



PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(716) 875-5485

[www.pilgrimkenmorelcms.org](http://www.pilgrimkenmorelcms.org)

*A Congregation in Mission, Community and Service*

# *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

**MARCH 2024**

PASTOR: Rev. David Walsh

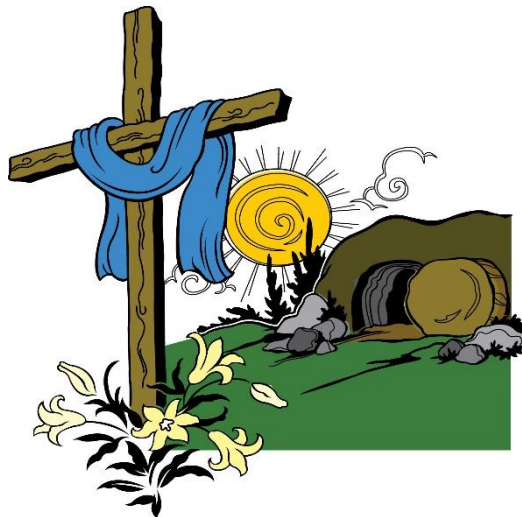
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 AM

EDITOR: Mary Werth

BIBLE STUDY: 9:00 AM

ASSOC. EDITOR:

WORSHIP: 10:00 AM





Forgiveness, this is a hard thing to give, seek, and receive and yet it is a major need that souls desire, not only from the Lord but from our neighbors. Forgiveness is found in scripture in the Greek word “ἄφεσις” (a-fey-sis) meaning: a sending away, a letting go, a release, pardon, and complete forgiveness. When we look at the English word “forgiveness” these meanings of the Greek word are all things we do well to ponder and recognize our need for to give and to receive.

The first meaning is “sending away,” “letting go,” and “release.” When we ponder what an action or a word spoken against us does to us, it brings up feelings of sadness and anger. The longer we ponder these hurts the more we are afflicted by that word or action, and it leads us to act in a way that is contrary to the life of love that we are called to live in. Therefore, the best thing for ourselves and for our neighbor is to send away or let go of that word or action, for it is only hurting us more than the person who spoke or did the action. Forgiveness is a sacrifice of the self for the sake of others. This of course is not easy, but Christ sacrifices himself for our forgiveness. In letting go we also help ourselves by removing from ourselves the actions and words that hurt us allow us to move on.

The second meaning is “pardon.” Pardon means to remove punishment for an action. This is a work that Christ does for us on the Cross and is the whole point for the season of Lent. In Lent we recognize that we deserve the punishment for sins, that being everlasting death, or put another way, eternal separation from God. By removing punishment, we are not condoning the action done, rather we are showing love and mercy by showing them grace. Grace is a gift that is unearned, and that is what forgiveness is, it is God’s unearned love and a removal of everlasting death for the sake of Christ’s Work on the cross. And by the removal of this punishment by the Lord, we are guided not to punish those who do harm to us.

The last meaning is “complete forgiveness.” This is the gift we receive from the Lord every time we seek His forgiveness. He completely removes, sends away, forgets, pardons, and restores us to our baptismal promises. We receive His assurance that our past sins will not be a barrier between us and His Kingdom. That we can be at peace knowing that we ourselves don’t have to anymore ponder our sins or worry about the consequences therein.

So, in this Lenten season, let us to look to Christ who has won forgiveness for us, and let us always do the hard thing and give forgiveness. For by it, they and ourselves can move on in love.

Christ blessings

Rev. David J. Walsh



# SUNDAY SERVER SCHEDULE

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

## MARCH 2024

WEEKEND OF	Mar. 2, 3	Mar. 9, 10	Mar. 16, 17	Mar. 23, 24	Mar. 30, 31
READER	Doreen Griebel/Carolyn Alessi	Rhonda Mohr/Dianne Wuerch	Doreen Griebel/Tyrone Bryant	Ruth Whitmer/Mary Werth	Rhonda Mohr/Kathy Farkas
USHER	Jim Miller	Melody Keef	Jim Miller	Eric Fellner	Jim Hartz
COMMUNION ASSISTANT (Sat/Sun)	Dave Porter/Eric Fellner	Dan Griebel/Jim Hartz	Rod Mohr/Mike Wuerch	Dooley O'Rourke/George Alessi	Rod Mohr/Tyrone Bryant



## ONE SENTENCE SERMONS

A family altar can alter a family.

Don't put a question mark where God put a period.

Give God what's right, not what's left.

God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called.

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.

He who kneels before God can stand before anyone.

We're too blessed to be depressed.

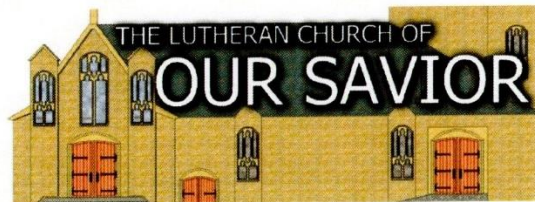
"Pray" is a four-letter word you can say anywhere.



**2024 SUNDAY COUNTERS SCHEDULE**  
**Weekly Rotation**

Date	March 3	March 10	March 17	March 24	March 31
Lead Counter	Dianne Wuerch	Mike Wuerch	Voters Meeting	Carolyn Alessi	Easter Sunday
Counter	Dolores Zeeb	Jim Hartz	No counting	Janice Vogel	No counting

If you are unable to count the date you are assigned, please let Dianne Wuerch know.



Our Savior Lutheran | 26 Brunswick Blvd Buffalo 14208

We are collecting donations to send monthly.  
All donation amounts are welcome.  
Please designate amount on your offering envelope.



## BLESSINGS ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

<b>Madison Porter</b>	<b>Mar. 1</b>
<b>Karen Smith</b>	<b>Mar. 5</b>
<b>Rev. David Walsh</b>	<b>Mar. 8</b>
<b>Carter Gempko</b>	<b>Mar. 9</b>
<b>Chrystal Gempko</b>	<b>Mar. 9</b>
<b>Wes Wiers</b>	<b>Mar. 20</b>
<b>Rhonda Mohr</b>	<b>Mar. 23</b>
<b>Naomi George</b>	<b>Mar. 26</b>
<b>Tim McGuan</b>	<b>Mar. 30</b>



### Because Jesus said so

One intriguing person in the Passion account is the thief on the cross whom Jesus promised a same-day entrance to paradise (see Luke 23:43). Pastor and radio host Alistair Begg says he can't wait to meet that man and ask how everything unfolded. "You were cussing [Jesus] out with your friend," Begg says. "You've never been in a Bible study. You've never been baptized. You didn't know a thing about church membership, and yet you made it!"

In a sermon, Begg pictures an imaginary angel at the pearly gates, growing frustrated during the sinful thief's entrance interview. After receiving no clear answers from the thief about doctrines such as justification, the angel finally asks, "On what basis are you here?" The thief simply replies, "The man on the middle cross said I can come."





## **ESTHER CIRCLE**

Our next meeting is on Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, at 12:30 pm at church. All women of Pilgrim are welcome to attend. We will have a brief business meeting then discuss chapters 5 and 6 of the book “Joining Jesus on His Mission, How to Be an Everyday Missionary” by Greg Finke.

LWML news: since the Winter Zone event hosted at Pilgrim on Saturday, 2/24, was after the March newsletter deadline, a report will be given in April. Exciting news! Margaret Walsh was selected to be a Young Women’s Representative (YWR) at the Eastern District Convention in June near Pittsburgh, Pa. Congratulations to Margaret! Sharon McGuan and myself attended the BOD meeting 3/1-3/2 at the convention site in Pennsylvania. We are looking for interested women to be delegates at the convention. Some of the expenses can be covered. See Carol Obot or Sharon McGuan for more information.

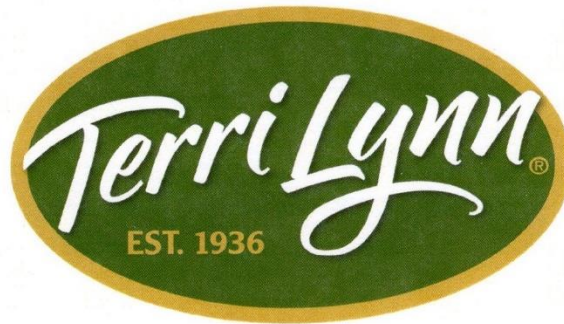
**REMINDERS:** Volunteers are always welcome to host fellowship time after the Sunday service. There is a sign-up sheet on the board. Dash’s receipts go to Sue Holway; cancelled stamps to Sharon McGuan and mites (loose change) to Karen Smith. These efforts support mission projects. Thank you!

March is the season of Lent, Holy Week, Jesus’s crucifixion, and His Resurrection on Easter Sunday! “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalms 46:10)

Carol Obot



On March 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m., Pilgrim will celebrate another VBS Sunday. The lesson, *Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet*, will remind us that, just as Jesus came to serve, we too are called to serve others in His Name. The adult class, led by Pastor Walsh, will take place in the Fellowship Hall. The children’s session, including the lesson, craft and singing will take place in the Sunday school room. We look forward to seeing everyone attending our March VBS Sunday.



Terri Lynn's Signature nuts, snack mixes, and chocolates are delicious on their own; but they also make great ingredients for your homemade, tasty creations. Check out their recipes online and share them.

<https://www.terrilynn.com/resources/recipes/fruit-and-nut-protein-bars>

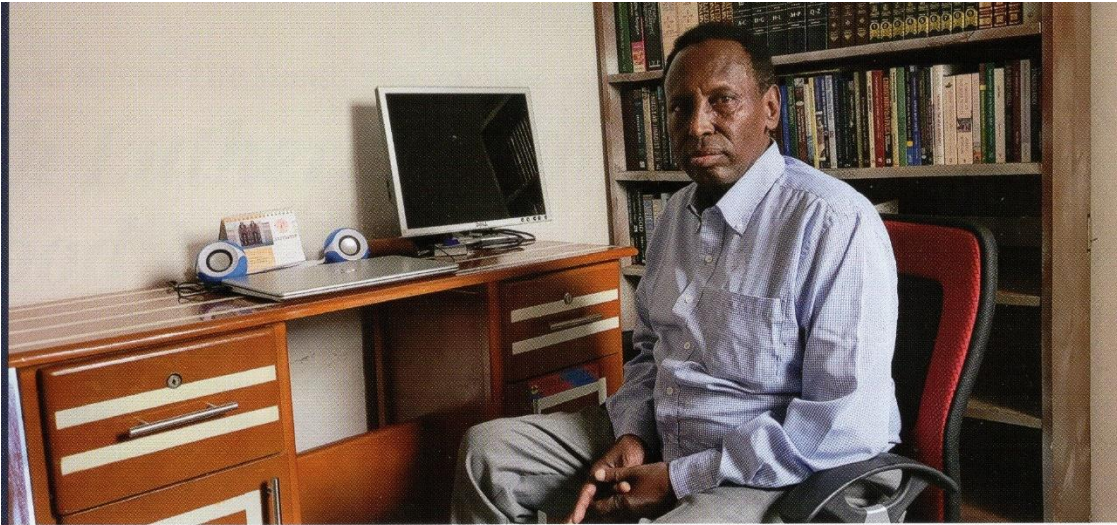


All profits are used to support local charities such as Ken - Ton Meals on Wheels, Local Church Food Pantries, Lutheran Bible Translators, Lutheran Hour Ministries plus many others. Please help us support them. Thank you!

Pilgrim Lutheran Church Terri Lynn's Webstore is **contactless, safe, and easy!!**

<https://pilgrimesthercircle.terrilynn.com>





## LHF translator forced to flee

*Those who have been supporters of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation for some time likely are familiar with the extreme situations faced by Rev. Mohamed Gurhan (LHF's Somali translator, pictured above) over the past few decades.*

*Rev. Gurhan has experienced incredible persecution for attempting to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Somalia, one of the most militantly Muslim countries on Earth. After receiving formal death threats from the Somali government, Rev. Gurhan's wife left him and took their young children with her. Their older children were kidnapped by Muslim family members (and later escaped), and Rev. Gurhan and those children had to relocate out of the country. A few years later, Rev. Gurhan's Christian sister and her husband were executed on the street in front of their home, and Rev. Gurhan returned to live near the Somali border in order to retrieve his nieces and nephews.*

*For the past several years, Rev. Gurhan has been living in Ethiopia near Somalia, where he has continued to share the Good News with Somali people in person and online. Although he has remarried and has been able to rebuild his life, he has continued facing tense situations (including physical attacks), which have yet again required his family's quick relocation. Rev. Gurhan writes:*

Even though we have had security problems since we moved to Jigjiga (the Somali region of Ethiopia) in 2019, things got worse than ever after May 2022, when some Islamist mullahs found out that we were preaching Christianity and distributing Christian literature and started to threaten our lives. Though I promised them few times that I will not be involved in any evangelistic activities, they continued to harass and threaten us almost every week, regularly observing our activities, movements and those visiting us.

Soon we put on hold our prayer and Bible study fellowship meetings but continued distributing Christian literature covertly and very carefully. We also started planning and preparing ourselves to flee from the country to somewhere else anytime we sense an imminent danger. My wife applied for her Ethiopian passport, and I applied for our children's passports from the

embassy in Addis Ababa. We kept ourselves underground taking all possible safety measures for ourselves and our residence.

In the second week of September 2023 when our children started to attend school, they faced constant persecution from the Muslim students as well as some of their parents. They encountered verbal abuses, beatings, stripping off of their clothing, and destruction or damage of their school materials. When my wife complained to the school administration, she was treated very harshly and even called *kafir* (apostate). Since then, our children stayed at home without school.

Between Sept. 17-25 while I was in Europe for a short family visit, several mullahs related to my wife visited my family three times to persuade her to renounce our marriage, take the

Gurhan \_\_\_\_\_ continued on p. 4



children and go with them to Degahbur (a town about 170 km east of Jigjiga.) When she refused, they left threatening that they will forcefully abduct her and the children soon.

My family and I were in an uncertain security situation as some of my wife's extended-family members were threatening to separate us forcefully. For a long time, they were trying to convince her to renounce our marriage and desert me, but when she rejected their demand, they now opted to use force.

In the afternoon of Oct. 20, two mullahs and three Somali police officers from the powerful presidential guard unit came to our house looking for me. When my wife opened the door and greeted them, one of the officers said, "Lady, call your husband. We need to talk to him."

When we sat together in front of my house, one of the officers inquired, "Mohamed, are you Christian?"

I nodded silently, and one of the mullahs said, "We know that he renounced Islam many years ago, but we never expected that he would preach and teach Christianity and distribute Christian books. His presence is disgrace to our family dignity and honor as well as this city, and we will not tolerate that any more."

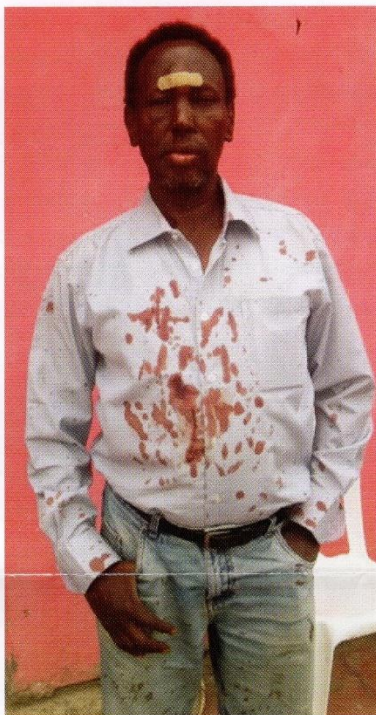
"Gurhan, if you rejected our beautiful religion, we are Muslims and our faith prohibits infidels to have marriage relationships with our Muslim daughters. Therefore, we demand you to pronounce the *dalqa* (divorce) right now, here! If you don't comply with our demand peacefully, then you will be punished and forced to abide by the sharia," said the other mullah.

"No. That is impossible. I love my wife, and we have four children. How could you ask me to divorce her?" I asked them nervously.

When the discussion turned into a heated quarrel, one of the mullahs rose from the chair saying, "Why are you quarreling with the infidel? You must obey the order of your commander. Handcuff him and put him in jail. He does not deserve respect."

When two of the Somali Liyu Police officers grasped me by the shoulders to handcuff me, my wife and some of my kids cried loudly. My wife tried to prevent the officers from handcuffing me, but one of the mullahs slapped her on the face a few times and pushed her back away from me.

They shoved me into their vehicle which was parked on the street in front of my house and headed toward the city's main police station.



*Rev. Gurhan, following a 2018 stoning for propagating the Christian faith among the Somali people.*

At the police detention center, one of the officers who brought me informed the guards, "Shaleka Ahmed instructed this man to be arrested. Keep him in custody until further notice." He turned towards me and added, "*Kafir!* You will remain in prison until you either return to Islam or officially divorce our daughter."

*Once Rev. Gurhan was in the detention center, two high-ranking police officers revealed that they had arrested Rev. Gurhan for his own protection, though they would not be able to protect him for much longer. Several sheikhs and clan elders had long been complaining about Rev. Gurhan's Christian activities on behalf of LHF, and the officers recommended that the Gurhan family flee Ethiopia as soon as possible.*

"If you accept this condition that you will abandon this country instantly, then we will let you go. Take your family with you and leave. Are you ready to leave this country for good?" asked one of the officers.

"We will abandon Ethiopia," I assured them, and they told me to go home.

Thanks to the generous support of a multitude of LHF donors, Rev. Gurhan and his family have been moved to a safe location, from where he continues his translation and introduction work for LHF. While Rev. Gurhan's situation is extreme, he is but one example of the dangers LHF workers and believers face in non-Christian countries around the world – and why LHF books are so vital.

**[www.LHFmissions.org/donate](http://www.LHFmissions.org/donate)**



## LUTHERAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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("Word at Work" staff: Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise, executive editor; Jennifer Bagnall, managing editor and graphic design; Anna Irwin, staff writer)



# Come Serve with Us!!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### **HOUSE & GROUNDS COMMITTEE** - Monthly or as Needed

ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT: MIKE WUERCH, JIM HARTZ, CAROLYN ALESSI

#### Housecleaning

1. Sweeping & Vacuuming the Church & Nursery
2. Dusting
3. Empty Trash & Take out to Tote... Church, Nursery, Kitchen, Bathroom
4. Sweep & Wash Floors Kitchen, Bathrooms, Fellowship Hall
5. Wipe/Dust Pews & Nursery
6. Wash Floors in Kitchen, Bathrooms, Fellowship Hall
7. Clean Toilets & Sinks (Check Toilet Paper, Hand Soap, Paper Towels)
8. Take Inventory of Kitchen, Cleaning Supplies

**USHERS** - Saturday / Sunday - ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT TYRONE BRYANT

**READERS** - Saturday / Sunday - ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT TYRONE BRYANT

**ALTAR GUILD** - Saturday / Sunday - ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT MARY WERTH OR SUE HOLWAY

**VBS/SUNDAY SCHOOL** - Sunday - ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT SHARON MCGUAN OR CAROL OBOT

**CHOIR** - Sunday - ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT RUTH WHITMER

**Sign-up sheets are on church bulletin board or contact the person(s) listed.**



## REACHING YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN PARAGUAY

As adolescents struggle with conflicting moral and social choices, **Project JOEL** is the main field program for children and youth offered through **LHM—Paraguay** to tackle tough topics—from relationships to sex to drugs—in an honest, relevant manner, rooted in God's love for them. The program is officially authorized by the Paraguayan government to be accepted in public and private schools. Ministry staff collaborate with participating schools to incorporate a variety of Project JOEL activities into classroom curriculum.

A trained psychologist and educator who serves on staff leads the Project JOEL program across 14 schools, ensuring students in both public and private settings can express their faith. Alongside her team, she integrates various field programs into the Paraguayan cultural calendar, leveraging national celebrations and special occasions to resonate the Gospel's message with youth.

Alongside these Project JOEL activities for youth, LHM—Paraguay staff often host talks at schools to connect with parents. A recent presentation, "Mission and Challenges of the Family in Our Time," highlighted the factors that hinder communication and harmony within the home. After the talk, each participant received a brochure titled, *The Family*.

Enzo, the father of a third-grade student at the school, attended the presentation. His wife died of cancer, and he has raised four children (three young adult daughters in addition to the third-grader). Enzo retired from the police force and currently works independently as a gardener. When his daughter finishes school each day, she accompanies Enzo to his job sites since there is no one else at home.

Following the event, Enzo shared with LHM staff some of the challenges the family has faced and how he has always worried about providing his daughters with the best of things while also protecting them and preparing them for the future. He thanked the staff for the information they presented, especially for showing solutions to several of his worries. "How good it is to hear advice and find support for my concerns," says Enzo.

After a few days, Enzo wrote a letter to the staff thanking them for their willingness to listen to him and for the brochure he received. He said that he spoke with his children about the teachings offered in the booklet and that they were working together to find ways to solve their problems. He also appreciated everything being presented from a Christian perspective and asked to be connected to a local congregation to grow in his faith.



**2023–2025 LWML Mission Grant #5**

# **Disaster Response Team**

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Tyler, TX**

## **About This Mission Grant**

Trinity Lutheran Church Disaster Response Team (TLC DRT) in Tyler, Texas, answers the call to serve our neighbors in need by ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of people affected by severe storms such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. The team is comprised totally of volunteer workers who set up base camps in areas that have been affected by natural disasters. They listen compassionately to the stories of people who have been affected by storms and share Christ's love with them in Word and action.

TLC DRT's equipment and trailers are also used by volunteers from other teams, causing additional wear and tear on equipment. This grant will allow repair and replacement of necessary equipment so the team can continue to be Christ's hands and feet and share God's love to people affected by disasters.



Assessing safest way to remove tree from house



Cutting a large fallen tree



Fully stocked equipment trailer





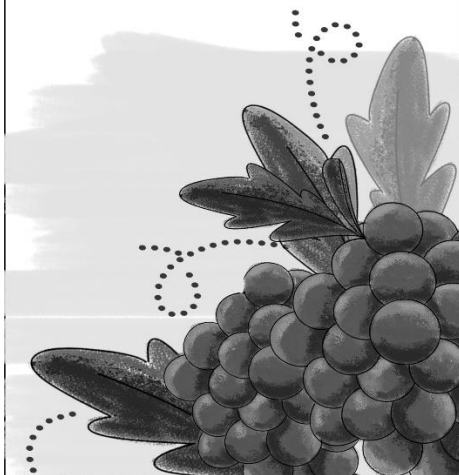
Try this chilly new take on a healthy snack.

**What you need:**

- 30 grapes, washed and dried
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 4 graham crackers, crushed
- Toothpicks
- Parchment paper

**What you do:**

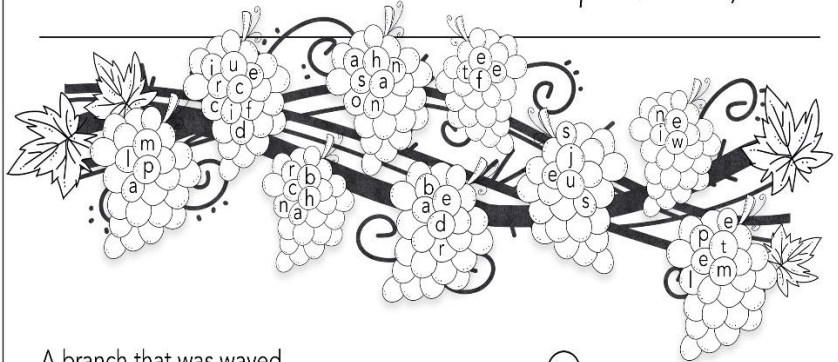
1. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, arrange grapes in a single layer. Freeze for two hours.
2. Insert a toothpick into each grape.
3. Dip each grape into the yogurt, coating half of it.
4. Roll each dipped grape in the crushed crackers. Place back on the parchment.
5. Freeze for two more hours. Enjoy!



# A LASTING LESSON

Before dying on the cross, Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson.

*Directions: Use the clues to unscramble the letters in each grape cluster. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete John 15:5, NIV.*



- A branch that was waved \_ \_ \_ ○
- How Jesus was put to death \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_
- A stick attached to the vine \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_
- People shouted this to Jesus \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Jesus washed these  \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_
- This was broken and eaten \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_
- The Messiah \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_
- A drink from grapes \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_
- Jesus drove the money changers from here \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_

"I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
 apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5, NIV

Answer: palm, branch, crucified, hosanna, feet, bread, Jesus, wine, temple; much fruit

**THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE APRIL NEWSLETTER IS MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup>.**