

## **Lenten Devotional March 23, 2023**

### **Scripture**

#### **Romans 8:12-27**

*12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*

*18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

### **Devotional**

#### **The Rev. Brian Wallace '06**

“What if you treated every child like they were made in the image of God?”

This quote, from Reggie Joiner, is one of just a handful of quotes that have fundamentally shaped the way I do ministry. In the abstract, the question is nonsensical—after all, every child is created in the image of God. But the power of this question isn’t in the abstract but in the day-to-day work of ministry.

Every ministry I’ve been a part of involving kids has had “that kid.” They’re the kid whose family car you recognize as it pulls into the parking lot and your heart beats a little faster. They’re that kid who you, in theory, want to be at youth group or Sunday school, but also know that when they’re not there, things run smoother. They’re the kid who you love because Jesus commands you to, but they seemingly try to do everything in their power to make that a difficult task.

And yet, these are so often the kids who need to be connected to the church and a community of caring adults. Adults who will, in obedience to Jesus’ commands through the sacrament of baptism, choose to love “that kid.” Who will, in a spiritual sense, adopt “that kid” as their own, just as the Triune God has given us a spirit of adoption and chosen us.

## **Prayer**

God of grace, help us to remember that all whom we encounter are created in your image. When we face the hardest and most challenging situations and people, remind us to draw our strength from your spirit, so that we might reflect your love to those around us. In Jesus' name. Amen.