March 24, 2024



Weekly Booster

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Barb Cunningham, Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane, Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay, Jeff Hiser, Drew Morelock, Pastor David



Prayers for Strength

For thousands of years, people have drawn inspiration from the Bible. And with good reason; it has restored hope for many during their most trying circumstances and continues to be a source of encouragement and support today.

Life in this world is fraught with all kinds of challenges. Whether we have health concerns, financial concerns, relational concerns, or just plain worry about how we'll pay the bills this next month, the Word of God has the power to inspire us, lift us up, and give us the stamina and courage to carry on. Following are ten powerful passages that can give us strength when we need it most.

1. God is my strength and defense: Exodus 15:1-4

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

"I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

"The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea."

Continued page 2.

Did you know the scientific term for brain freeze is "sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia."

Reminders

<u>March 23rd</u> Bishop Kennetha Town Hall 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Greenfield, IA

> March 24th Palm/Passion Sunday

<u>March 27th</u> Bible Study – 11:00 a.m. Praise Team - 5:00 p.m. Choir – 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir – 6:30 p.m.

> <u>March 28th</u> T.O.P.S.

<u>March 29th</u> Good Friday Service – 6:30 p.m.

**No Men's Saturday Bible Study Until Spring - TBA

**Worship Assistants are needed for March 31st & April

** Fellowship Volunteers needed sign-up in Fellowship Hall



Prayers - Continued from page 1.

For over 400 years, the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. In a profound display of his power, God sent a man named Moses to secure their release. Moses approached the ruler of Egypt with a request to let the people of Israel go, and when Pharaoh responded with hard-hearted cruelty, Moses informed him that God would respond.

God sent ten catastrophic plagues that finally convinced Pharaoh to let Moses lead the people out into the wilderness (read this story in Exodus chapters <u>8 through 11</u>). These ten plagues showed God's control over the things of this world: the animals, the elements, and the weather all responded to his command. God was, and remains, firmly in control of the world that we live in. He created it out of nothing (see <u>Genesis 1</u>) and still today keeps all of creation intact (<u>Hebrews 1:10–12</u>).

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But God wasn't finished with the Egyptians just yet. When Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army off in pursuit of the fleeing Hebrews, God gave the Israelites passage through the Red Sea on dry ground, and then closed the sea around the Egyptian army, destroying it (Exodus 14:5–31). Key to this amazing account is the response of Moses when his people came to him, panicking and terrified as they watched the powerful Egyptian army in hot pursuit:

Continued page 6

Did you know that Canadians say "sorry" so much that a law was passed in 2009 declaring that an apology can't be used as evidence of admission to guilt?

Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church

Please wear your name tag on Sunday mornings



Church Office Hours

** Children & Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School – PK-6 during service, Jr/Sr High at 10:30 a.m.

**Choir – Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m. **Bell Choir – Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch. Monday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00 Tuesday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00 Wednesday CLOSED Thursday 9:00-11:00 12:00-3:00 Friday 9:00-11:00 Please continue to call in advance if you need in the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine please leave your name, number, and a brief message and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned the next business day.



12:00-3:00

How did Paul receive the gospel he preached?

- a) through the angels
- b) by studying
- c) by man
- d) through a revelation
- of Jesus Christ

Who said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight?

a) Jerusalem b) Isaiah c) Ezekiel

d) Daniel

Who gave King Ahasuerus pleasing advice after Queen Vashti's refusal?

- a) Haman
- b) Biztha
- c) Memucan
- d) Harbona

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



25th – Ann O'Hara, Ed & Nancy Bonefas 27th – Phyllis Moore, Dan & Heather Weiss 28th – Brody Burdorf

**See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the office, or send an email to office@shen.church

Shenandoah First United Methodist Church

200 Church St. Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at <u>https://shen.church</u>



https://shenchurch.onechurchsoft ware.com/



United Methodist Church, Shenandoah, IA

https://www.facebook.com/meth odist.church.shenandoah



Services are now on our YouTube channel only. https://www.youtube.com/@shen.churc h8192/streams March 24, 2024

*Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford

Call to Worship

Leader: When they had gotten close to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His followers ahead of them. He said, "Go to that village over there, you'll see a young colt tied that nobody has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it back to me." They brought the colt back to Jesus, piled garments on its back, and Jesus rode the animal toward Jerusalem. As they traveled, people cast their cloaks onto the road and spread-out palm branches.

People: Hosanna! Rescue us now, Lord! Hosanna! Blessed be the One who comes in the name of the Eternal One! Hosanna in the highest heavens!

"Joy and Sorrow"

Scripture Reading: Mark 15:1-47

<u>Songs</u> Hosanna, Loud Hosanna #278 Mighty to Save #3038 I Surrender All #354

Last Week's Attendance In-Person Worship – 72 On-Line Worship – 15

Our Mission:

"Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love."

Our Vision:

"We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world."

Answers for March 17th are c) Horeb d) Shechem b) Priest Quiz hints – Q1) Galatians Q2) Matthew Q3) Esther

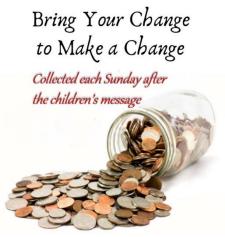




April 2024

Pasta (any kind), Jell, Kechup & Mustard, Pickle Relish, Spices, Green Beans & Corn, Mandarin Oranges, Cinnamon Applesauce, Chicken Noodle Soup, Soda Crackers, Canned Tuna or Chicken, Bar Soap, Shampoo & Conditioner, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste.

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals with their food items home. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.



"Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and also teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children's Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from

your pockets or purse. The money donated in March will go to the *Heifer International Organization*.



Prayers - Continued from page 2.

"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exodus 14:13–14).

Do we feel the need for a deliverer in our daily walk? How often we long for someone to come and defend us, to make things right in our families and our workplaces. When we sit in the hospital next to a beloved family member, we pray for God to intervene. When we look at the path our adult children are taking, sometimes we plead for God to orchestrate the circumstances of their lives so that they follow God's path once again. We long for a deliverer to lead us out of our difficulties.

When we do, we need to remember these words from Moses. As hard as it can be to "be still," we must wait for God to work in his way and on his timetable. When our circumstances seem beyond our control, we can think back on the people of Israel, who faced certain death as the Egyptian army charged hard after this defenseless gathering of families and animals.

God saw; God heard; God acted and delivered them. As we'll see in many of these passages, our strength is found only in God's might. And our God knows our circumstances; he hears our cries just as surely as he heard the cries of his people living in captivity in Egypt. As we look to find our security in him, we are lifted and protected by our champion Defender.

2. The joy of the Lord is your strength: <u>Nehemiah 8:10</u>

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

This passage finds the Israelite nation just returned from exile. They stand together as a remnant of a nation that was captured and dispersed because their ancestors had lost their way and disobeyed the covenant that God had made with them (<u>Genesis 12:1–3</u>, <u>2 Samuel 7:8–16</u>). Ezra understood what was needed for these recently returned exiles to thrive in the land: a word from God. So he opened the book, and read it to them.

In the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, Ezra reads to the people from God's Law. And the people, hungry to hear God's Word and rediscover their heritage, listen to Ezra read from dawn until noon. They rightfully respond in worship, understanding Who it is who has returned them to their land from their time in exile.

Here Nehemiah tells them that this is a celebration, and in one of Scripture's more well-known lines, lets them know that "the joy of the Lord is their strength." It's their confidence in God's goodness that sets them apart and makes them a robust people. In so doing, he set the stage for their new life in the promised land.

We too have access to the regular reading of God's Word. We too are invited into his fellowship to celebrate what the Good News of the gospel means to us today.

Have you been in exile from God's Word? Have you been away from the celebration that his people have every Sunday in church? Here's an opportunity to understand, week by week, just what God promises to us in his Word. Open it, read it, and open your heart once again to finding and attending a local church if you're able. If not, look for one that streams their services online and listen for God to speak to you through the words and worship of his people.

If you're part of a regular Sunday congregation, look to your authentic friends for guidance and peace in your own life. The body of Christ is designed to work as a unit (<u>1 Corinthians 12:12–31</u>), and through that body, we can also hear God speaking. When we open our hearts and minds to the celebration of hearing what God promises to us in his Word, that celebration can seep into and transform our lives from the inside out.

3. God is our refuge and strength: Psalm 46:1–3

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

The Psalms are a trusted source of reassurance and encouragement for beleaguered believers. A book of songs that defined the worship of God among the Hebrews, these beautiful poems are as real and raw as any words we find in the Bible. The Psalmists didn't pull any punches when they wrote these songs to God. They questioned his goodness and his care for those who believed in him (<u>Psalm 6:3</u>; <u>13:1–</u> <u>2</u>; <u>35:17</u>). They railed against the evil in this world and pleaded with God to come to their rescue.

Many of the stories in the life of David are reflected in these Psalms. He was the author of a majority of the songs that we read in this book, and he often wrote during times of deep distress. For example, Psalm 3 was written about the time he had to flee his palace and his country because his son had rebelled against him and tried to take his throne. Everything he had done in God's name was on the line, and one of his most beloved children was the one threatening to take it all away. Imagine David's feeling of betrayal! Yet at the end of this song, David responds with trust in his God and Savior: "From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people" (Psalm 3:8).

Often the Hebrews found their stamina and hope in remembering God's powerful acts. In <u>Psalm 46</u>, the psalmist wants to remind us that God is our "ever-present help in trouble." We look to the past to remember what's been done to remind ourselves that God is at work today, and we can trust him—even if it feels like the mountains in our lives are falling into the sea.

In <u>Malachi 3:6</u>, the prophet relates this message from God: "I the Lord do not change." The God who reinforced the courage of the Psalmists is the same One who can do exactly that for us today. Just as

David reflected on God's goodness when he wrote <u>Psalm 3</u>, we can also reflect on God's care and concern for us as we look back over how his promises have been evident and kept in our own lives.

4. Strengthen me according to your word: Psalm 119:28

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

This is perhaps the best passage to continue this discussion into how God helps us and strengthens us today. <u>Psalm 119</u> is the longest chapter in the entire Bible. It repeatedly reminds us to trust in God's Word, which will make us wise and righteous and will prepare us for good works.

In the midst of this Psalm, the psalmist speaks of his weariness and sorrow. And he looks to God's Law for strength. Do you feel the weight of sorrow today? Are you weary from worry, from overwork, from financial or relational stress? Do you find yourself on the precipice of a major life change? Are you in a position where you don't have any choice but to change your habits and behaviors? We all find ourselves in these situations at different points in our lives.

Here the Psalmist speaks to all of us when he prays a prayer that's instructive for all believers throughout time: "Strengthen me according to your word." Like Solomon's famous prayer for wisdom when faced with taking over the kingdom from his father David (<u>1 Kings 3:7–9</u>), this prayer asks God to deliver on the promises he's made to us in his Word. It's like saying, "God, instruct me with what you've already revealed to me in the Bible. Remind me of your goodness in the midst of my pain and sorrow by turning my heart back to your greatness revealed in the pages of your revelation, and instruct me in your ways."

When we're weighed down with so much stress and anxiety that we don't think we can bear even one more day, we can turn to God's revealed will in the Bible and understand that we can "Cast all [our] anxiety on him because he cares for [us]" (<u>1 Peter 5:7</u>).

That means ALL our anxiety. All of it.

5. The Lord is our strong tower: Proverbs 18:10

The name of the Lord is a fortified tower the righteous run to it and are safe.

Life in modern society encourages proactive movement forward in the pursuit of success. In the Western world, we live with a strong "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps" mentality that leads to long days at work. For many, materially keeping up with others draws us to make purchase decisions that can keep us in financial bondage for years.

Yes, the way we run after security in the modern world keeps us running hard after the "good things" in life. But this isn't new. The Bible says that we tend to look in the same places for security that our forefathers did. Like the Israelites of old, the first people who heard these words of God through the writers of the Old Testament, we trust in our riches, close relationships, and strong rulers to protect us (see <u>1 Timothy 6:17–19</u>).

Is it wrong to make a plan and to provide for one's family? The whole book of Proverbs, which is quoted above, tells us that hard work is preferable to sitting around waiting for good things to happen. As the old saying goes, "Hope is not a strategy." The best way to make it in this world is to get up every day and get moving. Be industrious. Take action. And understand that God is the One who gives you strength to do the job that you have so that you can provide what your family needs.

We need to make money; we need to provide. But there is a slight shift in perspective that happens when we give ourselves too much credit for doing the work ourselves. When we put our hope in those things; when we trust too much in the work of our hands to provide us with security, we find ourselves on shifting sand. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (<u>1 Timothy 6:10</u>).

On the other hand, God's name—the very essence of who he is—is a fortified tower where we can find the security we long for. His name and his actions in the world through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus provide the rock-solid hope that believers have for the future. When we trust in God alone for our ultimate security, we can have trust in his ultimate care and provision for us.

6. We will run and not grow weary: Isaiah 40:29-31

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Those of us with small children resonate with this passage. When we find ourselves pacing around the living room with a crying baby in our arms, looking at the clock and knowing that we have to get ready for work in 3 hours, we understand the exhaustion that Isaiah spoke about in this passage. As do those of us who care for friends or family members who struggle with health issues. Anyone who has sat with someone who is battling cancer and the effects of chemotherapy can tell you that physical strength, along with hope, at times wears thin in the face of such a battle.

At some point, each and every one of us gets physically and emotionally exhausted. It doesn't matter who we are or where we're at in life. At such times, this passage from Isaiah 40 is an incredible encouragement. God is our source for unlimited renewal. In the very way he designed creation, he brings us restoration when we're weary. He made our bodies function best by sleeping a certain number of hours during the day. Sometimes during those long, nights when our concerns weigh us down and we can't see our way out, God gives us the gift of rest and sleep. And our perspective on our current

circumstances sometimes changes when we see the morning sun. The prophet Jeremiah wrote about this as his people faced the awful prospect of exile in a foreign land. Because of the sins of their rulers, God called Jeremiah to tell the people not to resist the coming judgment. Imagine the internal stress and anxiety he felt as he stood in front of his country's leaders, proclaiming God's judgment for the sins of the people. Yet even he could write about God's goodness in the midst of this harrowing situation: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22–23).

God still "gives strength to the weary." He understands what it's like to be a weary human being because his Son Jesus experienced the same thing while he was on this earth. Many times in the Gospels we see Jesus retreating to a quiet place to pray (e.g., <u>Luke 6:12</u>). He even fell asleep in the bottom of a boat in the middle of a storm! (<u>Luke 8:22–25</u>). He knows and understands our weakness, and he promises to strengthen us with his own power when we feel we can't go on (see <u>Acts 1:8</u>).

7. Strengthened and upheld by God's hand: Isaiah 41:9-10

I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

While these words were written to an ancient people in a different set of circumstances from ours, we can still hold fast to these promises. Here God speaks to Israel, the nation he has created, cared for, and loved. They were often under duress from foreign cultures who were envious of the material prosperity that the Israelites had and would have loved to see them get wiped out.

In the midst of their difficulties, the Israelites could turn to the prophet Isaiah once again for reassurance. Were they perfect? Obviously not. Did they regularly take their eye off the ball and fail to follow God's plan for their lives? Certainly. They, as much as we, knew what it was like to experience the consequences of disobedience to God and his word. The prophets of the Old Testament were continually amazed and frustrated at how far the people of Israel could walk away from God's path and follow the leading of the surrounding culture. Despite their regular unfaithfulness to God, still he called, strengthened, and upheld his people Israel when they turned to him in repentance and faith.

How about us? Are we continually surprised at how we personally take our eye off the ball in our own lives and walk away from God's best plan for our future? The seats in every church are filled with people who know what it means to live with the consequences of their actions and decisions—for better or for worse. And yet, in Christ, our faithful God still cares for us. When we are "dismayed," he promises to "uphold us with [his] righteous right hand": "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

When we come to God with our concerns and ask for his gracious help, he still reaches out to provide us with what we need—mentally, emotionally, and physically. He knows our needs before we even speak

them, and works through his people to provide help, all the while giving us his Holy Spirit to encourage and empower us (<u>2 Timothy 1:7</u>).

9. Be strong in the Lord: Ephesians 6:10–11

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

The Christian life is difficult. Our enemy, the devil, is looking for ways to destroy our fervor, entice us to be unfaithful to God, and ultimately destroy us.

Paul spoke to this when he wrote his letter to the church at Ephesus. This was a strong church that had been blessed with good teaching and leadership, and yet they struggled with the pagan forces that influenced their surrounding culture. In the face of this, they heard Paul's encouragement to be strong. Paul used the analogy of putting on armor to withstand the cultural and religious darts that seemed to come at them from all sides, reassuring the people that their strength came from the God who provided that armor.

What did that armor consist of? The "belt of truth." The "breastplate of righteousness." Boots fitted with the "gospel of peace." The "shield of faith." The "helmet of salvation." And over all this God-given and God-reinforced armor, an admonition to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Ephesians 6:10–18).

We are best able to defend ourselves from Satan's attacks when we arm ourselves with the promises of God found in the Bible. We are best able to keep from stumbling when we join with others in understanding how those promises protect and preserve us in our current circumstances, whatever those may be.

10. Through him who gives me strength: Philippians 4:11–13

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

<u>Philippians 4:13</u> is a rather well-known verse, but we really need the context to see it for the profound inspiration that it is. Paul had endured so much difficulty in his ministry: persecution, physical danger, betrayal by one of his closest companions, opposition from false teachers, and many more hardships. Throughout this time, God was growing in him something that is instructive for us today: he was teaching Paul the secret of contentment.

This passage tells us that Paul wasn't only content when he had what he needed. Through reliance on God's provision, Paul learned to be fulfilled even when he was hungry and in desperate need. He looked to God for strength, and God gave it to him, though it wasn't necessarily in the way he wanted it to be or how he understood it would work. That's the basis of surrendering to God's will and trusting in his way.

We Can Trust in God's Strength

Each one of us will face myriad trials and difficulties in our lives, but through them all God will be faithful. If we wait on him and trust in him, he will be there to protect, guide, lead, and renew us. But it requires us to put our hope in Christ's sacrifice and the power of the resurrection. As Paul reminds the Galatians:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (<u>Galatians 2:20</u>)

This passage reiterates the true source of the believer's strength: Trust in God and in Jesus Christ alone. The most powerful force in the universe is the same God who bolsters our hope and strength on a daily basis.

By Mike Vander Klipp, a senior editor with the Zondervan Bible Group, where he's been privileged to work for the past three decades. He and his family live in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

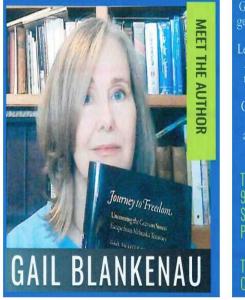
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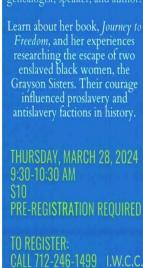


Palm/Passion Sunday – March 24th Maundy Thursday – March 28th Good Friday – March 29th Holy Saturday – March 30th Easter Sunday – March 31st Villisca United Methodist Church is hosting a SPRING Women's Conference on Saturday, April 13 from 9am to 3pm.

> Everyone is invited! To secure your spot, please call the church office at 712-826-3132

Cost is \$30 per person which includes a light breakfast and lunch



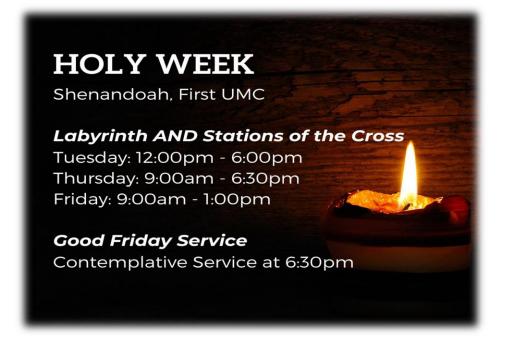






IOWA CONFERENCE The United Methodist Church ALDERSGATE DISTRICT Town Hall Meeting with Bishop Kennetha has been rescheduled for this Saturday, March 23rd from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Greenfield United Methodist Church, 108 SW 5th St.

Join virtually by Zoom – to join the town hall meeting through Zoom register at <u>https://bit.ly/3T5iQYf</u> and a link will be sent to your email so you may join the meeting.



PRAYER LABYRINTH AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS

During Holy Week, come participate in the experiential prayer practices of walking a Labyrinth and journeying through the Stations of the Cross. Prayer stations will be set up for you to engage with and will be open at the following times:

Tuesday from 12:00pm - 6:00pm Thursday from 9:00am - 6:30pm Friday from 9:00am - 1:00pm

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

On Good Friday at 6:30pm we will host a contemplative service in which we will sing, pray, and remember the passion of Christ.