



Church Has Left the Building  
2021



Church Has Left the Building 2021

Lenape Valley Church



Welcome • Inspire • Nurture • Serve

*Daily Devotional*

September 12—October 24, 2021

## *Chasing Lions*

How many of us would choose to chase a lion?

Would you chase a lion into a pit on a snowy day?

What an absurd idea!

We all know to avoid lions at all costs!

The only lions we want to see are in a zoo behind a protective barrier, or on a documentary that gives us the joy of up-close exposure with none of the risk. Lions are 500lbs of fierce danger. Only the foolhardy would venture into their realm intentionally. And if per chance we would find ourselves face to face with a lion, we would run as fast as our legs could carry us.

The challenges we face in this life often look like lions that we would like to avoid if at all possible. But is it possible that there is a God-ordained opportunity to be found in that lion-sized challenge?

For the next 6-weeks, we will consider together whether it might be time to become a Lion Chaser!



## *Chasing Lions* *Finding Your Inner Lion Chaser*

**Sunday, October 24**    I Samuel 3:10 [Samuel]

*Speak Lord, your servant is listening.*

Luke 1:38 [Mary]

*I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.*

Isaiah 6:8 [Isaiah]

*Here I am. Send me!*

Matthew 4:19-20 [Disciples]

*Jesus said, "Come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed Him.*

The Bible is full of them... these crazy lion chasers. From a little boy who answers the voice of a God he cannot see, to a teen girl who signs up to be the mother of God's Son, to a man who accepts the commission as God's prophet, and fishermen who leave their boats and all they know behind to follow a wandering rabbi... each one defies common logic to follow an "immeasurably more" God.

Lion chasing is risky. Lion chasing can feel foolish. Lion chasing takes you out of your comfort zone. But lion chasing also brings you into communion with the One who is known as the Lion of Judah.

As we chase lions in the name of Jesus, may we follow the One who is the Lion of Judah, wherever... whenever... however... knowing that His roar fills us with life!

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** In the morning, pray for God's work in and through LVC in the CHLB projects. At night, celebrate God's good work and the privilege of being a part of what God is doing in the world!!!!

**Friday, October 22** Isaiah 6:8

*Here I am. Send me!*

Isaiah had no idea what he was signing up for when he said these words. God asked, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” There was no hesitation in Isaiah’s response. Like Benaiah, Isaiah chases that lion without a second thought. Wow! Are you like me? I am a bit more calculated... pro/con lists... hours of prayer... consulting close friends all before I make a decision to go. I wonder what God-ordained opportunities I have missed because I have been so cautious. God still uses cautious people, but... perhaps I should try- “Here I am, send me!”

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who have lost a spouse, for comfort, for friends on the journey, for God’s presence to fill aching hearts.

**Saturday, October 23** Ephesians 3:20-21

*Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

May this be your prayer as you look for God-sent ‘lions’ today. Know that He will give you all you need and more to chase a lion into a pit on a snowy day. Blessings!

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for families expecting a baby, for strength and health and the desire to raise their child in the faith. Pray for those who grieve the loss of a child. Pray for LVC as we go out in mission!

## *Chasing Lions*

**Be a Lion Chaser**

**Sunday, September 12** II Samuel 23:20

*Benaiah went into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.*

Can you picture this scene? Who in their right mind chases a lion into a pit? Doesn’t wisdom teach us to run away from a lion? And why would you ever want to be in an enclosed space like a pit with a dangerous wild animal? And who would choose such a risky move when the ground is slippery with snow?

Most of us have grown up learning how to play it safe. We follow Jesus because we expect that he will keep us safe. But the truth is: following Jesus... really following Jesus... is often anything but safe. Think of all the ordinary people that God called to extraordinary paths in life that took them far out of their comfort zone. Is it possible the lions in your life that you instinctively want to avoid, are actually opportunities to be God’s Lion Chaser?

Think of a lion you have faced... or perhaps are facing now. You most likely want to avoid the lion or have the lion go away altogether. But what if you stepped into the pit with that lion trusting that God has a good way forward?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:**

Pray for Grandparents and their ministry with the little ones and not so little ones in their family.

**Monday, September 13** Esther 4:14

*Who knows but that you have been brought  
to this royal position for such a time as this?*

Meet a lion chaser! She is not what we typically think of lion chaser material- pampered, beautiful, a woman in a world that discounted the worth and voice of a woman. At the beginning of her story, she has good reason for not chasing the lion. She could lose her life if she talked with the king on behalf of her people. But when she says yes to God's call, she has a front row seat to God's saving grace! What excuse have you been giving God? Are you ready to live into your 'royal position for such a time as this'?

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for *Manna on Main St.*, a soup kitchen in Lansdale. Pray for the volunteers & guests.

**Tuesday, September 14** I Samuel 7:12

*Samuel took a stone and named it Ebenezer saying,  
"Thus far the Lord has helped us."*

Sometimes we have to look back in order to have the courage to go forward. Samuel does this for his people. He points to and celebrates all that God has done, to God's faithfulness and power. When he raises the Ebenezer, that memory gives the people courage to trust God for the next step. What is your Ebenezer? Point to and celebrate what God has done in your life, so that you can trust that he will do it again!

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for the ministry of *Help a Family*, for resources and wisdom to help our community.

**Wednesday, October 20** II Chronicles 7:14

*If my people, who are called by my name,  
will humble themselves and pray and seek my face  
and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heav-  
en and forgive their sin and heal their land.*

We are God's people- called by His name. What a powerful truth that comes with an important purpose. We are called to seek God on behalf of our land. The Old Testament image is "standing in the gap." It is so easy to complain about our nation, but God is calling us to be on our knees for our leaders. Instead of criticism, will we pray for God's blessing of wisdom for those whose decisions impact the direction of our country.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our nation's leaders, for Godly men and women to seek God's call for our nation.

**Thursday, October 21** Nehemiah 12:43

*The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem  
could be heard far away.*

This joyful prayer of the people of God came after God enabled them to rebuild the Temple. The whole community experienced their joy. Can you imagine if our thanksgiving raised the roof of LVC so that our community had no doubt that God is great and God is good? Is there Joy in the House of the Lord today?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for marriages that are struggling, that they would find God's healing path.

**Monday, October 18** Matthew 26:39

*Not my will but Yours be done.*

These words were spoken by Jesus in the garden as he considered facing the cross. The Bible tells us that he sweat blood, the strain of facing the cross was so great. Jesus asked his Father to “take this cup from me.” But, in the end, Jesus gave his will over to the Father, accepting the way of the cross. *Not my will but Yours...* Do we pray that prayer? Many who have prayed that prayer before us, have faced ‘lions’ because of their willingness to accept God’s will. To pray the prayer of a Lion Chaser is not easy! Will you?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our college students as they strive to learn in this current reality. Pray for teachers and students in our local schools.

**Tuesday, October 19** Zechariah 8:23

*In those days, men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his garment and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’*

What have people heard about you? Do they see you live the faith in their midst? Do they see evidence of God’s love and grace as you work with them, and live in their community? Do they want to be with you because they see God’s presence shining through us? Who do you know is a contagious Christian? Could you be contagious?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for *CB Grandfamilies*-for grandparents raising their grandchildren.

**Wednesday, September 15** Daniel 6:10

*When Daniel learned about the decree, three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*

Daniel prayed even though it was against the law. He knew the penalty was death. But even so, he prayed... with his windows open so that the world could see and hear him pray. He was not willing for the world to quiet his faith.

We live in a country where we are free to worship as we please, yet our society seeks to quiet us more and more. Will we stand boldly for all to see our faith in the living God?

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for new parents, for strength, for joy, for wisdom, for a yearning desire for their child to know Jesus, to love Him and to serve Him.

**Thursday, September 16** Nehemiah 1:13, 16

*Half of the men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor; posted at the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places.*

The neighbors did not want the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, so they shot arrows at the workers. Instead of stopping the work, they decided to stand as human shields to protect the workers. Half working, half risking their lives to protect. Then they switched places! Everyone risked for the other. What risk are you willing to take to protect another? Would you risk your life? Who needs protection today?

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for the *Food Larders* that feed the hungry. May God give our community a heart for those in need.

**Friday, September 17** Genesis 12:1

*The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country,  
your people, and your father's household  
and go to the land I will show you... so Abram left...*

Would you leave all you know to follow Jesus? That's what Abram does... God calls and he leaves everything, to go to a land he knew nothing about. Imagine that... We think of missionaries who make that sacrifice, but we seldom consider that possibility for ourselves. We like our comfort zone, in location and relationship and activities. But is it possible that God is calling you out of that comfort zone today? What do you need to leave behind so that you can answer God's call?

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for the women and staff at the *Women's Recovery Center*, for healing and hope.

**Saturday, September 18** Acts 1:8

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;  
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,  
and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Be my witnesses... not a comfortable calling in this day and age. While we are free to believe in Jesus, we are less welcome to say His name and speak His truth in our daily encounters. But if we do not speak, how will they know? And if they do not know, how will they follow? And if they do not follow, how will they know God's grace? Who needs you to be a witness in their life today? Chase that lion today!

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for those facing health decisions, for wisdom and courage.

## *Chasing Lions*

### *Prayers of a Lion Chaser*

**Sunday, October 17** Matthew 6:10

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Do you ever skip this part of the prayer? Do you cringe when you say these words? Do these words just slip off your tongue so routinely that you don't consider the risk of praying this prayer? Your will be done... what if God's will is for you to chase a lion into a pit on a snowy day? What if God's will is to leave you with the challenge you are facing? What if God's will is radically different than what you are hoping? Do you still want God's will for you?

And then think about praying for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. As you pray this prayer, you are making a commitment to be part of God's kingdom building plans. The work may be hard... the risk perhaps great. Kingdom builders must let go of their own kingdoms for the sake of God's kingdom. Are you ready to be a lion chaser in the name of Jesus?

Pray this prayer each day this week and then listen... allow God to inspire, challenge, encourage a Kingdom dream.

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for those in prison, for the guilty and the wrongly accused. Pray for their chaplains as they bring the transforming news of Jesus Christ into the prison. Pray for the families of prisoners, and for those being released back into society- a healthy path back home.

**Friday, October 15** II Corinthians 12:8

*Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take my [thorn in the flesh] from me. But Jesus said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*

Have you ever pleaded with God to take away a challenge? Paul pleads three times- meaning that his pleading has gone on and on. Sound familiar? But instead of taking the ‘lion’ away, Jesus uses the lion to teach Paul about grace. How might Jesus use your ‘lion’ to teach you? Can you trust that God’s grace is sufficient, that His power is made perfect in your weakness?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those facing financial crisis- for hope and expectation that God will lead them through the storm.

**Saturday, October 16** Acts 8:1,4

*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church and all were scattered... Those who were scattered, preached the Word wherever they went.*

The believers were under attack. Surely that was not a good reality. But once again, God used the ‘lion’ in their lives to bring good. Those believers, who were forced out of their homes, took the Gospel to Asia, Africa, Europe... This ‘lion’ moment exploded the witness of the church like fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Without the persecution, those Christians would have kept the faith in their small gathering. How might God use a ‘lion’ in your life to bring such good?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those struggling with addiction, for God’s healing grace... pray for their families caught also in the cycle of addiction.

## *Chasing Lions*

*How Big is Your God?*

**Sunday, September 19** Genesis 1:1

*In the beginning, GOD*

The first four words of the Bible make an audacious claim: in the beginning GOD. Think about the import of those words. This means that before the beginning- God was... before time, before space, before land and sea, before light and darkness, before order, before life... GOD. People often say that they do not believe in God because there is no proof of God... yet, the Creator is not a part of the creation. God is outside time and space, like a playwright looking in on his characters watching the plot unfold. We would only see Shakespeare in his plays if he chose to write himself into the script. In the same way, the Creator is outside all that we can tangibly know, yet we see the thumbprint of God on every aspect of the creation... the details... the beauty... the order and harmony of the original design... the capacity to heal when we break that order. When we look at the creation, we begin to get just a small glimpse of how very big our God is. Today, marvel at God’s creation and let that glimpse amaze you with God’s greatness.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for *Samaritan’s Purse*- a Christian organization that does building repair for people in need. LVC’s adult mission team has served with them several times. Pray for the families in need and volunteers.

**Monday, September 21** Psalm 51:17

*The sacrifice God desires is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Why does God “desire” a broken spirit?

The Psalmist helps us to understand the meaning of “broken” when he connects that description with “contrite”. Contrite means to be penitent, aware and willing to confess failure and sin. To be contrite is to recognize need. Being contrite opens our hearts to the presence of God.

Take time today to confess... to bring to God those areas of failure and sin... to allow God to bring healing and grace. As you experience grace, open your heart to offering grace, and thus to experience the kingdom of heaven.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the safety of the *First Responders* in our community, and for their families. Thank God for their sacrifice.

**Tuesday, September 22** James 4:6

*He gives more grace. Therefore it says,  
“God opposed the proud and gives grace to the humble.”*

Grace is God’s gift... offered to all... but only some welcome the gift. The poor in spirit recognize their need for God’s grace. What keeps you from receiving God’s full grace? What keeps you from experiencing the kingdom?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for people suffering from disasters. How can you put your prayer into action?

**Wednesday, October 13** Philippians 4:8

*Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent and praiseworthy- think of such things.*

Do you need a break from facing the ‘lions’ in your life? Too often we allow the challenges in our lives to monopolize our thinking. They invade our sleep and control our moods. Paul gives us a simple way to get a break from the lions in our lives- Change the direction of your gaze. “Think of” the good that God has placed in your life. You will discover that shifting your focus off your problems offers you a needed respite.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who live in the midst of poverty and violence... God’s safe refuge.

**Thursday, October 14** Matthew 5:10

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

None of us wants to be persecuted... We want to be liked and affirmed and welcomed. But there are many in this world who pay a dear price for claiming the faith. Even in our country, it is becoming more challenging to stand up for Jesus. Are you willing to face that ‘lion’? Are you willing to be persecuted for righteousness sake?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Dunns, the Hinkeldeys, the Suttons, and Paulette Thomas as they serve on the mission field.



**Monday, October 11** Matthew 8:1-4

*Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man [who had leprosy]... “Be clean!” Immediately he was cured.*

In this moment we see the One “through whom creation came into being.” (John 1:3) Jesus was the Word spoken that brought light and life into God’s good creation. Here in this moment, we see Jesus speaking life for a leper, recreating his body to be as God created him to be. Jesus is the Redeemer who is drawing all creation back to the garden, one act of love at a time. We yearn for a life without lions. This story teaches us to yearn even more for the One who can tame the lions in our lives.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for caregivers, that Jesus would lighten their burden. Pray for our front-line workers who risk their lives to care for others.

**Tuesday, October 12** Acts 16:24-25

*The jailer put Paul and Silas in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening.*

Do the ‘lions’ define you, or do you tame the ‘lions’ in your life? Paul and Silas are in a dungeon, shackled, hungry, cold... but there they are singing praises to God. They claim the night! They refuse to be defined by the lion that has them in its jaws. Their witness of joy transforms their jailer and their fellow prisoners and by the end of the night the jailer and his family are baptized, and the men are free.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Elders and Deacons of LVC.

**Wednesday, September 23** Luke 18:13

*But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner.’*

We eat when we feel the pangs of hunger. We drink when our throat is parched. We sleep when our eyes are heavy with exhaustion. Jesus teaches the blessing of being poor in spirit- recognizing our poverty opens us up to God’s mercy.

Take a moment to beat your breast and cry out, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Military and their families. Pray for the Chaplains who are dedicated to helping them navigate the challenges of serving.

**Thursday, September 24** John 15:18

*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.*

When have you been “hated”? When have you faced disrespect? When have you felt unwelcome? When have you paid the price for what you believe is right?

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.* Most of us have not felt the sting of a whip or the cold steel of a prison cell bed because of our faith. Would we hold fast to the faith if there was a cost? Would we raise our children in the faith if it was dangerous to claim the name of Jesus? How do we let the subtle judgment of our society quiet our witness?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Deacons as they care for God’s people. Pray for Jeff and Carol Stern in their ministry of visitation.

**Friday, September 25** Romans 5:1-5

*We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts.*

Look back in your life at a time of suffering. Allow time to give you perspective. Look for the blessings in that suffering - the perseverance, character, even hope. Look for God's hand in the midst, perhaps not in the way you wanted, but in the way that God willed. Look for his "love poured out into your heart" today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for families that are dealing with brokenness. Pray for marriages stressed by the challenges of living through the pandemic.

**Saturday, September 26** Psalm 42:1

*As the deer pants for flowing streams, so my heart pants for you O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

The Kingdom of Heaven, promised to those who are poor and persecuted, is the dwelling place of God. Jesus describes the poor and persecuted as those whose souls "thirst for the living God." That thirst is an openness to, in fact a yearning for the presence of God.

What do you "thirst" for? What is your heart's desire? Where do you find fulfillment? Take a moment today to rest in the presence of God and allow Him to fill you.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for front line workers who sacrifice for the sake of others. Pray for their safety. Pray for their families. Pray for those they serve.

***Chasing Lions***  
***Life Without Lions***

**Sunday, October 10** Genesis 1:31

*God saw all that He had made and it was very good.*

Genesis chapter 1 gives us a picture of life without lions. Yes, there were lions in God's creation, but those lions lived in harmony with all the other creatures. We see life not death in this picture. Can you imagine walking through this garden, enjoying the beauty, savoring the fruit, talking with God. The Bible calls this 'paradise'. Wouldn't you like to live in a place where lamb and lion can lie down together?

Soon a 'lion' enters this paradise in the form of a serpent, hell-bent on corrupting God's "good" creation with sin. Humanity could have chosen to chase that lion down, as Benaiah chased the lion into a pit on a snowy day. Instead, humanity allowed the serpent to have his way, bringing death into God's perfect creation. Since that moment, we have faced one 'lion' after the next, each a new challenge and danger. Will we chase down the lions in our lives, or will we allow them to bring death into our world?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the children and families in the YMCA preschool program at LVC. Pray for their teachers and leadership, for a healthy, caring environment. Pray for the families struggling economically in this COVID reality.

**Friday, October 8** Isaiah 43:1

*Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine!*

When we adopted our youngest son, he gained the name Bell. Every night I will remind that precious little four year old that he was a Bell, and would always be a Bell. I wanted him to know without a doubt that he had a family that would never let him go. That's what God is saying to you- *You are Mine!* There is nothing that can separate you from His love.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who volunteer in the ministry. Thank God for their sacrifice. Pray for their encouragement. How does God want to use you?

**Saturday, October 9** Deuteronomy 31:7-8

*Be strong and courageous for...  
the Lord himself goes before you and will be with you,  
he will never leave you nor forsake you.*

God speaks this promise to Joshua as he prepared to lead the people into the Promised Land. Remember the 'giants' they were facing. Imagine their fear as they faced their 'lions'. This promise is for you as you face the 'lion' in your life. Your fear is real, but God's promise is true. Imagine God's presence going before you into the pit where the lion dwells. God's presence goes with you and will never leave you. Be a courageous Lion Chaser with God's presence!

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those struggling with the realities of aging. Pray for families making hard decisions.

## *Chasing Lions*

*God has a Lion for YOU!*

**Sunday, September 26** Matthew 14:16

*"You feed them."*

Imagine a crowd of over 5000 sitting on the hillside. They have come to hear Jesus preach. They have faithfully followed him from place to place to listen and to bring their sick for Jesus to heal. Now they have run out of the food they brought along and there is nowhere near where they could find a meal. When the disciples point out to Jesus that the crowd is hungry, his response is simple and direct: "You feed them."

If you remember the story, the disciples were quick to point out that they didn't have the resources to purchase such a large feast for the hungry crowd. It never occurred to them that if Jesus asked them to feed the crowd he would also give them all they needed to accomplish that task. Instead, they did what we often do, they considered their meager stores and concluded that this "lion" was too hard to tackle.

Have you ever said "no" to a call of God? Have you ever felt that you were not up to the task... that surely there was some other way to care for that need? Think back... what would have happened if you said "yes" and trusted that God would give you all you needed to meet the challenge?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for people facing terminal illness, for peace, for relief from suffering, for God's presence in the midst, for their families and caregivers sharing the journey with them.

**Monday, September 27** Romans 8:28

*In all things God works for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.*

We are often quick to define a situation as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Perhaps you are currently caught up in one of those definable realities. In the midst, it is often hard to see what God is doing, hard to see God’s “good work”. Take a moment, close your eyes, and ask God to show you His “good”. Is it possible that God is allowing you to face a lion so that you can experience the “good” He will bring?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the staff of Lenape Valley Church.

**Tuesday, September 28** Isaiah 54:2

*Enlarge the place of your tent,  
stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back.*

Do not hold back... that’s a challenging call... God is calling us through the prophet Isaiah to stretch, perhaps even beyond our comfort zone, to make space for another. Often we are protective about our boundaries, making sure that we allow in only those we know and care about. But what about the others... would we make room for them? Are we willing to welcome those who come with their own hurts and needs? Will you stretch your tent curtains wide today?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for people struggling with suicidal thoughts, for families in the grief after a suicide. God’s healing grace.

**Wednesday, October 6** Psalm 27:1

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?*

Take a moment to remember how BIG our God is. Our God is the Creator of heaven and earth. When we begin to imagine the expanse of the universe, we begin to realize that God is greater than we can even grasp. Our God is awesome. Our God is greater than the biggest challenge we will ever face. What do we need to fear if God is our ‘stronghold’?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our missionaries as they serve in different cultures, that they may be able to introduce people to Jesus and help them grow in faith.

**Thursday, October 7** Luke 2:8

*There were shepherds living in the fields nearby,  
keeping watch over their flocks at night...  
An angel of the Lord appeared... and they were terrified.*

Take a moment to stand in the sandals of those shepherds... They had no way of comprehending what they were seeing. We know the rest of the story, but those shepherds did not. While they were just terrified, God had a plan. Have you ever wondered- ‘How can this be happening? What do I do now? I don’t understand.’ In those moments, when you are terrified, God has a plan for you. Will you trust Him?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the ministry of the *Gift of Life House* that supports transplant patients and families.

**Monday, October 4** I Peter 5:8

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him by standing firm in the faith.*

We are ‘modern’ people... so we seldom talk about the ‘devil’. But Jesus was very clear in his teaching that evil has a face and intention and is very dangerous for us. Jesus taught us to pray: “Deliver us from the Evil One.” We are wise to fear such a ‘roaring lion’ that is looking to ‘devour’ us. Have you ever known the assault of evil that impacts your health, emotions, family, community? Pray for the faith to ‘stand firm’ in the face of a ‘roaring lion.’

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who are looking for a job today. Pray for the peace of Christ in an anxious time. Pray for God’s hand to support them and guide them to the next step.

**Tuesday, October 5** Psalm 23:4

*Even though I walk through the Valley... I will fear no evil...*

Do you remember why the Psalmist does not need to fear? “Your rod and staff they comfort me...” A shepherd’s rod was used to beat away wild animals and the staff had a hook that could secure around a wandering sheep to bring it back. Do you need God’s rod today to beat back the ‘lions’? Do you need God to draw you back from a moment of wandering? Know that God is your Shepherd... your ‘good’ Shepherd today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for *Cornerstone Christian Academy* and the *Common Place* in SW Philly.

**Wednesday, September 29** Matthew 28:19

*Go and make disciples of all nations...*

Imagine being one of the disciples when Jesus gave His Great Commission. The disciples had never left their country. Their travel radius was confined to a geographical area smaller than New Jersey. The world to them was the ‘unknown’, with languages and customs they did not understand. How would they be able to reach all nations? But that is exactly what Jesus asked them to do... and what Jesus is asking us to do. While most of us are more travelled than those disciples, reaching the world is still a huge ask. Where in this world is Jesus sending you with His good news?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those struggling to forgive. Ask for the grace to be able to forgive.

**Thursday, September 30** John 20:17

*Go and tell my brothers...*

Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Jesus. What a privileged place she has in our faith story! But with the privilege of meeting Jesus comes the responsibility to tell others. For Mary this will be hard. Women were not supposed to teach the men, yet Jesus intentionally sends a woman to teach the disciples the good news. Mary answers that call with the courage of Benaiah chasing a lion. Will you?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for Sunday School, and Genesis and youth ministry teachers that they would joyfully, creatively and Biblically share the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Friday, October 1** Isaiah 58:9-10

*If you do away with the yoke of oppression...if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday.*

This word from God was spoken through the prophet Isaiah over 800 years ago, and yet His call speaks into the need of our community today struggling with a pandemic. The hurting of our community this past year has offered us many opportunities to answer this call. Where do you see the need? Imagine the light that God is bringing into our hurting community as we answer the call. Where can you step out in faith today?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those living alone, for God's presence, for good friends, for peace in the quiet moments. How might you ease someone's loneliness?

**Saturday, October 2** Matthew 26:40

*Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.*

Do you remember the parable of the sheep and the goats? Jesus identifies his sheep as those who care for the least of these... they do it so naturally that they are even unaware of the import of their actions. The goats in Jesus' parable are defined not by any 'bad' act, but rather by missing the opportunity to do good. Are you a sheep or a goat? Where is your opportunity to live as a sheep today?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the ministry of *Bold Hope* and for the healing of Haiti.

***Chasing Lions***  
***The Fear of Lions!***

**Sunday, October 3** Acts 2:14

*Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd...*

This is Peter's preaching debut as a preacher. Imagine your first sermon preached to an unfriendly crowd. Peter recognizes that he is facing people who had called out "Crucify, crucify" when Jesus was before Pilate. This is not just an unfriendly crowd this is a dangerous crowd. Yet, Peter stands... as do the other disciples... They face the crowd and Peter preaches a sermon few preachers would have the courage to preach. Where did that courage come from?

Think about Peter before this day... Peter argued with Jesus about going to Jerusalem- wanting Jesus to avoid the danger and ultimately to avoid the cross. Peter ran when Jesus was arrested. Peter denied he knew Jesus as he stood outside the trial of Jesus. Peter was hiding when Jesus hung on the cross. In each of these moments we see the humanity of Peter, fearful, unsure, struggling to be faithful. But then Pentecost happens... the Spirit fills Peter, and suddenly he has the courage to face the 'lions'. Have you known the gift of the Spirit, filling you with God's presence, God's courage, God's direction? Pray for that filling today and see what 'lion' God has in store for you.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for Refugees looking for safe haven. Pray for the children... for the families... for the Christians who are homeless because of their faith.