



Society of St. Andrew
GLEANNING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

Daily Lenten Devotions
scripture readings • reflections • prayers

Blessed *are*

the Meek

Welcome to the season of Lent 2026! This is our 40-day season of preparation (plus Sundays!) before we celebrate Jesus' victory over sin and death in the resurrection. Just as Jesus was tested in the wilderness for 40 days and Israel was formed in the "wilderness school" for 40 years, we benefit from seasons of formation, such as Lent.

Our theme, "Blessed are the Meek," was chosen before I began working for the Society of St. Andrew as the new Director of Church Relations. Still, I'm so grateful for it and for the work of my predecessor, Chesley Vohden, in recruiting this year's writers. Meek is not the first word we typically use to describe Jesus or anyone who has made an "impact" in our world. And few in the United States aspire to meekness. In our culture, we prefer to distinguish ourselves through public success, if at all possible. Yet the scriptures routinely raise up small, lowly, poor, meek, and humble persons as testimony against institutions, societies, and leaders who use power against them.

"Blessed are the meek" comes from the Beatitudes in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where he delivers a series of blessings clarifying his primary audience: the poor spirits, the grieving, the meek, the hungry, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted, and the rejected. By joining this party of the forgotten, we can hear Jesus' message afresh. There is something we gain from being in the "back seat," if only we are willing to risk it.

The term Lent comes from the "lengthening" of our days in the Northern Hemisphere during this time of year. So as the days grow longer during Lent, grab your Bible (or pull it up on your phone) and join the Society of St. Andrew and partners across the country in Lenten devotions that champion the little folks and those who take up their concerns. Blessed are the Meek.

Pastor Jennifer Davis Sensenig
Director of Church Relations



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Society of St. Andrew
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Preventing Waste, Feeding Hungry People

With your help, The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) addresses this crucial issue in two ways. In each, SoSA gathers up food that would otherwise be wasted. This fresh and nutritious food is then provided, at no cost, to food banks, pantries, and programs to feed or provide food to those most in need.

SoSA distributes food donated from a variety of sources including farms, fields, orchards, packing houses, and grocers. This is accomplished through the coordination of thousands of volunteers and events, each year.

Volunteers serve in a variety of roles. This includes gleaning fields and orchards, delivering packaged produce to hunger relief agencies, and unloading and distributing truckloads of food directly into the local community. In 2024 alone, SoSA distributed more than 22 million pounds of good food to families who might otherwise have gone without.

Often the food is surplus, inconveniently-sized, or cosmetically imperfect. Sometimes, it's marketable but the farmer or grower wants to share it with the local community to address urgent needs.

Society of St. Andrew

GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS ~ FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

Picture the world we want.

Isaiah 58:10-12

The world as it is. Too much food wasted. Too many hungry people in a rich country. We begin Lent wearing the sign of the cross, recalling our mortality, and shedding the habits that interfere with the life to which God calls us. Smudged with ashes, we feel the burden of the world as it is. But Isaiah speaks to the meek with a flood of images of who we can become when we heed the prophet's words. Isaiah helps us picture the world as it could be.

Which of these prophetic word-pictures resonates with your hopes for this Lenten season?

- Emerging from dark clouds into the sunshine (v. 10).
- Becoming spiritually strong with increasing physical and mental health (v. 11).
- Living in a fruitful garden watered with an ever-flowing fountain (v. 11).

These three compelling images are the outcome of a renewed people of God, a people who begin recovering from a disaster by rebuilding society (v. 12). Very often, we don't know where to start a big project. Still, the prophet identifies a beginning: sharing our food with the poor (v. 10). Society of St. Andrew helps all of us share food with people in places urban, rural, and in-between who are facing food insecurity in our society. We may not always sit at the same tables, but our lives—both today and in the future—are interconnected. By sharing food, we begin to rebuild society.

Prayer: God of the prophets, open our eyes to the world as it could be, open our hands to share with the poor, open our lives to the work of your Spirit within us, among us, and through us this Lenten season.

Jennifer Davis Sensemig | Rockingham, VA

Give, Pray, Fast

Matthew 6:9-13

The traditional Lenten disciplines of giving, praying, and fasting come from the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches these three practices, including the Lord's Prayer. The disciplines of giving, praying, and fasting are widely practiced across different Christian denominations and other faith traditions. One way we can build relationships is to be curious about others' practices. A key aspect of Jesus' teaching is that the practices themselves, intended to form us as a holy people, are undertaken with meekness. We don't give, pray, or fast for show. These are not self-seeking habits but a way to yield to God's transformative work in us and the world.

This Lent, let's take time to talk about our practices with others. You might tell a friend: Since it's Lent, I'm praying 15 minutes daily. I might forget some days, but each day is a new beginning with God. You might say to a new neighbor: I know that you're Muslim and I'm Christian, but we both have special seasons for fasting. This Lent I'm fasting (from sweets, from alcohol, from social media, for one meal each week, etc.) How do you fast during Ramadan? You might share with a church member: I regularly give to our church, and this Lent I chose the Society of St. Andrew as a special giving project. Even though Lenten practices are undertaken with meekness, sharing about our experience builds relationships and sparks curiosity across generations and communities.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you lived a holy life. Help us keep our holy Lenten practices this year, so we are prepared to answer your call. Amen.

A SoSA staff member

What Would Jesus Do?

Matthew 11:29

When I watch the news these days, I often feel angry, frustrated, and full of despair. Why is there so much injustice, oppression, and cruelty being brought upon the poor, dispossessed, and marginalized in our society? My soul is sad and dejected. I want to yell and scream. There are times when I see myself wanting to channel that angry young man who dwelled inside of me during some of my teen years. Then I think, "What would Jesus do?" I reflect on those bracelets we gave to our church youth some years ago. Perhaps, now more than ever, it's

a question worth revisiting. Jesus also lived in a time of horrible oppression and marginalization of the poor and those who had no say in what was happening to them. Yet, he was not afraid to speak out and challenge injustice while doing so with meekness and humility, the conviction of righteousness, and the promise of the kingdom of God. That was not an easy combination. I want to follow his lead to find my calm, but courageous voice when I see suffering, hatred, and discrimination. There is power and strength in quiet, persistent advocacy. There is also rest in my soul when I learn to follow Jesus' lead.

Prayer: Lord, give us courage and wisdom to follow in your footsteps, to be your hands and feet, and to be your voice. Amen.

Bob Brooks | Pine Knoll Shores, NC

Saturday, February 21, 2026

The Meek Among Us

Colossians 3:8,12

Of all the adjectives that may be used to describe my personality, “meek” is not one of them. I marvel at the courage of the meek souls whom I’ve met along life’s way:

- Parents who continued to love their adult children, even when those children stole from or took advantage of them.
- Children who continued to care for their aging parents, even when those parents abused them.
- Spouses (and former spouses) who continued to seek God’s blessings for their partners, even when those partners broke promises.
- Neighbors who continued to share what they had, even when they themselves were on food stamps.
- Church folk who continued to serve, even when their own bodies ached.
- Civic leaders who continued to speak up for the poor, the orphan, and the widow, even when their own lives or livelihoods were at risk.

In response to God’s love, the meek among us model what it looks like to show compassion for – and align themselves with – “the least of these” who are on the fringe and marginalized. As the Spirit nudges me toward a life of meekness in Christ, I admit: it’s painful to die to self.

Prayer: God, grant us the humility to soften our rough edges. Help us show gentleness in the face of aggression, kindness in the face of hatred, and self-control in the face of chaos. Help us hold on to your truth that goodness is stronger than evil. Amen.

Katy Yates Brungaber | Chambersburg, PA

Sunday, February 22, 2026

Purpose and Focus

Matthew 4:1-11

Isn't it ironic that Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread and successfully resisted, but later multiplied bread and fish to feed a large crowd? There are many meal stories in the Bible, but Jesus' first temptation is sort of an anti-meal story. What could it mean to prefer God's word to actual food? Christian fasting is not about weight management, but it usually has a purpose, a focus. The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness is a time of clarifying purpose and setting focus. For Jesus, God's word in the law and the prophets clarifies his purpose of proclaiming an alternative to Rome's kingdom. God's word also sets his focus, so that he's ready to die among the disposable and despised people of his day. Is a focus on meekness fitting for you this Lent? Or is there a theme in your congregation this season that connects deeply with your spirit? Is there anything preventing you from taking in God's word, chewing it over, and digesting it? If God has given you a purpose or focus for this season, don't get distracted. If you are seeking a renewed sense of purpose for your life or a fresh focus for this season, being hungry for God is a good thing.

Prayer: God, give us a hunger for the life you want us to live. And satisfy us with your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen

A SoSA staff member



Becoming Meek

Scripture: Matthew 5:5

It was the custom of Jewish rabbis to be seated when teaching. Culturally, this showed authority and commanded attention. Jesus always sat before teaching. Meekness is power under control and a gentle mindset.

My two experiences of humility and service occurred in two of my churches. Our church was part of a multi-church ministry that provided a bag lunch at noon, six days a week, to those living in low-income apartments/housing. In California, during our winter stays, our church provided the homeless with a hot meal and a mat for sleeping in the fellowship hall during the night, when the temperature was 35 degrees or lower.

In both churches, we served the meals to our guests, and then we walked around the tables as they ate. Our guests were always meek and very quiet. I suggested that we join them, sit around them, and engage our guests in conversation. In other words, we would now be looking them in the eye and not looking down at them. The change in atmosphere was immediate. Our meek guests were now more relaxed and began sharing their names and stories with us. Our becoming meek made a huge difference in all of our lives.

Prayer: Father God, help us to find more opportunities to become more like Jesus and follow you. Amen.

Carolyn Purdy | Harrisonburg, VA

Humility in Action

Micah 6:8

“We accept people right where they are, just the way they are,” said Appalachian Service Project (ASP) founder Tex Evans. I experienced this truth several years ago when I traveled with youth from my church on an ASP mission trip to Letcher County, Kentucky, one of the poorest communities in the nation. It brought us face to face with meekness, not as weakness but as genuine humility. The truth is that we are not in control of all that happens around us. Like the “poor in spirit,” the meek rely upon God. Our group’s mission was to make significant repairs to the roof and flooring of a man’s home. He had been a truck driver for a major cereal company when his truck was forced off the road.

His truck overturned, leaving him disabled. This fellow loved the Lord and was grateful for our youth group and their service. Making his home “warmer, safer, and drier” meant climbing on the roof of his house, painting walls, and replacing floorboards in his living room. The youth also eagerly listened around his kitchen table as he shared about his faith and trust in God. They were humbled by his story and eager to help restore his home so that he could live in it with some comfort and safety. We came face-to-face with humility in action.

Prayer: God, may the fullness of your grace remain with us through this week’s challenges. May we pass on the grace we have received to those around us as we work, serve, and rest. Amen.

Bill Jones | Waynesboro, VA

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Choices!

Scripture: Psalm 25:9

The age-old question: how do we find meaning in our lives? Our culture leads many to find happiness through seeking power, fame, and fortune. Some try to push political ideologies and agendas onto others in their effort to “better” society. Others say always put yourself first. On the contrary, a spirit of humility can work wonders and provide peaceful abundance. However, humility, or meekness, does not imply what it takes to survive in today’s world.

Jesus urges us not to follow what culture and ideologies promote, but to live by the Word alone. He calls us to surrender to a life of humility and service, as told in Matthew 5:5, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” By humbling ourselves and serving one another, we can find the true blessings God has promised us. In doing so, we can change others’ lives for the better.

So, we have choices: aim to be bold, powerful citizens of the world, perhaps no matter the cost to ourselves or to others, or give ourselves to God and follow Jesus’ example, humbly serving through the spirit of meekness to enrich and enhance his kingdom. Let’s choose meekness!

Prayer: Almighty God, may we humbly strive to live Christ-like lives, working toward the day when no one lacks any necessities, everyone is treated fairly and justly, and all can experience the glories of your kingdom on this earth. Amen.

Julie Erickson | Olathe, KS

The Lord's Formula

Colossians 3:12-13

Several years ago, I was deeply wounded by someone I love, and I spent a considerable amount of time nursing anger and resentment until I realized I was keeping myself and that relationship moored in hurt and pain. The Old English definition of forgiveness is “to give up desire or power to punish.” I also read somewhere that something must die for forgiveness to happen. It was time for me to humble myself and to give up. God’s voice was clear: Forgive. Over the past few years, I have done a trust fall into forgiveness, the biggest leap of faith I have ever taken. Forgiveness is completely countercultural to our earthly sensibilities, but it is a necessary component of God’s will for us and central to Jesus’s message. Humans make messes, but Jesus gives us the steps to see them, clean them up, learn from them, and become stronger. The steps in Colossians are the Lord’s formula. To give in, grant, give—this is humility. I have been humbled in my surrender to let go of the anger and the desire to punish so God can do the rest. Jesus’s humility in submitting himself to death as the ultimate forgiveness of sins is a true display of giving ourselves away in order to live and serve God and each other.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us remember that we gain renewal through humility and recognizing our human meekness through Jesus’s resurrection, ready to go joyfully forward together. Amen.

Melissa Dameron-Vines | Hoover, AL

Friday, February 27, 2026

True Strength

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3

When I think about how to receive a word from God, I think of the boy Samuel who assisted the priest Eli. One night, when everyone was sleeping, God called Samuel three times. Because he is young and has never had a message from God, Samuel believes Eli called him. Realizing what was happening, Eli instructs Samuel to lie down, and if he hears his name being called, he is to say, “Yes, Lord, your servant is listening” (1 Sam 3:9).

Samuel had to do several things to hear God’s voice. He had to be quiet, patiently wait, and be willing to listen to whatever God said. In short, Samuel had to be meek, a word we’ve misunderstood to mean a timid pushover.

However, if we want to hear the voice of God, we must be meek. Sitting in silence, waiting patiently to hear a word from God, we show humility. It is an act of faith and reverence. We're not listening to the sound of our own voice or the voices of those who agree with our views. We're waiting to hear from the Almighty. In a world that promotes the idea of "me first," this may seem hard to do. Who among us today can say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening," and mean it?

Prayer: Father, please give us the strength to be meek.

Regina K. Carson Chesterfield, VA

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Meek Doesn't Mean Weak

Psalms 121:8

When I was a young child, one of my aunts said I was meek. At the time, I thought meek meant weak, and I was anything but! I have since learned meek means humble. To this day, I struggle to be humble. In other words, humility is not my strong suit.

We often think of Jesus as the essence of humility. After all, he humbled himself to death on a cross even though he is the Son of God. And yet, he struggled mightily. He was human as well as divine. But for me, his humanity makes it possible to relate to him. Since Jesus struggled, it's okay that I struggle!

Throughout my life, the Lord has kept me going, in and out of faith. When I was faithless, he was steadfastly faithful. May each of us recall that Jesus struggled so we can also struggle.

Prayer: All-knowing God, whose steadfast faithfulness keeps us even while we are faithless, hold us in Christ's embrace forevermore. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

Chris Suerdieck Emmitsburg, MD



Remembering a Meal

Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus' Transfiguration is a glimpse of resurrection glory even before Jesus goes to the cross. We don't "hear" the conversation between Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, but today, I imagine it as a conversation about last meals.

Moses: Of course, before our exodus from Pharaoh's Egypt, we ate standing up! We were ready to walk out in the power of the Lord. And then the Lord taught us over all those wilderness meals that hoarding would lead to rot. Better to make meals of enough.

Elijah: I had just enough when I hid in the wilderness from King Ahab. I ate what God's good creation provided. The ravens fed me; I drank from the wadi. I thought those would be my last meals, but when the drought came, God sent me to that faithful woman in Zarephath. For me, God's love was never so vivid as when she fed me. God's power of life over death was never so evident as when I raised her son.

Moses: [to Jesus] Have you made plans for your last meal?

Jesus: We'll be in Jerusalem for Passover. [Looking at Peter, James, and John] I'm sure these disciples will make preparations.

Elijah: [to Jesus] Are you prepared?

Jesus: Body and blood.

Moses: [Looking at Peter, James, and John] These three don't look like much.

Jesus: There are faithful women, too. [With tears...] I don't know how I will say goodbye.

Elijah: A last meal will be enough. They may not understand in the moment...

Moses: But meal after meal will teach them. And they will walk in your name.

Elijah: They'll learn God's love and power of life over death.

Prayer: Lord God, as we eat the eucharist meal, transfigure your church. Make us stand up in the power of the Lord, resisting false Pharaohs and corrupt kings. Let us join the meek of the earth, receive your love, and give ourselves to ministries of life over death, one meal at a time, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Jennifer Davis Sensenig | Rockingham, VA

Monday, March 2, 2026

The Clothing of The Chosen People

Colossians 3:12

As God's children, we live for, love, and serve God with the blessing of the dawning of each new day. We are given the opportunity to clothe ourselves not only with earthly garments but also, more importantly, with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Ashamedly, I've often exhibited the direct opposite of the aforementioned attributes. I've sometimes presented myself to the world as a poor ambassador for Christ.

The following quote speaks to my heart:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel!" – Dr. Maya Angelou

From the moment I'm blessed to open my eyes, I begin to pray that the Lord will clothe me with the meekness necessary for my living witness to be apparent to those I encounter in and out of my home. I never want to say with my mouth that I'm a follower of Christ and turn up my nose at the abused, addicted, hungry, hurting, homeless, those of a different political affiliation, race or religion, those struggling mentally, or my neighbors (whom we are called to love).

Prayer: Lord, as your child, incline my heart daily to exhibit being chosen by you in thought, word, and deed in the matchless name of Jesus, Amen!

Tracy Porter | Pasadena, CA

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Simple Gifts

2 Corinthians 12:9

Recently, I returned to a small country church where I had served as a pastor to assist at the funeral of a friend of mine of over 30 years. Once again, I had the privilege to proclaim the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ and rejoice in the joy of our celebration together. With the passing of time, our faces had a few more wrinkles, but the reality of our shared faith in the Lord remained.

Following the service, I was greeted by one brother and his lovely wife, whose wedding I had performed. We hugged and gave thanks to be together once more. Every time we meet, this dear friend reminds me of how God used me to help bring him to sobriety, a good and blessed life, and to become a faithful witness to the Lord. It is not a sermon filled with eloquence or wisdom that he always recounts. It was a brief whisper into his ear as he left church following worship one Sunday that he always remembers.

“You said you were praying for me.”

Countless others aided his road to recovery. Yet I am always humbled to be reminded that it wasn't sounding cymbals but a simple, quiet word of love from a fellow sinner that the Lord used.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, show your power in our weakness to fulfill your promise that our labor is not in vain. Amen.

William Nash Wade | Strasburg, VA

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Welcome with Meekness the Implanted Word

James 1:19-27

The book of James challenges the church to “care for orphans and widows” and to “be doers of the word and not merely hearers.” Preparing to transplant lettuce, I noticed weeds had already emerged in the plastic cells. Not wanting to transplant these competitors along with the lettuce plugs, I began “weeding” the flat. Upon closer inspection, I found the sturdy weeds were cottonwood seedlings! The lettuce flat had been “hardening off” under the cottonwood tree whose seeds, adrift on the breeze, had snowed down on the flat and taken root.

While James challenges the church, he also expresses deep confidence in the seeds God has planted. James says, “welcome with meekness the implanted word...” The Lord has planted the word of ‘good news for the poor’ in us. This word sometimes seems as fragile as tender lettuce transplants and threatened by strong forces of greed and exploitation. The Lord has also planted churches in communities across the country to be good news for the poor. To welcome



God's word with meekness, we likely need to weed out lies about poor folks that circulate in the airways and justify indifference to suffering neighbors. People who need help getting access to nutritious food for themselves and their families are not lazy, undeserving, hopeless, or taking advantage of others. Once we weed out the lies, we can get on with the satisfying work of cultivating God's good news in our communities.

Prayer: Creator God, thank you for planting a challenging word in us. Direct me as I undertake the work from the word you have planted in my life. Amen.

A SoSA staff member

Thursday, March 5, 2026

The Widow's Mite Retold

Luke 21:1-4

My church has a Blessing Box (an outdoor food pantry). Volunteers take turns filling it so people needing food can grab a little something to help sustain them.

One day, I saw the story of the Widow's Mite come alive right before my eyes at the Blessing Box.

It was my day to fill the box, and as I was pulling into the parking lot, one of the ladies who uses the box regularly was already there. We have met before at the box—me filling it and she looking for food. She has told me some of her story. She is a widow, and both she and her son are in poor health. Her income is minimal.

As I pulled in this time, she jumped out of her car and said, “I want you to have this,” and handed me \$10. She said she wanted me to use it to help someone else because this box had been such a blessing to her.

I was blown away. She did not have \$10 to spare. She gave all she had that day and was so pleased she could. She claimed her dignity that day and showed through her heart that she is a valuable part of God’s kingdom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are all welcome in the Kingdom of God, not because of the size of our bank accounts, but because of your love for us. Thank you.

Melva Shelor | Bedford, VA

Friday, March 6, 2026

Learning to Be Still

Psalms 46:10

Being still is something that is not easy for me to do. I wake up each day with a mental to-do list of things I want to accomplish. I cross off finished tasks throughout the day. My husband, with a smile on his face, sometimes tells me that I can be hyperactive and need to slow down.

Lent is a time of penitence and reflection. It is a time to slow down and pray. It is a time to think about our Lord as he prepared to give his life for our salvation. It is a time just to be still.

We all have our ways of slowing down and being still. Some people practice stillness through prayer or meditation. For me, being still means sitting on my back porch and looking up at the beautiful mountains in the distance. I feel myself slowing down as I lean into the Lord. I know that my Lord is present in this setting. I pray and marvel at his creation. I thank him for all he gives me: mountains, valleys, family members, friends, and shelter. In my quietness, I am grateful to him for all he has blessed me with.

Prayer: Lord, teach us to be still and to lean into your presence. Amen.

Barb Radebaugh | Lexington, VA

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Common Kindness

1 John 3:17-18

I am appalled by people leaving litter behind in fast-food restaurants, theatres, or grocery carts. Perhaps they reason that it is someone else's job to clean up. However, while it may be their job to maintain public spaces and facilities, service workers deserve common kindness. Mean people are exhausting; it is easier just to be kind! Showing respect for others and picking up after ourselves makes someone else's day a little easier. Why not lighten someone's load?

When passing by panhandlers, even if you don't give them anything, they are still people, living in difficult circumstances. They do not deserve to be treated with disdain, contempt, or condescension. Psalm 139 says grandly: "You are wonderfully made."

A person who embodies entitlement, as though anyone else is beneath them, needs a serious lesson in compassion and humanity. Being unassuming and unpretentious is nearer to God's heart.

"Everything I know I learned in kindergarten" has a corollary - "Everything important in life, I learned from Jesus: love one another as I have loved you." It doesn't get any better, or simpler, than that.

Prayer: Loving God, help us remember the lessons you have taught us, to love you, and to love each other. It really isn't all that hard. Amen

Kathi Wise | McLean, VA

Share Health & Hope

Give Generously to the Society of St. Andrew



EndHunger.org/Donate



Sunday, March 8, 2026

Looking for the Meek

John 4:5-42

Blessed are the meek. (Matthew 5). Clothe yourselves in meekness. The English word 'meek' is not used as often as it once was in translating the original Biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. More often, 'humble' is substituted. The Hebrew word *anavah* means humble, meek, or poor. It is also used as a noun—*anawim*—to refer to the humble, meek, poor, suffering, and politically disadvantaged folks in society. The Old Testament prophets insisted that leaders look after the needs of the *anawim*. In the New Testament, Jesus is born into a family of the *anawim* in occupied Palestine. So if you're looking for the meek in our Biblical story, you suddenly find them everywhere! For example, the Samaritan Woman is not directly referred to as humble or meek. In fact, she has the most sophisticated theological conversation with Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John! However, she is among the suffering and disadvantaged. But Jesus treats her with dignity and offers her a new life story.

In our personal commitment to “not think of ourselves more highly than we ought” (Romans 12) and thereby learn meekness or humility, let's also do what Jesus did. Jesus was among the *anawim*. He had conversations with them, ate with them, invited them into his company, touched them with healing, and blessed them. He fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the *anawim* (Isaiah 61:1).

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we pray for people in our community who are suffering: for those relying on a food pantry, who are unemployed, or whose income is insufficient for food, healthcare, housing, childcare, and transportation expenses. We pray that helpers meet them with compassion, dignity, and love, and that our society becomes more aligned with your kingdom. Amen.

A SoSA staff member

Monday, March 9, 2026

A Moment of Meekness

Philippians 4:11

The day after my best friend fell and broke a hip, I sat by her hospital bed. At 4 p.m., an orderly announced that the surgeon and his team were ready. We were stunned. Earlier, when my friend's daughter and husband were at the hospital, they had been told surgery would likely be the next day. As a result, her family had left to regroup, rest, and gather things they needed for the following day.

With this unexpected summons, my friend only had time to call her daughter, and they agreed she should proceed with the surgery. We prayed for God's blessing and concluded with the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done." Despite her fears—and without one member of her family present—my fiercely independent friend completely abandoned herself to God.

The surgery was successful. Two days later, she told me the rest of the story. In the operating room, her doctor presented everything that might go wrong during the hip repair. My friend listened patiently and signed the release form. She told him she had no option but to proceed and trusted the Great Physician. The surgeon leaned over to whisper a reply: "I talk to him every day."

My friend remembers smiling and saying, "Thank you," as she drifted off under the anesthesia.

A state of meekness requires a complete dependence on God. Only the total surrender of self produces humility and contentment in all things, so we can be "well in the Lord" no matter what befalls us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, make us more like your Son, whose submission made him strong, not weak, and comfortable in meekness because his confidence was in you.

Andi Lehman | Hernando, MS

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Gentle Wisdom

Colossians 3:12

Sunlight streamed through the tall windows in the kindergarten classroom. It was playtime; shrieks of laughter and excited conversations erupted from lively circles of energetic children. A vivacious five-year-old giggled in the room's center and pleaded for more pat-a-cake ("one more time, p-l-e-a-s-e"). At 13 years old, it captivated me. It was my first time serving as a youth volunteer for my church's annual summer Vacation Bible School. I was excited about this new role and wanted to do it well.

Mrs. Bullock, the experienced and beloved Vacation Bible School and Sunday School teacher, came and stood right beside me, shoulder to shoulder, and said softly, just loud enough for me to hear, "Remember, don't play favorites. All the children need love and attention."

Until I learned of her death last winter, I had not consciously thought of that moment for over fifty years, but what marvelous advice! Indeed, her wise and caring words left an indelible watermark upon my life. So often, in so many situations, I have paused to address the questions echoing in my mind, “Am I playing favorites? Who else needs love and attention?”

Mrs. Bullock’s gentle words offer guidance in any setting from food pantry to corporate executive suite, emergency shelter to legislative hall, preschool to detention center.

Prayer: Holy and gracious God, your attentive love extends to all. Help us, rooted in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to serve those in need with genuine compassion and kindness. Amen.

Kathleen Overby Webster | McGaheysville, VA

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Self Denial

To deny self is to step out of those places
of safety and convenience where we like to hide,
and to make ourselves vulnerable
for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
We do that as we stop protecting our privacy
and stop worrying about our reputation,
allowing God to work through us.
We willingly put ourselves at risk
for criticism and judgment of others,
even from those within the church.
We do that as we make the gospel of Jesus Christ
more important than what people think of us.
We do that as we work for justice for the poor,
and by meeting human need,
even the salvation of lost souls,
and by encouraging and challenging the church
into new ways of thinking and acting.
Self-denial is usually more about self
than it is about denial.

David A. Rash | Waynesboro, VA

Where is Jesus?

Mark 10:45

At God's nudging, my wife and I involved ourselves in urban ministry in Hartford, CT, serving those living on society's margins. After an outside worship service including communion, the attendees selected basic needs, such as socks and underwear. There was universal gratitude but also hesitancy to choose; they wanted to remain anonymously hidden in the shadows of life.

Following our initial participation, the leader conducted a debrief of our experience. Being entirely clueless, I blurted out, "If Jesus were alive today, this is the location we would find Him." Bryan looked at me and kindly said, "Jesus was fully present today." Our Lord was there among the meek, hungry, and homeless. And I failed to recognize him.

Years later, I remember the important lesson learned on that cold Connecticut day. Jesus is evident at the food pantry, where food and clothing are provided. I see his smile on the faces I am privileged to serve. As I visit the memory care where my wife now resides, I feel his love for the residents there, those without clear memory or coherent voice.

Jesus seeks those without power or influence while commanding us to do the same. Christ meets people where they are. This is our mission, as well.

Prayer: Lord, during this season of Lent, may I honor you through service to others, specifically those who have so little. Amen.

Houston D. Hemp | Midlothian, VA

"You Can Have Mine"

Matthew 5:42

I never thought of my young daughter as meek. Even as a 9-year-old old, she had noticeable strength of character, could make her presence known, and had no trouble telling you what she liked and disliked. I remember a time when one of her favorite things was the movie *The Little Mermaid*. She watched and rewatched the video so much that I was concerned it would break!

When our church participated in the Angel Tree Project, we took home a family's wish list, which included a girl our daughter's age. One evening, my wife and I discussed the items on the list and mentioned the young girl who wanted a copy of the video, *The Little Mermaid*. We didn't know our daughter had heard our conversation until she came and handed us her copy of the video. She told us to give it to the young girl. We discussed this with her several times, and she was determined to give her copy to a girl she had never met. She understood better than I did how important the movie was to another. That day, I saw gentleness, kindness, and humility in my daughter's face. And maybe for the first time, I understood what meekness does.

Prayer: Dear God, may we have open ears and an open heart to hear and respond to the needs of others. May we always be open to being taught by our children. Amen

Charles Gambrell | Saraland, AL

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Meek Ain't Weak

Luke 18:1-8

Twenty years ago, I helped lead a team of senior high students in ministry to the inner city. We rode the subway in groups to different spots, serving through food service, cleaning, sorting, and painting. At one stop, we assisted a group of nuns caring for elderly homebound residents.

One of those residences was the basement of a tenement house. The man living there couldn't raise his head to greet us from where he lay on the couch, as we removed trash and decomposing food from his living space. I left with the little nun who served as his liaison to replenish his food supply. Returning, we encountered his delinquent landlord, a thick six and a half foot man, with a snarling dog straining to reach us. I don't know its breed because I could only see its teeth!

In a quiet, calm way, this diminutive nun stared down the landlord, rebuking him for his shameless treatment of the man who lived there. I stood there silently, aware that we were a mile from the subway in a neighborhood that wouldn't have thought twice about a moment of violence. I'm sure the nun knew it, too, but her quiet strength has stuck with me as I consider what it means to follow Jesus in pursuit of justice.

Prayer: Holy God, give us strength to stand in your love and peace, so that we will not turn back when others need us to be filled with your courage. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Jacob Sakms | Chesterfield, VA

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Rejoice in your baptism!

Psalm 34

The fourth Sunday in Lent is sometimes called Laetere Sunday. In Latin, laetere means "rejoice." The tradition emerged to give us all a refreshing day of joy in the long and largely somber season of Lenten repentance and reflection.

One of the joyful habits connected to this fourth Sunday is to visit our "mother church" or congregation where we were baptized. I now live in a different part of the country, so I won't be visiting my mother church this week. However, it is significant to me to recall my baptism in one of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes at the age of 13. My youth pastor baptized me. And our lead pastor baptized a whole family that day. This was the congregation that nurtured my faith in Jesus Christ and encouraged me to use my gifts in the church. I recall joining the congregational singing of "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God" with gusto! That congregation encouraged me to learn about and take action to address local hunger. They supported me in organizing a food drive at my school and community for a regional mission effort called Twin City Sweat.

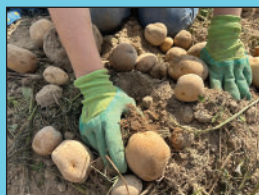
Where were you baptized? How has your experience of that congregation shaped your life? When did God first make you aware of hunger in our world?

Prayer: God, thank you for the congregations that call us to become disciples of Jesus Christ and have nurtured us throughout our lives.

A SoSA staff member

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2024 STATISTICS

**Over 22 million pounds of
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**Over 2,000 recipient
feeding organizations served**

**817 generous farmers who
shared their harvest**

Less than 5c per serving



Monday, March 16, 2026

Being Content

Philippians 4:11b-12

Paul indicates in Philippians that he's learned to be content whatever his circumstances. Paul was more evolved than I because I find it hard to be content. It is human nature to be continually striving. Our ancestors had to struggle for survival: food, water, shelter. And they've left that imprint on us.

But as Paul indicated, we can learn to be content; it just takes effort. When I found myself suddenly unemployed, I realized I was spending over \$150 every week dining out. Shifting my financial priorities, I found great joy preparing food at home. I discovered I made better meals for a fraction of the cost! And it was a fun hobby that didn't cost extra: it actually saved money. I just needed to reframe my attitude about it. Now fixing dinner isn't a chore. It's a blessing. And I have used those new skills to prepare food for others. (Let me know if you need a pasta casserole recipe for 125 people!)

Prayer: Father God, help me to approach life with a spirit of contentment. When I have much, help me to share. When I have little, help me to see the blessings that abound. Amen.

Chris Howell | Madison Heights, VA

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Renewal

Romans 12:2

So many things in life have renewal dates: car insurance, car registration, home insurance, medical insurance, etc. We must renew those things to stay legally and financially sound. We get notices to remind us of due dates. There are consequences if we ignore those renewals.

What are the consequences if we ignore our own spiritual renewal? What do we lose? We lose peace in our hearts and minds. It is important for us to specifically, frequently, and determinedly look at our own spiritual health. The perfect will of God for us is not to avoid troubles, but to face them with tested faith and encouragement from our Father.

Prayer: Lord, create a spiritual bravado within us to face anything that tries to darken our lives. Renew our minds and our thoughts to fit your word. Amen.

Betty Easter | Bedford, VA

Wednesday March 18, 2026

Clothed in Donations

Colossians 3:12

In the summer of 2020, after my parents' deaths, I was settling into a new home while also clearing out the house in which I grew up. To say I was overwhelmed is a gross understatement. So many people offered advice: "Have an estate auction," or "Take the good stuff to an antique store." I even had a neighbor offer to take photos and sell things online. None of those ideas fed my spirit. I asked, "What would Jesus do?" My answer was, "Share everything." That was my direction. I gave a few mementos to family and friends. Everything else was donated. Dad's clothes to a veterans' center, Mom's to a shelter for women escaping domestic violence. Electronics were recycled. A furniture bank truck was loaded. Group homes and thrift stores were gifted with kitchen and other household items. Sheets and towels were taken to animal rescue centers. Everything in Dad's workshop was sorted, bagged, and delivered to Habitat ReStores. My parents' "change jar," which contained over \$100, was given to a friend who makes birthday cakes for kids living in shelters.

Paul instructed early Christians to wear compassion, humility, and meekness like clothing. Somewhere, there's a man dressed in one of Dad's suits, admiring his favorite purple tie.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for everyday gifts. Remind us to share our abundance. Amen.

Kelly Deschos-Estes | Glen Allen, VA

Thursday March 19, 2026

Meek is not Weak

Matthew 5:5

Be careful not to misinterpret these words of Jesus. If we do, we will be missing one of his greatest teachings. Meekness isn't weakness; instead, it marks the path of humility. For Jesus, meekness involves trusting in God's sovereignty and accepting his Father's plan, even when this path led to the cross. As Jesus found in his short time on earth, meekness and humility inspired him to engage with courage and trust the most difficult and controversial social justice issues of the day—poverty, political oppression, racial prejudice, economic exploitation, and religious hypocrisy, to name a few. He navigated these challenges with strength and love.

As believers, Jesus is our guide for taking a stand to confront the injustices of our world today. He empowers us to contribute to healing and restoration in a world filled with prejudice, mistrust, and hatred. He gives us strength to contribute to healing and restoration in a world yearning for hope. Over and over again, Jesus tells us to have courage and find our truth, strength, and peace through Him. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says those who are humble, gentle, and patient will ultimately be rewarded with his earthly and spiritual kingdom forever.

Prayer: Jesus, we trust you and ask that you teach us to be meek and humble. We thank you for your promise of always being with us in a world filled with chaos and dire challenges. We love you. Amen

Deb Broadwater | Moneta, VA

Friday March 20, 2026

Sharing with Those in Need

Matthew 5:5

In our world today, more people are food insecure than ever. Some of them have a difficult time asking for assistance, and I have encountered some of these neighbors at a local food pantry.

Clients arrive at the pantry and sign their names to receive food on a Friday morning at a local church. When their name is called, a host walks around with them as they select items they would like on that day. The amount of food they receive depends on the number in their family. The host chats informally with the client as they gather food items: canned items, bread, milk, and frozen meats. After the process, their host takes them to the prayer warriors. These dear ladies ask about the client's prayer concerns on that day, then pray over them before the hosts assist the clients to their vehicles.

This process has blessed my heart every time I am present. The informal chats let the host know more about the person requesting assistance. Some are timid, but we assure them we are happy to assist. I always leave with a heart full of gratitude for the time to serve "the least of these" in a small way. Even though it seems small to me, it is huge to those who are food insecure.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for the opportunity to assist those who are hungry. May I never underestimate the importance of sharing with "the least of these". AMEN.

Linda M. Mays | Appomattox, VA

Saturday March 21, 2026

It's-Not-About-Me Hearts

Psalm 46:10

Lent is quieter than Advent. Yet, both seasons remind me of these simple words from Psalm 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God."

When I think about the life of Jesus, especially during the time of his disciples, he had to search for quiet moments and stillness. Finding quietness and stillness in our busy and often loud world isn't easy today. However, in my stillness, I'm often drawn to think about the humble and meek. These people have quietly given of themselves to serve others.

My 31 years of work in public schools connected me with many kind hearts who could cool down an agitated parent, communicate with a challenging student, and lift morale when the school day weighed us down. On mission trips, I've experienced the same understated leadership where individuals met the needs of volunteers, homeowners, and building suppliers in demanding environments. In the church where I work, I appreciate the volunteers who work behind the scenes to ensure that a community event, worship service, or funeral goes well.

On a quiet, gray, dreary day during Lent, be still and reflect on the meek and humble who have impacted your life. Within minutes, a drab day will brighten. That's because these unselfish servants have "it's not-about-me" hearts. They have hearts like Jesus. They sacrifice for the good of all.

Prayer: During the stillness of Lent, remind us of the people with "it's not about me" hearts who have touched our lives. Amen

Bill Pike | Richmond, VA

Sunday March 22, 2026

Weeping Jesus

John 11:1-45

This is a favorite Bible story for me because even before raising Lazarus, Jesus makes another of his big "I AM" announcements: I am the resurrection and the life (v. 25) AND Martha makes a confession of faith: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." But amidst these big splashy gospel moments, there is a splash of tears.

The shortest verse in the Bible? “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35). It occurs in this signature story as Jesus finally stands before the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Some of us learned along the way that tears, weeping, and “weak” emotions should be avoided or minimized. For some of us, tears well up regularly, even when we’d prefer to “keep it together.” Some of us are content to let tears come and go as an emotional response to life’s circumstances.

When did you most recently shed tears? When did you most recently accompany someone who was weeping? As we read this story during Lent, anticipating the great wonder of Jesus bringing life out of death, the author pauses the action, and we find ourselves accompanying Jesus as he weeps. Perhaps like those on site at the time, we will be quick to attribute his tears to love (v.36) or evaluate his “performance” against our preferred version of a miracle worker (v. 37). But today, let’s see what difference it might mean for our lives to simply be in the presence of the weeping Jesus. This week, notice those who are weeping. Notice when tears come to your own eyes. Notice the presence of the weeping Jesus and draw near in faith.

Prayer: Enter my lament in your book; store every tear in your flask. (Ps 56:8 from *Psalms Anew*)

A SoSA staff member

Monday March 23, 2026

Quiet Trust, Lasting Inheritance

Proverbs 17:1

The Worldwide English translation of Matthew 5:5 is thought-provoking: “God makes happy those who quietly trust him and do not try to get their own way. The world will belong to them.”

There’s profound wisdom in the paradox of meekness—that those who don’t grasp and claw for power are the ones who ultimately receive it. When we quietly trust God rather than scheming for our own advantage, we position ourselves to receive blessings greater than anything we could manufacture through our own efforts.

The world celebrates the aggressive, the self-promoting, the loudly ambitious. Yet God’s economy operates differently. Those who trust him enough to wait, to serve without demanding recognition, to choose peace over proving a point—these are the ones who inherit lasting significance. Choosing to believe that

God sees our faithfulness releases our grip on outcomes and allows God to work through us rather than despite us.

The “world” we inherit isn’t material wealth or earthly power. It’s the satisfaction of living in alignment with God’s purposes, the peace that comes from surrendering control, and the joy of seeing his kingdom advance through our willing hearts.

Prayer: Lord, help me stop trying to force my way, so I can discover your way, which leads to inheritance far richer than anything I could hope to gain on my own.

Jack Kincaid | Alberta, Canada

Tuesday March 24, 2026

Change Maker

Mark 12:41-44

I have been heavily influenced by the cultures of other countries, especially some that are economically disadvantaged compared to our own. Serving as a United Methodist missionary in West Africa meant nearly everything was a challenge and in short supply: transportation, electricity, decent weather, fuel, and Oreos. However, underlying all that was something unexpected: a personal learning process was going on.

West African friends taught me humility in ways not many North Americans appreciate. With little, they experienced so much that we often ignore or underappreciate, like close-knit families, vibrant community-mindedness, and sharing of resources when others were in need.

Jesus’ disciples were undergoing an unexpected learning process in the temple courtyard. The widow’s contribution was powerful, and Jesus’ comment to the disciples was unexpected; she “has given everything she had, even what she needed to live on.” She had a commitment to God that her world and God’s kingdom were the same, even though her monetary contribution was no match to that of the rich folks. She knew something they didn’t. Her precious penny powerfully represented a faithful inheritance of all God’s kingdom would reveal for her—past, present, and future.

Prayer: Papa God, thank you for the exciting revelations of your kingdom through your relationships with others as you want them to be. May we be

the disciples for whom you want to inherit the earth—in all the ways you want it to be.

Kip Robinson | Glen Allen, VA

Wednesday March 25, 2026

Meekness Eventually Won

Matthew 23:1-12

I was invited to attend the 50th wedding anniversary of a couple in the rural church I served. One family member told me the wife had tried to stop the romance from the start, but her husband had won her over with patient meekness.

He had fallen in love with the beautiful girl who sat in the front of the school bus. One day, he decided to act. He tore off a piece of notebook paper and wrote, “Will you go with me?” He folded it and had it passed to the girl. He watched her read it and write her reply. He saw her pass the note back. He opened it to read: “You are too short.” Undaunted, the young boy sent a final message that his future wife would later say won her heart. It read: “I will grow.”



I believe Jesus spoke of this when he told the crowds that the meek would be blessed and inherit the earth. This meekness is humble, but hopeful. It accepts shortcomings in a world that belongs to those who overcome others, but trusts that Christlike maturity will come and not at the expense of others. This Meekness is the opposite of the loudness of those who seek power; it is notable as a life that speaks softly in words that are simultaneously courageous and bold.

Prayer: God, help us discover the power of meekness. Amen.

Norman Tippens | Hampton, VA

Thursday March 26, 2026

Held Together

Colossians 3:12

What an awesomely dangerous and powerful gift to be one of God's chosen ones—to know with deep faith that I am holy and beloved. Each of these statements contains both/and exchanges and leads me to consider the hidden grace of my existence.

This Lenten journey through the wilderness is one of darkness and of light. I'm drawn to consider the both/and stories throughout scripture, revealing an all-encompassing embrace of everything and everyone. Placed in this wandering and seeking, I encounter the juxtaposition of meekness and power, blessed in the enormity of such an inheritance as referenced in Matthew 5:5.

To be clothed in compassion and kindness is the way of Jesus, showing the professed love of God, and in that I am called to obey. It takes a strength of humility to return cruelty and callousness with kindness. Continuing, we are asked to clothe ourselves with meekness and patience. It seems a very daunting task, one a small and meek person finds overwhelming. To be sure, trust and faith need to be added to the wardrobe!

Prayer: God of life, lead us in The Way, embracing one another and all of life that the world will know the power of Love. Amen.

Nancy Severin | Fort Morgan, CO

Choose Meekness and Focus on the Risen Christ

James 3:13

It is difficult to remain sheltered from the political rhetoric that bombards Americans on social media and news outlets. I find it disappointing when ugly and hateful statements are often used, without regard to Christian values and beliefs. Michele Margolis, in her 2018 book *From Politics to the Pew: How Partisanship and Political Environment Shape Religious Identity*, suggests that people are more likely to adjust their religious affiliations or interpretations to align with their political views, rather than changing their political stances to match their religious beliefs. What a sad observation for Christians!

This Lenten season, if I encounter political statements that veer from Christian beliefs, I hope to choose a path of meekness. Not responding to hurtful comments that tempt me to reply is probably best. Instead, prepare for Easter. Cherish that Jesus rose for all of us. Focus on the risen Christ!

Prayer: Oh God, we praise your holy name. Thank you for the season of Lent, which prompts us to focus on the risen Christ. We appreciate the mercy you have bestowed on us and request your assistance with meekness. Amen.

Dwain Baldridge, Ph.D | Arnold, MO

Saturday March 28, 2026

Blessings of a Young Servant

Deuteronomy 10:12

As a young woman in my twenties, I moved to the Washington, DC, area and started attending a church near Georgetown. Once a month, church members packed lunches to give to homeless neighbors living near Capitol Hill. Curious and admittedly a little scared, I agreed to serve one night.

Our team included a young male pastor plus several church members. We handed out lunches from a window in a large van and prayed for the people we served as we worked.

I experienced a range of emotions. I had recently returned from serving in a West African country as a Peace Corps volunteer. I thought I had seen everything concerning poverty, infant mortality, meager living conditions, and

most of all hopelessness. My eyes were opened that night in Washington. One part of me wanted to cry out for these homeless souls. The other part of me was blessed to serve these people food, listen, and pray. I realized that for some people this might be their only contact with another person that day.

My fear turned to joy as I worked that night. As I reflect on this experience, I think of Jesus mingling with and serving ALL—the rich and the downtrodden.

Prayer: Father, help us serve our fellow human beings with love and joy. Amen.

Barb Radebaugh | Lexington, VA

Sunday March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus' ride into Jerusalem generated fresh hope for Jewish peasants suffering under the thumb of Rome, and those who had experienced his healing touch, wise teachings, miraculous feeding, liberation from evil spirits, and call to follow. Waving branches and shouting—Hosanna! Save us!—they imagined him becoming king and immediately reversing policies of exploitation. Wouldn't we love to see our society become fair and just at the snap of a finger?

The Bible is not a fairy tale. The events of Holy Week reveal what happens when leaders and a society lose their moral compass and destroy what is good. Jesus' confrontation with evil was not to destroy its current manifestation by a magic wand or violent force, but to accept its cross and be himself destroyed—publicly crucified. As we turn toward the cross this Holy Week, we too must die to sin and evil. The promise of our faith is that by this dying, in our baptism and whenever we take up our cross, our God who raised Jesus will raise us as well, so that we become a people freed from the enslaving bonds of a corrupt society and rooted in resurrection life.

Recognizing those nearby and at a distance who have material needs, many congregations receive a special offering during Lent, such as One Great Hour of Sharing. As a church who both suffers and walks in newness of life, let's give this year, and always, as a testimony to the One who died for us that we might live.

Prayer: Saving God, shape your church this Holy Week so that we are neither ashamed of your suffering on the cross nor reluctant to accept your gift of abundant life. Amen.

A SoSA staff member

The Righteous Choose Their Friends Carefully

Proverbs 12:26

My parents had two goals for my sister, brother, and me. One was that we always attend church and become active members. The second was that we graduated from college. To me, a college degree was a one-time thing. Once we had it, we had it. But committing myself to be a practicing and active church member was a lifelong commitment. I prayed for a sign from God to help make this a permanent goal in life.

The answer came when I joined the Army. In basic training, I was one of many recruits. How would I sort out those I wanted to associate with? Ironically, I met one individual who asked me a question. This was the start of finding a friend among so very many. One Sunday, he asked me to join him and three others to attend chapel. After that, the four of us did a lot of things together.



One of the first things we talked about was our backgrounds—where our home was, something about our families, what our interests were, and where we went to school. It turned out that they were all active in church and had a college degree, which I did not have. Here was God’s answer to my prayer. They “sold” me on devoting myself to the works of the Lord and getting my college degree. I wanted to be like them. And I was fulfilling the goals of my parents. Yes, God speaks to us in many ways.

Prayer: Lord, help us find friends who share our values in life consistent with the talents, interests, and beliefs you expect us to use. And give us patience to wait for your replies when we ask you for help, regardless of how long it takes.

Harvey J. Soram | Brems Bluff, VA

Tuesday March 31, 2026

The Community Garden

Psalm 46:10

We spend the dark winter with old planting notebooks and seed catalogs, concocting fertilizers from eggshells, coffee grounds, and banana peels, waiting patiently, like seeds in the soil. Then Spring bursts. Dressed in our best-worn ragged jeans, we arrive at the gate toting our shovels, buckets, and lucky gnomes.

Our eclectic little group happily works the soil we don't own and never will. You'll find us in the rain and heat, insect-bitten, sunburnt, crawling on the ground picking slugs off tender leaves or mourning the loss of squash to mold.

Gardening grows humility, no doubt. Little is within our control. There's as much use in demanding clouds to rain as protesting an unjust June frost. Your nails are always dirty, and you often smell of compost. Not a glamorous hobby.



But then the first tomato! It's like eating sunshine, fresh with a prayer of thanks and a pinch of salt.

By the gate, there sits a basket. Last year, it carried over 500 pounds of donated produce to local pantries.

Maybe “inheriting” the earth isn't about owning or controlling but being meek enough to see all things as one multi-faceted miracle—the flowers, tomatoes, and manure. Maybe that revelation of the earth is the inherited gift from the father and an invitation back to the garden.

Prayer: Thank you for showing me that things are not always as they seem; that dark nights, stormy days, and compost are all held gently in flower petals. Amen.

Leslie Eiler Thompson | Nashville, TN

Wednesday April 1, 2026

Oh Lord, It's Hard To Be Humble

James 4:10

Growing up as the “poor” kid with some friends from families that were better off than mine, I was still accepted as “okay.” Today, as an old guy, I'm the scripturally “dumbest” in our Men's Bible Study group. It's a great group of guys who are far more scripturally knowledgeable than I am. And that's okay too. When I'm the person who shares the devotion for the day, it allows me to bring items that are troubling or difficult to accept or understand at face value. Once I present the devotional, the free-flow of thoughts from the group benefits us all.

A real benefit is that I am not preaching or teaching. I'm just bringing the topic for discussion and then the benefit of synergy takes over.

We meet on Saturday mornings in a Hardee's restaurant. Our presence is appreciated by the restaurant staff and by a number of other diners—both regulars and folks just passing through. Sometimes, travelers have joined us directly or indirectly for the devotional discussions. And we all feel the blessings.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for always being with us and allowing us to lean into your strength as we humbly work to serve you and those around us. In your precious name we pray. Amen.

Denny Engle | Gautier, MS

In a Rich and Fruitful Land

Many congregations will mark this day with worship that recalls Jesus' last supper with his disciples. The famous English poet William Blake (1757-1827) wrote *Holy Thursday*, so amidst our Holy Week reverence and anticipation of resurrection celebration, we who follow Christ would not forget the children who hunger, nor waste the abundance of our fields. Centuries ago, Blake recognized institutional greed's impact on London's children.

Holy Thursday by William Blake

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine.
And their fields are bleak & bare.
And their ways are fill'd with thorns.
It is eternal winter there.

For where-e'er the sun does shine,
And where-e'er the rain does fall:
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appall.

Prayer: Help us, Good Lord, to live your self-giving love through our service, giving, industry, and art, so that we become your body for the world. Amen.

A SoSA staff member

ALICE is Suffering

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The prophet Isaiah includes four “Suffering Servant Songs.” This final Song describes God’s righteous servant whose suffering will ultimately be redemptive for others. Physical suffering is often accompanied by emotional and spiritual grief.

We sometimes use an acronym to describe one common type of physical suffering. ALICE stands for people in our communities who are Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. ‘Asset-limited’ means that while they may be housed and have some transportation, these folks rarely own homes or vehicles. ‘Income-constrained’ means that their education and experience in the workforce don’t allow them many opportunities for advancement. Their wages aren’t keeping up with rising costs. ‘Employed’ obviously means they work, often multiple jobs, but ALICE households face impossible choices in terms of affording food, rent, transportation, and healthcare. While ALICE households may “get by” for a while, emergencies likely find them seeking food from a local pantry. ALICE may be your relative or neighbor, the clerk at a store you frequent, or the teacher at your child’s or grandchild’s daycare center. ALICE often suffers and grieves mightily before seeking help.

Our crucified savior suffered and grieved with the poor because he loved them and shared meals with them. He also suffered and grieved over a world of people who turn away from those in economic hardship, ignoring our neighbors’ needs, while securing our own well-being. Jesus’ death for all of us is sometimes described as a ransom—the redemption of our lives from the clutch of evil and death that casts ALICE and all human life as worthless rubbish. By his suffering and death, Jesus, the very life of God, redeemed us because we are all made in God’s image and able to reflect God’s life and love in the world.

Prayer: Blessed Savior, in meekness we kneel at the cross of your suffering, deeply aware of our own sin, and the suffering of our world. By your holy cross, you ransomed us from evil, sin, and death, so that we might live as your redeemed people. In these last days of Lent, may our love, like yours, be unmistakable. Amen.

Jennifer Davis Sensenig | Rockingham, VA

A Humble Stance

Luke 22:54-62

If you live long enough, you pick up bits of wisdom that become crystal clear, though still difficult to practice. One bit of wisdom I have learned is that a humble stance before the world is a sensible choice. I have experienced many times when a little arrogance brought a fall into shame and disarray.

An early life example was when I was playing Little League as an eleven-year-old. I had achieved an at-bat three-hit streak. That left me a pretty cocky before the pitcher of an opposing team I had never seen before.

I walked up to the plate with a smug smile and jaunty stride, then I stared down the pitcher for a few seconds, daring her to get a pitch past my hot bat! Needless to say, three straight strikes later, I walked back to the dugout with a sullen and red face.

Thankfully, through my Lord Jesus, God has taught me numerous other examples of where my arrogance would get me. More than once, I have felt the shame of Peter in his betrayal of Jesus before the crucifixion (Luke 22:54-62). I am grateful for God's steadfast love and mercy, which extends to those like Peter and me.

Prayer: Lord, in your mercy, keep our arrogance in check with the grace you have always shown us. In the precious name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Andy Brook | Winchester, VA



Society of St. Andrew
GLEANING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

How Can I Help?

GIVE AND SHARE HEALTHY FOOD

EndHunger.org/donate

- When you give, you offer health—and hope for a better tomorrow.
- It costs just 5 cents to share one serving of food.
- Every gift matters!



GET OUT AND VOLUNTEER

EndHunger.org/volunteer

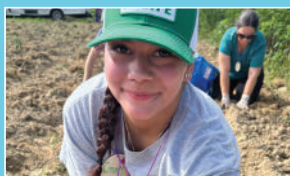
- Contact SoSA to find out more about gleaning opportunities.
- Glean a variety of crops throughout the year!
- Great for individuals, church groups, civic organizations, and school groups!



LEARN MORE AND TELL OTHERS

EndHunger.org/signup

- Join an email list.
- Get the quarterly newsletter.
- Request Bible study, devotional, or VBS materials.



Easter April 5, 2026

With fear and great joy

Matthew 28:1-10

An earthquake, an angel, guards who nearly died on the spot, and a couple of faithful women. The resurrection morning scene in the Gospel of Matthew is super-charged! The emotional palette of this story ranges from fear to joy, and this good news of a risen Savior changes everything. Now we live with hope beyond the death and destruction we see in our world. Now we recognize that rejection by the world never means rejection by God. Now we see that God's redemption is not an idea, but a person, not a distant hope, but a flesh-and-blood reality.

When the two Marys obediently follow the angel's instruction, heading to Galilee to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with the rest of their community, they are both fearful and joyful. Isn't this how we feel when living



into God's call for our lives? There is always some fear, anxiety, trepidation, and reluctance that can slow or even halt our faithful steps. But these apostle women went quickly (v. 8) because a deeper joy was also part of their obedience. And then... Jesus met them.

When have you met the risen Jesus in your life of discipleship? When have you heard his greeting of love and peace? When have you received the confirmation that your role in sharing good news is blessed and affirmed by the risen Lord?

What a precious detail the Gospel-writer included that the women "took hold of his feet!"

Prayer: Lord God, we worship you today with joyful praises of alleluia! Year-by-year, age-by-age, generation-by-generation, we take hold of this truth that Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again! Allelujah! Amen!

A SoSA staff member



Notes

[illegible]



Share nourishing food all year long by joining the 12 Baskets Monthly Giving Program.

Yes! Please sign me up for 12 Baskets

- ☐ \$25 per month will share 6,000 servings servings of healthy fruits and vegetables with children, adults, seniors, and veterans facing hunger
- ☐ \$50 per month will share 12,000 servings of healthy fruits and vegetables with children, adults, seniors, and veterans facing hunger.
- ☐ _____ Other monthly donation amount

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Sign up online at: **EndHunger.org/12-baskets** or through your authorization (below).

- ☐ I'd like to donate through an automatic withdrawal from my checking account. Please contact me to set this up.
- ☐ Charge my credit card monthly ☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover
Account # _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV _____

Signature _____

Mail to: The Society of St. Andrew • 3383 Sweet Hollow Rd • Big Island VA 24526

Hunger Relief Ministries of The Society of St. Andrew

Gleaning Network — A hands-on mission program for all ages, getting healthy food directly from fields and markets to the hungry people who need it most. The Gleaning Network brings together farmers with excess produce, volunteers to glean (pick, dig, or gather) that produce, and agencies feeding the hungry. People in need glean alongside people with plenty in this community-based program, that engages individuals, congregations, and civic organizations in service.

Potato & Produce Project — A produce salvage program, providing direct food relief to our nation's poor, while addressing one of the major causes of hunger: food waste. The Potato & Produce Project salvages and distributes hundreds of tractor-trailer loads of fresh fruits and vegetables to food banks, soup kitchens, and other feeding agencies each year.

Seed Project — A self-help program, providing seed potatoes purchased by The Society of St. Andrew to impoverished rural communities, where people have access to land for gardening. Families plant, cultivate, and harvest their own crops, realizing a yield of about eight pounds of potatoes per pound planted.

Harvest of Hope – A hunger-focused work/study mission program. Participants glean and distribute produce remaining in fields after harvest each morning and learn about the realities of hunger each evening. Bible study and dynamic worship round out days of Christian community and service, providing a basis for on-going commitment to ending hunger. Harvest of Hope offers middle school, high school, and intergenerational events throughout the summer. Alternative College Spring Break programs also available.

Each year, The Society of St. Andrew distributes 90–120 million servings of nourishing food to hungry people throughout the United States.

The Society of St. Andrew, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, grassroots interfaith ministry, has been working toward a world without hunger since 1979.

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