



Theme artwork by  
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**Lent at Lakeside:  
My Heart as Sanctuary  
My Life as Prayer  
Devotion for Friday,  
March 2, 2018**

**Where I'm From  
By Sheila Powell Martin**

I am from a family of unconditional love.  
I am from a family with a strong Mother and Father.  
I am from a family, and a neighborhood, that was truly a village that raised us.

I am from a family that had a strong work ethic... my brother and I never knew what it was like to not work and do our part around the house.  
I am from a family where Sunday School, Worship, and Wednesday Night Dinners and Prayer Meeting were not optional.

I am from a family that schedules would not allow family breakfast time. Bag lunches were our noon meal, but Supper was always around the table with a beautiful blessing from Dad before the first bite was taken. This was when we caught up on everything that was going on at school, at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and Sears Roebuck.

I am from a family where my father, as a young man, was a sheet metal worker. He would leave the supper table to go to his part-time job making duct work for heating homes. I adored this man and just wanted to be with him and listen and cling to every word he said. I would go with him and curl scrap metal on a machine. On weekends, I would crawl under houses with him and talk while he installed that beautiful shiny duct work that he made with his own hands. When he rose to "white collar" status, he became a strong leader and became very active in politics and community. He woke me up at the crack of dawn one morning and took me to see candidate John F.

Kennedy, I wanted to go everywhere this man went... I wanted to grow up and be just like him.

I am from a family that forgave me for making mistakes. In the worst of times my Dad would say "Sheila, we are down in the valley right now, but we are going to climb right back up on that mountain."

I am from a family where my precious father literally got on his knees every morning and thanked God for giving him the gift of a new day.

I am from a family that fondly remembers seeing my father back on the floor at night thanking God for the day and releasing any burden or worry that he had on his mind... for the night he "would let go and let God."

I am from a family that traveled every Sunday afternoon from Portsmouth to Newport News to visit my paternal Grandmother and Grandfather. I never saw my Grandpa other than in their home in a hospital bed. Mamie cared for him, like an angel, in that condition for 18 years. We never saw him walk or even talk. She fed him and kept him spotless.

I am from a family where my maternal Grandmother lived with an aunt who was single with three children. We never knew what it was to go to either Grandmom's house for a sleep over, or to go shopping, or to play a game.

I am from a family that believed in a "Griswald style" family vacation every single year. The older I get, the more I realize how valuable that time is and how many incredible memories are made that will last a lifetime.

I am from a family that was able to see me find my soul mate and to feel unconditional love from a spouse that I never dreamed possible.

I am from a family that allows me to be absolutely, positively obnoxious about our two children, five precious grandchildren, Lakeside, Rocky Mount, organ donation, and litter.

I am from a family that learned through a son's illness and his brush with death at 21 years old, that life is precious, and every day is a gift. We thank God for the gift of each and every day.

## Jeremiah 29:11-14

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

### Prayer:

Lord,

As your disciples, we make preparations for your banquet.

We knead the Bread of Life;  
Our feet are bare as we dance  
On the grapes of the vine  
For the wine  
Of the new covenant.

The table has been set by friends . . .  
In the presence of your enemies.  
How can we sup together?  
D i v i d e d?  
By betrayal?  
Of you?  
And of one another?

Quickly we drink from the cup of forgiveness . . .  
Mercy spills over the brim.  
And the tongues of the thirsty are no longer  
Swollen and parched.

In your name, Lord, we b-r-e-a-k your body  
The body of your Church  
And distribute it to the hungry  
That their bellies may be full.

We are poured out and distributed in remembrance of you.  
Remember us . . . Amen.

*From I Will Sing, I Will Sing: Hymns for Lent. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996.*