

# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## INTRODUCTION

*Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi*

*At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.  
- Mark 1:12-13*

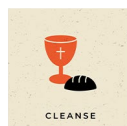
In the northern hemisphere the season of Lent corresponds with the lengthening of days as we journey toward spring. Christian tradition teaches us that Lent corresponds with the season the Spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness to prepare Jesus for his public ministry. During this season Jesus communed with wild beasts and angels and was tempted by Satan. Jesus emerged from his wilderness experience and immediately proclaimed the Good News of God.

I believe God is calling the people of The United Methodist Church to more faithful, vibrant, joy and hope-filled ministry than we have ever seen. In the increasingly chaotic, doom and gloom-filled world, I believe God is calling and equipping us to discern innovative, compelling, relevant ways to proclaim the Good News of God. Perhaps, the Spirit is sending the Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey Annual Conferences into a season of preparation for this new season of ministry. I believe our preparation includes our journey healing. Perhaps God has enlisted some angels to attend to us during this Lenten season in order to aid our healing. Perhaps some of those angels are the gifted persons who have written the devotions in this Lenten Devotional Booklet.

As you read these devotionals, I urge you to open yourself to the healing grace and restorative mercy of our loving God. I beseech you to expect that as you read, reflect, and pray God will commune with you, lead you, carry you, and guide you toward wholeness.

Opening ourselves to God in this way is not easy. It may bring to our remembrance and consciousness situations and feelings we have long suppressed. These remembrances may tempt us to act in ways that fall short of the glory of God. When this happens, look for and reach out to the angels God has appointed to minister to you. Those angels maybe pastors, laity, trusted friends or colleagues, or mental health professionals. Look for the angels and allow God to heal.

I will be praying for your healing during this season. I ask that you do the same for me. Because come Easter Sunday morning there will be Good News for all of us to proclaim!



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 1

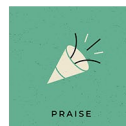
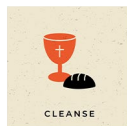
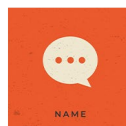
*John Christopher Wallace*

*Malachi 4:3-5*

Ordinarily, the OT prophets are not known for pleasantries. However, at the end of the prophecy of Malachi, we learn that obedience to YHWH will present to the faithful a healing like none other. While not necessarily a healing of the body, our strengthened relationship with the LORD will yield a healing of our souls. We cannot manufacture this healing, but we must realize that it comes as we seek the LORD daily. An added bonus found in Malachi's words is the promise of the "Elijah," better known to us as John the Baptist, the forerunner of our LORD Jesus Christ. While this "Elijah" demanded repentance, he also desired that his first hearers (and us as well) take very seriously the creation of an intimate relationship with the prophesied Messiah. He and He alone can provide the healing we need if we but ask. He and He alone can and will forgive us those things that divide and help us to foster stronger relationships with each other and with our LORD.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What other OT references can we cite for healing that only YHWH can provide?
2. While many people pray for a healing of the body (and rightly so), do we find it hard to pray for a healing of our souls?
3. Malachi tells us that "Elijah" will "turn hearts." Have our hearts become hard toward each other? Can we plead with Jesus Christ to turn ours?



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 2

Pastor David Woolverton

*To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*

— Isaiah 61:3 (NIV)

### “BEAUTY FROM ASHES”

Throughout my childhood and teenage years, I always imagined myself becoming a doctor. I loved the sciences and had set my sights on medicine from an early age. But during high school, something began to shift. Encouraged by my brothers and teachers, I discovered a love for music, theater, and leadership. By my senior year, I was elected Student Council President, a role that required me to speak weekly to hundreds of my peers. Though public speaking didn’t come naturally at first, something inside me came alive as I stood before them each Monday morning, leading assemblies.

Then came a devastating fire. The main building of our high school—the heart of our campus—was destroyed. Watching it burn was heartbreaking. In the aftermath, the local United Methodist church opened its doors to us, offering their Sunday School rooms for our classes and their sanctuary for our assemblies. I remember taking personally the role of bringing hope and direction to my fellow classmates in the face of loss.

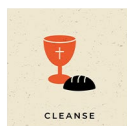
Years later, I stumbled across my high school yearbook. There, in my senior photo, taken in the wake of the fire, I was standing at that pulpit—the place where every Monday morning I would lead the gatherings. It was a moment of great clarity. I wasn’t just leading assemblies in high school—I was stepping into God’s calling for my life. Though I couldn’t see it at the time, God was using those moments to prepare me for ministry. Only God could take the ashes of a fire and turn them into the foundation of a lifelong purpose.

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

Where in your life have you experienced “ashes”—moments of loss or brokenness—and how might God be working to bring beauty and purpose from those experiences?

### PRAYER:

Lord, You are the God who brings beauty from ashes. Thank You for weaving Your purpose into our lives, even when we can’t see it at the time. Open our eyes to Your redemptive work and help us trust in Your perfect plan. May we embrace the calling You have prepared for us in Jesus’s name. Amen.



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 3

Judy Ehninger

*A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.*

*- 1 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT)*

### BE THE GIFT GOD CREATED YOU TO BE

When I cleaned out a closet recently, I found a beautiful gift a friend had given me many months ago. I remember when she gave me the gift, I was thrilled! It made me feel so special and loved that she purchased it with me in mind. Yet somehow in the busyness of life, the gift became buried underneath "stuff," hidden and unused. I can't imagine how disappointed my friend would be if she knew I hadn't continued to treasure it.

It made me pause and think about the gifts that the Ultimate Gift Giver has given each of us, and whether or not we're using them. I envision God, with His infinite creativity, pouring over each of us as He formed us, selecting unique abilities and spiritual gifts to prepare us for the work that He has called us to do, our journey of healing.

It's our job to steward these gifts. We must prayerfully consider what they are and how we can use them to serve a world in desperate need — this is our purpose, our calling, our journey of healing.

I have worked with men and women who were overcoming exploitation, addiction, and domestic abuse. Because of their life circumstances, many of these individuals had never considered God's purpose for their life. Many were frightened and scarred, afraid they couldn't do anything right. Through love, encouragement, hard work, and prayer, many of these students became successfully employed in allied health professions. Each learned that God gifted them with a HUGE heart of compassion for suffering people and an incredible sense of perseverance.

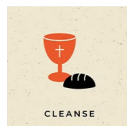
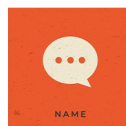
Just imagine what the world would be like if we began to steward the gifts God has given us to serve each other and bring healing to the broken.

Unlike the gift my friend gave me long ago, let's not keep our unique gifts from God hidden under a mountain of stuff in the closet of our lives. Let's use our gifts for His glory now, on our journey of healing.

Are you aware of your giftedness?

How can you more effectively use your spiritual gifts?

Lord, we thank you for our spiritual gifts. Help us share these gifts and your love with everyone we meet. Guide us we pray. Amen.



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 4

Jacqueline Tilford

*Moses said to the Lord, 'Please forgive the wrongs of these people...' Then the LORD said, 'I will forgive as you requested....'*

*- Numbers 14:19-20*

### PREPARING MY HEART FOR FORGIVENESS

Decades ago, the rejection of a family member shook me to my core. It was deeply disappointing and hurtful. The fallout was humiliating, requiring a long drive home alone through several states. I desperately needed God's love to wash over me and cleanse me of the pain and hurt. Instead of words to pray, a profound image came to mind. Jesus' arms were lovingly wrapped around both of us; our heads were bowed as we humbly encircled one another, soaking in the love that flowed and never ended. "Praying" the image daily prepared me for the moment I finally realized, the hurt was healed; no pain or ill will was felt. It was an incredibly joyous moment!

Forgiveness was cause for celebration in a second instance. When two women spent energy searching for me from state to state, they urgently wanted to apologize for their involvement in a racist event that occurred fifteen years earlier. Prayerfully, living in multi-cultural contexts and anti-racism training gave me insights for coping and maneuvering. I felt no malice in my mind; though it is likely that my body was "keeping the score." Their humble apology was a delightful surprise for which I continue to be grateful, for their sake as well as mine.

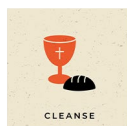
I have also needed to repent and seek forgiveness. I need forgiveness from inaction when offended or witnessing an offense rather than choose to fight with the weapons God provides. When I sincerely asked forgiveness from friends for arrogantly and belligerently exuding an attitude of "calling offenders out" to be rebuked and shamed, rather than "calling them in" to God's circle of love and healing, reconciliation happened and hearts healed, leading to a place where "All is known. All is forgiven."

### PRAYER:

Forgive us, God, for being quick to offend and be offended but slow to forgive and seek forgiveness. Help us to feel the urgency to heal and be healed that you feel. Amen.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Who do I need to forgive today?
2. Is there someone I've harmed and need to ask their forgiveness?
3. What can I do to increase a culture of forgiveness that heals within the Church?



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 5

Rev. Cindy Brubaker

*Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.*

- Matthew 6:34

### THE MESSAGE:

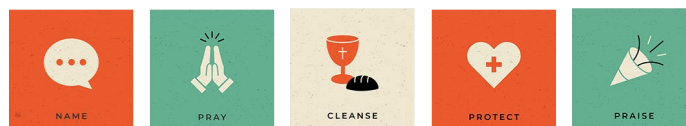
In an early episode of "The Crown", the ill King George takes his future son-in-law, Prince Philip, out shooting to explain to him that the titles and all are not the job. He says, "She (Princess Elizabeth) is the job. She is the essence of your duty. Loving her. Protecting her."

One anxious day I heard the Lord say, "I want you to rest in Me. Trust Me. Believe Me. Love Me. This is the essence of your duty, the fulfillment of your work - your life in Me."

I was blown away. The job for me has always been the Lord and everything else: family, church, praying, preaching, ministering, loving, giving, forgiving, fixing, and more. But I do not have to divide my attention and life up into so many exhausting pieces. I can choose to make the Lord my sole focus, the essence of my life, and the Lord will lead me in paths of righteousness, restore my soul, and make me light in dark places.

What would it be like to make the Lord your God the sole focus of your life today?

Good Shepherd of my soul, I am tired. Teach me to rest in and trust and believe You. I want to love You more and know Your love working in and through me. I surrender all the pieces of my life to You now. Holy Spirit, help me to give You my undivided attention so that Christ's life will be in me a light to the world, in Jesus' name. Amen.



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 6

Eunice Lee, Arcola Covenant Community Lay Leader

*The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. - Psalm 34:18*

*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. - Matthew 28:20*

Holy Week and the season of Lent have taken on a deeper significance for me since the passing of Pastor John Suh last year.

All through the Lenten season, ACC members signed up for hourly prayer circle slots and to write Daily Bread messages to our beloved Pastor and his family to provide hope, love, and encouragement in their time of need. In return, until Day 34, the day before he passed away, Pastor John responded to nearly all the devotion writers with poignant and hopeful emails which were like mini sermons, testimonials, and pep talks. In this way, despite his advancing illness, he continued to pastor to us with joy until the very end, revealing his great love for God and for ACC.

Pastor John took his last breath on Holy Monday. We held a glorious funeral service for him on Maundy Thursday, attended by a standing room-only crowd of 500. He was buried on Good Friday. We gathered at his grave early in the morning on Holy Saturday. ACC's first Sunday worship service after his passing was on Easter Sunday.

You might think it unfortunate timing, but it was God's plan to time Pastor John's passing to be the perfect ending to his short-lived but powerful and enduring legacy at ACC – allowing Pastor John to be the instrument through which we experienced Holy Week on a personal and profound level. Our sorrow at Jesus' crucifixion was heightened when we gathered on Good Friday and grieved for Pastor John, recognizing the heavy cross he bore so joyfully while suffering unfathomable pain. The hope and elation we felt in Christ's resurrection was intensified as we rejoiced in Pastor John's resurrection to his eternal home on Easter Sunday.

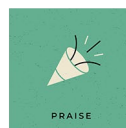
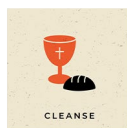
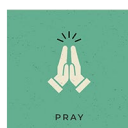
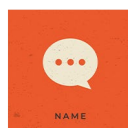
Last year's Holy Week was an opportunity for me to witness the miracle of God's divine and compassionate timing. Amidst my despair and mourning, He helped me begin my healing process, strengthened with the deep faith that He was with Pastor John, and with ACC, every step of the way. What a precious and loving God He is!

### PRAYER:

Father God, thank you for knowing when we are brokenhearted and need your solace. Thank you that you are always with us until the end of time. Thank you for using others in our lives to reflect Jesus' love and show us how to surrender ourselves before you.

We pray that our hearts and minds can always be open to hear your voice and feel your presence so that we may discern the ways you lead, reassure, use, and love us. During this season of Lent, help us to reflect more intentionally on your teachings and connect to you more intimately through our prayers, fasting, and worship.

We love you and praise you, our Strength, our Hope, and our Comfort. Amen.





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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 7

Darlene DiDomineck

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. - Jeremiah 29:11 NRSV(UE)*

*"With hope comes resilience and with resilience comes new beginnings." - Indigo Girls*

Healing requires hope. Hope cultivates resilience.

I spend my days with my unhoused/unsheltered neighbors. I am appointed to serve a daytime drop-in center called Grace Cafe. Grace Cafe is a ministry of Arch Street UMC's nonprofit called the Center-Philadelphia. Philadelphia is the poorest of the ten largest cities in the US. The needs in this city are great. I bear witness to the traumatizing impact of the intersecting systems of oppression that bring my neighbors to the doorstep of the church every single day. That kind of trauma can sometimes make hope a difficult thing to embody.

About a year ago one of our drop in center guests arrived with wounds covering most of her body. Wounds I can only describe as apocalyptic in nature. The wounds were caused by an animal tranquilizer called xylazine which is commonly added to street opioids. She knew she needed to go to the emergency room. She feared however she would be judged or discriminated against by the emergency room staff if she didn't get a shower and a clean pair of clothes first.

She was in excruciating pain. Every movement was nearly unbearable.

She had only visited the drop in center a few times before that day. But she knew that if she could just get to the church she would find the support and resources she needed. She knew if she could just get to that big grey stone church on the corner that she would be received with love, dignity and compassion. And she was.

She returned to the drop in center a few months later after a lengthy stay in the hospital and rehab. Her wounds were healing and she had a new sense of hope and resilience. For her it was an opportunity for a new beginning.

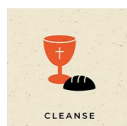
May each of us find hope, resilience and a new beginning just when we need it the most. May God compel us to be bearers of hope in the midst of pain, cultivators of a resilience that brings about a new beginning wherever we find ourselves. A new beginning that can only be found when in community.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How different would our world be if every church felt like a place of hope and healing for its neighbors on the most painful day of their lives?
2. In what ways do you need to change to become a bearer of hope and cultivator of resilience?
3. How can you be an agent of healing for those in your life today?

## PRAYER:

God of Hope, your love is a healing balm on our most painful days. Compel us to be the same for this broken and hurting world in need of your love today. Amen.





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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 8

Brad Leight

*Proverbs 3:1-6*

I've often heard that "getting old isn't for wimps," and I can appreciate that sentiment. Yet I recently discovered the daily challenges faced by the "sandwich" generation – those tasked with guiding and caring for both children and adult family members, while maintaining a multitude of ongoing responsibilities – aren't for the faint of heart either.

The demands, pressures, and stress of navigating parenting, caregiving and arranging care, professional responsibilities, household responsibilities, pet responsibilities (after all, dogs can't walk themselves!) – oh, and don't forget a little self-care... all that can feel overwhelming. Just as needs in one area appear to be addressed, a crisis arises in another. Anxiety spikes with each ding of a text message, as we wonder what fresh new disaster will be revealed. As pressures mount, it can become more and more difficult to hope. Each time our hopes rise, a new challenge inevitably seems to deflate them. It can seem much easier – and safer – not to get our hopes up in the first place.

The opening verses of Proverbs 3 speak to the wisdom of committing to lives of loyalty, love, and faithfulness. When a covenant commitment to love and remain faithful to God is written on the tablet of our heart, and our trust is centered in God, God will direct us through every difficulty and disaster life brings. The difficulties and defeats we face, though, have a way of chipping away at our commitment. Choosing to trust isn't a one-time decision; it's a lifelong endeavor.

Recent challenges I've faced in a "sandwich" season have reminded me how my choice to trust God must be made each day. Sometimes, each hour of each day. While I don't need to sugarcoat the difficulty and hurt I'm experiencing in that moment, I do need to expressly choose to place the bruised and battered trust I have in God. Some paths take a long time to be made straight; still, I believe the choice to trust God is the foundational step to healing and renewed hope. I recently scribbled out the following prayer in a trying moment; I pray it will help you choose to trust when trusting is difficult.

### PRAYER:

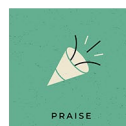
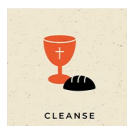
God, I come today trusting-  
at least wanting to trust.

You are good, Lord, that I do know.

Yet my heart hurts, as a glimmer of hope has seemingly evaporated.  
Darkened to night.

I wanted to dream, opened up, allowed myself to dream,  
and then my dream was crushed as quickly as it appeared.

It hurts, God, deeply in my soul.

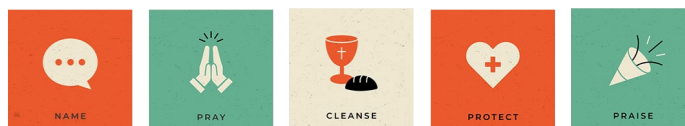


So God, I need to whine. I need to lament.  
I need to say a dream has been crushed; I need to grieve.  
I hear your wisdom: Trust in the Lord with all my heart, and I do. I will.  
I will choose to do so, even as I stumble in my hurt.

Help me to do that today: to choose to trust  
and not spiral in unhealthy thoughts.  
And as I trust, grant me the hope  
to slowly dream again.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What challenge(s) do you face that is making it difficult to trust in God's goodness and direction?
2. Can you use the prayer – or offer your own prayer – to seek God's help in renewing your trust?



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 9

Alison VanBuskirk Philip

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;  
I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.  
- Ezekiel 36:26*

The apostle Paul describes flesh and spirit as opposites in his letters. But here in Ezekiel, the opposite of flesh is stone, not spirit. God wants to replace our heart of stone with a heart of flesh. God wants to soften and heal what fear and pain have turned to stone. Instead of being hard and impenetrable like stone, a heart of flesh is tender and accessible. Instead of being firm or frozen like stone, a heart of flesh is flowing and flexible.

These links and contrasts say something powerful about healing. Modern neuroscience is learning just how much the body and brain are interconnected via the nervous system. We store negative experiences and trauma in our bodies. That means healing happens not outside of our bodies, not by avoiding or overcoming them, and not just through intellectual understanding, but healing happens in and through our bodies, our flesh.

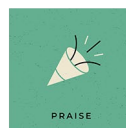
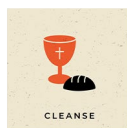
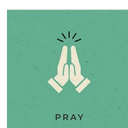
This emerging science is deeply synchronistic with Christian theology. The incarnation reveals that God cares about the body. Jesus put on flesh to show us who God is, which is not impenetrable and detached but accessible, tender, and engaged with the world. Jesus entered into all the joy and suffering of being human in a body. He cared for others, body and spirit. Post-resurrection, Jesus appeared again as a body that bore scars, walked alongside others, and shared bread and fish. God brings healing to humanity through God's own embodiment.

And so we are free to inhabit our bodies as locations of God's presence and healing. Body and spirit are connected. One element of embodied spiritual healing is our breathing. The word for breath in the biblical languages is the same as the word for spirit. Breath is flowing and flexible. It calms our nervous systems, slows our heart rates, and tells our brains that we are safe.

Breathing in, we welcome God's Spirit.  
Breathing out, we release what we are holding.  
Breathing in, we receive new life from God.  
Breathing out, God moves us into relationship, into action.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- When is a time that you experienced God renewing your heart or spirit?
- How does or might the incarnation shape your relationship to your body?
- What is a connection for you between breath and prayer?

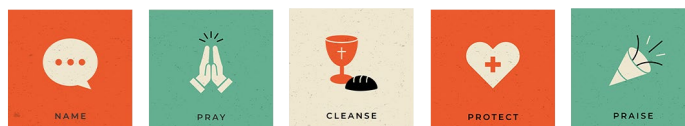


**PRAYER:**

Lord of Life, as we breathe in, fill our hearts with your loving presence. As we breathe out, help us release what blocks our healing. May we experience your Spirit in and through our embodied lives, in the name of Jesus who embodied you. Amen.

**HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- Breathe on Me, Breath of God (United Methodist Hymnal #420)



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## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 10

Rev. Dr. John G. Smith

2 Samuel 18:30-33    Isaiah 53:3-5    John 11:32-35

### REFLECTION

During my ministry, I have acquired a close affinity with grief. From comforting scores of members who lost loved ones, to my own personal experience as the sole living survivor of the four members of my family of origin, to facilitating bereavement support groups for others, and grieving the loss of a sizeable number of close friends and colleagues in the Covid pandemic. I was under the impression that I knew all that I could possibly know about grief. However, the brutal killing of my twelve-year-old granddaughter on February 10, 2023, plunged me into a heart wrenching time of grieving unlike anything I had ever experienced before. In those early days in what grief counselor, Dr. Alan Wolfelt has called “the wilderness of grief,” my cries often mirrored that of King David, who when he learned that his son, Absalom had been killed, cried out:

*“O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you – O Absalom, my son, my son!”*

The suffering and pain which the journey through the stages of grief brought me has been interwoven with the even slower process of healing. It takes time to experience healing, but it does come slowly as I can attest. In my situation, my unforgiving heart was an obstacle to my healing. It was not until by God’s grace, facilitated by much prayer, reading of the psalms, self-compassion, and a community of supporters, that I was able to relinquish the desire for revenge, and what I perceived as the justice I and my family deserved. Gradually, I became aware of a change, working its way from inside of me, which began to change my whole demeanor and outlook.

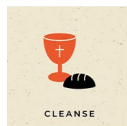
I am still on my journey in the wilderness of grief but reflecting on the journey thus far, I know that the healing I have experienced has only come as I have ‘let go and let God.’ For me and for all who must navigate the terrors of grief, our help and our hope are in Jesus Christ our Comforter, the One ‘acquainted with all our grief,’ meaning he has encountered more grief than we have, understands our need for comfort, and is capable and able to help us find our way through the wilderness.

### PRAYER:

Christ, the Healer, draw near to all who currently, and even for a long time now have been journeying through the wilderness of grief. As you companioned Mary and Martha grieving the death of Lazarus, even weeping alongside them in their sorrow, walk with us, strengthen us, support and restore us. Heal us, Emmanuel, hear our prayer; we wait to feel your touch. Amen.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Where might there be a need for healing in your life which you have been ignoring?
2. What would you ask Christ the Healer for (i) yourself, (ii) someone else, and (iii) our country and the world?
3. What word or action can you extend to someone you know who is hurting as a way of encouraging healing for that individual?



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 11

Connor Felty

*So then, putting away falsehood, let each of you speak the truth with your neighbor, for we are members of one another. - Ephesians 4:25, NRSVue*

Someone near to me found himself where no person wants to be—beneath a heavy piece of equipment. (Un)luckily, he escaped the situation without needing immediate medical attention. Without the expert attention of a doctor, the prolonged swelling in his leg could not be properly diagnosed as blood clots that would creep toward his heart! He learned quickly that a problem in one part of his body still did harm to the entire system.

In today's verse, the author of Ephesians says the Body of Christ is as interconnected as this person's body. The entire system is regulated by our ability to tell one another the truth; each individual member is healed when we tell the truth. You are part of me, and I am part of you.

In our Journey of Healing, it will not do to carry forward the fear, or hiding, or silence that felt protective in our painful past. Neither will it do to think, "The pain of others is theirs." Healing will require that we overcome fear to speak about historic imbalances; that we share our previously hidden emotions; that our voices break comfortable silences; and that we take ownership where our siblings' pain flows from an imbalance in the Body that has privileged some.

To speak the truth, we must first discern the truth, and this is contemplative work. It begins with individuals laid bare before God and before themselves in the secret place; it continues in communities praying for Scripture's illumination; it culminates in communities gathered to ask forgiveness, to change their ways, and to announce pardon. It is never only individual; it is never only communal; it is always in God's loving, just, and truthful presence.

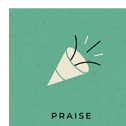
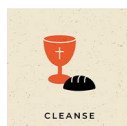
Truth-telling is not instant medicine, but when we commit to it as a spiritual practice that will define our communities, we just may be surprised at the healing God will work.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What emotional, spiritual, or systemic experiences of pain do you need to share with others so that all might experience healing?
2. How can you express gratitude to those whose courageous truth-telling has helped you to heal?

### PRAYER:

Healer God, Just as you have knit each of our individual bodies together as a beautiful and functional system, so you have stitched Christ's Body together for the sake of flourishing and mission. Reveal anew the healing power of truth spoken in love, and embolden us to break comfortable silences that all might find life in one another and in you. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 12

Lela Hartranft

Psalm 37:1-10

*Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. - Psalm 37:4 (KJV)*

My fraternal grandmother, Lelah Jewell passed away in her early forties. My twin sister and I were born prematurely and were critically ill. My parents had decided that the first twin born, my sister, would be named after our grandmother. However, the doctors did not think she would survive. My daddy did not want to lose another “Lelah” and so I was named Lela Jewel. We survived. A few times after that my daddy had to face the possibility of losing another “Lelah,” when we were ill with diphtheria, when I had to have major surgery, and when I was ill with Covid-19.

My daddy delighted in the Lord, daily reading his Bible and praying, In Exodus 15:26 we read, “I am the Lord, who heals you.” Every time I was critically ill, prayers were offered and I was healed. Knowing intercessory prayers on my behalf had been answered, my faith increased as I began praying for family members and others for their journey of healing. I prayed with people in parking lots, stores, etc. desiring that God would heal everyone I prayed for.

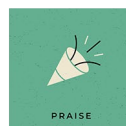
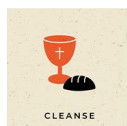
When I became a Lay Supply Pastor, another of Daddy’s desire was fulfilled, that one of his children would become a preacher. Because of the healings in my life, God granted the desire of my daddy that aligned with God’s plan and purpose for my life.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What does Psalm 37:4 teach us about the relationship between our desires and God’s will for us?
2. What role does trust play in healing, and how does Psalm 37:4 reassure us that God desires to bring us wholeness?
3. When facing illness or pain, how does Psalm 37:4 remind us that God sees our struggles and wants to bring healing?

### CLOSING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, we come before You, thankful for Your promise to give us the desires of our hearts as we delight in You. Guide us on our journey of healing, and may we always find comfort in knowing that You are leading us toward wholeness. We surrender our desires to You and ask that Your will be done in our lives. Thank You for walking with us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.





# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 13

Pastor Bob Strauss, Tabernacle UMC – Erma

### SCRIPTURE –

*Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit..." - John 20:21-22 (NIV)*

### DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT –

There is so much brokenness and division in our world today. From ongoing wars, natural disasters, division within our nation, division within our denomination, sometimes it is difficult to know which way to turn.

My family's personal journey of healing is a physical and emotional one. In 2016, my wife, Laurie, was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was a long journey that included surgery, chemotherapy, radiation...our family was broken and sometimes we did not know which way to turn. Laurie was so anxious at times that she needed to be reminded to breathe. She would take a deep breath and begin to relax.

One of the songs that was meaningful to her was Danny Gokey's "Tell Your Heart to Beat Again," which was written at time when his wife had passed away from complications during her third surgery to treat her congenital heart disease:

Tell your heart to beat again  
Close your eyes and breathe it in  
Let the shadows fall away  
Step into the light of grace  
Yesterday's a closing door  
You don't live there anymore  
Say goodbye to where you've been  
And tell your heart to beat again

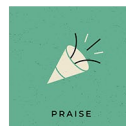
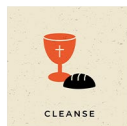
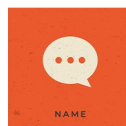
And just to let you know, Laurie's journey of healing has been successful – she is a cancer survivor. But she sees life differently since cancer. She is now even more alive!

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS –

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to be reminded to breathe?
2. Can you allow God's breath to guide you on a journey of healing?

### CLOSING PRAYER –

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what thou dost love,  
And do what thou wouldst do. Amen  
(Words by Edwin Hatch, 1835-1889)



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 14

Greg Impink

*What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?*

- Matthew 18:12, NRSVUE

In 2023, Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy named loneliness an epidemic, citing its adverse effects on our physical health. The necessitated isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic has only increased these feelings. In addition factors that are beyond our control, we have self-segregated into our own camps by splitting into Republican versus Democrat, Liberal versus Conservative, Traditional versus Contemporary, etc.

One of the greatest hurts in this world is when we feel alone. When we become isolated, it's easy to feel as if no one is thinking of us. No one cares about us. No one would notice if we weren't here.

Some of the times whenever church members feel the most hurt is whenever they stop showing up, and no one seems to notice. This phenomenon is not unique to church members though. Our partners, our kids, our parents — everyone wants to feel pursued. Even clergy want to feel pursued by denominational leaders. To know that we're not alone, to know that someone is out there, noticing us, and going to come after us when we go missing.

In this broken world, it can feel like no one is looking out for us. No one is pursuing us. The pastor didn't visit. Our partner didn't plan the date. Our kids didn't call. Our parents didn't show up. We're struggling without any support.

As Christ's representatives, we are supposed to pursue people. But sometimes, the only bit of redemptive healing is knowing that God pursues us, even when others don't. Jesus notices, and he doesn't neglect us. Jesus still leaves the 99 in search of the one who has gone missing.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How can you pursue people to help heal the wound of loneliness?
2. What comfort do you take in knowing that God pursues us, even when others don't?

### PRAYER:

Triune God,

We have failed to live into the ideals of community.

We have not checked in on our neighbors, especially those with whom we disagree.

Forgive us, and heal us.

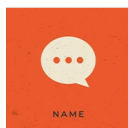
Comfort us in our loneliness.

In the name of the One who leave the 99 to seek the one,

Amen.

### HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Listen to this song to meditate on how God "chases [us] down, fights 'til [we're] found, leaves the ninety-nine."  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 15

Carol Gibson

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

*- Jas. 1:2-4*

These were the first words I heard during my first bible study outing after suffering a devastating loss, the loss of a baby. It was difficult to grasp the meaning of this verse with a broken heart. Turmoil and bewilderment were the only emotions I could feel. Why Lord? I sat quietly while others in this bible study gave meaning to these verses.

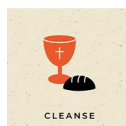
As the days progressed, I became aware of how God in His omniscience provided the Holy Spirit to minister to me through unexpected phone calls, cards/notes, family and friends, and those in the body of Christ. I began to expect his love and mercy. My bewilderment eventually became a different perspective of my situation. I began to look to God and His faithfulness. As I looked upward, I could see God's hand in almost every circumstance. He surrounded me with those who embodied a spirit of compassion and understanding. In addition, the word of God became a balm to my spirit. Studying His word allowed me to internalize His faithfulness and love. Eventually, God showed me how I could minister to those who suffered similar losses.

God uses everything. He wants us to understand the sacrifice He made for us through his Son for the remission of our sins. As we begin to understand this sacrifice, hopefully, we will accept His call to love and allow His light to shine through us to others.

How have you responded to disappointments? Did your faith enable you to see God's hand amid your circumstances.

### PRAYER:

Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness in all things. Help me to look up and understand how you care for me in all situations I may encounter. You are my light Father, so allow you light to shine through me so that I may be a beacon that draws others to you. You are my strength in the time of trouble, and I will forever give you thanks and praise. Hallelujah and Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 16

Rev. Cameron Overbey

*Praise the Lord.*

*God heals the brokenhearted*

*and binds up their wounds. - Psalm 147:1,3 (Please read the entirety of the Psalm)*

Scattered...like the seeds of Spring filled with the potential of new life and harvest. Scattered...like the stars of a Summer night sky that twinkle and share cosmic beauty overhead. Scattered...like the leaves of Autumn caught up in the stiff, cold breezes of changing seasons. Scattered...like the flakes of Winter that cover everything below as they swirl to the ground.

Sometimes we feel scattered. Scattered physically as we were during the height of the pandemic. Scattered spiritually as we navigate denominational separation. Scattered mentally as we try to keep pace with the torrent of information that we receive each day.

Where can we find respite and restoration from all of this scattering? The Psalmist reflects on the Israelites' long journey out of exile, a time when the people of God were literally scattered far apart from one another. The reflection begins and ends with the same action, praise. "Hallelu Yah, praise God." The Psalmist reminds us that praise is a mode of our participation in the creative and redemptive love of God that restores us and is building a kingdom on Earth. It is not a kingdom that is built on displays of raw and violent power, but of humbly confident love.

We can offer praise even when we feel scattered. The God of our healing and wholeness is also the one who scattered the stars to make the heavens, a reminder of the magnificence of creative love that is high above even our most daunting challenges and heartbreaks. So we sing praise under the night sky. When we are being tossed about, perhaps we are seeds of love that are being sewn to be gathered in a new season's harvest. So we sing praise when we fall into the dirt. When we are aloft and afloat as individuals in a blizzard of humanity, perhaps we are on our way to being regathered into a magnificent snowscape with beauty beyond our individual selves. So we sing praise during the descent. When we are swept away like the leaves of Autumn, perhaps something old is passing away and preparing for new life and birth in Spring. So we sing praise in the midst of death before resurrection.

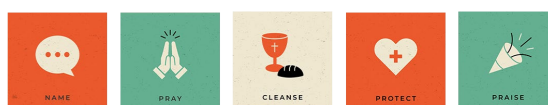
Like any journey, our shared endeavor towards healing and hope will not be linear. No matter where we find ourselves in the scattering and gathering, may we be found in praise, for praise is always fitting.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What are some times in your life that you have felt scattered?
2. Have you ever felt praise or worship to be healing in a time of difficulty?
3. How might God be working among United Methodists to build something new?

### PRAYER:

God of our every step, open our eyes so that we may see your creative and redemptive love even when we feel scattered. Open our lips so that we may respond with praise. Open our hearts so that we may be strengthened on our way with resurrection hope. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 17

Seoyul Kwon

*And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. - James 5:15*

When I was in school, around 2017, I had a friend who was always ill. I'll call her Mary. She'd miss weeks of school, and still be a little ill when she returned. She would always complain, telling everyone that being sick was exhausting. One day, Mary came up to me and asked me, very softly, "Hey, you're Christian, right? Can you pray for me to stop being sick?"

I'll never forget the day when we sat on the school stairs together outside and she asked me to pray for her. It was such a special moment for both of us. And I believe that God heard us and our prayers. Within the next year, Mary's chronic illness died down, finally allowing Mary to live a normal life in school and outside as well. She thanked me, saying I had healed her. I told her that I did not, but the Lord heard her voice and saw her faith in him.

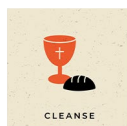
I learned a lot from this experience. God hears all of our prayers. He hears them, and he answered them. Every time Jesus would heal someone, do you remember what he'd say? He said that "your faith has healed you" instead of something like "God has healed you". God listens. God will always bless you and heal you, so long as you have faith that he will.

James 5:15 tells us about God's willingness to heal those with faith. He is willing to help, to heal, to touch. God has already healed so many people, whether those people are only in the Bible or around us. His healing doesn't discriminate against whether you are rich or poor, He just wants us to have faith in him, to have faith that he will help us and heal us during our journey to His kingdom.

Have faith in our God, since he will heal the broken and forgive the sinner.

### LET US PRAY:

Dear God, please help us to continue to have faith in your ability so that you may heal us and those around us who may be in pain or suffering. May you touch them with your healing hand and heal their souls, their hearts. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 18

Sue Grimm McCoy Mattox

*Lord my God, I called to you and to help, and you healed me. - Psalms 30:2*

The definition of heal is 'cause [ a wound, injury, or person] to become sound or healthy again. Ask any child if something is healed what does it mean, they say it gets better or is fixed. Usually a child that is fixed the incident is over.

Unfortunately as the child grows into adolescence 'to get better' is not so simple. Young adults and children for that matter can be very cruel to one another. As an educator I have witnessed this far too many times. The healing after nasty words or actions between students is very slow to be fixed or healed. And sometimes the healing takes much work and is long coming.

As we mature we know healing takes many forms. Physically our body heals at a slow rate, but add prayer and healing happens. But if words or actions need to heal that takes much more prayer and more help.

Most people have suffered a hurt but not a physical hurt. They have suffered from ill words or actions. This hurt takes does not heal as easily. It takes time, prayer and often help from a mental health professional.

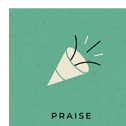
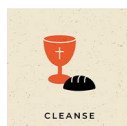
This type of healing takes much more time. When we call upon God to help he helps. Our prayers to God heal and in His time we are healed.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What was a time God came to your aid?
2. What was the outcome?

### PRAYER:

Father I ask you to touch us with your healing touch. Fill us with Your healing power of your spirit. Make us better. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 19

Jisun Yang

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. - Matthew 5:42-45

### “FROM SURVIVAL TO HEALING--THE JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS”

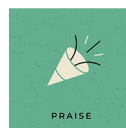
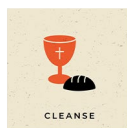
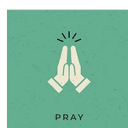
A couple of weeks ago, our staff team had the opportunity to receive CPR/AED training from one of our church families, who run a health education company. After witnessing a church member suffer a heart attack several months ago, we were eager and motivated to learn about how we could help others in unexpected emergencies. Though the class lasted three hours, it didn’t feel that long – it was engaging, with hands-on activities, instructional videos, CPR/AED practice with manikins, and a Q&A session. We learned many things, but my biggest takeaway was this: the primary purpose of CPR is to increase the likelihood of survival by providing oxygen to the brain when the heart stops beating. CPR doesn’t heal victims, but it can be the first step in their healing journey, giving them a chance to receive advanced care to continue on the path to recovery.

Life is full of twists and turns. Divisiveness in our community and country raises collective anxiety. The grief of losing loved ones or missed opportunities cuts deep. When we’re hurt or harmed, our human response is to seek payback – to hit back when struck, to retort when insulted. It is easy to react out of anger, resentment, and bitterness, but these emotions consume us, holding us back. Like a downward spiral, they pull us deeper into hurt, harm, and loss. Only forgiveness frees us, and the journey begins with our choice.

Just as CPR sustains life, our willingness to begin the journey of forgiveness creates space for healing. Forgiveness doesn’t mean forgetting the hurt. Instead, it starts with acknowledging the pain and sharing the story in a safe place where we can listen to one another with open hearts and minds and without judgment. Forgiveness is not weakness—it is a bold act of faith that disrupts cycles of pain and allows us to move forward, creating room for God to work—for restoration, peace, and renewal.

Jesus calls us to respond differently than our natural instincts would lead us. In Matthew 5:44, He says, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Forgiveness keeps the heart open, prevents bitterness from taking over, and invites the Holy Spirit to do what only God can - bring true healing to our lives and communities.

Who in your life needs a breath of grace today? Where is God calling you to step away from retaliation and toward a posture of forgiveness? May we trust that healing begins with grace and be people who extend it freely, just as we have received it from Christ.





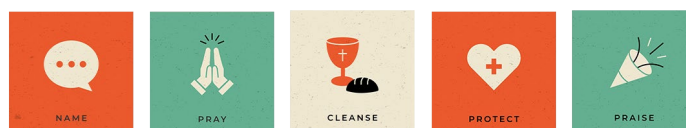
**PRAYER:**

Gracious and merciful God,

Thank You for the gift of forgiveness and the healing You bring into our lives. When we are hurt, help us not to be consumed by anger or resentment. Instead, teach us to extend grace, give us the courage to seek peace, and trust in Your justice. May Your love be the oxygen that revives our weary hearts and enables true healing to begin today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**REFLECTION:**

What would it look like to surrender your pain over to God and invite Him into your healing process?



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 20

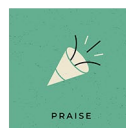
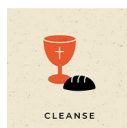
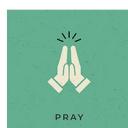
Deanna Geiter

*Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and your billows have gone over me. By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. - Psalm 42:7-8*

What songs are you singing today? Is there a melody in your heart? How is that melody speaking to your soul? Recently, I was working with a large group of students as they learned about how Joshua led the Israelites to march around the walls of Jericho seven times before the walls tumbled and collapsed. For the lesson, the students marched around a wall blowing horns which sounded like a dreadful drone. Perhaps, that is your song today. There is power in music. There is power in the sighs, the groans and even the dreadful drones. Through this story, we learn that God's promises are steadfast and true, so we should follow God, listen to God and obey God, even when life here on earth isn't fair and doesn't make sense. Still, we are called to share a faithful witness to the goodness of God.

One afternoon I went to the hospital to visit a friend but as I walked down the hallway a woman stopped me. She knew me from living in the community. As soon as she saw me, her face brightened up, she began waving to me and calling my name. Her son was in critical condition following an accident. The prognosis for healing wasn't known at this time as the situation was tenuous. She greeted me and asked, "Will come in and pray with us?" I agreed and felt honored to be asked to pray with her and her son, but to my surprise as we opened the door to enter his room, the room was full with family members who circled the bed. They all greeted me but then continued to pray. This moment was life transformative for me. They were holding hands, taking turns praying and leaving some space for silence. One of the children who was part of the circle began to sing the song, "Jesus Loves Me" followed by "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart." Despite the groans and the sighs, despite the uncertainty and the unknown, there was joy and there was peace. In those moments I learned the power of music and how the melodies that are on hearts brings us hope and joy. The songs we sing speak to the depths of our longings, grief, and pain. I also learned the importance of community and how healing occurs when we can come together seeking God and seeking the good and grace in all things, despite the circumstances.

Storms come and go. Droughts and famines are often present. However, through it all, we can trust that God is with and God is for us. Landscapes will change. The things of this world will come and go, but our God is faithful, steadfast, and always present. Our God will work through our challenges, chaos and "stuff" to bring about goodness. God has covered each of us with grace. Our God is our Rock and Redeemer. It is our God who restores. During the chaos and disruptions in our life, the melodies in our hearts will sustain us. Sing the songs of faith and praise. What is songs are you singing? What is your theme song? How are you giving God the glory through the songs you sing?



**PRAYER:**

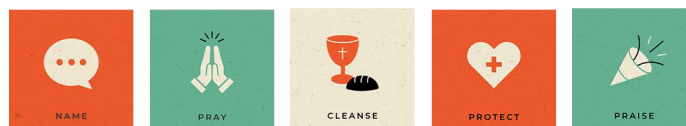
You, O Lord, are our Rock and Redeemer. It is You who sustains us and comforts us. Thank you for the gift of song that you have placed in our hearts. Speak to us and give a bold, faithful witness to your steadfast love, even in the midst of the storms. Amen.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Joshua 6. What are some walls in your life that need to come down?
2. Read Romans 8:28. How have you witnessed God at work in your life to make things good, right, just and holy? Please note that Scripture does not say that we will never have trials.
3. Read Psalm 42. What is your song that you are singing to the Lord? How have you witnessed restoration following the storm?

**HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- Rock of Ages
- It Is Well with My Soul
- Take My Life
- Praise You in this Storm
- Eye of the Storm
- Goodness of God
- Peace Be Still
- Blessed Be the Name



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 21

Tim Conaway

<sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid. - John 14:27 (CEB)

This past Christmas was the year of LEGO in our household—not just for our children, but for me as well! I didn't grow up playing LEGO (or is it "playing with LEGOs"?), but that changed this past summer. While on vacation, our two sons received LEGO sets and asked me to help build them. I quickly discovered how cathartic and peaceful the process was. It gave me a chance to connect with my children, to be fully present, and to slow down.

The word LEGO is "an abbreviation of the two Danish words "leg godt", meaning "play well"". That's something our world could use more of, isn't it? Too often, we struggle to play well with others. How do we do that? I believe it starts with making peace; peace in ourselves, and with others.

In Hebrew, the word for peace is shalom—meaning not just the absence of conflict, but a state of wholeness and completion. Think of a LEGO set: when every piece is in place, it is whole, complete—it is in a state of shalom. It is bringing together and mending that which has been broken.

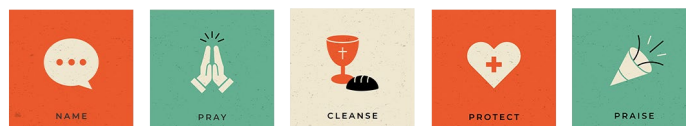
The kind of peace that makes us complete and whole only comes from God. Jesus says he gives us peace, not as the world gives, to which we say "Thank God". For us to play well with one another we need to allow God to do a work in us, to transform us and make us whole. The One who mends the brokenness of this world and makes us whole gives us a charge, to be peacemakers, to love one another. So may we LEGO, play well with others, by being peacemakers, who live in, through, and by God's grace.

May the peace of God that exceeds all understanding keep our hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus. To make us complete and made whole in love.

God of Peace, continue to do a work in us—in our World, mending what is broken, bringing hope, restoration, recovery, renewal, and to send us out as people of Your Shalom. We ask this in the name of the One who gives us not as the World does, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

## HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- It Is Well (UMH #377)



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 22

Ben Lee

*Don't you know? Haven't you heard?*

*The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the creator of the ends of the earth.*

*He doesn't grow tired or weary.*

*His understanding is beyond human reach,  
giving power to the tired  
and reviving the exhausted.*

*Youths will become tired and weary,  
young men will certainly stumble;  
but those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength;  
they will fly up on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not be tired;  
they will walk and not be weary.*

*- Isaiah 40:28-31 (CEB)*

### IN TOO DEEP

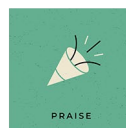
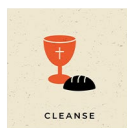
In the coldest, dreariest days of each Winter, my wife and I like to plan Summer trips to scorchingly hot places, the hotter the better. Last year, that meant mapping out a trip to Arizona for some hiking in and around Flagstaff and at Grand Canyon National Park. It was a trip we've dreamed of making for many years. Tickets were booked, reservations made, and earnest efforts to prepare and get in better shape were half-heartedly gestured toward.

Now, I love to climb up the mountains we have here on the East Coast, up through the Adirondacks and New England. One great thing about climbing a mountain is that the hardest part comes first. Hiking a canyon is the opposite experience. Down feels like nothing, but then you turn around and see how far you've come, and how far up you have left to go.

\*Gulp\*

Recovery from an illness or injury always takes too long. We are prone to impatience, overdoing it, and reinjuring ourselves, starting the cycle again. When we have an emotional setback, like a break-up or a falling-out with friends or family, the path to restoration can also feel like an impossible, uphill climb.

The morning my wife and I set out on the Bright Angel Trail was cool and breezy for late June, yet traveling thousands of feet downhill toward the Colorado River meant it got hotter the deeper we went.



By the time we got to our planned turnaround at the Three-Mile Resthouse, I knew I had made a mistake. It was 100 degrees. I was tired. Squirrels were stealing snacks from my backpack if I stopped for a second. It was all too much.

It took a little over an hour to get down. It took four to climb out. We needed to stop every few minutes to find what shade we could, drink, and catch our breath. It wasn't easy, but we made it up and out.

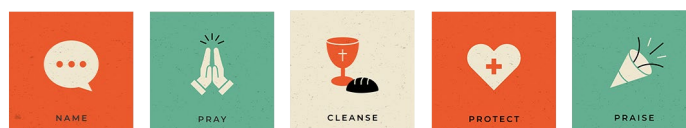
In life, when we recognize we have made mistakes or gotten off the path we want to be on even by no fault of our own, the road back can be difficult. It seems impossible. Yet we trust in a God who never grows tired or weary, whose understanding is beyond ours. Whatever your healing needs may be, trust that the God we follow together will carry you through.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of a time when you found yourself at the bottom of a canyon – whether literally or metaphorically?
2. What sort of pauses or breaks can you take along your own journey of healing to safeguard the progress you've made?
3. Who can you turn to for help when the path ahead feels steeper and harder than you are able to climb alone?

### PRAYER:

God of hills and valleys, of high places and low, of mountains and canyons – we trust you even when the way is challenging. Help us to remember the all the challenges you have carried us through already, and remind us of your unfailing grace to carry us through whatever comes next. In Jesus' name. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 23

Sam Jo, Cross Keys Church

*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.*

*- Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)*

## DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

As I reflect on my own journey of healing, I realize that healing is rarely instant. It's a journey—sometimes long, sometimes painful, but always guided by grace. Often, we long for wounds to disappear, for scars to be erased, and for brokenness to be undone. Yet, in Scripture, we see a different picture. The wounds of Christ did not vanish after His resurrection. He showed His scars to His disciples, not as a sign of defeat, but as proof of victory.

Our healing may not always look like what we expect. Sometimes, God does not remove our struggles but redeems them, using our pain to bring peace, just as Jesus' suffering brought salvation. Perhaps the greatest healing is not the absence of wounds but the transformation of our wounds into a testimony of God's faithfulness.

During this Lenten season, as we walk toward the cross, may we remember that healing is not just about restoration but about redemption. Just as Christ's wounds brought life to the world, God can use even our deepest wounds to reveal His grace and bring healing to others.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

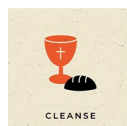
1. How have you seen God work through a painful or difficult season in your life?
2. What wounds in your life might God be transforming into a testimony of healing?
3. How can you extend Christ's healing love to someone who is struggling today?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, thank You for the healing that comes through Christ. Help me to trust You in the midst of my wounds, knowing that You are working all things for good. Teach me to see my scars not as signs of brokenness, but as reminders of Your faithfulness. Use my journey of healing to bring comfort and hope to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- "There Is a Balm in Gilead"





# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 24

Ms. Virgil Anne Williams

*Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. - Psalm 23:6 (NLT)*

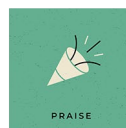
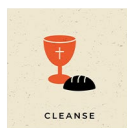
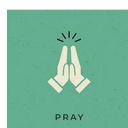
### ANGELS IN THE OPERATING ROOM WRITTEN

My doctor had felt a lump in my breast and had ordered a biopsy as my mom and younger sister had had breast cancer. The results came in and my doctor said, I too had breast cancer. He wanted me to have further testing to ensure my lymph nodes were unaffected. The 23rd Psalm states, that when we are uncertain or anxious the Good Shepherd provides all, we need.

The evening before my second procedure, I prayed for angels, something I had never done before. I prayed that the team responsible for cleaning and sanitizing the operating room would be covered by angels. I prayed that the anesthesiologist, the nurses, and my surgeon, would be covered by angels. I prayed that everybody in the operating room would be covered by angels. When we think we are walking alone, the Good Shepherd is always walking beside us.

My daughter, Stephanie took me to the hospital. We had been told that the procedure would take about 45 minutes. Three hours later she still had no news of what was happening. I was unconscious so I had no idea what was happening to me in the OR. My surgery was scheduled for 6:00 am and that was a blessing because all the doctors that I would need were in the hospital doing their morning rounds before they went to their private practices. I was injected with a blue dye, which was iodine-based, and I am allergic to iodine. My doctor told me my reaction was immediate. I went into a severe anaphylactic shock; all my organs were shutting down. In the presence of my enemy the Good Shepherd was preparing a feast for me, and He honored me with a blessing of oil. A heart specialist was there, a pulmonologist was there, a kidney specialist and a liver specialist were there. Every doctor that I needed was there. When I awakened three days later, I was on life support, my sisters were standing around my hospital bed reassuring me that I was fine, and they had come to be supportive of Stephanie. The same-day procedure stretched into nine days and doctor after doctor came to my bedside to see the miracle woman. My surgeon came and said, "I do not know why you are still alive; it is nothing that I did that saved you, there was a presence in the operating room," and I smiled and told him I had prayed for angels. He said, "They were there."

Dear Lord, I praise you and thank you that in May 2025 it will be 20 years since that happened; surely your goodness and mercy had me covered, even until this day. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 25

Vernon House

*You whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "you are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your god; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. - Isaiah 41:9-10*

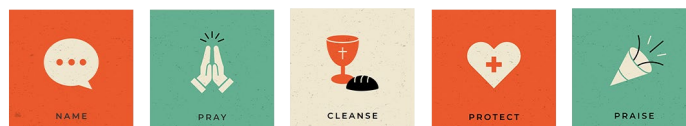
As a young man I struggled with the demons of addiction, before long I was faced with the challenge of continuing this path of destruction and certain death or stopping and changing my life for the better? The choice was clear but the problem was that I didn't know how to stop. I was tired and afraid and completely unable to find my way! I prayed to God to help me, I knew that without him I would surely die. That was over 30 years ago and I have been clean and sober ever since.

### QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever felt lost and didn't know which way to go or who to turn to?
2. Has fear and confusion ever overwhelmed your ability to make important "life" decisions?

### PRAYER:

Thank you god for your forgiveness, your strength and your healing. Thank you for never abandoning us and for allowing us to always have a chance at redemption and everlasting life. Your love is beyond our comprehension and we are blessed and grateful to be your children. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 26

Pastor Megan Mead-Bracknell

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. - Psalm 119:105 (ESV)*

During my four years as a Domestic Violence Counselor, I saw a lot of scares and a lot of wounds. Women and children were hurt by people they thought they could trust and came to us for assistance. They were disappointed by human sin. Each person had a story and needed to experience healing.

I remember one woman who had to move across country with her two daughters for safety. They not only needed a safe place to move, but needed to change their identity. She knew that she would not be able to return home and that her life would never be the same. Her wounds were so deep. She arrived at the shelter scared, angry and uncertain of her next moves.

When this woman was given a chance to pick out some items for her new room, she gravitated to a Bible. She was so pleased that she could add this second hand book to her few possessions. Through classes and support groups, she was able to find a school for her girls, a job, a church and a new place to live. Through the pages of the Bible, she was able to find hope and a Light to lead guide her down a new path. She was also able to find her identity not only in life, but in Christ. She found the healing that only God can offer. She was able to start fresh, move on and turn both physical and emotional wounds into scars.

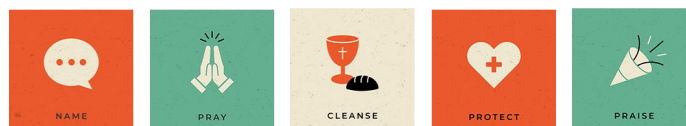
### QUESTIONS:

1. How are you using your Bible to help turn wounds into scars?
2. How do the promises in the pages move you and change you?
3. Who can you share Scripture with today?

### PRAYER:

Dear Healing and Redeeming God, Thank you for your presence in our hardest situations in life. You are the Great Physician and know how to heal our deepest wounds. Thank you for guiding us and lifting us up on wings like eagles. Thank you for the pages of Scripture that sustain us and help to heal our wounds.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 27

Sandy Callahan

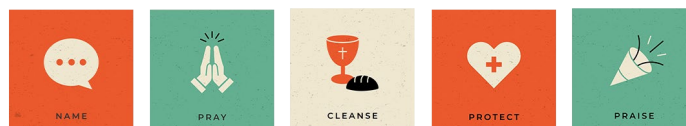
*Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering of sweet smelling aroma. - Ephesians 5:1&2*

As we live to be more like Jesus, we occasionally forget that love is the highest law in the kingdom of God and that we are never more like Jesus than when we forgive others. In this Lenten season I'm reminded that as we remember the scene at the foot of the cross, the executioners were there gambling for the garment of the Lord. Right above them, His broken, bleeding body, nailed to MY cross, dying in MY place, He looked down and did NOT say, you bunch of criminals! you'll be sorry! No, He said, Father forgive them, they don't even know what they are doing, that's my paraphrase but you get the message. What do we do with the Lord's prayer? Jesus taught us to pray "Father forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us? I'm quite rusty on this business of being an imitator of the Lord in the area of forgiveness, although I don't usually forget that others need to keep the command of forgiving my "transgressions." So, here I am in this holy time of this new year considering what to lay aside to draw closer to Jesus. I've decided to lay aside the opportunities to hold onto hurts and in being more willing to forgive others. I'm hoping I can develop a new pattern that will strengthen my partnership with the Lord in the process of restoring the wounded believers and non-believers alike. 2 Corinthians 5:18 reminds us, "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself AND gave US the ministry of reconciliation." Think about that.

### LET'S PRAY:

Dear Jesus,

We thank you for being our example of God's love and forgiveness toward us. We appreciate the honor of our partnership with You. As Your beloved children, help us as we practice forgiveness and reconciliation so that those within the scope of our reach can come to know the great love you have for them too. Amen



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 28

Alicia Juliá-Stanley

Psalm 23

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"I greatly disliked MRI's" There, I said it. Notice that it says 'disliked'. I don't mind them any longer, but the Lord knows that the 1st time I went through that tube, I was terrified.

The newer models look very different, but you still have to lay still- but no mirror... yet...

Last year, I had to have 3 MRI's on the same day. The total duration for all 3 was over 2 hours and 20 minutes... the techs divided the test in 3, because they needed to set up the scanner for the next area: neck & shoulder, elbow, knee. As the scanning continued, the pain and discomfort increased- and this was only in the midst of the 1st scan. Then I remembered to 'get into the 23rd Psalm...

During the Pandemic year, I attended an online retreat on Breath Prayer. It is a power-full combo of Conscious breathing and using all your senses to let God speak to you, as we entered the Psalm, we were aware of the presence of the Shepherd, feeling the green grass between our toes, listening to the brook nearby while looking at ourselves in the calm waters... we found ourselves enjoying a feast of our favorite fruits (I so miss guava, acerolas, mangoes, and sweet lemons, and also sugar cane, sweet oranges and tamarindo)... we were invited to use all our senses to as we found ourselves walking through the valley of the shadow of death... and that's when I got thinking that the Light of the World walks alongside us- and the darkness cannot overcome the Light!

I no longer dislike MRI's... I welcome the space, the time, and the invitation to get inside the 23rd psalm- and the reminder that God's got this!

Since then, twice each year, I invite my congregations to 'get inside the 23rd Psalm during a healing service... a reminder that no matter what, we do not walk alone... especially when we are anxious about what we don't know.

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

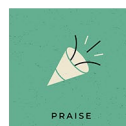
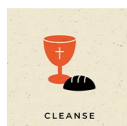
The One who knows and loves us best walks with us is the Light that darkness of any kind cannot overcome. He knows your name.

### PRAYER FOCUS

For those who fear what they don't know

### HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- He knows my name



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 29

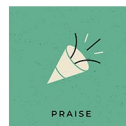
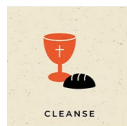
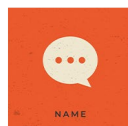
Janice McCrostie

- <sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD,  
and you know me.
- <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.
- <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue  
you, LORD, know it completely.
- <sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.
- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.
- <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?
- <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.
- <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"
- <sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

- Psalm 139:1-12

### DEVOTIONAL:

In your darkest places, God is there. Even when you shy away from being known, God is there. The fact is that the Creator of all things believed that the world needed you too, so how dare you try to hide from such love? The God who knows all things walks beside you, lives around you, and understands you well. Do you really believe that there is anything done to, or for, or by, you that God does not have intimate



understanding of? The one who created you loves you deeply, radically and unconditionally and that love is transformative. Allow it to transform you.

In your darkest places, God is there. Loving you through your pain and heartache, holding you close as you grieve and ache. God knows your heart and holds it as precious. God knows your heart and protects it fiercely. When this earthly world causes harm, God's love for us is there.

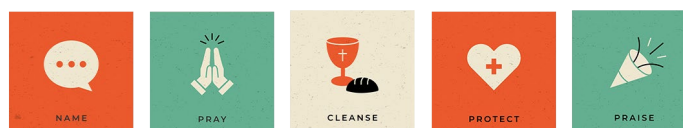
And when you are ready to find your way back to the light, God is there, guiding your path.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the parts of you that you try to hide from God?
2. How does it feel knowing that God knows you completely and loves you unconditionally?
3. Understanding this, what are some intentional things you can do to deepen your relationship with God?

### **PRAYER:**

Lord, while my heart knows that you are with me in my dark places, my mind struggles. I hide from you, shameful of what I have done, fearful of what has been done to me, not seeing Your light and goodness. Keep me in Your grace filled embrace. Open my mind to know the transformational power of your presence in all parts of my life. Remind me of that Your love for me is so great that You created me to walk this earth, with these people, at this time. Guide my heart, guide my mind, guide my words. Amen.





# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 30

Rev. Dr. William D. Carter, III

*Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. - Psalm 30:5b*

### HEALING IN THE MORNING

I started playing the piano at the tender age of seven. My grandmother, Edna m. Brown, was the one who introduced me to this magnificent instrument. Not long after she taught me, she had me leading songs in the church choir. Many of these were familiar hymns and gospel songs, such as Amazing Grace, Order My Steps, and Melodies from Heaven. To this day, I cannot sing or play the piano without thinking about the woman who shaped my musical journey, my grandmother.

When she passed away in October 2023, I feared that my life would be consumed by grief because of the deep and profound bond we shared. However, in the midst of my sorrow, I found joy. Yes, joy in knowing that for 88 years, she loved, nurtured, and supported my musical and preaching ministry. It was then that I truly understood that healing from grief is not an overnight destination but a journey. Even though the pain of loss still lingers, I choose to celebrate her life and influence, finding comfort in the promise that joy indeed comes with the morning.

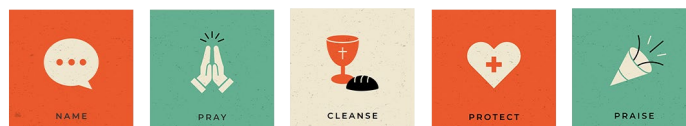
### PRAYER:

God of eternal love, we lift up those who are on a journey of healing and grief. May they experience the joy that comes when we embrace the Spirit of Christ, who grants us peace beyond our understanding.

Amen.

### QUESTION:

What do I need to do to embrace joy in this season of my life?



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 31

Diana B. Yamoah

*Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, For You are my Praise. - Jeremiah 17:12-14 (NIV)*

### SEEKING GOD'S HEALING

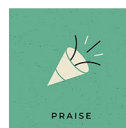
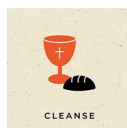
I am one of the senior black instructors in my school district. I was asked to mentor Ramy, a young scholar athlete who had joined our faculty. Ramy and I became such good friends both on and off campus sharing our perspectives in life despite the difference in our ages, ethnicity and political views. I encouraged Ramy to serve as a basketball coach at my daughter's high school. It just so happened that Ramy met her future husband Tony, during her time as the basketball coach. The two got married and had 2 sons. Our friendship grew stronger even when Ramy transferred out of my school district. Sometime later, Tony got sick and within a few months we lost Tony. This came as a shock to both of us and everyone who knew him. They both were in the prime of their lives raising a family together. Six months later I received a call from Ramy that she was in the hospital having been diagnosed with breast cancer and had to have surgery. This was a second shock. I went to see Ramy often in the hospital; we cried, laughed and prayed together for God's healing during those times. I was concerned about the 2 sons who were just about to get into college. As I was preparing to make another visit to see Ramy I received a text message from Ramy's sister that Ramy had died early that morning. I was very devastated. I wept and prayed for strength and also for Ramy's children who were now left motherless and fatherless within a 10-month period. As I was grieving and seeking comfort and healing and also for Ramy's family, I came across this scripture verse from Jeremiah.

The verse in Jeremiah suggests that our needs for healing is not limited to the physical. In the same way, God's power to heal is not limited to the physical. To experience total healing, it must extend to our hearts, minds, and spirits. We must have faith that whatever pain we carry today – the loss of a loved one and the emotional weariness - God sees them all and draws near. Just as Jesus reached out to touch the sick and comfort the weary, we pray and seek God's healing. His love is constant, and His power to heal is unfailing.

For us humans, healing may not always come in the way we expect or at our desired timeline. We must remember that God's presence is always a source of our strength and comfort. Our time is not His time, and even as we wait for His healing, we must have faith that He is working on our request.

### PRAYER OF HEALING:

God of mercy, we thank you for healing us, making us stronger when life and grief have broken us down, Touch our bodies with Your strength, our minds with Your peace, and our spirits with Your hope. Amen



**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:**

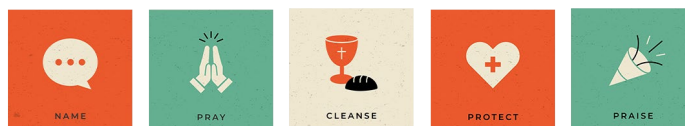
God can heal us physically, emotionally, and spiritually

**QUESTIONS:**

1. When have you had an opportunity to comfort a young person who has lost a parent or parents? What did you say to the person?
2. Were you able to help a person who has suffered a loss look at the positive aspect of the loss?
3. Have you experienced a loss? Have you had an opportunity to use your experience to help someone?

**PRAYER FOCUS:**

Those who have lost loved ones



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 32

Rev. Vanessa M. Wilson

*The LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous snake and place it on a pole. Whoever is bitten can look at it and live. - Numbers 21:8*

### LOOK UP AND LIVE

The Israelites had wandered through the wilderness for forty years. They were almost at their destination when they were redirected to go back to the Red Sea. It was the long way. For many of them that was the tipping point. They were tired of the burden of wandering including the lack of food and water; they were fed-up with the entire experience. They were weary from the unmet expectations of the journey. In addition to personal suffering, they had watched family and friends perish in the wilderness. Repeatedly their hopes had been dashed. Their frustration grew and so did their complaints against Moses and God. It appears that God was frustrated by their continuous complaining and the response was venomous snakes, that killed many of them. This added fear to frustration; it was then that they repented and asked Moses to pray. God heard the prayer of Moses and provided a method of healing – a bronze snake on a poll. To be healed the people had to face what they feared and then look beyond.

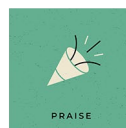
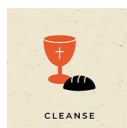
The journey to healing, whether, emotional, physical, mental or spiritual is often crooked and full of setbacks. We can become frustrated, fearful, angry and start to complain. As a breast cancer survivor, I have journeyed the road to physical and emotional healing. Along the way, I learned to replace my complaints with prayer, regret with gratitude, and resentment with forgiveness. I looked directly at cancer, the enemy that had taken the lives of family and friends and now sought to destroy me, but my gaze did not stop there. I looked beyond cancer and up to God as my healer, peace, joy and strength. Standing firmly on John 3:14-15, I lifted Christ, by continuing to study, preach, teach and serve. Complaining is an easy first response; but we serve the God who is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Let's remember the Creator shaped us, Jesus redeemed us and the Holy Spirit sustains us. When we face detours and setbacks let's ask God to give us transformational grace to shift from complaining about circumstances to the sustaining faith that empowers us to look up to Christ and live.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What spiritual disciplines can we use to build resilience to life's unexpected setbacks?
2. Healing is a journey, what five items would you bring on the journey?

### PRAYER:

Dear gracious God, we look to you as we travel a healing journey full of setbacks, detours and unexpected delays. Please give us the ability to look beyond past hurt, rejection, illness and malady and see your hand in every aspect of our lives. Give us the grace to forgive ourselves and others. Allow us to experience the incarnational power that resurrects and restores. Increase our capacity to love ourselves, our neighbors and You as we Look Up and Live. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 33

YoungHak Lee

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

- Luke 4:18-19 (NRSVue)

Healing begins with truth. It starts when we have the courage to name what is broken—within us, around us, and in the systems that shape our world. Without truth, healing remains shallow, like a wound covered too quickly without proper treatment. Real healing happens when we're honest—when we bring our pain, failures, and struggles into the light and embrace God's grace that meets us there.

Jesus understood this. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus declares his mission: to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, and set free those who are oppressed. Jesus didn't avoid the painful truth of suffering. Instead, Jesus stepped into those broken places to sit with the oppressed and speak words that exposed both personal and societal wounds. Jesus called out hypocrisy, confronted injustice, and eagerly urged people to see themselves and the world through God's eyes.

Following Christ means embodying Jesus's mission of truth-telling and healing. We must open our eyes to see the suffering around us and ask, "Who among us is still captive? Who is still oppressed? Where is God calling us to bring good news?"

If we're willing to look honestly at the world around us, we'll see places of deep pain and injustice. We'll see people weighed down by poverty, discrimination, loneliness, and fear. We'll see communities fractured by division and mistrust. We'll see wounds that have been ignored for too long. And if we truly believe in the mission of Jesus, we cannot turn away.

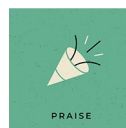
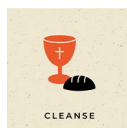
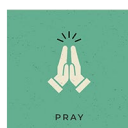
But here's the good news: healing is possible. Transformation is possible. In Christ, we are not defined by our wounds or our failures. God's grace meets us where we are and leads us toward renewal. When we step into the work of healing, we don't do it alone. Jesus walks with us, just as he walked with the hurting, the outcast, and the oppressed.

So, what truths need to be named in your own life? Where do you see suffering in your community? Where is God calling you to step in with love, truth, and grace?

May we have the courage to seek healing, the humility to acknowledge what is broken, and the faith to trust that God is already at work, restoring what has been lost and making all things new. AMEN.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What wounds—personal or communal—do you need to acknowledge today?



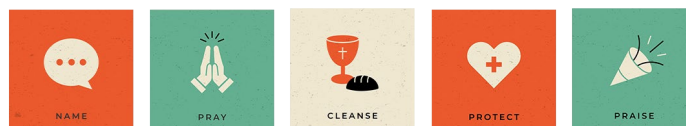
2. How does discomfort shape your faith and your journey toward healing?
3. Where do you see God inviting you to participate in the restoration of others?
4. What fears keep you from confronting painful truths? How can you surrender those fears to God?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving and merciful God, give us the courage to face the truth of our wounds and the grace to seek healing. Help us to hold discomfort, not with fear, but with faith, trusting in Your promise of restoration. Open our eyes to the pain around us and within us, and guide us toward Your healing presence. Walk with us as we journey from lamentation to praise, knowing that You are always working to bring renewal and hope. In the name of Jesus who brings good news to the poor, we pray. AMEN.

### **SONGS, HYMNS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- UMH 57. O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
- UMH 375. There is a Balm
- UMH 593. Here I Am Lord
- TFWS 2241. The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 34

Myounghun Stephen Yun

Genesis 50:15–21 (NIV)

### "WHY, LORD?"

"Why?" "I want to know why." "What is the meaning of what I am experiencing?" As a pastor, one of the most challenging questions I hear is "Why?" This question arises from all sorts of painful circumstances, including life-threatening illnesses, personal tragedies, and relational traumas. I vividly remember hearing that simple yet heart-wrenching "why?" from a survivor of domestic violence. My response was compassionate silence and listening, because I sensed her "why" was more a deep relational cry of lament than a quest for an intellectual explanation.

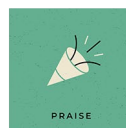
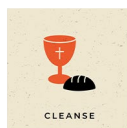
It is natural to search for meaning, to seek an explanation that might make our circumstances feel more understandable. Yet, attempting to make sense of painful experiences can be perilous. Whether directly or indirectly, it may appear that we are justifying or normalizing suffering, brokenness, and evil, especially when dealing with human atrocities or psychosocial traumas. But does this mean we should refuse to find any meaning after our painful experiences, leaving them untouchable chaos or secrecy?

Joseph's words in Genesis 50:20—"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good"—show how he moved beyond simply asking why he suffered and instead trusted that God could bring forth a greater purpose out of his suffering. Rather than remaining trapped in bitterness over betrayal, false accusations, and imprisonment, Joseph acknowledged the real harm done, but he trusted that God could transform it to save many lives.

This perspective is critical for anyone wrestling with trauma or injustice. While evil is never justified, it does not have the final say. The God of resurrection does. By bringing our pain honestly before God, we discover that our wounds can become catalysts for renewed purpose and healing. Lament provides a biblical framework for naming injustice without minimizing it. In crying out, "Why, Lord?" we do more than seek intellectual explanations; we invite God into our most wounded spaces, resisting evil's power to isolate or silence us.

In times of deep suffering, such as personal tragedies or communal traumas, we hold two truths in tension: human atrocities and injustice remain affronts to God's goodness, yet God's grace can still lead us toward hope and healing. We do not claim that suffering is good, nor do we dismiss its severity and consequence. Instead, we trust in the promise that what was intended for harm can be reworked by Christ's redemptive power. Such redemption does not necessarily erase the pain or make it "all better," but it does proclaim that suffering will not ultimately prevail.

If you hear someone asking "why?" or find yourself asking that question, remember it is often a relational cry—a lament that can draw you closer to God's heart. You are guided and empowered to



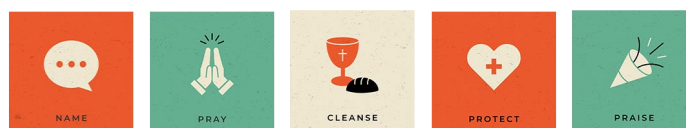
move from "finding meaning in pain" to "finding meaning out of pain," and this transition can be a lengthy and difficult journey. However, your faith in Christ serves as a bridge between these two places. As you shift from meaning in suffering to meaning out of suffering, you may witness grace flowing in ways you never expected. This process might involve breaking silence by sharing your story, seeking support through prayer and community, and standing in solidarity with others. Even in the darkest valleys, God's transforming power can create new beginnings, turning your story of pain into a testimony of compassion, renewed hope, and deeper faith. What Now, God? Here I am, Lord!

**PRAYER:**

Dear God, when we're overwhelmed and asking "Why?" remind us that our question isn't just about answers. It's our heart reaching out for your comfort and healing. Help us move from trying to explain our pain to discovering new purpose and strength through it. Give us the courage to speak honestly about our struggles and to lean on others who can walk beside us. Even if we don't have all the answers, assure us of your presence in our darkest moments, bringing healing and hope that go beyond anything we could imagine. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

**HYMNS, SONGS, OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- "Be Still, My Soul"





# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 35

Gail Armstrong

<sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

<sup>5</sup> Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers & sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

- 3 John 1:4-5

## A JOURNEY OF HEALING FOR THIS COUNTRY

This country is hurting. It is hurting at every level of society and we need to get back to being kinder to each other. Violence is intruding into every level of our society - even to the youngest. Time and again you read of children, even at the elementary level, that are using the basest of violence to deal with encounters of bullying. Children using guns and knives in retaliation.

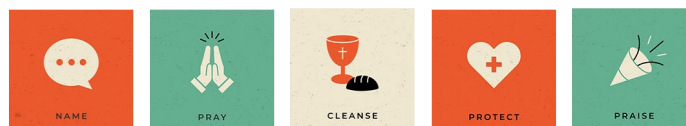
Jesus advocated for inclusiveness. We are becoming more and more separate from Jesus' teachings about what God expects of us. He taught us to turn the other cheek and to share with those in need. Children need to see that violence is unacceptable and that comes from the adults in their lives. They cannot learn kindness if they do not see it at home. Jesus taught a different way of living and we need to be examples of it. In order for this country to start to heal we need to put into practice what Jesus preached.

## QUESTIONS

1. Where can we start? What can we as a church do to lead people to this consciousness?

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, We come to you with heavy hearts asking for your guidance. We ask you to open our hearts and open our eyes to the needs of our communities. Help us to show the kindness that is so needed today. We ask this in Jesus' name. AMEN.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 36

*Hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

*- Romans 5:5 RVSUE*

A long time ago, I read an article about cultivating “reasonable hope” that has stuck with me. The author’s point was that hope is essential. It’s essential for healing, and it’s essential for change. The trouble is that we don’t always feel hopeful. She noted, “We tend to feel hopeful when the goal is clear, the pathway known, and hopeless when the way is blocked, the goal obscure.”

These days, I feel like many of the pathways forward are unknown. It is unclear to me how I, with my effort and influence, can tilt the world toward greater justice or beat back the ravages of climate change. Hope, as a feeling, slips through my fingers.

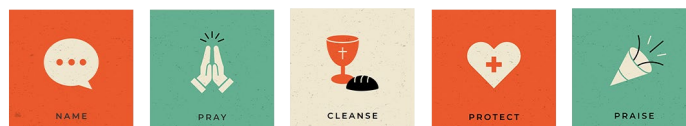
But “reasonable hope” isn’t a feeling; it’s a practice. It’s an action that we take to ensure something is done, even if we can’t accomplish the fullness of our heart’s desires. We embody reasonable hope as we identify realistic goals and a pathway toward them—for ourselves and for others.

The reality is—we don’t get to choose when or how we heal. Those things are beyond our control. We do get to choose how we show up for ourselves and for each other as we do the work of healing—both our own healing and the healing of the world around us.

We can show up; we can embody reasonable hope because we know that our hope will not be put to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

### PRAYER:

God of compassion and steadfast love, thank you for hope. Thank you for the precious moments when we feel it and for every opportunity that you give us to embody it. Grant us the courage to act, the boldness to continue showing up, trusting that the future is secure, for you go before us into it. This we ask in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 37

Joseph Jueng

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. - Matthew 6:33-4 (NRSVue)*

What will happen to the dinner ministry? This was the worry running through my mind as I made my way to UMC at New Brunswick one Sunday in mid-May of 2020. What had begun as a bi-weekly Rutgers campus ministry initiative had morphed into a daily meal feeding over 50 of the most vulnerable members of our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. With my new appointment and no extra pastoral support coming for my senior pastor, I was anxious about the future longevity of this critical mission.

That afternoon, a man I didn't recognize approached during a lull in meal service. He introduced himself as Pastor Art. He had come to the New Brunswick train station with a backpack full of sandwiches, expecting to find people in need. Instead, he was directed to our church. It turned out he was on a scouting mission to see if his congregation could alleviate food insecurity in the city. The name of his church? God Will Provide. Through Pastor Art and the members of his church, the dinner ministry was able to not only continue but thrive. And although they have since phased out of the mission, God's provision has kept the food outreach going—now serving over 100 meals every night, seven days a week.

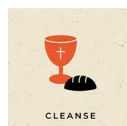
This experience reminds me to cast my burdens upon the Lord, especially in moments of fear and uncertainty. Truly, the worries of tomorrow are not ours to carry. Instead, when we seek first His kingdom and trust in His faithfulness, we will find that God indeed provides.

### QUESTIONS:

2. When faced with times of fear and uncertainty, how can you shift your focus from the challenges ahead to trusting in God's provision for today?
3. Have you ever experienced God's provision in ways that were surprising or unexpected?
4. How did it strengthen your faith?

### PRAYER:

Gracious God, we thank you for your constant provision and for reminding us that we do not need to worry about tomorrow. Help us to trust you with the needs of today and to seek first your kingdom in all things. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 38

Marcia Brands

*The Lord says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*  
- John 16:33 (NIV)

### HOLDING ON TO HOPE

This world is anchored in the way of empire – striving, straining, and acquisition. Each and every person fighting to get to the top. And each and every persons fighting to stay on top. But the way of the kin-dom is the way of relinquishment. We follow Jesus in our weakness and trust He is our strength, portion and sustenance. Kingdom is invading empire every day! We are part of the kingdom of God on the move; the gospel moving on the ground.

Christ tells us to hold on to the hope we have in Him. He tells us to “take heart” because the trials of this world have already been won, the evil has already been conquered, and He has already overcome the world.

Hope always travels with two friends – faith and love. Live your life as a statement of hope, not despair. Live like the victor, not the victim. Live with your eye on eternity, not the here and now. Daily remind yourself that you serve a powerful and gracious God, and decide to be used by Him to act as a messenger of grace and healing to the world’s brokenness.

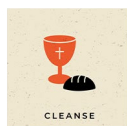
We rejoice in knowing we are chosen in our weakness and not our strength.

### QUESTIONS

1. How can I be “the gospel moving on the ground” today?
2. How can I live my life as a statement of hope?

### PRAYER

Lord, forgive my doubts. Forgive me for losing focus on You and being distracted by my present circumstances. Forgive me for growing discouraged and not placing my full trust in You. In my weakness and your strength help me to share my faith and your love. May I learn to trust you better and to live my life as a statement of Hope.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 39

Anaiza Cruz

*Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. - James 5:14-15*

### PERSONAL STORY:

At the age of 14, I moved out of my parents' house to live with my aunt. As a small, shy freshman, it was clear to anyone who looked at me that I didn't quite fit in. I often found myself sitting in the first three rows of every class, and I wasn't "up to date" with the latest clothing trends. My freshman year was a struggle. I faced loneliness, heartache, and the constant battle to find my place. The weight of being an outcast was heavy, and it felt as though I was just drifting through a sea of uncertainty.

In 2023, my heart was burdened with pain, confusion, and bullying. I often felt like I didn't belong anywhere, but God was still at work in my life, even when I couldn't see it. His grace was with me, even in my darkest moments, quietly guiding me through the storms.

Then, something changed during my sophomore year. Three months had passed since the start of the school year, and one day I noticed a bright orange poster on the auditorium doors. It was an audition notice for the spring musical, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Something stirred in me. Maybe it was God's whisper telling me to step out of my comfort zone. I decided to audition, thinking, "Why not?"

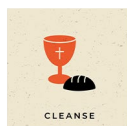
To my surprise, I got in. It was in this new, theatrical world that I found peace, hope, and healing. For the first time in a long while, I felt like I belonged. The stage became a place where I could express myself, and through it, I began to experience the healing touch of God. It was there that I realized: that God doesn't leave us in our struggles. He uses every part of our journey—our pain, our doubts, and our challenges—to bring us closer to His purpose and His healing.

Looking back, I see how God was working even when I felt abandoned. He led me to a place of peace and hope, and through His grace, I found a new sense of belonging. Today, He is the source of my strength, and His healing power is always at work, transforming our brokenness into something beautiful.

### CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come before You today with a heart full of hope. I ask that everyone who has read or heard these words be filled with renewed faith and trust in Your healing power. May they leave today with hearts and minds anchored in the truth that healing is on the way, and that tomorrow holds the promise of a better day.

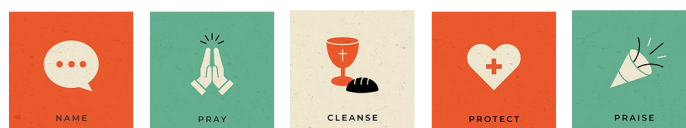


Lord, help them trust the journey You have set before them, knowing that with each step, You are guiding them. May they see Your faithfulness, like a rainbow after every storm, a reminder of Your constant presence and care.

I pray that my journey of growth and transformation today might inspire others to find peace and hope in You. May they be encouraged to embrace the future, knowing that You are at work in their lives.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I pray.

Amen.



# Journey of Healing

40 DAYS OF HEALING PRAYER

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL 40

Rev. James Lee, Director of Communications,  
United Methodists of Eastern PA and Greater NJ

*I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.*  
- Psalm 9:1 (NLT)

## PRAISE IN THE MIDDLE OF HEALING

I grew up watching my father serve Communion every Sunday. As a child, I didn't think about the deep theology behind it—I just knew that I wanted to go up to the altar and see my dad. Sometimes, I'd even run around the sanctuary to get in line again for a second piece of bread. He never stopped me. The table was open, grace was abundant, and I felt safe.

But life has a way of making us forget the open invitation. Over time, we learn to guard our hearts, protect our wounds, and build walls around what's been hurt. Healing takes time, and some wounds feel impossible to mend.

I once carried a wound I thought would never heal—rejection, disappointment, the kind of hurt that makes you question if restoration is possible. I prayed, but healing didn't come overnight. It came in quiet moments. Conversations. A slow softening. The realization that before anything changed externally, something was changing in me.

Brené Brown says, "We don't have to do it all alone. We were never meant to." Healing is not a solo act. It happens in community, around tables, in the embrace of people who remind us that grace is still abundant. The invitation is still open. And even in the middle of healing—before everything is resolved—we can praise. Not because the pain is gone, but because God is still good.

Lent invites us to this kind of praise. The kind that doesn't wait for resolution but worships in the waiting. It's the praise of the wounded who are being made whole. The praise of those who walk with a limp, yet keep walking. The praise that trusts—one day—we will see the fullness of what God is doing.

## PRAYER:

God of healing, teach me to praise you—not just when the pain is gone, but even in the middle of it. Help me trust that you are working, even when I can't see it. Open my heart to your presence in the waiting. Amen.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Where in my life do I need healing?
2. How can I practice praise even in the middle of healing?
3. Who has been part of my healing journey? How can I express gratitude for them?

