

UNLOCKING SALVATION

LENT 2023

Daily Devotional



Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

This devotional is meant as a way to guide your thoughts and prayers through the doors, locks, and keys you see every day. It is NOT a checklist. It's simply a way to help you focus your attention on the Divine during this holy season of Lent.

If you come across a devotion that doesn't resonate with you, move on to the next one. If you miss a devotion, just come back to it whenever you're ready. Or skip it. Whatever works for you.

May these reflections help you to unlock what you need during this holy season.





ASH WEDNES DAY

Front Door

The front door is the primary entrance to a building or a house. Although there may be other ways to get in, this is the most obvious, the most public, the most accessible. We decorate the front door of our house to reflect our personality to the world. This is where the owner of a house receives visitors and where the host welcomes their guests.

God's house may not be a physical building, but it certainly has a front door. There are many ways to enter a relationship with God, but for many people, the most obvious, public, and accessible way is through the Church. As those making up God's "front door", how do we welcome others? How are we reflecting what can be found inside?

When you see a front door, say this prayer: "Lord, help me to welcome others as you have welcomed me."



FEBRUARY 23

Bike Lock

A bicycle is a great, environmentally-friendly way to get around town when public transportation isn't available and walking would take too long. When we ride our bike somewhere like the library or grocery store and we have to leave it outside, we hope that it will still be there when we come back out.

That's why bike locks were invented: to make sure that our bike stays put while we're away. It helps ease our minds to know that we won't wind up stranded without transportation at the end of the day.

Sometimes, we think that God works the same way - that we have to connect God to certain places or actions or things, like church or Holy Communion or the Bible, in order to be sure that God stays where we left Them. We want to be able to find God in the same place when we need Them most.

But we don't need to tether God to anything to be sure of God's presence. Whenever we seek the Lord, we will find Them.

When you see a bike lock, say this prayer: "Lord, thank you for being there for me exactly when I need you."

boonepcusa.org/lent





FEBRUARY 24

Spare Key

Even the most responsible among us has moments of forgetfulness, especially when it comes to our house key. Maybe we locked our key inside, or left it behind at work, or forgot to get it back from a friend who was housesitting. It doesn't really matter WHY we don't have our key; what matters is that we can't get into our house without it.

In those moments, a spare key can be a life-saver. Whether it's kept under the welcome mat, hidden in a fake stone, or left with a neighbor, knowing that our mistake won't keep us locked out of our home is a huge relief.

God knows that we're human and far from perfect. Our sinful nature means that no matter how clear the path to heaven is, we will mess up. If entrance to the kingdom of heaven depended on our "getting it right" the first time, none of us would stand a chance.

Fortunately, our participation in the kingdom of heaven doesn't rely on our perfection. No matter how many mistakes we make, rules we forget, or teachings we neglect, God always offers us another opportunity to make it right - a "spare key" to the kingdom. We're NEVER left out in the cold.

When you see a spare key, say this prayer: "God, thank you for always providing another way into your kingdom."

First Sunday in Lent

FEBRUARY 26

MEDITATE ON THIS PASSAGE:

"But when you pray, go to your room, shut the **door**, and pray to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you."



MATTHEW
CHAPTER 6
VERSE 6

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE



FEBRUARY 27

Mailbox Door

Before there were telephones and texting and the internet, there was mail. The mailbox connected households to the world beyond their front door - letters from distant relatives, local and national news, advertisements, and packages all came through the post.

If we're honest, we all still look forward to opening the mailbox door to see what's inside. It's often a bill, but every so often, we receive something truly exciting.

Paying attention to what God is doing in the world is like opening the mailbox every day. There's nothing more exciting than opening "mail" from God and discovering all the ways the Spirit is moving through the world, through our communities, and even through ourselves!

When you see a mailbox door, say this prayer: "God, I love your Good News. "



FEBRUARY 28

Locker

Sometimes, taking part in a particular activity, whether it's attending school, working out, or spending the day at an amusement park, means that we're unable to keep our belongings with us. A locker is a way for us to keep our things safe until we need them again. It enables us to take part in important activities without having to keep track of all of our other responsibilities at the same time.

Sometimes, when God calls us to a particular relationship, task, or ministry, we worry about how it will impact other parts of our lives.

Will I still have time for my family? Will my friends abandon me? Will I still be able to take vacations? We can't let these worries stand in the way of God's call - we have to trust that God will keep the things that matter safe while we follow Jesus.

When you see a locker, say this prayer: "Lord, help me to trust your provision when I take a risk for Jesus' sake."



MARCH 1

Skeleton Key

Although they're not very common these days, a skeleton key is a key that's been reduced to its basic parts. In the days before modern locksmithing, this essentially made it a universal key that could provide access to any locked door. Soldiers used to use them to gain access to enemy homes, servants had them to enable a rapid response to their masters' needs, and landlords used them to enter tenants' homes more quickly.

When a human being has unlimited access to something, it's always accompanied by the danger of abuse. As history has progressed, locks have become more complex in order to limit such abuse and to enhance privacy.

Although we know that God is omniscient, we still resist allowing anyone unlimited access to our emotions, our dreams, and our desires in an effort to protect ourselves. But unlike a human with a skeleton key, God never uses God's access for abusive purposes, but only ever for our good. It's up to us to recognize this and accept it as a blessing that allows us a closer relationship with God.

When you see a skeleton key, say this prayer: "God, help me stop trying to shut you out."

boonepcusa.org/lent





MARCH 2

Church Door

Church doors are some of the biggest, most ornate doors we come across in our day-to-day lives. They're often decades, if not centuries old, and they usually require special maintenance and restoration when they become worn or broken. We treat them with a kind of reverence that we rarely practice towards other kinds of doors.

We recognize them as a special threshold between the secular and the holy. Even though they're generally made out of the same materials as any other door, these particular ones represent our entrance into God's presence.

But church doors aren't just entrances - they're exits, too. Many church doors (including ours!) have a sign on the inside of the front door that says, "You are now entering the mission field." We may initially go through church doors with the expectation of encountering God, but we return through them bringing God's presence out with us into the world.

Every time we go through a church door - in either direction - we are reminded of all the places where the divine and the secular touch, and that God is present in all places.

When you see a church door, say this prayer: "Lord, help me see your presence everywhere."



MARCH 3

Admission Turnstile

If you've ever used public transportation, attended a concert, or been to an amusement park, you may have encountered one of these unique gates. They're designed for crowd control, admitting one person into the venue or station at a time. It's not to keep people out, just to make sure that they come in at a manageable rate - one at a time.

God doesn't expect us to manage our entire lives all at once, either. There's a lot to worry about, a lot to work towards, a lot to fight for, and a lot to fix - but we don't have to do it all at once. Jesus spent thirty-three years on earth, three years in ministry, and three days in the tomb: even he didn't accomplish everything all at once. It's okay with God that you to take one day at a time.

When you see a turnstile, say this prayer: "Lord, give me the strength for today to accomplish what I need to today."

Second Sunday in Lent

MARCH 5

MEDITATE ON THIS PASSAGE:

"Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the **door** will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Whoever seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the **door** is opened."



MATTHEW CHAPTER 7 VERSES 7-8

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE



MARCH 6

Key Ring

With an increased number of responsibilities comes an increased number of keys - house keys, car keys, work keys, closet keys, church keys, storage keys, and so on. When we're younger, we only have one or two keys to keep track of, but as we get older, they start to add up. Sometimes, we're even entrusted with other people's keys! To make sure we don't lose any, we usually store them together on a keyring. That way, they're all in one place.

As we mature in our faith, God entrusts each of us with more and more responsibilities: responsibility for ourselves, responsibility for creation, responsibility for others, responsibility for community, responsibility for sharing the gospel, and so on.

If we were to put all that God has given us stewardship of on a keyring, there's no pocket on earth that could fit it! But as intimidating as these responsibilities may be, we can't forget that God believes we're up to the task.

When you see a keyring, say this prayer: "Lord, thank you for the trust you've placed in me."



MARCH 7

Refrigerator Door

These days, almost every household has a refrigerator. It's a critical tool for storing food, making sure it stays fresh long enough for us to eat it.

When the household power goes out, we can generally go without our televisions, computers, lights, and cell phones for quite a while (although we might not like it). But the refrigerator can only go without power for so long before there are consequences and the food starts to spoil. During that time, the only thing standing between the perishable food items and their decay is the refrigerator door, holding in the cold air.

There are times that WE may feel like we can't go on much longer; that we're right on the verge of exhaustion and about to spoil. But even when our energy is completely gone and we can't preserve ourselves any longer, God is there like a refrigerator door, keeping us sheltered and sustaining us until our energy returns.

When you see a refrigerator door, say this prayer: "God, thank you for ~~sustaining me through difficult times.~~"
boonepcusa.org/lent





MARCH 8

Keepsake Box Lock

A keepsake box doesn't have the same purpose as a safe. It's not made of impenetrable steel, but of decorative wood; it isn't protected by an infinite number of possible combinations, it uses a small, simple key; it's not built into the wall or floor, it can be easily moved. A keepsake box isn't intended to hide away what's inside of it, it's meant as a place to collect items of personal value and special things worth remembering and set them apart.

Sometimes these things are private, but other times they're set apart for the express purpose of sharing with someone else later. Family photos, letters from a pen pal, a child's artwork - any of these things might be kept in a keepsake box.

God didn't create any of us to be hidden away. Each of us is precious to God, a beloved child that brings joy. God may set us apart, but it's never for the purpose of keeping us away from others. We each have a holy purpose, something that makes us special, and God wants us to cultivate this until it's time to share it with the world.

When you see a keepsake box lock say this prayer: "God, show me what you've set me apart for."



MARCH 9

Deadbolt

Unlike a regular spring lock, it's almost impossible for a deadbolt to be opened without the right key. A lock with a spring can be manipulated or forced open, but a deadbolt resists these efforts due to its simple construction: a literal slab of metal stubbornly holding the door closed through brute force.

Sometimes, what stands between us and God isn't any sort of sophisticated theology or complicated sin or convoluted belief. Sometimes, the only thing standing between us and God is our own stubbornness. Our own unwillingness to believe that God wants a relationship with us. Our own determination to make it on our own.

When you see a deadbolt, say this prayer: "Lord, help me let go of my stubbornness and inflexibility."



MARCH 10

Keychain

Generally speaking, keychains serve no purpose other than to decorate a keyring. They're fun ways to highlight an aspect of your personality or something that you love. A keychain doesn't need to "do" anything to have value. It brings joy for its own sake.

Of course, God created us each with a purpose, but that's not the thing that gives us our value. It's not how well we share the gospel, or how much we volunteer, or how many people we help, or what we do for a living that makes us valuable to God.

We bring joy to God just by being who God created us to be. We don't need to "prove" that we're worthy of God's love. We just are, because God has declared it so.

When you see a keychain, say this prayer: "God, thank you for loving me for exactly who I am."



Third Sunday in Lent

MARCH 12

MEDITATE ON THIS PASSAGE:

"Go in through the narrow **gate**. The **gate** that leads to destruction is broad and the road wide, so many people enter through it. But the **gate** that leads to life is narrow and the road difficult, so few people find it."



MATTHEW CHAPTER 7 VERSES 13-14

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

MARCH 13

Bathroom Door

As anyone who has children or pets knows, the bathroom door is a sacred portal to solitude. It's the only place in the entire house that you can find privacy and be alone for a moment. You can find respite from the demands of life and responsibility ever-so-briefly when you're in the bathroom.

With all the demands of modern-day life, even the most devout person can struggle to find time alone with God. Prayers are often uttered in between errands, or right before a hard task, or as an afterthought. There's always something else demanding our attention.

Just as we seek out and treasure the time we spend alone with ourselves, we should also seek out and treasure the time we get to spend alone with God. Make sure God isn't an afterthought!

When you see a bathroom door, say this prayer: "Lord, help me to cherish the time I spend alone with you."

boonepcusa.org/lent



MARCH 14



Safe Lock

A safe is designed to do exactly what the name suggests - to keep things "safe". There are different kinds of safes designed to protect different kinds of things: important documents like birth certificates, passports, and Social Security cards; private firearms; family heirlooms; money. Anything that a person wants to protect from thieves, fire, the elements, or unauthorized use belongs in a safe.

You can tell a lot about what's important to a person (or organization) based on what they keep locked up in a safe. They're saying, "These are the things most precious to me; these are the things that I need to protect."

God doesn't keep precious things locked away in a safe, but God is very clear about what is most important: protecting the powerless, pursuing justice, loving our enemies, obeying the Torah. God calls us to lock these values safely in our hearts so that we can never forget or neglect them, so that no false teaching or god can steal them away from us.

What do you have locked into your heart? Are they the things that God wants you to keep there?

When you see a safe lock, say this prayer: "God, help me to value and protect the things that are most important to you."
boonepcusa.org/lent



MARCH 15

Old Keys

As time passes, it's almost inevitable that a household will accumulate some old keys that no longer have a use. Door locks that have been changed, padlocks that have been lost, diaries that are long gone, cars that have been sold. Yet even when we know for a fact that a key is no use to us anymore, it's hard for us to get rid of it.

Sometimes this stems from anxiety ("What if the lock is still around somewhere?") other times it stems from nostalgia ("This is from my very first diary!"), but no matter the reason, we often find ourselves with a junk drawer full of old keys that we never use, just taking up space.

Old beliefs can be like that. They may not have been help helpful for a long time, yet we hold onto them for inscrutable reasons.

When you see an old key, say this prayer: "Lord, help me let go of the old ways of thinking that are holding me back."



MARCH 16

Pet/Baby Gate

Although some people think of animal crates or baby pens as restrictive, they're not usually used in a cruel or controlling way. In fact, in most cases, they're used for the pet or baby's own good!

Animals and very small children aren't able to make the best decisions to protect themselves, so those of us charged with their care create physical boundaries to make sure that they don't go into areas that might cause them harm.

Sometimes in your life, you might feel God pushing back against something that you really want to do or somewhere you really want to go. Instead of getting angry or frustrated, consider whether God might be trying to place some boundaries in your life to keep you from harm.

When you see a pet or baby gate, say this prayer: "God, thank you for the boundaries you establish to keep me safe."



MARCH 17

Passcode

A passcode on a phone is a way to ensure that only you have access to it. It may be in the form of a PIN, a pattern, your fingerprint, or even facial recognition, but whatever it looks like, its purpose is to make sure that the information on your phone stays private.

There are some things in our life that we want to keep to ourselves. Shame about past actions, uncharitable thoughts, relationships that are unhealthy, private grief that we don't want to talk about, selfish choices we've made...these are the sorts of things that we never speak aloud, that we keep locked up in our mind.

But it's not good to keep all of this bottled up inside, taking up space in your mind. Maybe it's time for you to share the passcode to your heart with God so that you're no longer carrying the weight of these things alone.

When you enter the passcode on your phone, say this prayer: "Lord, I open my heart to you."
boonepcusa.org/lent



MARCH 18

Write down this week's thoughts, or reflect on your progress unlocking the doors between you and God.

A large area of lined paper for writing, with a vertical margin line on the left side. The lines are light blue and spaced evenly down the page.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

MARCH 19

MEDITATE ON THIS PASSAGE:

"I'll give you the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven. Anything you fasten on earth will be fastened in heaven. Anything you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven."



MATTHEW CHAPTER 16 VERSE 19

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

MARCH 20



Car Keys

Car keys mean "freedom" to so many of us. Teenagers count down the days until their parents hand them the keys, while on the other hand, many older folks struggle with the decision to give up the freedom that their car keys represent for financial or safety reasons. Car keys mean that you don't have to share your morning with others in your carpool, or time your vacation around flight schedules, or rely on public transportation. Car keys mean that you're the master of your own destiny.

But that freedom isn't absolute. A teenager has to get their parents' permission to take the car. There are extensive costs and obligations associated with car ownership. And in some places, finding somewhere to park your car is a bigger challenge than acquiring the car itself. The freedom of having access to car keys comes with conditions and responsibilities.

As Christians, we are free in Christ. But that doesn't mean that we get to do whatever we want. Our freedom from sin's grasp comes with responsibilities: to keep resisting sin, to refrain from leading any of our human siblings astray, to live lives that reflect Christ, to stand against any sin that we see in the world, and to work towards the kingdom of heaven. The freedom that our faith grants us isn't as simple as we might think.

When you see car keys, say this prayer: "Lord, help me live a life worthy of the freedom that I have in Christ."



MARCH 21

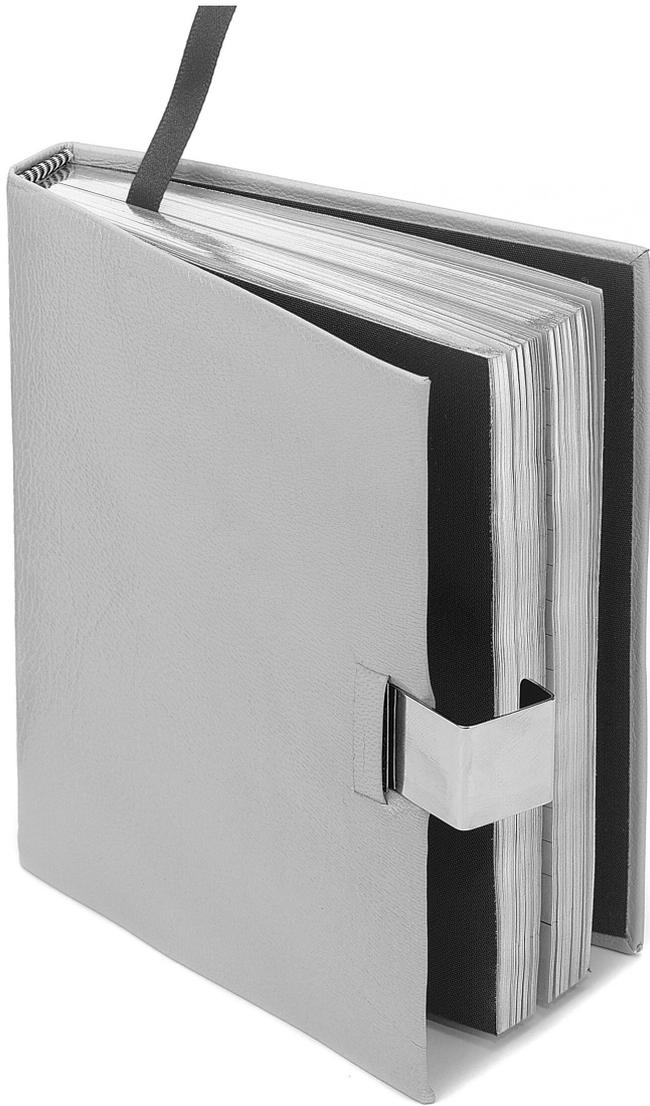
Washer/Dryer Door

Modern washers and dryers are miraculous. You put your clothes in, add some detergent, maybe some softener or a dryer sheet, and when you open the door at the end of the cycle, they're clean and dry and ready to be worn again!

It doesn't matter whether they were covered in mud or just a little bit stinky; the washer and dryer take care of it. No need to throw the clothes away!

There are days when each of us feels worn down, messy, covered in the grime of life, and altogether unfit to be seen in public. But worshipping a God of resurrection means that feeling like this isn't the end. There is freshness and renewal right around the corner!

When you see a washer or dryer door, say this prayer: "Thank you, God, for your promise of renewal."



MARCH 22

Diary

We all know the purpose of a diary: it's a record of one's innermost thoughts and dreams kept under lock and key, a place where a person can be completely honest without fear of reprisal.

We've also all seen at least one movie where the contents of a character's private diary are shared and it shocks everyone. Sometimes, the diary reveal has negative effect (the best friend's feelings are hurt) and other times it has a positive one (true love is revealed).

In either case, the reason it makes waves is because its contents are completely surprising and unexpected.

Only God knows the full contents of a person's hearts. We should always remember not to judge someone based only on what we see on the outside.

When you see a locked diary, say this prayer: "Lord, help me overcome my assumptions about others."



MARCH 23

Fingerprint

Your fingerprint is unique. Even identical twins have different fingerprints. For this reason, more and more technology uses fingerprints as a way to confirm a person's identity and "unlock" access to all sorts of things.

This means that being uniquely you can both literally and figuratively open doors!

For so much of our lives, our focus is on fitting in, not making waves, being like everyone else. But while being like everyone else may make us feel less self-conscious, it keeps us from going places and doing things that can change the world for the better.

Being unapologetically and uniquely you is your key to the world.

When you see a fingerprint or use a fingerprint scanner, say this prayer: "God, I am grateful for being fearfully and wonderfully made just as I am."

boonepcusa.org/lent





**MARCH
24**

Automatic Doors

Do you remember using automatic doors as a kid? It was fun to pretend that you were opening them with the power of your mind, whether you imagined using "the force" or magic words like "open sesame".

Most of us stopped doing this a while ago (out loud, at least), but if we're honest, automatic doors still have the ability to give us a little thrill, to make us feel confident and welcome. Like we belong and deserve to be there. (If you're skeptical, just think about how you felt the last time you expected an automatic door to open and it didn't. Your feelings change REAL quickly.)

Some people think of the Kingdom of Heaven as being guarded by a gate. We imagine a holy checkpoint where the soul is either tested or judged, and then admitted or rejected based on that one interaction. We all like to think that we'd approach the gate with pride in how we lived our lives, but let's be honest - we'd all feel at least a little bit panicked in this scenario.

But what if the door to the Kingdom of Heaven is more like an automatic door? Not in that there's no accountability and no moral standards, but in that, as we approach it, we feel a sense of peace, welcome, and belonging instead of dread? What if we welcome our heavenly judgement, because we know that we ourselves are welcome?

When you see an automatic door, say this prayer: "Lord, As your beloved child, I welcome your loving judgement."

Fifth Sunday in Lent

MARCH 26

MEDITATE ON THIS PASSAGE:

"How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You **shut people out** of the kingdom of heaven. You don't **enter** yourselves, and you won't allow those who want to **enter** to do so."



MATTHEW CHAPTER 23 VERSE 13

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE



MARCH 27

Gated Community

The words "gated community" sometimes evoke images of fortifications and stone walls meant to separate the "haves" from the "have nots". Other times, though, gates aren't intended to keep out a certain type of people, but simply to ensure that the community isn't turned into something it's not supposed to be.

It's the same reason there are often gated entrances at national parks: not to keep people out, but to preserve what's inside for everyone. If a person agrees to abide by the values and rules of the community, then they're welcomed with open arms.

How often do we treat the Church as a gated community in the first sense? How often do we treat it as a gated community in the second sense?

When you see a gated community, say this prayer: "Lord, help me to defend YOUR values instead of my own."

MARCH 28

Safety Caps

Safety caps on medicine bottles were invented in 1967 to keep medication out of the hands of children. The idea was that children might see medicinal pills or capsules and, thinking that they were candy, ingest them. This could have terrible, sometimes even fatal consequences.

It makes sense that children could mistake medication for something harmless - pills are bite-sized and colorful; a child may have even been given different medications in the past with no ill-effects. But without a proper understand of them and their effects, medicines can be very dangerous.

We may think that the gospel is a feel-good story meant to take away our worries. It may even have been taught to us that way in the past. But the truth is that the gospel exposes some of the worst parts of humanity, and it demands more from us than many are willing to give. We need understand this and be ready to let the gospel change us in ways we don't expect if we want it in our lives.

When you see a safety cap, say this prayer: "God, let me know your Gospel for what it really is."



MARCH 29

House Key

If someone gives you the key to their house, you know that they trust you. It either means that they want you to feel at home in their place, that they have faith in your ability to take care of their living space, or both. And it definitely means that they trust you not to lose or abuse the key!

When we give a house key to someone else, it means that we have to let go of some control. We're no longer the only one with access to our home, but because of that, we gain stronger relationships and help sharing your responsibilities.

It can be difficult to give up control in our life of faith. But God didn't create us to be alone. We are meant to be in community. And a part of that means trusting those in your community to take care of the things that are most precious to you. Besides - they might even help you see a better way of doing things!

When you see a house key, say this prayer: "God, thank you for those I share my life and my faith with."





MARCH 30

Pantry Door

The pantry is the place in the house where all the food staples are stored. There's a place for the bread, a place for the canned vegetables, a place for the boxes of macaroni and cheese, a place for the baking supplies, and so on. Most of us keep it well-stocked - if we run low on something, we make sure to stock up at the grocery store next time we're out. Every time we open the pantry door, we expect to see everything in its place, ready to prepare any meal we could possibly conceive.

But what if that weren't the case? What if we only bought items for the pantry right when we needed them, and didn't notice when they ran out? What if we gave some of it away? What if we worried less about the contents of our pantry and more about the emptiness of others'?

God has promised to provide what we need to live. This doesn't mean that we should sit around doing nothing to take care of ourselves, but it DOES mean that we shouldn't obsess about keeping the pantry full, or hoarding non-perishable food items like a squirrel. Maybe it's okay for us to give away some of what we were going to keep for ourselves. Maybe it's okay to use some of the money we would have spent on groceries to feed someone else. Maybe it's okay if we open the pantry door to find empty spots once in a while.

When you see a pantry door, say this prayer: "Lord, give me today the bread I need for today."



MARCH 31

Storage Unit

Many people rent storage units when they downsize their homes, intending to eventually go through the things they've set aside and selling or giving away what they don't need. But as shows like "Storage Wars" prove, sometimes this just doesn't happen. The contents of many storage units wind up abandoned and ultimately auctioned off to the highest curious bidder.

Sometimes the units contain nothing but junk, but other times there are literal treasures inside. We all have parts of our faith that we've left behind, whether because our lives got busy or just because we got distracted. Some of these things are better left in the past, but sometimes, we leave behind things that truly brought us life and drew us closer to God. We shouldn't let these things get buried under the clutter of life - they're priceless treasures.

When you see a storage unit, say this prayer: "Lord, help me to reclaim the spiritual disciplines I've forgotten."

Palm Sunday

APRIL 2

MEDITATE ON THIS PASSAGE:

"The next day, which was the day after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate. They said, 'Sir, we remember that while that deceiver was still alive he said, "After three days I will arise." Therefore, order the grave to be **sealed** until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people, "He's been raised from the dead." This last deception will be worse than the first.'

Pilate replied, 'You have soldiers for guard duty. Go and make it as **secure** as you know how.' Then they went and **secured** the tomb by **sealing** the stone and posting the guard."

MATTHEW CHAPTER 27 VERSES 62-66

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

APRIL 3

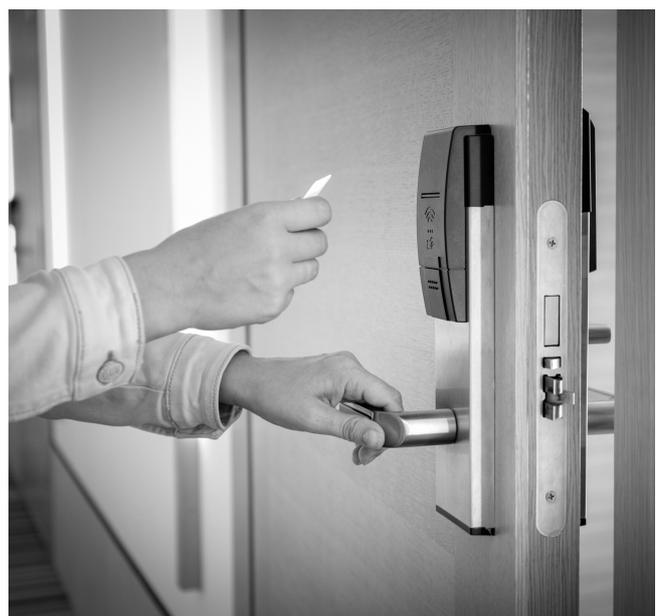


Keycard

The unique thing about a keycard is that it's essentially a key that can be reprogrammed. If a hotel guest forgets to return a keycard when they leave, no problem - the hotel just deactivates it. If an employee takes on additional responsibilities and needs access to more parts of the building, no sweat - the company just adds new access. If someone loses a keycard, a new one can be set up in seconds.

We should strive to be like keycards for God. We should be prepared at any moment for God to call us to a new ministry, a new calling, a new task. Because God may not change, but the world certainly does. God needs us to be ready to help in new and different ways.

When you see a keycard, say this prayer: "Lord, use me in whatever way you see fit."



APRIL 4

Side Door

The front door may be the main entry point for a house and the primary door for guests, but many families have a separate door that they prefer to use when they come home. Maybe it connects to the garage, maybe it leads directly into the kitchen for dropping off groceries, maybe it's closer to storage for coats, boots, backpacks, and purses.

Whether it's a side door, a back door, or a garage door, the family entrance tends to be the busiest one. And if a friend invites you into their house through the family entrance, you know that they consider you one of them.

When you first join the Church (with a capital "C") you mostly enter through the "front door". You see yourself as a guest, appreciative of the host's hospitality. But eventually, God invites you to enter through the side door - where the committee work is done, the mission projects are organized, and worship is planned. At a certain point, you have to choose whether you want to continue to be a guest or to be a part of the family.

When you see a side door, say this prayer: "God, help me find a way to be a part of the greater life of your church."
www.epcusa.org/lent



APRIL 5



Enter Password
*****|

Password

"Please create a password. It must contain at least six characters, one uppercase and one lowercase letter, one number, and one symbol. It cannot contain any part of your username, and it cannot be a password that you've used previously."

These words strike fear into the heart of everyone who's ever read them on their computer screen. With all the conditions placed on the creation of a password, how can any person with a normal memory be expected to keep track of all the passwords that they've created for all the websites they've visited?

Keeping track of the Torah, the religious laws that people of faith are supposed to follow, can feel equally overwhelming. There are so many, and these days, there are even unspoken rules that the community expects you to adhere to without being told.

But Jesus has given us the master password: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands." If we seek to follow these two commandments, we can be confident that we're meeting all the requirements of God's will.

When you enter a password, say this prayer: "God, help me to love you and my neighbor with all that I am."



MAUNDY THURSDAY

Garage Door Opener

A garage opener can seem like magic. Without touching the garage door itself at all, a person can command it to open, even from a distance, even from inside their car! It certainly makes it easy to move things in and out of the garage.

But, of course, it's NOT magic. The opener is communicating wirelessly with a receiver, which in turn communicates electronically to a motor attached to the garage door, which causes it to open.

Sometimes, God's work in the world can appear to be magic, but it's not. It seems like all we have to do is sit back and watch the kingdom come to earth, but there's a lot of work that goes on in the meantime - and it starts with us.

When you see a garage door opener, say this prayer: "God, show me what you need me to do."

GOOD FRIDAY

Bedroom Door

All living creatures are at their most vulnerable when they're asleep. So when we seek out places to rest our bodies, we're willing to spend a lot of resources to make sure it's somewhere we feel safe.

We try to make sure we sleep in the vicinity of those we trust. When we can, we seek out soothing decorations and comfortable bedding. Sometimes, we cuddle up with a stuffed animal. And whether we lock it or not, many of us feel most comfortable sleeping behind a closed door.

Once we feel safe, then we're able to sleep soundly.

As Christians, we live in the assurance that we are ultimately safe in God's care, and that we can allow ourselves to be vulnerable, knowing that no matter what happens in this life, sin and death will never have the final word.

When you see a bedroom door, say this prayer: "Lord, I entrust my soul to your care."



EASTER SUNDAY

HE IS RISEN!

HE IS RISEN INDEED!

ALLELUIA!





**Written by Rev. Katey Schwind Williams
for Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church
boonepcusa.org
©2023**

