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## Additional Material

Missionary material is found at [prayercards.lcms.org](http://prayercards.lcms.org)  
Cover map from Google Earth © 2020 Maxar Technologies centers over Jerusalem with Italy appearing on the left and covering much of the area described in Acts' missionary journeys

# The Word of the Lord Grows

Forty Day Lent Devotions



He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he  
has established justice in the earth; and the  
coastlands wait for His Law.

## March 16-21

Amos 9:9-15

Acts 8:26-40

Joshua 2:8-14

Jonah 1:4-16

Revelation 3:14-22

## In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches.

When Jacob fled Laban and returned to the Promised Land, he feared how Esau might receive him. It is an unexpected and beautiful moment when Esau “ran to meet his brother, fell on his neck and kissed him and they wept” (Gen. 33:4).

The sweet reconciliation of the two brothers did not set the tone for future generations. Tensions between Israel and Edom (the nation issued from Esau) swung between various states of distress. In Amos’ day, there was great frustration at how Edom prospered unjustly at Israel’s expense. Amos promised justice would fall (1:11-12) and even that the remnant of Edom would once more be possessed by Israel (9:9-15).

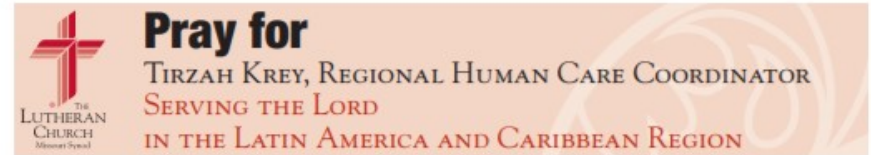
For centuries, Amos’ prophecy lay waiting for fulfillment. Then, the greatest injustice fell on Israel’s Messiah. As Edom had once mocked the destruction of Jerusalem, now Jerusalem’s leaders mocked the destruction of their own Messiah. But the day the Lord had come! The Lord raised up the fallen booth of David in the resurrection of Christ crucified. Not only has the everlasting monarchy been restored to the Son of David, but all nations are given to the Son of Man, and humanity is lifted up to eternal life by the Son of God.

Amos’ text finally became clear when Christians debated whether the Gentiles need to be changed into Jews to receive the gift of Christ’s kingdom. Remembering Amos, James sees the Edomites and the Gentiles joining the house of David while remaining Gentile. “My judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God” (Acts 15:14-21). The church rejected the triumphalist privilege of the conqueror to mock and change subjected peoples. Instead, as Esau once welcomed his brother, so the church receives the Gentiles as brothers and sisters in Christ.

- Rev. Daniel Guagenti

We pray

Lord, fill our hearts with joy in sowing the peace of Your gospel. Amen.



Tirzah Krey, B.S.N., serves the Lord through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the Latin America and Caribbean region, based in the Dominican Republic. In her role as regional human care coordinator, Tirzah works alongside pastors, deaconesses and seminary students to promote community health and to complete congregation health visits. She coordinates community health initiatives and fairs where mission plants are located in this region. Tirzah conducts well-child checks and teaches health education inside Lutheran and public elementary schools. She also serves with regional leadership to care and advocate for the missionaries and their families serving in the Latin America and Caribbean region in all aspects of their physical, spiritual and emotional health.

Tirzah intentionally shares the Gospel through the relationships she builds in all her activities.

Tirzah was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Her home congregation is Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada. She received her bachelor's degree in nursing (B.S.N.) from the University of Windsor. She was very involved in the University's Nursing Society during her college years, organizing events and fundraisers for community charities and working to improve student life on campus. Tirzah worked at Harper University Hospital, Detroit, for two years before serving in Latin America. She also worked with Bethesda doing camp ministries for adults with disabilities and, in 2012, participated in a mission trip to Nicaragua. Tirzah's hobbies include traveling, reading, volunteering at church and spending time with family.



Pray for Tirzah as she serves the churches and people around the Latin America and Caribbean region, especially in the Dominican Republic. Ask God to give Tirzah strength and peace as she travels to build her prayer and financial support network. Pray for her transition from Canada to the Dominican Republic. Ask God to be with Tirzah as she experiences known and unknown challenges in the days and weeks ahead. Let's give God thanks that Tirzah has been appointed to this new position and that she is serving God and His Kingdom faithfully.

To connect with Tirzah, email her at [tirzah.krey@lcms.org](mailto:tirzah.krey@lcms.org), follow her on Instagram at [nurse\\_krey](https://www.instagram.com/nurse_krey), or check out her Facebook group at [facebook.com/groups/TirzahTales](https://www.facebook.com/groups/TirzahTales)

• BIRTHDAY: Aug. 12 • HOME DISTRICT: Lutheran Church—Canada

- Pray daily for Tirzah — and how you can support and tell others about her ministry. Visit [lcms.org/tirzah.krey](https://www.lcms.org/tirzah.krey)
- Learn about LCMS international work at [international.lcms.org](https://www.international.lcms.org)
- Support and adopt an international worker. Call 888-930-4438.

March 20, 2020

Read Revelation 3:14-22

**You say, “I am rich,” not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.**

The flu recently ran through my household. At one point, I opened every door and window possible. I wanted to change out the air. Now, while the incoming Texas air was not nearly as cold as in other locales, it was still quite invigorating.

Behold, Jesus stands at the door and knocks (v. 20). When He enters, He changes out everything He finds. He breathes new life into the mephitic air of our flesh and soul. He replaces our air with His own. He breathes life into us. He breathes forgiveness and vitality. He dispels sin and death.

This is a good image for us to ponder during Lent and as we focus on missionary work. We realize our great need for Jesus to breathe new life into us. We see how stale we have become in our sin and weakness. We realize it is our Lord who opens the door and breathes new life into those who do not know Him.

The air He breathes into us is faith refined by fire, which shines as pure gold (1 Pt 1:7). While we might see the things burnt up as painful loss, with our Lord they are a treasure beyond measure. The air He breathes in will certainly invigorate us as we are disciplined by our Father.

If you think of the kind of discipline that doesn’t “spare the rod,” after such discipline it might be hard to sit anywhere! With our Lord, however, His discipline enables us to sit with Him upon His throne!

- Rev. Matthew Brackman

We pray

Breathe Your wind of change into our complacent lives, O Lord. Grant us the gift of Your Holy Spirit to enliven us as Your people. Let the breath of Your life fill us. Let us be desirable in Your sight. Amen.

Read Acts 8:26-40

March 17, 2020

**Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.**

I was blessed as a child to grow up in a working-class neighborhood with families from many different nationalities. We played with children whose parents came from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. We had chums from Africa and the nations of Central and South America. They had names like Giuseppe, Quang, Angus and Ali.

A few of my friends’ families found themselves far from their homeland having fled war and civil unrest. Happily, kids are kids, and share the same joy of kicking around a soccer ball.

Philip was among those who were scattered after the persecution in Jerusalem. He went on to proclaim Christ amidst the borderland region, a crossroads for different nationalities. It was there that God led him to meet a traveling government official from Ethiopia in North Africa.

Philip spotted the Ethiopian while the man was reading in Isaiah, “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth” (Acts 8:33). Then we hear that “Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

They would have discussed the harsh reality of sin and the one thing that we all have in common—our need for a Savior. He told Him about God who became flesh and blood, just like the two of them, so that He could suffer and die in our place on the cross to redeem us from our sins. He showed him from the Old Testament how God had truly made good on His promise to Abraham, “Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed” (Acts 3:25).

- Rev. David Tannahill

We pray

Heavenly Father, thank You that today more of our neighborhoods resemble the crossroads of many nations. Like Philip, lead me to share Your grace with folks who, just like me, need a Savior. Amen.

March 18, 2020

Read Joshua 2:8-14

## **As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted.**

Rahab worked as a prostitute. She took husbands from wives and fathers from families. She helped herself to income that should have put shirts on backs and bread on tables. She polluted her body and countless beds, before tests and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases. She hung around perversion, violence, theft, treachery, blackmail, abortion (crimes connected to prostitution yet today, and we have police). God's decree destined her for heathen's destruction, and she deserved it.

What a magnificent miracle that she believed Israel's Lord would save her. Somehow even hearsay about Him convinced her He would have one such as her. The Word of His almighty mercy melted her heart, for when mortals barricade every door, He busts in a window. Unworthy does not mean unwanted, and of her scarlet letter He could braid a cord to bind her to Him. He, the bearer of His people's sinful failures and wicked weakness, could bind her to Him in a way that even sexual intimacy hadn't connected her, because He took responsibility for the iniquity. He would bind Himself to her by atonement and forgiveness, for deliverance and for reconciliation.

The human heart is the widest frontier for the Gospel's mercy mission. Far or near, no conscience is foreign to Jesus, who has become familiar with the blackness there, been killed by it, and come back to life again in love. He stitched heaven to earth, God to humankind, and His kingdom to criminals by His blood's crimson line. He approaches each as neighbor, brother and sister. Sexually immoral? Participated in abortion? Neither, but still self-righteous? This Savior's gracious pardon and promise is your lifeline down from the gallows and out of the guilt and grief. And if for us, then for any!

- Rev. Michael Salemink

We pray

Lord Jesus, melt our hearts; mold our witness with Your mercy. Amen.

Read Jonah 1:4-16

March 19, 2020

## **Let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood.**

Consider the details of a story. A man is sleeping in a boat while a great storm is raging around him. His shipmates come and wake him, wondering how he can sleep during the storm. Later, lots are cast concerning this man's fate, and then the man is (essentially) killed to appease the wrath of God. This is done by unbelievers, but as a result of their actions some of them come to faith in this man's God.

Who is the man in the story? No one could blame you if you answered, "Jesus." But this is the story of Jonah. There are remarkable parallels between his life story and Jesus' story. And we haven't mentioned the biggest connection: Jonah returned to dry land after three days in the belly of a fish, and Jesus returned to life after three days in the grave. Do these points of connection mean anything, or are they just coincidences? See what Jesus says in Matthew 12:38-41.

As you think about Jonah and his connection to Jesus, consider your own life story. Do you see any connections between Jesus' life and yours? There are at least three. He was baptized, and you were baptized. He died, and you will die. He rose from the dead, and you will rise from the dead, too. These connections are not mere coincidences. His resurrection is now yours, too.

One huge difference between Jonah and Jesus is their approach to the missions of mercy given to them by God. Jonah is trying to run away from God's plan. But Jesus willingly came to die in your place, as His Father intended.

In many ways we are nothing like Jesus. We are sinners. He is not. But in the most important way we are just like Him: we will live.

- Rev. Jonathan Mueller

We pray

Lord Jesus, we thank You for coming to die like us, so we can rise with You. Amen.