



MT. PLEASANT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

14255 Rippy Rd. | Gulfport, MS 39503

Rev. Kordell Sims, Sr. **Senior Pastor**  
Rev. DeNondrea Sims, **Assoc. Pastor**

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## **2023 Table of Contents Pastoral Vision Packet**

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REV. KORDELL SIMS,SR.  
*Senior Pastor*

REV. DENONDREA SIMS  
*Associate Pastor*





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Greetings Mt. Pleasant,

There's a beautiful scripture I would like to share with you that, no doubt, you have read or sung at one point in your walk with the Lord. Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it." While I have little doubt that the vast majority of us are happy to see the year 2022 in the "rear-view mirror," so to speak, we know that the simple changing of a calendar will not fix everything but can be a refreshing head start as we go into 2023.

As we start a new year, it is a natural time to reflect on the past and set goals for the future. But as Christians, our goals mustn't be just about achieving personal success or happiness but rather about honoring God and living according to His will.

One way to set godly goals is to pray and seek guidance from God. Take time to listen to His voice and ask for His direction. The Bible says in Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." When we seek God first, He will lead us and give us the desires that align with His will for our lives.

Another way to set godly goals is to consider how they will impact others. As followers of Jesus, we are to love and serve others. Therefore, our goals should focus on blessing and helping those around us rather than just seeking our personal gain.

It is also important to remember that achieving our goals may not always be easy, and we may face challenges and setbacks. But we can trust that God is with us and will give us the strength and guidance to persevere. The Bible says in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who gives me strength."

In conclusion, setting godly goals for the new year is about seeking guidance from God, focusing on how our goals can impact others, and trusting in His strength and guidance to help us achieve them. May God bless your journey toward living a life that honors Him this year.

*Rev. Kordell Sims, Sr.*

Rev. Kordell Sims, Sr.

*Rev. DeNondrea Sims*

Rev. DeNondrea Sims



## Pastoral Vision 2023 ( iMove )

- I-Intentional (Discipleship)**
- M-Missional (Outlook)**
- O-Onward (Focus)**
- V- Vibrant (Worship)**
- E-Empower (All Persons)**

We are a life-changing ministry reflecting the Glory of God through Worship, Outreach, Discipleship, and Servanthood.

### **Pastoral Teaching Focus (SWEEPS):**

Spiritual Leadership | Worship | Evangelism | Education | Pastoral Care | Stewardship

### **Teaching Ministry Initiative (ACTT)**

Apply, Change, Transform, Take Action

### **Young People Innovate Initiative**

(Youth Zoom Hangouts) SWAG | (Students who Admire God)

(Young Adult Zoom Hangouts) R-Gen | (Radical Generation)

### **Fellowship before Worship**

Coffee & Convo (Sunday Edition)

8:30am-8:55am Mt. Pleasant

10:30am-10:55am St.Paul U

### **Seasoned Senior and Retired (SSR)**

Coffee & Convo (Tuesday Edition ) 10:30am-11:30am

### **(E.S.I) Equip the Saints Initiative**

1st Sunday Month for nine months Each member will be equipped with handouts with vital information to transform and equip members in their biblical knowledge.

### **(G.A.P) God Answer Prayer Worship**

## Quarterly Prayer Meeting

### **Stewardship & Giving Initiatives**

\*Monthly Overview of giving principle

**The Christian businessman**, R.G. LeTourneau, made a practice of giving ninety percent of his earnings to God. One day someone asked him, *"Mr. LeTourneau, is it true that you give ninety percent of your income to the Lord?"* He replied, *"No, I don't give God anything. It all belongs to Him. I just keep back ten percent."*

#### **Three great principles regarding money and possessions:**

1. God owns all things.
2. All things come from God.
3. We and all that we have belong to God.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Unity Initiatives ( one Church two Location)**

- Purpose to incorporate both churches in unity, commonality, and fellowship with worship and Lunch to promote unity.

### **Mission Impact 6**

Church engages in mission six times a year.

#### **\*Target areas:**

- Children/youth
- Homeless community
- Senior Elderly Care (Adopt a Nursing Home)
- Humane Society
- Prison Ministry
- Strengthen Community Relations

### **Evangelism Impact 12**

12 Months campaign engages people in conversation about Jesus and invites the unchurched. In this initiative we will invite people to worship with us to share the Good News.

### **Small Group Initiative (SGI)**

Develop throughout the year



## “4 Keys to Unlock the Power of Giving”

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?" Luke 16:10-12

### **Key #1 – God is the Owner You are the Manager**

"Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management.'" Luke 16:1-2

- Everything comes from God.
- God has expectations of His managers.
- God will hold us accountable for how we managed His money.

"Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17

### **Key #2 – If you are Generous Toward God He will be Generous Toward You**

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Cor. 9:6

Laws of sowing and reaping

1. You can't reap if you don't sow.
2. If you sow you will reap.
3. If you sow you will reap what you sow.
4. You will reap more than what you've sown.

"You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." 2 Cor. 9:11

### **Key #3 – Honor God with the Tithe**

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the Lord Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty." Malachi 3:8-12

- What is a tithe = 10% of your income.
- Who should tithe - Every Christian.
- When should I tithe – When you earn income.
- Where should I give the tithe – To your “storehouse”, the local church.
- Why should I tithe – To obey and honor God.
- What are the results of tithing – God’s protection and provision.
- Can I give more than a tithe – give as much as you have faith to give.

#### **Key #4 – Generosity Goes Beyond the Tithe**

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion.” 2 Cor. 9:7

What is an offering – anything you want to give beyond the tithe What is the attitude of a generous person – cheerful “God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Cor. 9:7

“The secret of financial success is save 10%, tithe 10%, and live on the rest.” John D. Rockefeller

#### **The 70% principle**

1. The first 10% is your tithe
2. The second 10% is your offering
3. The third 10% pays off your debt or is invested
4. Be as generous as you like with the remaining 70%

Ref. Greg Wendschlag

# A Way to Give

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Mt.Pleasant U - GULFPORT, MS

OR PAY USING YOUR PHONE

(TEXT) ChurchTextGiving\$  
TO 73256

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1880

Mt. Pleasant UMC  
Historical Turkey Creek

Mt. Pleasant U / St. Paul U  
Rev. D. Andrew Sims  
Rev. Kendall Sims

Pastors

14255 Rippy Rd.,  
Gulfport, Mississippi



# Mt. Pleasant UMC 2023

Pastors Kordell & DeNondrea (De) Sims

## 2023 Calendar Dates

### JANUARY

January 08 Installation of Church Leaders | 9:00 am  
January 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebrations | 9:00 am  
January 18 Spiritual Leadership Training | 6:00 pm  
January 29 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Worship (St. Paul) SM Mass Choir | 11:00 am

### FEBRUARY

February 05 GO Red for Women | 9:00 am  
February 22 Ash Wednesday Drive Thru-Imposition of Ashes | 6:00 am-7:00 am  
February 25 Lenten Breakfast (Drive-Thru ToGo Plates) | 10:00 am  
February 26 Black History Observance | 9:00 am

### MARCH

#### **Joint Virtual Lenten Luncheon Service (12 Noon) Via Zoom**

**March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>**

March 3 Women on Fire Paint Night | 6:30 pm  
March 8 Leadership Round Table With Pastor Sims (Via Zoom) | 6:00 PM  
March 12 Begin One Great Hour of Sharing Offering UMCOR | 9:00 am  
March 13-15 Spring Revival 2023 | 7:00 pm nightly  
March 21 Laity Live #1 2023 | 6:00 PM

### APRIL

(April 2-8 Holy Week)

April 1 Cook Off on the yard | 12 noon  
April 2 Palm Sunday | 9:00 am  
April 6 Foot Washing Service | 7:30 pm  
April 7 Good Friday Services | 7:00 pm  
April 8 Drive Through Prayer | 12:00 noon-2:00pm  
April 9 Resurrection Sunrise Sunday (Easter) Ball Field | 6:00 am  
\*After Worship Ending Lenten Breakfast (Drive-Thru)  
April 22 Prayer Breakfast | 8:00 am  
April 30 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Worship (Mt. Pleasant) SM Mass Choir | 11:00 am

### MAY

May 6 Lunch For Mothers (Men) | 12 noon  
May 13 Mother Day Tea | 11:00 am  
May 14 Mother's Day | 9:00 am  
May 21 Methodist Minds with Pastor Sims (Class on the Methodism & latest News) | 5:30 pm  
May 21 Baccalaureate 9:00 AM

### JUNE

June 12-14 Vacation Bible School | 2023 5:30 pm

June 18 Father's Day

June 26-30 MS Annual Conference 2023

## JULY

July 10-14 Discipleship Week (Via zoom) | 6:00 pm

July 16 Begin Receiving Back to School Supplies | 9:00 am

July 18 Laity Live #2 2023 | 6:00 PM

July 30 5th Sunday Worship (St. Paul) SM Mass Choir | 11:00 am

Back to School Bash (Blessing of Backpacks| School Supplies) | 4:00 pm-5:00 pm

## AUGUST

August 2 Pastor DeNondrea's Birthday

August 22-25 Pre-Church Anniversaries Activities | 6:00 pm

(Memorial, Senior night (story telling), prayer night (143 minutes)

August 27 143 Church Anniversary | 9:00 am

## SEPTEMBER

Sept. 10 Grandparents Day | 9:00 am

Sept. 19 Laity Live #3 2023 & Celebration of Laity Sunday| 6:00 pm

Sept. 24 Methodist Minds with Pastor Sims (Class on the Methodism & latest News) | 5:30 pm

Sept. 29. Pastor Kordell's 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday

## OCTOBER

### **Pastor Appreciation Month|Breast Cancer & Domestic Violence Awareness**

Oct. 8 Pastors 4<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary/Appreciation Celebration | 2:00 pm

Oct. 9-11 Fall Revival 2023 | 7:00 pm

Oct. 7 Breast Cancer & Domestic Violence Walk | 8:00 am

Oct. 21 Fall Festival 2023 |11:00 am- 2:00 pm

Oct. 29 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Service (Virtual Sunday) | 11:00am

## NOVEMBER

Local church Leadership Appreciation Month

November 14 Laity Live #4 (Via Zoom) | 6:00 PM

November 25 Thanksgiving Day



## DECEMBER

Bible Study Winter Break | Angel Tree Gifts Accepted

December 3 Hanging of the Green | 11:00 am

December 19,20 Christmas Cantata Service SM Mass Choir | 6:30 pm  
19<sup>th</sup> Mt. Pleasant | 20<sup>th</sup> St. Paul

December 31 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Worship (Mt. Pleasant) SM Mass Choir | 11:00 am

## **Ongoing weekly**

Sunday School (Every Sundays | 5:30 pm-Via Zoom)

Youth Fun Day ( Saturday before 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Monthly)

# SUNDAYS & SPECIAL DAYS 2023 Calendar

## SUNDAYS DETERMINED BY ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

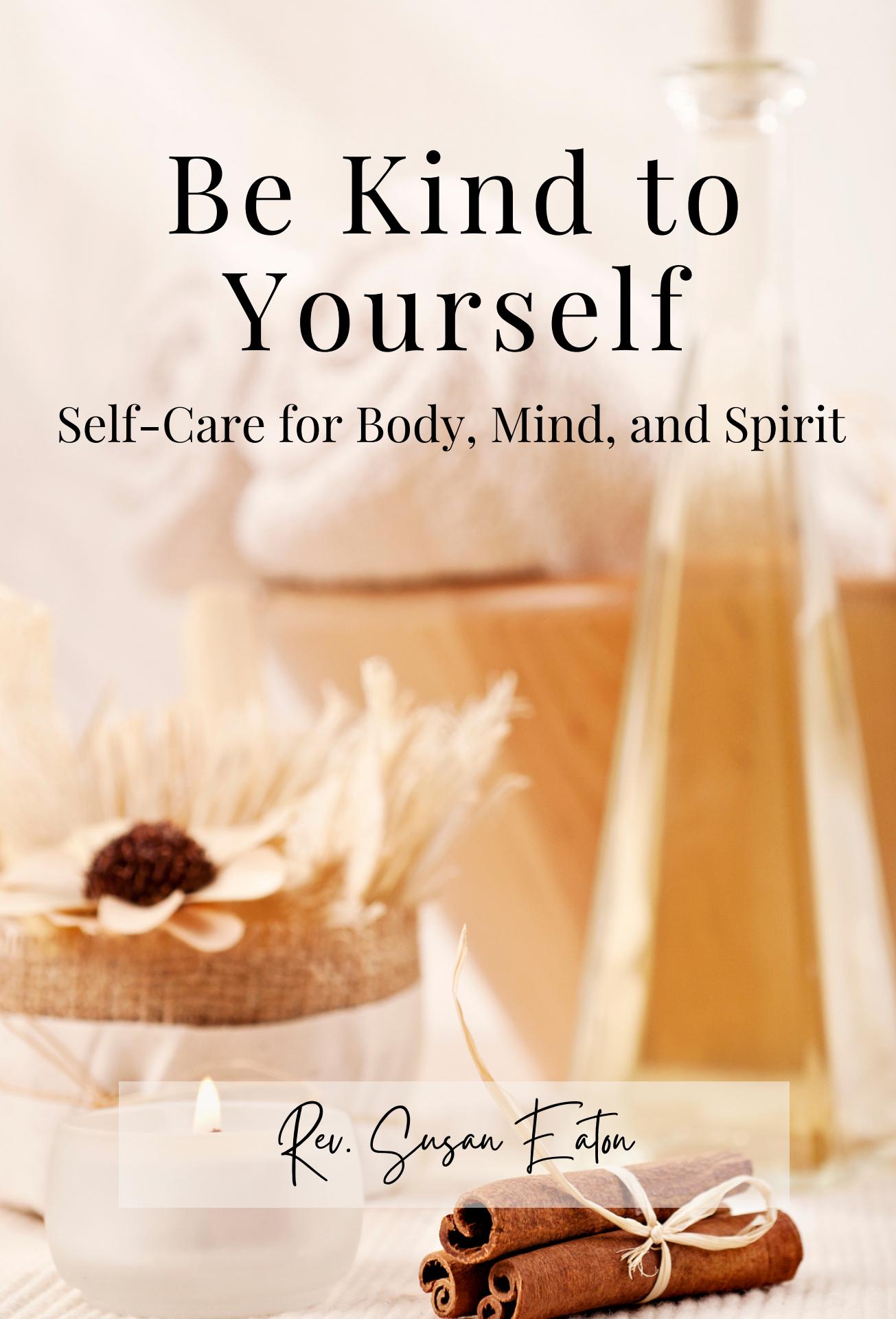
Christian Education, Disability Awareness, Golden Cross Sunday, International Day, Rural Life

<p><b>JANUARY 1   Epiphany Sunday</b> (White or Gold) Isa 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7, 10-14 (<i>UMH</i> 795); Eph 3:1-12; Matt 2:1-12</p>	<p><b>APRIL 02   Passion / Palm Sunday</b> (Purple or Red) Palms Lit: Matt 21:1-11; Ps 118:1-2, 19-29 (<i>UMH</i> 839) Passion Lit: Isa 50:4-9a; Ps 31:9-16 (<i>UMH</i> 764); Phil 2:5-11; Matt 26:14-27:66 or Matt 27:11-54</p>
<p><b>JANUARY 06   Epiphany of the Lord</b> (White or Gold) Isa 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7 (<i>UMH</i> 795), 10-14; Eph 3:1-12; Matt 2:1-12</p>	<p><b>APRIL 03   Monday of Holy Week</b> (Purple or Red) Isa 42:1-9; Ps 36:5-11 (<i>UMH</i> 771); Heb 9:11-15; John 12:1-11</p>
<p><b>JANUARY 08   Baptism of the Lord</b> (White or Gold) Isa 42:1-9; Ps 29 (<i>UMH</i> 761); Acts 10:34-43; Matt 3:13-17</p>	<p><b>APRIL 04   Tuesday of Holy Week</b> (Purple or Red) Isa 49:1-7 (<i>UMH</i> 794); Ps 71:1-14; 1 Cor 1:18-31; John 12:20-36</p>
<p><b>JANUARY 15   2nd Sunday After the Epiphany</b> (Green) Isa 49:1-7; Ps 40:1-11 (<i>UMH</i> 774); 1 Cor 1:1-9; John 1:29-42</p>	<p><b>APRIL 05   Wednesday of Holy Week</b> (Purple or Red) Isa 50:4-9a; Ps 70 (<i>UMH</i> 793); Heb 12:1-3; John 13:21-32</p>
<p><b>JANUARY 22   3rd Sunday After the Epiphany</b> (Green) Isa 9:1-4; Ps 27:1, 4-9 (<i>UMH</i> 758); 1 Cor 1:10-18; Matt 4:12-23</p>	<p><b>APRIL 06   Maundy Thursday</b> (Purple or Red) Ex 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14; Ps 116:1-2, 12-19 (<i>UMH</i> 837); 1 Cor 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35</p>
<p><b>JANUARY 29   4th Sunday After the Epiphany</b> (Green) Mic 6:1-8; Ps 15 (<i>UMH</i> 747); 1 Cor 1:18-31; Matt 5:1-12</p>	<p><b>APRIL 07   Good Friday</b> (No Color) Isa 52:13-53:12; Ps 22 (<i>UMH</i> 752); Heb 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42</p>
<p><b>FEBRUARY 05   5th Sunday After the Epiphany</b> (Green) Isa 58:1-9a (9b-12); Ps 112:1-9 (10) (<i>UMH</i> 833); 1 Cor 2:1-12 (13-16); Matt 5:13-20</p>	<p><b>APRIL 08   Holy Saturday / Easter Eve</b> (White or Gold) Job 14:1-14; Ps 31:1-4, 15-16; 1 Pet 4:1-8; Matt 27:57-66</p>
<p><b>FEBRUARY 12   6th Sunday After the Epiphany; Scouting Sunday</b> (Green) Deut 30:15-20; Ps 119:1-8 (<i>UMH</i> 840); 1 Cor 3:1-9; Matt 5:21-37</p>	<p><b>APRIL 09   Easter Sunday; Easter Vigil</b> (White or Gold) Acts 10:34-43; Ps 118:1-2, 14-24 (<i>UMH</i> 839); Col 3:1-4; John 20:1-18 or Matt 28:1-10</p>
<p><b>FEBRUARY 19   Transfiguration Sunday</b> (White or Gold) Ex 24:12-18; Ps 99 (<i>UMH</i> 819); 2 Pet 1:16-21; Matt 17:1-9</p>	<p><b>APRIL 16   2nd Sunday of Easter</b> (White or Gold) Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Ps 16 (<i>UMH</i> 748); 1 Pet 1:3-9; John 20:19-31</p>
<p><b>FEBRUARY 22   Ash Wednesday</b> (Purple or Grey) Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Ps 51:1-17 (<i>UMH</i> 785); 2 Cor 5:20b-6:10; Matt 6:1-6, 16-21</p>	<p><b>APRIL 23   3rd Sunday of Easter; Native American Ministries Sunday</b> (White or Gold) Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps 116:1-4, 12-19 (<i>UMH</i> 837); 1 Pet 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35</p>
<p><b>FEBRUARY 26   First Sunday in Lent</b> (Purple) Gen 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Ps 32 (<i>UMH</i> 766); Rom 5:12-19; Matt 4:1-11</p>	<p><b>APRIL 30   4th Sunday of Easter</b> (White or Gold) Acts 2:42-47; Ps 23 (<i>UMH</i> 754 or 137); 1 Pet 2:19-25; John 10:1-10</p>
<p><b>MARCH 05   2nd Sunday in Lent</b> (Purple) Gen 12:1-4a; Ps 121 (<i>UMH</i> 844); Rom 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17</p>	<p><b>MAY 07   5th Sunday of Easter</b> (White or Gold) Acts 7:55-60; Ps 31:1-5, 15-16 (<i>UMH</i> 764); 1 Pet 2:2-10; John 14:1-14</p>
<p><b>MARCH 12   3rd Sunday in Lent</b> (Purple) Ex 17:1-7; Ps 95 (<i>UMH</i> 814); Rom 5:1-11; John 4:5-42</p>	<p><b>MAY 14   6th Sunday of Easter; Mother's Day</b> (White or Gold) Acts 17:22-31; Ps 66:8-20 (<i>UMH</i> 790); 1 Pet 3:13-22; John 14:15-21</p>
<p><b>MARCH 19   4th Sunday in Lent</b> (Purple) 1 Sam 16:1-13; Ps 23 (<i>UMH</i> 754 or 137); Eph 5:8-14; John 9:1-41</p>	<p><b>MAY 21   7th Sunday of Easter; Heritage Sunday; Ascension Sunday</b> (White or Gold) Acts 1:6-14; Ps 68:1-10, 32-35 (<i>UMH</i> 792); 1 Pet 4:12-14, 5:6-11; John 17:1-11</p> <p><b>Ascension of the Lord Lections:</b> Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47 (<i>UMH</i> 781); Eph 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53</p>
<p><b>MARCH 26   5th Sunday in Lent</b> (Purple) Ezek 37; 1-14; Ps 130 (<i>UMH</i> 848); Rom 8:6-11; John 11:1-45</p>	

<b>MAY 28   Pentecost (Red)</b> Acts 2:1-21; Ps 104:24-34, 35b ( <i>UMH</i> 826); 1 Cor 12:3b-13; John 7:37-39	<b>OCTOBER 01   18th Sunday After Pentecost; World Communion Sunday (Green)</b> Ex 17:1-7; Ps 78:1-4, 12-16 ( <i>UMH</i> 799); Phil 2:1-13; Matt 21:23-32
<b>JUNE 04   Trinity Sunday; Peace with Justice Sunday (White or Gold)</b> Gen 1:1-2:4a; Ps 8 ( <i>UMH</i> 743); 2 Cor 13:11-13; Matt 28:16-20	<b>OCTOBER 08   19th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Ex 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Ps 19 ( <i>UMH</i> 750); Phil 3:4b-14; Matt 21:33-46
<b>JUNE 11   2nd Sunday after Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 12:1-9; Ps 33:1-12 ( <i>UMH</i> 767); Rom 4:13-25; Matt 9:9-13, 18-26	<b>OCTOBER 15   20th Sunday After Pentecost; Laity Sunday (Green)</b> Ex 32:1-14; Ps 106:1-6, 19-23 ( <i>UMH</i> 829); Phil 4:1-9; Matt 22:1-14
<b>JUNE 18   3rd Sunday after Pentecost; Father's Day (Green)</b> Gen 18:1-15, (21:1-7); Ps 116:1-2, 12-19 ( <i>UMH</i> 837); Rom 5:1-8; Matt 9:35-10:8, (9-23)	<b>OCTOBER 22   21st Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Ex 33:12-23; Ps 99 ( <i>UMH</i> 819); 1 Thess 1:1-10; Matt 22:15-22
<b>JUNE 25   4th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 21:8-21; Ps 86:1-10, 16-17 ( <i>UMH</i> 749); Rom 6:1b-11; Matt 10:24-39	<b>OCTOBER 29   22nd Sunday After Pentecost; Reformation Sunday (Green)</b> Deut 34:1-12; Ps 90:1-6, 13-17 ( <i>UMH</i> 809); 1 Thess 2:1-8; Matt 22:34-46
<b>JULY 02   5th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 22:1-14; Ps 13 ( <i>UMH</i> 746); Rom 6:12-23; Matt 10:40-42	<b>NOVEMBER 05   23rd Sunday After Pentecost; All Saints Sunday (White)</b> Josh 3:7-17; Ps 107:1-7, 33-37 ( <i>UMH</i> 830); 1 Thess 2:9-13; Matt 23:1-12
<b>JULY 09   6th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Ps 45:10-17; Rom 7:15-25a; Matt 11:16-19, 25-30	<b>NOVEMBER 12   24th Sunday after Pentecost; Organ &amp; Tissue Donor Sunday (Green)</b> Josh 24:1-3a, 14-25; Ps 78:1-7 ( <i>UMH</i> 799); 1 Thess 4:13-18; Matt 25:1-13
<b>JULY 16   7th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 25:19-34; Ps 119:105-112; Rom 8:1-11; Matt 13:1-9, 18-23	<b>NOVEMBER 19   25th Sunday after Pentecost (Green)</b> Judg 4:1-7; Ps 123; 1 Thess 5:1-11; Matt 25:14-30
<b>JULY 23   8th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 28:10-19a; Ps 139:1-12, 23-24 ( <i>UMH</i> 854); Rom 8:12-25; Matt 13:24-30, 36-43	<b>NOVEMBER 23   Lections for Thanksgiving Day (No Color)</b> Deut 8:7-18; Ps 65 ( <i>UMH</i> 821); 2 Cor 9:6-15; Luke 17:11-19
<b>JULY 30   9th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 29:15-28; Ps 105:1-11, 45b ( <i>UMH</i> 828); Rom 8:26-39; Matt 13:31-33, 44-52	<b>NOVEMBER 26   26th Sunday After Pentecost; Reign of Christ (White or Gold)</b> Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24; Ps 100 ( <i>UMH</i> 821); Eph 1:15-23; Matt 25:31-46
<b>AUGUST 06   10th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 32:22-31; Ps 17:1-7, 15 ( <i>UMH</i> 749); Rom 9:1-5; Matt 14:13-21	<b>DECEMBER 03   1st Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)</b> Isa 64:1-9; Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 ( <i>UMH</i> 801); 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
<b>AUGUST 13   11th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 37:1-4, 12-28; Ps 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b ( <i>UMH</i> 828); Rom 10:5-15; Matt 14:22-33	<b>DECEMBER 10   2nd Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)</b> Isa 40:1-11; Ps 85:1-2, 8-13 ( <i>UMH</i> 806); 2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
<b>AUGUST 20   12th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Gen 45:1-15; Ps 133 ( <i>UMH</i> 850); Rom 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matt 15:(10-20), 21-28	<b>DECEMBER 17   3rd Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)</b> Isa 61:1-4; 8-11; Ps 126 ( <i>UMH</i> 847); 1 Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28
<b>AUGUST 27   13th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Ex 1:8-2:10; Ps 124 ( <i>UMH</i> 846); Rom 12:1-8; Matt 16:13-20	<b>DECEMBER 24   4th Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve (White or Gold)</b> 2 Sam 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 ( <i>UMH</i> 199); Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38 <u>Christmas Eve:</u> Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96 ( <i>UMH</i> 815); Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
<b>SEPTEMBER 03   14th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Ex 3:1-15; Ps 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b ( <i>UMH</i> 828); Rom 12:9-21; Matt 16:21-28	<b>DECEMBER 25   Christmas Day (White or Gold)</b> Isa 52:7-10; Ps 98 ( <i>UMH</i> 818); Heb 1:1-4, (5-12); John 1:1-14
<b>SEPTEMBER 10   15th Sunday After Pentecost; Grandparent's Day (Green)</b> Ex 12:1-14; Ps 149 ( <i>UMH</i> 861); Rom 13:8-14; Matt 18:15-20	<b>DECEMBER 31   1st Sunday after Christmas Day (White or Gold)</b> Isa 61:10-62:3; Ps 148 ( <i>UMH</i> 861); Gal 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40
<b>SEPTEMBER 17   16th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Ex 15:1b-11, 20-21; Ps 114 ( <i>UMH</i> 135); Rom 14:1-12; Matt 18:21-35	<b>NOTES: Lections for Easter Vigil</b> Old Testament Readings & Psalms: Gen 1:1-2:4a and Ps 136:1-9, 23-26; Gen 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 and Ps 46; Gen 22:1-18 and Ps 16; Ex 14:10-31; 15:20-21 and Ex 15:1b-13, 17-18; Isa 55:1-11 and Isa 12:2-6; Bar 3:9-15, 3:32-4:4 or Prov 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6 and Ps 19; Ezek 36:24-28 and Ps 42, 43; Ezek 37:1-14 and Ps 143; Zeph 3:14-20 and Ps 98; <u>New Testament Reading &amp; Psalm:</u> Rom 6:3-11 and Ps 114; <u>Gospel:</u> Matt 28:1-10
<b>SEPTEMBER 24   17th Sunday After Pentecost (Green)</b> Ex 16:2-15; Ps 105:1-6, 37-45 ( <i>UMH</i> 828); Phil 1:21-30; Matt 20:1-16	

# Be Kind to Yourself

Self-Care for Body, Mind, and Spirit



Rev. Susan Eaton



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# MINDSET IS EVERYTHING

## DEVELOPING SELF-COMPASSION



Compassion is a critical theme in scripture, and it's a common topic in sermons. We talk about the compassion of God in Christ towards us. We talk about how important it is to act in compassionate ways towards others. But we don't seem to talk as much about how important it is to show compassion, love, and kindness to *ourselves*. This guide will lead you to consider each part of yourself — body, mind and spirit — so you can practice compassionate self-care in a wholistic way.

We were all created by God to live an abundant life, but experiencing abundance is not something for which God is solely responsible. Living a life of abundance is something we partner *with* God to experience. One way we do this is by adopting a mindset of self-compassion and self-care.

I've heard many people say they don't have time for self-care. If you resonate with that, let me encourage you not to begin with how busy you are. Let that go for a moment and consider where you are right now. As honestly as you can, answer the following questions:

# BRIEF PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

## Questions

### BODY

- How does your physical body feel?
- How is your energy level?



### MIND

- How is the quality of your focus?
- What has been occupying your thoughts?

### SPIRIT

- What words would you use to describe how your spirit feels?
- How are you and God connecting?

Developing a compassionate self-care mindset doesn't take any time, but it does take practice. The first step in developing this mindset is to pause and think about *how you are* in body, mind, and spirit. So often, we're busy taking care of a million other things that we rarely take the time to stop and pay attention to what we need. Here's where the message of flight attendants everywhere comes in handy: *Put the oxygen mask on yourself before you help others.*

Ultimately, caring for ourselves comes down to our choices. We can make choices that bring abundance into our lives, or we can make choices that bring lack and dis-ease into our lives. A mindset of compassionate self-care is strengthened and grown when we consistently choose to do what is beneficial for us, and purge from our lives whatever is unhealthy, harmful, or destructive. When you take care of your body, you'll notice improvements in mood and clarity of thought. When you take care of yourself spiritually, you'll notice physical and emotional improvements as well.

*A self-care mindset doesn't take any time, but it does take practice.*

# CARING FOR YOUR BODY



As we dive into the topic of caring for our bodies, let me assure you that the focus is not about having a perfect body (as if that even exists anyway). However, cultural ideals of what bodies should look like do affect us and often in a negative way. So take a few minutes to consider the following questions:

1. How do you view your body?
2. Do you appreciate what it does for you every day?
3. Do you see your body as a gift? If not, why is that?
4. Do you regularly criticize your body?
5. How easy is it for you to affirm your body?

Your mindset plays a crucial role in caring for yourself physically. For instance, if you choose to begin a physical routine of some sort, but you also hate your body and say cruel things to your body, you're going to have a harder time sticking to whatever activity you begin. Why? Because you're starting from a negative mental and emotional place.

When a negative mindset is your starting point, you may place unrealistic expectations on your body and shame your body when those expectations aren't met. Even if your body *does* respond in positive ways to your new efforts, if you maintain a mindset of disdain for your body, you may not be able to celebrate those improvements. However, having a loving, accepting, and appreciative attitude toward your body will help it transform and heal.

# A LIVING SACRIFICE

Romans 12:1 says to "*present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*" Present your bodies. Offer your bodies. Have you ever considered that caring for your body as an act of worship? How would it change what you do and how you view your body if you chose to offer it to God?

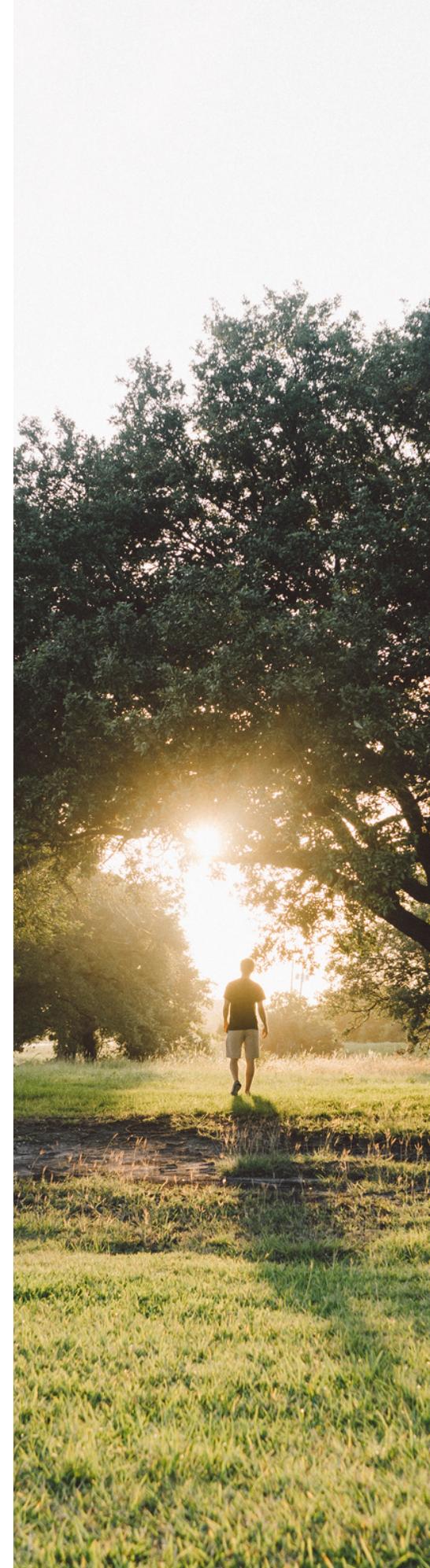
Ask: "*God, how would you like me to treat my body? What changes in attitude and habits would you have me make? How can I honor you and be wholly yours in this body?*

## MAKING CHANGES

The importance of taking care of my body really hit home after I received an auto-immune diagnosis. After living in a body that was in constant dis-ease, I had a new appreciation for how I treated my body. This diagnosis meant making adjustments to what kinds of foods I ate and what drinks I consumed. It also meant that I needed to find healthy and safe ways to move and exercise my body.

I began practicing yoga regularly, and with my husband's support I changed my diet to follow an auto-immune protocol. (Don't underestimate the importance of having the support of family members when you're making any sort of life-style changes.)

Caring for myself in these ways means that I commit financially, I commit my time, and I commit to not eating what other people eat all the time. Caring for yourself may mean sacrifice, but whatever you give up to commit to your physical health is worth it because you will gain so much more.



# TREATING YOUR BODY WELL

Treating your body well begins with paying attention to how your body feels and listening to it when it tells you that it's stressed, tired, dehydrated, etc. The next step is to act in your body's best interest.

If you're not sure where to start, use these questions to guide you. Remember, don't compare yourself to others. Think about your body. What do you need? What is your body trying to tell you? What choices can you make to begin increasing your physical health?

- How much caffeine do you intake?
- What type of food do you eat and under what circumstances?
- How much healthy movement does your body get?
- Do you have any sort of exercise routine? (Walking, yoga, other exercise)
- How much sleep do you get?
- What does your nighttime routine look like and how might it affect the quantity and quality of your sleep?
- Do you take time to rest?
- How much water do you drink?
- How often do you laugh?

If you have medical issues, talk to your doctor about what type of physical activity is best for you. Even something as simple as deep breathing exercises are extremely beneficial to our bodies!



# THINK ON THESE THINGS

Let's shift our focus now to think about our MINDS. Caring for our bodies is important, but tending to our thoughts is just as important and often over-looked.

Read Philippians 4:8-9

*"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."*

Dallas Willard said that what we set our minds on brings that reality into our lives. Pause for a moment and seriously consider that: *What we set our minds on brings that reality in to our lives.*

Now I don't want you to freak out and think that if you ever have an impure, unkind, or otherwise unhelpful thought that you are doomed. That's not the case. You are not your thoughts. However, it is true that what we dwell on -- what we set our minds on -- will impact our moods, our priorities, our compassion, whether or not we are able to persevere through difficult times without losing hope, how we respond to temptation, and how we treat others.

The bottom line is that the focus of our thoughts affects how we feel, what we act on, or what we choose NOT to act on. Just like we want to nourish our bodies with healthy foods, we want to feed our minds with nourishing things.

So, before you set your mind on certain things ask yourself:

- Is this true?
- Is this honorable?
- Is this pure, and is it pleasing to God?
- Is it commendable, excellent, worthy of praise?

## HERE'S A HINT...

If you have to hide it, it's not.

## TAKE IT TO GOD

If you are finding it hard to feel good about yourself or to enjoy life, please consider what you are bringing into your mind and how those messages or images are affecting your thoughts. Talk to the Lord honestly about what you are bringing into your mind and how those things are affecting you. Don't be afraid. You can be honest with God, and it will help you to write some things down.

## FILL YOUR MIND WITH SCRIPTURE

### CONSIDER THIS:

*What you focus your mind on is what you will make room for in your life.* How about focusing your mind on the word of God? It truly is life and nourishment. Here are some scriptures to get you started:

Colossians 3:12-14 (especially vs. 14)

"Above all, clothe yourself with love."

Psalm 3:3

"But you, O LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head."

Psalm 16:1

"Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge."

Psalm 18:1

"I love you O LORD, my strength."

Isaiah 43:3a-4

"I am the LORD your God...you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you."



# PRACTICING REST

I've learned that if I am going to have any hope of being an effective leader, patient mother, or compassionate human, I must have some spaces where I cease my work and allow myself to rest. Here are some ideas for how you might begin a practice of regular rest.

## UNPLUG

Choose at LEAST one heavily used appliance or technological device (phone, tv, computer) and let them rest for a time—whether it's a morning, an afternoon, or an entire day—and then surrender to a quality of time when you will not be disturbed, seduced, or responsive to what your technologies have to offer.

Then, notice how you respond to its absence.

- Do you feel less valuable?
- Less needed?
- Less in touch?
- Notice what comes up and talk to God about that.

## SET A TIME AND PLACE TO BE STILL

Developing the habit of stillness and quiet in the morning or night, allowing yourself enter into the Presence of God through silence and solitude, is a great way to regularly incorporate rest into your life.

## PRACTICE A RESTORATIVE ACTIVITY

- Take a walk in nature being mindful of what you hear and see.  
When you notice anxious or “busy” thoughts arising, take note of them and let them go, reminding yourself that you are resting and they can wait.
- Connect with a friend over a meal or coffee.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. Be creative and make rest a priority in your life. Your work and your relationships will thrive as a result.

# THE PRACTICE OF EXAMEN

The Examen is an ancient practice of self-examination where you simply review your day and consider where you were aware of God's presence or where you were distracted from his presence.

## Questions to help you consider where you sensed God's presence:

- When, today, did I feel most touched by the presence of God?
- What events, relationships, or thoughts of the day drew me closer to God?
- What was the most joyful part of my day?

## Questions to help you become aware of what distances you from God:

- When, today, did I sense being drawn away from God?
- What was the most draining part of my day?
- Was there at time that I felt discouraged, guilty, ashamed, or lonely?

You can also do this practice in a very basic form around the dinner table or with a small group. Go around the table and share your highs and lows from your day. Or you might ask, "Where did you recognize God today?"

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Too often, Christians, and Christian ministers, are not known as a community of well-rested people. We fall prey to the pace of culture far too easily. But we cannot love or practice patience, empathy or compassion well when we're exhausted physically, emotionally, mentally. Let's change the narrative and become the community of the well-rested. I'm in. Are you?

