

The background of the entire page is filled with numerous watercolor-style circles of various sizes and colors. The colors include shades of yellow, pink, purple, light blue, and green, creating a vibrant and artistic backdrop for the text.

40 DAYS OF  
*kindness*  
CHALLENGE

UNITED METHODIST MINISTRIES OF MECOSTA COUNTY

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# 40 DAYS OF KINDNESS CHALLENGE

Lent is a season of reflection and preparation—a time when we turn our hearts toward God and open ourselves to transformation. This year, we invite you to join us on a special journey: the **40 Days of Kindness Challenge**. This challenge is an opportunity to grow in faith by putting kindness into action, embracing justice, and caring for yourself along the way.

Each day of this challenge includes three simple focus areas – choose at least one focus each day:

- **Kindness:** Small, tangible ways to show love and compassion to others.
- **Justice:** Steps to learn about and act on the needs of the vulnerable, standing for fairness and equity.
- **Self-Care:** Practices to nurture your body, mind, and spirit.

Along with these daily activities, you'll find weekly devotions to guide your heart and inspire you to live out your faith in deeper, more intentional ways. These devotions are rooted in Scripture and reflect on how kindness, justice, and self-care intersect with the life God calls us to lead.

You'll notice that there are no Sunday dates in the challenge. In the Christian tradition, Sundays are not counted as part of the 40 days of Lent. Each Sunday is considered a "mini Easter," a day to celebrate the resurrection of Christ even in the midst of this reflective season. Sundays are an opportunity to rest, reflect, and worship. We encourage you to make participating in worship a central part of your Sunday practice. Use this time to connect with God, find inspiration, and recharge your spirit. You might also take a moment to revisit a favorite activity from the week, spend extra time in prayer, or reflect on how God is shaping you through this journey.

This challenge is designed for all ages and is perfect for individuals, families, or groups. Whether you're drawing a picture for a neighbor, learning about a justice issue, or pausing for a moment of gratitude, each step reflects God's love in action. By the end of these 40 days, we pray you'll experience not only a deeper connection with God but also the joy of making a meaningful impact on the world around you.

As we begin this journey together, let's remember the words of Jesus:

*"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

John 13:35

Let this season of Lent be a time to shine Christ's light through your actions, grow in your understanding of justice, and care for yourself as one deeply loved by God. Together, let's make these 40 days a season of transformation and hope.

**Peace+Grace,**



**Rev. Jeremy Wicks**

## QUICK TIPS FOR ENGAGING THE 40 DAYS OF KINDNESS CHALLENGE

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1. Start each day with a prayer or moment of reflection, asking God to guide your actions and open your heart to opportunities for kindness, justice, and self-care.
2. Place the challenge calendar in a visible spot to remind you to stay engaged.
3. If you miss a day, don't feel discouraged, just pick up where you left off. The goal is not perfection!
4. Invite your family, friends, or small group to join the challenge. Share your experiences, encourage one another, and celebrate your successes together. Kindness grows when it's shared!
5. Take time each week to reflect on how the challenge is shaping you.
6. The activities are designed to be approachable for all ages, but if something feels too difficult, adjust it to fit your context.
7. Keep track of what you've accomplished and thank God for every opportunity to make a difference.
8. Use Sundays as a time to recharge by worshiping with your faith community.
9. Share your commitment with someone who can encourage and remind you along the way.
10. Trust that God is using your actions in ways you may not see.

By staying intentional, flexible, and prayerful, you'll not only complete the challenge but also create habits that last far beyond Lent. Remember, each small step contributes to a larger ripple of love and transformation in your community and the world. You've got this!

## WEEK 1: THE CALL TO KINDNESS

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*“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” - Ephesians 4:32*

Kindness is not just a nice thing to do—it's a reflection of God's heart. When we are kind, we demonstrate the compassion and forgiveness we have received from Christ. As we begin this Lenten journey, let us remember that small acts of kindness can have eternal impacts. Each smile, word of encouragement, or act of service can reveal the love of God to those around us.

**PRAYER:** *God of kindness, help me to see opportunities to share Your love with others. Give me the courage to be compassionate, even when it's inconvenient. May my acts of kindness reflect Your grace. Amen.*

### **3/6/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Write a kind note or draw a picture for someone to brighten their day.
- Justice Focused: Learn about a social justice issue affecting your community.
- Self-Care Focused: Take five deep breaths and focus on the present moment.

### **3/7/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Say 'thank you' to someone in your family today.
- Justice Focused: Write to a local representative about an issue you care about.
- Self-Care Focused: Drink an extra glass of water today.

### **3/8/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Share a snack or small treat with a friend.
- Justice Focused: Donate to an organization that supports marginalized groups.
- Self-Care Focused: Go to bed 30 minutes earlier than usual.

## WEEK 2: KINDNESS WITHOUT LIMITS

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*"...love your enemies, do good to them..." - Luke 6:35*

True kindness goes beyond those who are easy to love. Jesus calls us to extend kindness even to those we struggle with or who may never repay us. This week, challenge yourself to step outside your comfort zone. Perhaps it's reaching out to someone who has hurt you or offering help to someone you don't know. Kindness without limits transforms hearts—ours and theirs.

**PRAYER:** *Lord Jesus, you loved and forgave even those who opposed You. Teach me to love like You do. Help me to extend kindness freely, trusting You to work through my actions. Amen.*

### **3/10/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Write a thank-you note to a neighbor or teacher.
- Justice Focused: Attend or watch a discussion on racial justice or equity.
- Self-Care Focused: Spend 10 minutes outside enjoying nature.

### **3/11/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Help with a chore without being asked.
- Justice Focused: Support a local business owned by someone from an underrepresented community.
- Self-Care Focused: Write down three things you're grateful for.

### **3/12/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Call or video chat with a family member who lives far away.
- Justice Focused: Sign a petition advocating for justice in your area.
- Self-Care Focused: Stretch for 5 minutes to relax your body.

### **3/13/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Make a card for someone in your family and leave it on their pillow.
- Justice Focused: Volunteer at a local nonprofit addressing systemic issues.
- Self-Care Focused: Listen to your favorite song and sing along.

### **3/14/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Say hello to someone you don't usually talk to.
- Justice Focused: Spend time learning about fair trade and make a conscious purchase.
- Self-Care Focused: Take a short nap if you're feeling tired.

### **3/15/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Pick up trash outside to make your neighborhood cleaner.
- Justice Focused: Share a post about a justice issue on social media to spread awareness.
- Self-Care Focused: Unplug from social media for an hour and do something relaxing.

## WEEK 3: THE POWER OF SMALL ACTS

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*“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.” – Matthew 10:42*

Kindness doesn't have to be big to make a difference. Jesus reminds us that even small acts—like offering a cup of water—are significant in God's kingdom. Never underestimate the power of a kind word, a smile, or a thoughtful gesture. God sees every small act, and through them, we can reflect God's love in ways we may never fully understand.

**PRAYER:** *Gracious God, help me not to overlook the small opportunities to be kind. Remind me that every act of love matters. Use my efforts, however small, to make a difference. Amen.*

### 3/17/2025

- Kindness Focused: Make a drawing or craft and leave it at a neighbor's door.
- Justice Focused: Commit to recycling or reducing waste for a day as an act of environmental justice.
- Self-Care Focused: Write down a positive affirmation and say it aloud.

### 3/18/2025

- Kindness Focused: Hold the door open for someone.
- Justice Focused: Help someone access a resource they need, like housing or food assistance.
- Self-Care Focused: Eat a meal mindfully, savoring each bite.

### 3/19/2025

- Kindness Focused: Say “please” and “thank you” extra today.
- Justice Focused: Participate in a church or community discussion on economic inequality.
- Self-Care Focused: Take a break and read something inspiring or fun.

### 3/20/2025

- Kindness Focused: Give someone a big smile when you see them.
- Justice Focused: Pray for courage to confront injustice where you see it.
- Self-Care Focused: Enjoy a warm cup of tea or coffee slowly.

### 3/21/2025

- Kindness Focused: Leave a sticky note with a kind message somewhere for someone to find.
- Justice Focused: Mentor someone who needs guidance and encouragement.
- Self-Care Focused: Organize a small space in your home to feel more peaceful.

### 3/22/2025

- Kindness Focused: Help carry something for someone if they're struggling.
- Justice Focused: Buy school supplies or donate to a school in need.
- Self-Care Focused: Draw or doodle something just for fun.

## WEEK 4: KINDNESS IN ACTION

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*“Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” – 1 John 3:18*

Kindness requires more than good intentions—it calls us to act. This week, think about how you can turn your thoughts into deeds. Maybe it’s volunteering your time, providing a meal, or standing up for someone in need. When we love in action and truth, we show that our faith is alive and meaningful.

**PRAYER:** *Lord, thank You for showing Your love through action. Help me to do the same. Open my eyes to needs around me and give me the courage to respond. May my actions point others to You. Amen.*

### **3/24/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Bring a canned good to church or donate it to a food pantry.
- Justice Focused: Sponsor a meal or snack for a child or family in need.
- Self-Care Focused: Spend time journaling about your thoughts or feelings.

### **3/25/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Make a care package for someone who might need it.
- Justice Focused: Read a book or article about a justice-related topic to educate yourself.
- Self-Care Focused: Watch a show or movie that makes you laugh.

### **3/26/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Deliver hygiene products or warm clothing to a shelter.
- Justice Focused: Join or support a local group working for systemic change.
- Self-Care Focused: Do a small act of kindness for yourself, like treating yourself to dessert.

### **3/27/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Write letters to nursing home residents or shut-ins.
- Justice Focused: Speak up when you witness unfair treatment of someone.
- Self-Care Focused: Spend time with someone who lifts your spirits.

### **3/28/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Pray specifically for someone you know who is struggling.
- Justice Focused: Donate to a legal fund supporting those fighting injustice.
- Self-Care Focused: Write yourself a note of encouragement or love.

### **3/29/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Visit or call someone who’s isolated or grieving.
- Justice Focused: Offer your time or skills to help someone job hunting or navigating paperwork.
- Self-Care Focused: Take a walk and notice the small things around you.

## WEEK 5: KINDNESS THAT BRINGS JUSTICE

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*“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.” – Isaiah 1:17*

Kindness and justice go hand in hand. Acts of kindness that address injustice and lift up the oppressed reflect God’s heart for the vulnerable. This week, think about ways you can show kindness that brings hope to those who are struggling. Whether it’s donating to a cause, advocating for change, or simply listening to someone’s story, your kindness can be a powerful force for justice.

**PRAYER:** *God of justice, give me a heart that seeks to lift others up. Help me to be bold in my kindness and use me to bring hope and healing to those who are hurting. Amen.*

### **3/31/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Donate to a local community initiative or nonprofit.
- Justice Focused: Support an event promoting inclusivity in your area.
- Self-Care Focused: Pamper yourself with a relaxing bath or skincare routine.

### **4/1/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Encourage someone by sharing why they are special to you.
- Justice Focused: Help fundraise for a nonprofit focused on justice.
- Self-Care Focused: Light a candle and sit quietly for a few minutes.

### **4/2/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Bring a treat to a community event or meeting.
- Justice Focused: Share educational resources on justice with friends or family.
- Self-Care Focused: Turn off your phone for an hour to recharge your mind.

### **4/3/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Organize a small cleanup project in your area.
- Justice Focused: Write a thank-you note to someone making a difference in justice work.
- Self-Care Focused: Spend 10 minutes meditating or praying.

### **4/4/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Ask someone how they’re doing and truly listen.
- Justice Focused: Visit a historical site or museum to learn about justice-related history.
- Self-Care Focused: Wear your favorite outfit or something that makes you feel good.

### **4/5/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Pray for someone you know who needs support.
- Justice Focused: Pray for leaders making decisions about justice and equity.
- Self-Care Focused: Set a goal for the day and celebrate completing it.

## WEEK 6: KINDNESS AS A WITNESS

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*“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” – John 13:35*

Our kindness is a testimony to the world of God’s love. People will see Christ in us not by our words alone, but by how we treat one another. As Holy Week approaches, let your kindness be a light to those around you. Consider how your actions can inspire others to seek God and His love.

**PRAYER:** *Jesus, let my life reflect Your love and kindness. Use my actions to draw others closer to You. Thank You for showing me the ultimate kindness through the cross. Help me to love as You love. Amen.*

### **4/7/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Encourage a friend to join a positive activity with you.
- Justice Focused: Attend a workshop or training on how to be an ally.
- Self-Care Focused: Declutter a small area to create a sense of calm.

### **4/8/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Give flowers to someone to brighten their day.
- Justice Focused: Commit to buying locally to reduce environmental impact.
- Self-Care Focused: Cook your favorite meal or snack.

### **4/9/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Share your favorite recipe with someone.
- Justice Focused: Offer to babysit for someone so they can attend a community meeting or event.
- Self-Care Focused: Spend a few minutes focusing on your breathing.

### **4/10/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Thank a teacher, first responder, or essential worker in your community.
- Justice Focused: Donate warm clothing to someone experiencing homelessness.
- Self-Care Focused: Take time to enjoy a hobby you love.

### **4/11/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Help someone with a task they cannot do alone.
- Justice Focused: Host a conversation about community needs in your neighborhood or church.
- Self-Care Focused: Practice saying "no" to something unnecessary to protect your energy.

### **4/12/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Share a story or memory with someone who needs encouragement.
- Justice Focused: Encourage a friend to vote or get involved in a local cause.
- Self-Care Focused: Call or text a friend to share something good about your day.



## HOLY WEEK: THE ULTIMATE KINDNESS

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*“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” – John 15:13*

As we reflect on Jesus’ journey to the cross, we see the ultimate act of kindness—His sacrifice for us. This week, let your kindness reflect the sacrificial love of Christ. Think about ways you can put others first, share the story of Jesus, and celebrate the hope of the resurrection.

**PRAYER:** *Thank You, Jesus, for the ultimate act of kindness. You gave Your life for me. Help me to live in gratitude and to share Your love with others in all I do. Amen.*

### **4/14/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Pray for someone by name who is struggling.
- Justice Focused: Give up a luxury for a day and donate the money saved to a justice cause.
- Self-Care Focused: Write down one thing you’ll do differently tomorrow to improve your well-being.

### **4/15/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Deliver Easter cards or small gifts to neighbors.
- Justice Focused: Learn about how justice issues intersect with faith and theology.
- Self-Care Focused: Spend time with a pet or loved one for comfort and connection.

### **4/16/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Compliment three people today.
- Justice Focused: Advocate for someone who needs help navigating social systems.
- Self-Care Focused: Do a 5-minute guided relaxation exercise.

### **4/17/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Bring a meal or treat to a neighbor or coworker.
- Justice Focused: Invite someone from a different background to share their story with you.
- Self-Care Focused: Treat yourself to a quiet moment of solitude.

### **4/18/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Encourage someone with a note or text message.
- Justice Focused: Pray for justice for those who are oppressed.
- Self-Care Focused: Set aside time to reflect on what brings you joy.

### **4/19/2025**

- Kindness Focused: Visit someone who may feel lonely or forgotten.
- Justice Focused: Find and participate in a local food drive.
- Self-Care Focused: Write down one positive thing about yourself.

## THE END?

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As you reach the end of the 40 Days of Kindness Challenge, we celebrate the ways you've embraced kindness, stood for justice, and cared for yourself during this Lenten season. Through your daily acts of love, you've reflected God's grace in tangible ways, making an impact on those around you.

But the journey doesn't end here. Kindness, justice, and self-care are not just practices for Lent—they are lifelong expressions of faith. The world continues to need the love of Christ, and you have the power to share it through your words, actions, and presence.

As we step into the hope and joy of Easter, we challenge you to carry this spirit of kindness forward. Look for opportunities to make kindness a daily habit. Continue to seek justice for the vulnerable, care for your own well-being, and live as a reflection of God's love. Remember, even the smallest actions can make a big difference.

*"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9*

Thank you for joining this journey and for being a light in the world. Together, let's make kindness more than a challenge—let's make it a way of life.

Blessings as you continue to live love out loud!

## IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

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The **40 Days of Kindness Challenge** is a wonderful opportunity for families to grow closer together while making an impact in the community. Here are some creative ideas to help your family participate in meaningful ways:

1. **Kindness Jar** - Place a jar in a central location in your home. Each time a family member completes an act of kindness, write it down on a slip of paper and add it to the jar. At the end of Lent, read the notes together and celebrate the love you've shared.
2. **Family Kindness Night** - Set aside one evening each week to complete an act of kindness as a family. Examples: baking cookies for a neighbor, cleaning up a local park, or writing thank-you notes to community helpers.
3. **Story Time with a Twist** - Read stories about kindness or justice (e.g., children's books with positive messages) and discuss how your family can follow the example of the characters.
4. **Family Prayer Time** - Use the weekly devotions included in the challenge as a guide for a family prayer time. Reflect on how God is calling your family to share His love.
5. **Acts of Kindness Calendar** - Hang the challenge calendar in a visible spot, like the kitchen or living room. Each day, let a different family member choose how to complete the activity, then share about it during dinner.