples witnessed this when Mary anointed Jesus. Though they didn't understand it at the time, Jesus encouraged them to trust Him with what was transpiring. What are you experiencing in your life that doesn't make sense? Is there some uncertainty or unanswered questions? Maybe God is up to something you don't yet understand. Take some time to thank God that He is sovereign and in complete control. Trust Him to provide everything you need to remain faithful as you wait on Him.

**March 26: Matthew 26:17-29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20;
 John 13:1-38 [Last Supper]**

Matthew 26:17-30 – "17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 18 He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. 20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, He said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me." 22 They were very sad and began to say to Him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

23 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with Me will betray Me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray Him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so."

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Have you ever had one of those times when you were simply enjoying some event, or time fellowshiping with others and something happened that didn't seem to fit, or make sense. Maybe you even paused and wondered, "What was that about?" but just kept on. Then, it wasn't until sometime later that you understood what happened. That is what happened during the Passover meal when Jesus told them He would be betrayed. It didn't register fully until later. When it finally registers, that's when we need to trust God for wisdom, or courage, or patience, or humility. Are you facing one of those times in your life? Thank God that He understands and is in control. Trust Him to provide whatever you need so respond in a God-honoring way that deepens your faith, and maybe even draws others to seek Jesus. These situations help us grow to maturity.

**March 27: Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46
[Gethsemane]**

Mark 14:32-42 – "They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took Peter, James and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," He said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." ³⁵ Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ "Abba, Father," He said, "everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will."

³⁷ Then He returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," He said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ³⁹ Once more He went away and prayed the same thing. ⁴⁰ When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to Him. ⁴¹ Returning the third time, He said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise! Let us go! Here comes My betrayer!"

Sometimes in our humanness we fall short of keeping our focus on Jesus and being faithful to what He has called us to do. The disciples struggled with this when Jesus asked them to pray with and for Him. He understood their weakness, even as He understands ours today. Is there some area of your Christian life where you have been "falling short"? Take a moment and thank Jesus that He understands. Recognize that He provides everything you need

to be faithful and consistent where you have been lax (Phil. 4:19). Commit yourself to any necessary action to improve this area of your walk with Him.

March 28: Matthew 26:47-27:26; Mark 14:43-15:15; Luke 22:47-23:25; John 18:2-19:16 [Jesus' Arrest & Trial]

Matthew 26:47-56 – “While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest Him.” ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested Him. ⁵¹ With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵² “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” ⁵⁵ In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

John 19:14-16 – “It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. “ Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.”

Jesus was fully prepared to obediently follow what God's purpose was for Him, even though it required incredible sacrifice. What would you say is God's purpose for you? God may not ask you to give your life, but His Word does call every Christian to obedience, and spiritual maturity. How are you doing with that journey to maturity? Ask God to show where you might need to be more purposefully engaged in following Him and allowing Him to transform your heart and actions. Ask Him to deepen your walk with Him so you can stand firm when circumstances are difficult. Make that commitment and see how God blesses. Prayer too that God would transform peoples' hearts on Easter.

**March 29: Matthew 27:27-56; Mark 15:16-41; Luke 23:26-49;
John 19:17-30 [Crucifixion] - 1 Peter 2:21-25**

Matthew 27:27-40 - "Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around Him. ²⁸ They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand. Then they knelt in front of Him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰ They spit on Him, and took the staff and struck Him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked Him, they took off the robe and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him away to crucify Him.

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). ³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, He refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified Him, they divided up His clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above His head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with Him, one on His right and one on His left. ³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at Him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

1 Peter 2:21-25 - "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth."

²³ When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. ²⁴ "He Himself bore our sins" in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by His wounds you have been healed." ²⁵ For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Jesus suffered horribly, both physically and emotionally, so that our sin could be forgiven. He willingly went through all He endured for you and for me. His sacrifice brought the healing we needed. His sacrifice changed our eternal destiny and our day-to-day life. When someone gives their life for another, it is a debt that can never be repaid. Take some time and reflect on what Jesus did for you. Reread the account of His crucifixion and the 1 Peter summary. Thank Him for His love, His sacrifice and the redemption it provided. Ask yourself, "How should I choose to live my life in light of what

Jesus did for me?" Commit yourself to make any necessary adjustments so you can enjoy your relationship with God to the fullest.

March 30: Luke 23:47-56 [Grief and Questions]

"The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." ⁴⁸ When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. ⁴⁹ But all those who knew Him, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. ⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. ⁵² Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how His body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

If you had been there, what would you have felt and been thinking the day after Jesus died? A week earlier Jesus had been hailed as king and excitement was running high. All that week He had continued to teach and perform miracles. Anticipation for the next amazing and wonderful development would have been high. Then, in the span of less than 24 hours you witnessed Him being crucified, dying and being buried. The disciples fled in fear and confusion and pain. What would you have done? How would you have handled the disillusionment that surely occurred? From the crucifixion, until the reality of His resurrection, would have been discouraging and confusing on many levels. What do you do when circumstances in life do not make sense, or some unexpected situation arises? After the initial shock do you turn to God and trust Him with what you do not understand? Sometimes you do not get quick answers. Sometimes you have to trust God over the long haul. He is always faithful, through whatever we face and will provide everything we need. What do you need to trust to Him today? Know He is at work even when things do not make sense.

**March 31: Matthew 27:27-56; Mark 15:16-41; Luke 24:1-12;
John 19:17-30; 1 Peter 1:3-5 -
(Resurrection Sunday/Easter)**

Luke 24:1-12 - "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; He has risen! Remember how he told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered His words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened."

1 Peter 1:3-5 - "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."

He is ALIVE! Coming through a time of uncertainty and fear, the disciples ventured out to "pay their last respects". But, once again things changed rapidly. As quickly as their hopes had been dashed with Jesus' crucifixion, they were renewed with His resurrection. There was still confusion as resurrection was not a common experience, but hope was restored and spread quickly. Jesus' resurrection confirmed that He is indeed God and also brought assurance that His sacrifice was satisfactory for our sin to be forgiven. What does Jesus' resurrection mean to you? Take a moment to thank God for His power over death, and the forgiveness of your sin. How will reflecting on Jesus being alive change the commitment you make to being His disciple? The disciples moved forward with their hope fixed on Jesus and changed the world. Are you ready to continue that mission and be part of changing your world?

**April 1: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Romans 10:9-11;
 Acts 1:8; Acts 4:33-34;**

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 - "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Romans 10:9-11 - "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame."

Acts 1:8 - "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 4:33-34 – "With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them."

Jesus' resurrection was a new beginning. He confirmed that by being with the disciples. They were so convinced they professed Him far and wide. They had a renewed focus and purpose and God provided them the Holy Spirit and the power to be His witnesses in a broken world. That same power is available to you today. Thank God that Jesus is alive! Thank Him for providing everything you need to live effectively for Him. Strive to let His love and power shine through you in this broken world. Prayer again for the PSTeam as they seek to identify the person best suited for Charter Oak.

Press forward trusting God to bless you.

Numbers 6:24-26

²⁴ "The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;

**²⁶ the LORD turn His face toward you
and give you peace."**