

# Lenten Meditations

**TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

*Opportunities for worship & connection*



# Lenten Mediations: Opportunities for Worship & Connection

A collection of Lenten Meditations written  
by Trinity parishioners, staff and clergy

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**Wednesday, March 2, 2022 (Ash Wednesday)**

*Fr. Lee Domenick*

*Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Ash Wednesday: Lent is here. In this season of Lent, we take time to stop, look, and listen to that small quiet voice of God. It is a chance in which we devote extra time and energy to the conversation that is ongoing within us, each other, and with God. Lent provides a focus for us to step back see the creation as a precious commodity. To hear a child laugh, feel the sun on our faces, to see the colors of winter begin to melt into the coming of spring. All of these are signs for us to turn our hearts too. To listen actively to God is one of the hardest things for us to do. But during Lent we have an opportunity to begin to turn our hearts, minds, souls, and strength toward the one who loves us unconditionally. In times of trial, in times of despair, when all seems lost and forgotten, remember God is there.

We often confuse unconditional love with unconditional approval. God loves us without conditions but does not *approve* of every human behavior. God doesn't approve of betrayal, violence, hatred, suspicion, and all other expressions of evil, because they all contradict the love God wants to instill in the human heart. Evil is the absence of God's love. Evil does not belong to God. Unconditional love means that God continues to love us even when we say or think evil things. God continues to wait for us as a loving parent wait for the return of a lost child. It is important for us to hold on to the truth that God never gives up loving us even when God is saddened by what we do. That truth will help us to return to God's ever-present love.

So, as we continue our Lenten journey, let us remember that we are never alone, that we, as a community of faith gathered, share, cry, laugh, and walk with each other as our journey continues.

I wish for you...

Comfort on difficult days,  
Smiles when sadness intrudes,  
Rainbows to follow the clouds,

Laughter to kiss your lips,  
Sunsets to warm your heart  
Gentle hugs when spirits sag,  
Friendships to brighten your being,  
Beauty for your eyes to see,  
Confidence for when you doubt,  
Faith so that you can believe,  
Courage to know yourself,  
Patience to accept the truth,  
And love to complete your life.  
God Bless you!

I asked the Lord to bless you  
As I prayed for you today  
To guide you and protect you  
As you go along your way...  
His love is always with you  
His promises are true  
No matter what the tribulation  
You know He will see us through  
So when the road you're traveling on  
Seems difficult at best  
Give your problems to the Lord  
And God will do the rest.

Lee+

**Thursday, March 3, 2022 (Day 2)**

*Mo. Cheryl Harder-Missinne*

*Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 • Exodus 5:10-23 • Acts 7:30-34*

One of my favorite hymns is "On Eagle's Wings". The first line starts, "You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord.". How very appropriate for today's psalm. As we enter into day two of Lent, we are reminded that God will indeed hold us – if we abide in God. Jesus showed us this time after time throughout his life.

I think that we, as humans, tend to think that this passage means that we will never suffer. That is not what it means. It means that God will always be with us, and walk alongside of us. Jesus endured hardships, and even walked to his death on a cross.

The Israelites in our Exodus reading endured hardships, even when they believed that Moses had taken them to “The Land of Milk and Honey”. We know from scripture that they doubted and turned away from God to worship idols of gold. We always have the choice to follow and trust or to turn away.

Just as it’s easier to love those who love us, it is easier to follow when there are no obstacles. Our Psalmist reminds us that God “will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble.”

**Friday, March 4, 2022 (Day 3)**

*Katy Hall*

*Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 • Exodus 6:1-13 • Acts 7:35-42*

In our mad dash to school each morning, we often listen to happy songs, hoping that they set the right tone for the coming day. One of the songs in our playlist has the line, “But your momma always said, ‘Look up into the sky find the sun on a cloudy day.’” It is an excellent reminder that just because the skies are cloudy doesn’t mean the sun isn’t there.

Likewise, the scriptures for today remind me that God’s love and promises are steadfast even when my eyes can’t see them, or like the Israelites, I fail to believe in them.

It can be hard to remember that a bright, beautiful sun is behind the clouds. In turn, it is also hard to remember God is steadfast and keeps his promises to us when we are the ones that fail to believe.

**Saturday, March 5, 2022 (Day 4)**

*Nancy Gill, postulant*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 • John 12:27-36*

Made popular by The Byrds’ cover of Pete Seeger’s hit song, this Old Testament passage is a familiar one. Notice that, for each season or time, there is a directly contrasting season. Many of these pairings are symbolic of life and death.

This concept relates thematically with our Gospel reading, in



which Jesus indicates that it is time for him to be glorified. In this scenario, glorification means not only exaltation, but also refers specifically to Jesus' suffering and death. Jesus understood that for us to have life, he must die ("...it is for this reason that I have come..."). But we now know that his death was only for a season...Easter was just around the corner!

In today's climate, so consumed by the pandemic, social and political animosity, financial strain, and international unrest, it is easy to relate to the Ecclesiastical season of mourning and death; but faith reminds us that laughter and dancing are only a season away. Easter awaits!

**Sunday, March 6, 2022 (1st Sunday of Lent)**

*Mo. Cheryl Harder-Missinne*

*Deuteronomy 26:1-11 • Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 • Romans 10:8b-13 • Luke 4:1-13*

Everything that we read today in scripture remind us that Jesus has walked our path before us. There is nothing that our God doesn't know or hasn't felt – as a human. Immediately after Jesus began his ministry, He was driven into the wilderness. The only way that He could understand temptation and fear and loneliness and hunger was to be "in his wilderness". The only way that He could learn to trust God was to be "in His wilderness". The only way that He could lead us was to experience our lives as we do. Not as some far off omnipotent God, but to be one of us.

God created Eden for us, and it wasn't enough. We had everything that we could possibly need, and it wasn't enough for us. Our wilderness takes all that away from us and leaves us with nothing. We become surrounded by quiet and darkness and loneliness and fear in our wilderness. The wilderness makes us realize what is important. It helps us to see what we need. It shows us that although we may be lonely or scared, that God is right beside us cheering us on. After Eden, God never promised us that life would be easy. But as God helped Adam and Eve sew clothing as they left Eden– He said that He would always be with them (and us).

As I write this reflection, I commemorate 10 years of the death of

my late husband Ed. Walking with him through his cancer diagnosis and treatment and feeling my fear and my pain were a true learning experience. This was not anything that I wanted to go through, but something that each of us will have to deal with during our life.

That unimaginable grief felt like a gaping hole in my soul, but I never doubted that God was there with me. God was revealed in my friends, in those that let me call and just cry. God was revealed in the hugs and the love that I felt from those that I knew. God was revealed through me as I walked with people taking the same path that I had with a loved one. Through this wilderness journey, I learned to trust that God would never abandon me.

Watching my husband suffer and die was the hardest thing that I have ever done, but I have become a stronger person because of it. Because of that experience, I was willing to reach out and touch other people that would have never crossed my path. I have been able to share the Gospel in places that I never imagined possible. Wilderness experiences are necessary to re-evaluate our relationship with God and find our way along our journey.

My prayer for you is that as you enter your wilderness, that you are surrounded by God's AGAPE love.

**Monday, March 7, 2022 (Day 5)**

*Jacque Swanston*

*1 Chronicles 21:1-17, 1 • John: 2:1-6*

My daughter, Katie, and I enjoy watching movies and discussing our impressions. Our conclusion about more recent movies is—"it doesn't answer its own questions." The characters are flawed, everyone reflects shades of good and bad, and you walk away wondering what just happened. Kind of like real life?

After Vivienne's accident, I've seen humanity in a different light, and although I've seen horribly disturbing things, I've also seen unimaginable acts of love and kindness. Perhaps these two scripture passages provide an illustration.

Both scripture passages are a plea to all of us to demonstrate faith through obedience. However, because the passage in Chronicles is specifically about David, a king, I believe the audience and the warning is directed to those in power. Are you a parent? Do you have wealth? Do you manage people? Do you influence others? Then this is for you. You, like David, are flawed. You will need to make restitution for mistakes. Do you claim to follow Jesus? Have you bought the t-shirt, the bracelet, and the bumper sticker? You declared your intention. If you don't follow it up with action, then you are a liar (not my words—see I John 2:3).

In the Chronicles passage, David blatantly disobeys God and then refuses to adhere to the warning of Joab, his advisor. Now David must face the consequences, and unfortunately his people will feel the brunt of either 3 years of famine, 3 months of war, or 3 days of pestilence on the land. Prideful, arrogant, careless decisions have consequences that many times hurt “the sheep” as David calls them. David chose three days, during which 70,000 people died. David and the elders fell on their faces and asked God to punish them rather than the people. In so doing, David shows that he is flawed, that he is not God, and because he loves God, he asks that punishment fall on him and his family rather than the innocent. Powerful people—what are you doing today to walk in the way of Jesus?

## **Tuesday, March 8, 2022 (Day 6)**

*Melissa Stirling*

*Zechariah 3:1-10*

... “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I put fine garments on you.”  
Zechariah 3:4

When the kids were little, they both had white uniform shirts. As I scrubbed shirts each week, you could see the jelly stains from lunch, the paint from an art project or the mud from the playground. Each stain, a story, but as hard as I scrubbed, over the course of the year the shirts would grow grey and dingy. I could never completely remove all the stains from their shirts.

In Zechariah, Joshua stands before God in his filthy clothes, his

sin on display for all to see. Yet his clothes are removed and replaced with fine garments; his sins are forgiven. This is symbolic of things to come. On Good Friday, Jesus does what I could never do to those white uniform shirts, he removes all of our stains, our sin, so that we too can one day stand in God's presence.

**Wednesday, March 9, 2022 (Day 7)**

*Fr. Lee Domenick*

*Psalms 17 • Job 1:1-22 • Luke 21:34-22:6*

"So, whatever you do, don't fall asleep at the wheel. Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that's coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man." As we begin our journey through spring, I thought that I would jot down a few thoughts about the season and what happens to us, or should I say, "should happen to us."

We have all driven down streets or roads and seen those funny-looking trees that have been pruned around the electrical and telephone wires. There are all shapes and sizes, but one thing is for sure - the tree looks different. We know that the pruning has been done to make way for productivity; without the pruning the wires could be weighed down and damaged. We also know that pruning at the wrong time can do damage; for example, if one prunes lilacs in the summer the buds will be cut off and there will be no flowers the next spring. So, my friends, what do we look like when we are pruned?

If we take the first example of pruning above, where the pruned trees make way for the wires, the shaping is for fruitfulness - anything is taken away that does not lead us to Christ. We may end up a little misshapen - we do not act like others at work because we choose to be friendly and helpful to all without discrimination, we are laughed at because we take time to dress nicely and go to church and rest on Sundays, the cashier at the store looks at us a little funny when we return too much change - but we are allowing God's words to remain with us. The fruit we bear blossoms from the intimate relationship we have with the Risen One.

If we take the second example for pruning above, when the pruning is done at the wrong time, we will not bear fruit. Here the

pruner is not the loving God, but the distractions and selfishness that brings us to shape our own lives thinking that we know best, what is good for us. We have not heard God's words and allow them to remain in us. Or we have forgotten the words we have heard or shaped them into our own words.

The second kind of pruning is clearly undesirable; we really cut ourselves off from the loving relationship we have with God and others. The first kind of pruning can also be undesirable if we do not let God shape us for the sake of others. Fruitfulness is never for our own sake, but always for that of others. This kind of fruitfulness is what glorifies God - bringing others into closer relationship with God.

The new life of resurrection that is ours because we are called to an intimate relationship with God is expressed in loving deeds and truth. Self-giving love motivated by the sheer joy of resurrection opens us to fruitful pruning.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, part of our pruning is dying to our prejudices towards others and allowing them to grow in their relationship with the Risen Christ. Their growth is also our growth, a deeper share in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

**Thursday, March 10, 2022 (Day 8)**

*Stephanie Kern*

*Genesis 13:1-7, 14-18*

As my grandfather neared the end of his life, we had many conversations about theology. He, like me, was a pragmatist and believed very much that faith exists to help us all be good humans to each other. It is a simple summary of faith and the meaning of life, but simple is what speaks to me!

During one of our talks shortly before he died, he shared he had been thinking a lot about the Lord's Prayer. It had occurred to him, that when Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven," we are asking God's help to do all we can on Earth to make our own 'heaven' for humankind.

As Christians, we are called to spread love and peace. In

David's words, "I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." In Genesis, Abraham could have just as easily have "pulled rank" over Lot to his own benefit. Instead, he chose peace. He deflected by offering a solution to separate from Lot, giving up better land, in order to be the peacemaker. He chose peace over conflict, sacrifice over wealth.

It is difficult for many of us to give up a chance for a "win". In this season of Lenten sacrifice, let us be good humans and look for opportunities to choose peace on Earth. Let us fulfill our baptismal covenant to "strive for justice and peace among all people". Because that's a win for all humankind.

### **Friday, March 11, 2022 (Day 9)**

Eric Saulnier

Psalms 27 • Genesis 14:17-24 • Philippians 3:17-20

The readings today remind me that sometimes life is frightening, but that in God I find hope. For me, fear is a tightness in my chest, a clenching jaw and narrowed eyes. If fear becomes panic, then my eyes are wide.

For years, I thought that the way to deal with fear was to anticipate what frightened me. Painfully, I have learned that all I accomplish when I ruminate on my fears is that I experience today unpleasant emotion that I might feel someday.

The readings remind me of a lesson that I seem to need to relearn frequently: I am not in control, and the only peace I can find is in God. For, as it says in today's selection from Philippians, my citizenship is in heaven and my Lord Jesus Christ.

Today, rather than pray for specific outcomes, I ask for help, above all to desire to do God's will. Because, as I read somewhere, wanting to do what one should do is the only true freedom (including from fear) that one can ever know.

**Saturday, March 12, 2022 (Day 10)**

*Jessica Smith*

*Psalm 118:26-29*

26

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*From the house of the Lord we bless you.[b]*

27

*The Lord is God,*

*and he has made his light shine on us.*

*With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession*

*up[c] to the horns of the altar.*

28

*You are my God, and I will praise you;*

*you are my God, and I will exalt you.*

29

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;*

*his love endures forever.*

I've sung these phrases for years, both as my days as a choir student and as a parishioner at Trinity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. I'm always impressed how these words can be sung loud, with fanfare and exultation as well as softly, with sincerity.

The Psalm goes on to encourage us, the House of God, to join in the procession and give thanks and praise. As I reflect on those words, and the multitude of ways I've performed them, I'm reminded that there is no one way, no right way, to worship. Some of us worship boldly, while others worship in quiet meditations. It is my hope that Trinity offers a home, a house of God, where one can find their perfect fit of worship and be embraced as part of this community.

Our collective voices, prayers, meditations, and actions are the outward reflection of the light God has placed in each of us. Let us embrace those whose worship may look different from our own, and maybe sing a little louder, or meditate a little longer as we journey through lent together.

**Sunday, March 13, 2022 (2nd Sunday of Lent)**

*Fr. Chris Cole*

*Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 • Psalm 27 • Philippians 3:17-4:1 • Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)*

Today Luke gives us the story of Jesus's transfiguration and what we discover is that Jesus's appearance isn't always what it seems. Seen on the mountain top through the prism of prayer, Jesus changes, becoming dazzling and bright. Jesus is not alone on the mountain – two great prophets and teachers also appear alongside him in glory. But the disciples, despite what's before their eyes, can't see what's happening as it truly is. They misunderstand. A cloud then appears that obscures their sight, but a voice inside the cloud also reveals. And yet the disciples keep silent after hearing the voice in the cloud, since they are still uncertain of what they have seen and what they have heard.

I think Lent calls us to consider all the ways we may fail to see things as they truly are, full of wonder and glory, or to hear the lessons that God wants us to know. So often our ideas of the world cloud our sight and keep us from seeing what's truly there. And while there are voices that can help us when our vision is obscured, we either can't or don't hear them in a way that deepens our understanding.

There is a voice inside us that says, "Listen to Jesus," but how many times have we misunderstood what he says or failed to act on it? Yet Lent gives us an opportunity to revisit our own cloudy vision and to again hear the voices that will help ease our misunderstandings and spur us to action. Jesus stands before us, dazzling and bright. And the voice of God is with him.

**Monday, March 14, 2022 (Day 11)**

*Mo. Cheryl Harder-Missinne*

*Psalm 105:1-42 • Exodus 33:1-6 • Romans 4:1-12*

I am not certain that I should be the person dealing with circumcision, and looked hard not to have to tackle it today.

Each of the readings today deal with Abraham's faith and his covenant with God. God promised, Abram believed. Abram followed and trusted God. He followed through with his part of



the covenant (circumcision), and God followed through with God's promise of "Abraham's descendants numbering like the stars in the sky". Circumcision was a fertility ritual required for Abraham and Sarah to have children, so the circumcision makes sense in this context.

The theological question is: Did God act because of Abraham's "works"? Well, it would appear that way, but...

Paul was writing to the Romans who were trying to make Christian Gentiles follow the Law of Moses, and Paul challenged them saying Abraham was righteous before the Law of Moses; that is BEFORE he was circumcised, as it is recorded in Jewish scripture. His righteousness was also recognized with his willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

So, likewise, if we trust God to keep God's promises through Christ, we will obey all that God has commanded, because we trust what Jesus has said.

## **Tuesday, March 15, 2022 (Day 12)**

*Shawna Gehres*

*1 Corinthians 10:1-13*

1 Corinthians 10:13 says "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tested) beyond what you can bear." The adage "God never gives you more than you can handle" derives from this verse and is intended to comfort people in difficult times. It may not be very comforting to someone enduring unspeakable tragedy or living with daily trauma, however.

The verse continues: "But when you are tempted (tested), he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." Many commentators suggest this is the essential point of the passage, that we cannot bear these temptations (tests) on our own but instead must place faith in God. That is fine and good, but does this place a burden on the person facing tragedy? "If your faith were stronger, God would see you through these trials and all would be well." Or, does the person experiencing trauma hear these words, and because there is no balm to their pain blame themselves for not having enough faith to trust God to provide a way out?

Perhaps instead of trying to comfort someone by telling them “God never gives you more than you can handle,” we can remember that God acts through us, that we can be the feet and hands and ears of God. Perhaps we could be present with the person who is suffering, maybe simply listening as they talk about their burden. Maybe we can acknowledge their pain and share God’s love with them. Perhaps, by doing that instead of assuring them God gave them only as much as they can handle, we can be part of the way God provides to help them endure the pain.

**Wednesday, March 16, 2022 (Day 13)**

*Lily Moseman*

*Psalms 105:1-42 • 2 Chronicles 20:1-22 • Luke 13:22-31*

“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.”

This is the line that stood out most to me in the reading, as it ties the entire gospel together as a whole. This reading can be boiled down into a couple qualities.

First, love thy neighbor as thyself. This is a simple statement that is easily understandable, the golden rule. However, this sentiment is not so easy to follow. For example, someone could say they want to make healthier choices. That is the statement alone, but it takes effort to push through and make that a commitment. How do we really take care of the poor, the sick, or the hungry?

It’s not just enough to attend church and read the scriptures. You must be able to truly accept others as your own, to love people as equals. Who in your life is difficult to love?

The second thing I took out of this reading is true forgiveness. Jesus died for our sins, but that doesn’t mean that a person doesn’t have to ask for forgiveness. A person should realize what they need to ask forgiveness for, and then to honestly want that forgiveness.

If a person accomplishes those things, no matter how late in their life, they can redeem themselves. They may not get out of the

consequences of their actions, but if they can forgive themselves and be forgiven, love God and love their neighbor, they can move through the narrow door.

**Thursday, March 17, 2022 (Day 14)**

*Fr. Chris Cole*

*Psalm 63:1-8 • Daniel 3:19-30 • Revelation 2:8-11*

“But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.” Daniel 3:25

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him.” Daniel 3:28

The story in Daniel of the men thrown into the fiery furnace by a tyrannical ruler, only to survive unharmed, shows us a ruler who not only sees the error of his ways, but also shows us the unassailable power of God. On one level it teaches that when we stand up for what we know is true and right, God will be there with us. Even in the heat of the flames, God stands with those who stand with God. And yet we know that it is certainly not always true that we emerge unsinged. Sometimes we do get burned by the fire. Sometimes when standing up to those who would oppress us, we get hurt and the oppressors do not change their minds.

But maybe that's the opportunity for us to consider during this Lenten season. Do we believe that God is with us, even when the furnace of our life and times burns us? Do God's angels speak to us, letting us know we are not alone, or does God maintain silence, even when we trust in God for deliverance? I think here our Lenten practice is helpful. Practice, after all, is what we do when we are not being put to the test, so that when the test comes, we'll have the experience and habits to endure and even overcome. During Lent we can reflect on where we are called to stand up for justice and against oppression (and where we have failed to do so) and pray for knowledge of God's presence in those times. That way, when we find ourselves in the furnace, we'll see that we are not alone.

**Friday, March 18, 2022 (Day 15)**

*Mo. Cheryl Harder-Missinne*

*Psalm 63:1-8 • Daniel 12:1-4 • Revelation 3:1-6*

Here is another place in scripture that we hear about God's sanctuary. We know that God is always with us. IF we speak God's name in our hearts, God will always be alongside us. One of my mother's favorite poems was entitled "Footprints in the sand."

*One night I dreamed a dream. I was walking  
along the beach with my Lord. A cross the  
dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For  
each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints  
in the sand, one belonging to me and one to  
my Lord.*

*When the last scene of my life shot before  
me I looked back at the footprints in the  
sand. There was only one set of footprints.  
I realized that this was at the lowest and  
saddest times of my life. This always  
bothered me and I questioned the Lord  
about my dilemma.*

*'Lord, You told me when I decided to  
follow You, You would walk and talk  
with me all the way. But I'm aware that  
during the most troublesome times of  
my life there is only one set of footprints.  
I just don't understand why, when I need  
You most, You leave me.'*

*He whispered, 'My precious child, I love  
you and will never leave you, never ever,  
during your trials and testings. When you  
saw only one set of footprints, it was then  
that I carried you.'*

God is ALWAYS with us, in times of trouble and in times of joy.

**Saturday, March 19, 2022 (Day 16)**

*Jordan Bracht*

*Luke 6:43-45*

Luke 6:43 and 45 reads, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.”

What does it mean to be a good tree? Being a perfectly moral person? Striving for my own perfection feels too much like self-centeredness and is an exercise in futility (but it doesn't mean I still don't stubbornly try). The prophet John's vision in Revelation 22 offers the ultimate model of a good tree, “the tree of life,” whose source is the water of the river of life—it's fed entirely by the presence of God. John describes this tree as abundantly fruitful and states the “leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” With God as our source of life, I doubt we could stop healing and abundance from flowing through us, like it does through this tree, even if we tried.

**Sunday, March 20, 2022 (3rd Sunday of Lent)**

*Deacon Deborah*

*Psalm 63:1-8*

Sometimes our lives get busy... maybe it's not just “sometimes”. Lent is a time to spend with God; to seek Him.

To pay attention to God, we must decide that we won't focus on other things. I am a Dr. Who fan (a British sci-fi program). In one of the episodes there is an alien race called “The Silence”. You cannot see them if you are looking directly at them. You can only see them when you are not paying attention to them.

I feel I do that with God; I see Him, but only if I'm not really looking at Him. This Psalm tells me I should thirst for Him, as if I were “in a barren and dry land where there is no water”. I think it's safe to say that is not what I've been doing.

This Lent I will try to - as the Psalm says - “gaze on you in your holy place”. I will stop simply noticing God in my peripheral vision...I will put Him front and center.

**Monday, March 21, 2022 (Day 17)**

*Barbara Woltz*

*Psalm 39; Jeremiah 11:1-17 • Romans 2:1-11*

I am not a big fan of the Old Testament God, the wrathful figure who seems constantly unhappy and disappointed with us, his human creations. Today's lessons, even Paul's letter to the Romans, seem to illustrate this angry and vengeful figure. In the reading from Jeremiah, God curses "the one who does not obey." David laments in today's psalm that all people are "but a breath," reminding us of both Ash Wednesday and the funeral dirge of "ashes to ashes" and "dust to dust." Paul urges us to be repentant so that God's wrath will not be stored up against us.

As much as I prefer the good news of the gospels, Lent has meaning precisely because it is a season of self-reflection rather than celebration. Today's readings are a plea for us to use our "insight," our God-given ability to examine our inner thoughts and our secret behaviors. If we use Lent as an opportunity to look inward, to find where we have fallen short of God's goals for us, and to earnestly repent, then the celebration of Easter will have a more personal and significant meaning for us.

**Tuesday, March 22, 2022 (Day 18)**

*Fr. Chris Cole*

*Psalm 39 • Ezekiel 17:1-10 • Romans 2:12-16*

*"They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness." Romans 2:15*

How do I know if I'm doing it right? That's a question I've asked myself over and over again throughout my adult life. I've always been more comfortable when I know the "lay of the land," when there are clear sign posts, clear directions, a map that says, "Yes, you are heading where you want to go by the best possible route." Here, best usually means "quickest with the fewest obstacles." When folks talk about getting off the highway and exploring the back roads, my first thought is, "Good grief, we are going to get lost!" Now that we all have Google Maps, that fear has lessened a lot, but it's still a bit nerve wracking.

And yet, there have been times when, without already knowing it's the "right way" I have found myself on a back road, or in a

conversation with someone new, or thinking through a challenge, and have felt my way through, based on the “spirit” of the occasion. And it usually ends up being exactly where or with whom or how I was supposed to be. If I have been paying attention, practicing my spirituality in the spirit in which it is intended, then what’s written on my heart is usually enough to get me where I need to go, even without specific instructions or signposts or maps in that one situation to tell me that. My conscience sends the signal, “Yep, this is where and what you need to be right now, even though no one else has told you that.”

Like the Gentiles that Paul writes about in Romans, without us always knowing it, God writes God’s law on our hearts and thus guides us in God’s ways. Lent is, like other parts of our spirituality, preparation of our hearts and our conscience for those parts of God’s law that God wants to write within us.

### **Wednesday, March 23, 2022 (Day 19)**

*Sarah Gehres*

*Psalms 39 • Numbers 13:17-27 • Luke 13:18-21*

Numbers 13:17-27 describes Moses sending out a convoy to “spy out the land of Canaan,” to “see what the land is like.” The closing line of this passage, which describes the land they found, resonated with me: “It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.”

Luke 13:18-21 features the parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven, which similarly describe the kingdom of God as something to be worked for, and something that is built up upon our actions.

Here, my mind went in multiple directions. First, I thought of Rupi Kaur’s poetry book, *Milk and Honey*, in reference to the Numbers passage. This is a beautiful book of poetry, and Kaur’s poem “Milk and Honey”, for which the book is named, beautifully describes kindness: how is it so easy for you/ to be kind to people he asked/ milk and honey dripped/ from my lips as i answered/ cause people have not/ been kind to me.

My second thought relates to my university chapel’s semester theme for our casual “Growing in Grace” evening services: the

Fruits of our Labor. As represented in Luke 13:18-21, the kingdom of God is represented in the fruits of our labor. If our labor is the kindness we offer others in moments when it would be easier to be cruel, the kingdom of God is also represented in our kindness.

**Thursday, March 24, 2022 (Day 20)**

*Caroline Leithner*

*Psalms 32 • Joshua 4:1-13 • 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5*

Jesus the Emmanuel, God with us: give us grace and focus to see your gifts when we previously could not. Grant us patience and renewal in this time as we remember your ministry and works. Help us not lose heart in the midst of political division, the ongoing global pandemic, and economic change. Be with us as we recall how you came into our earthly home to show us the inbreaking of the Kingdom of the God who forgives, renews, and loves without condition. May it ever be so.

**Friday, March 25, 2022 (Day 21)**

*Fr. Chris Cole*

*Isaiah 7:10-14 • Psalm 45 or Psalm 40:5-10 • Hebrews 10:4-10 • Luke 1:26-38*

*When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." -Hebrews 10:8-9*

What does God want from us? How are we to know? These are two of the most basic questions any person of faith might ask. But just because they are basic doesn't make them simple or easy.

Appeasing God is a notion as old as religion itself, but what does God value? How do we know what to offer? Our reading from Hebrews seems to reject the old cultic sacrifices that were made in the Jerusalem temple. That's not what God wants from us. If we make mistakes, and of course we do, God wants us to recognize them as such, to confess them, and then to offer up ourselves, our souls and bodies, to God's service.



In other words, God doesn't want or need anything from us... except ourselves. The one thing we always have to give is our humble service, freely offered without restriction. This Lenten season, perhaps we can ponder what parts of ourselves we have offered to God and what it would take for us to offer them more completely.

**Saturday, March 26, 2022 (Day 22)**

*Fr. Lee Domenick*

*Psalm 32 • Exodus 32:7-14 • Luke 15:1-10*

As some of you know Henri Nouwen is one of my favorite authors. His words of wisdom seek to pull upon my heart and create a place, a safe place, that I can live, breath and have my being. In his devotional book, he states, "When we live our lives as missions, we become aware that there is a home from which we are sent and to which we have to return. We start thinking about ourselves as people who are in a faraway country to bring a message or work on a project, but only for a certain amount of time. When the message has been delivered and the project is finished, we want to return home to give an account of our mission and to rest from our labors."

One of the most important spiritual disciplines is to develop the knowledge that the years of our lives are years "on a mission." (Bread for the Journey, Henri Nouwen) HarperCollins 1997). The season of Lent calls us to slow down and look at ourselves. An introspective time that we seek not only a better understanding of who we are, but more importantly whose we are. So, I give you the following, are things really that different...

A man accustomed to a mainline church went to a seekers' service one Sunday. He came home and his wife asked him how it was.

"Well," he said, "it was interesting. They did something different. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns."

"Praise choruses?" said his wife. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're okay, I guess. They're sort of like hymns, only different," said the man.

"What's the difference?" asked his wife.

He replied, "Well, it's like this. If I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' that would be a hymn. Suppose, on the other hand, I were to say to you: 'Martha, Martha, Martha, Oh, Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA, the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows, the white cows, the black and white cows, the COWS, COWS, COWS are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, the CORN, CORN, CORN.' Then if I were to repeat the whole thing five or six times, that would be a praise chorus."

As luck would have it, the same Sunday a young woman accustomed to seekers' services attended a mainline service. She came home and her husband asked her how it was.

"Well," she said, "it was interesting. They did something different, however. They sang hymns instead of praise choruses."

"Hymns?" said her husband. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're okay, I guess. They're sort of like regular songs, only different." said the woman.

"What's the difference?" asked her husband.

She replied, "Well, it's like this. If I were to say to you, 'Ernest, the cows are in the corn,' that would be a regular song. Suppose on the other hand, I were to say to you: Oh Ernest, dear Ernest, now hear thou, my cry; Incline thine ear to the words of my mouth. Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by To the righteous, inimitable, glorious truth. For the way of the animals who can explain? There is in their heads no shadow of sense! Harken they not in God's sun or his rain. Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced. Yea, those COWS in glad bovine, rebellious delight Broke free from their shackles, their warm pens eschewed. Then goaded by minions of darkness and night. They all my mild Chilliwack sweet corn have chewed. So, look to that bright shining day by and by, where all the corruptions of earth are reborn, Where no vicious animal makes my soul cry, And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn. Then, if I were to sing only verses one, three, and four, and if I were to do a key change on the last verse, that would be a hymn."

**Sunday, March 27, 2022 (4th Sunday of Lent)**

*Deacon Bert Bibens*

*Joshua 5:9 • Psalm 32 • 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 • Luke 15:1-3, 11-32*

Joshua says God “rolled away” from the Israelites “the disgrace of Egypt.” Psalm 32 reminds us “blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven”. The power of forgiveness removes burdens of guilt and shame from our shoulders, when we’ve done something wrong, and restores community acceptance, as well, helping us to feel whole and complete again.

I remember once we attended a holiday party at the Radford’s home, and I foolishly dripped chocolate sauce on a beautiful leather chair. My error either led to an exorbitant cleaning bill, or possibly a ruined piece of furniture! But, Ann and Britt comforted and assured me that it wasn’t a big deal...how kind, and how undeserved.

Who among us hasn’t spilled their milk or coffee, and ruined a tablecloth or somebody’s important papers? Which of us hasn’t said something in jest, only to realize feelings were hurt? God gives us the power to restore and renew, just as our imperfections are overlooked, by a loving and compassionate Lord.

Thanks, Radfords. Thanks, Jesus. Now it’s my turn.

**Monday, March 28, 2022 (Day 23)**

*Becky Moseman*

*Psalm 53 • Leviticus 23:26-41 • Revelation 19:1-8*

A first read through (or maybe 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> read) these scriptures show us a lot of darkness and pollution. God is not happy with humanity, and their destruction of his creation, and injustice. In each reading we have hope for a new beginning; a restoration of all that is good and just because God makes it so.

For those who are suffering, God’s ability to change creation and make this new world may be their anchor for this passage in life. The reading from Leviticus goes back to the law of Moses telling us to make time for atonement. Although the passage gives a specific date and such, the more relevant part is just setting

aside time to do it. Time to lift up all the things that we should have done better and make it right with God. Start anew. Reflect on Jesus's atonement for the sins of the world through his death and resurrection.

**Tuesday, March 29, 2022 (Day 24)**

*Tony Gehres*

*Leviticus 25:1-19*

Leviticus 25 prescribes every seventh year as a sabbath year to permit the land to rest, and more radically, a jubilee year every 50 years when leases or mortgaged lands are returned to their original owners and all slaves and bonded laborers are to be freed. Permitting land to be fallow during the sabbatical year seems a prudent environmental practice.

In our own lives, interruptions or changes in our longer term living practices can rejuvenate our purpose, reveal new opportunities, or simply enable reflection on who we are and what we want to become. For many, the pandemic's silver lining has been a similar personal catalyst.

The jubilee prescription seems unfeasible because the cost and disruption to the unwilling wealthy would have been unacceptable. Leviticus emphasizes that the land is God's land and it must be used to protect all people from destitution. Does this mandate for social and economic restoration guide us to oppose massive private accumulation and concentration of land and wealth and oppose multi-generational poverty? Have we done what we can and must to be proper stewards of natural resources and allow them to benefit everyone? What would real solutions look like today?

**Wednesday, March 30, 2022 (Day 25)**

*Betty Rains*

*Psalms 53 • 2 Kings 4:1-7 • Luke 9:10-17*

This story about God providing for his people must be pretty important, it is the only miracle that appears in all four of the gospels.

When I was teaching kindergarten, eating lunch in the brand new cafeteria was an exciting experience for the children. For the teachers, it was a logistical nightmare. We were given a 20 minute time slot and told to “just get them fed”. But, how? There were some children with lunch boxes and some ordering a hot lunch. We separated them into two groups. But some had food allergies and couldn’t sit near friends who brought “forbidden” foods. We made subgroups. We made a plan, and it worked. Everyone was fed.

In Luke 9: 10-17, the disciples are worried about feeding a huge crowd. Not to worry, though. Jesus has a plan. He tells the disciples to divide everyone into groups and have them sit down. Suddenly, it turns out that there is plenty of food to feed everyone!

It’s easy to be paralyzed into inaction when there are so many hungry people around us. The fact is, there is enough food in the world for everyone to have enough nourishment. God is telling us to figure out a distribution plan.

#### **Thursday, March 31, 2022 (Day 26)**

*Mo. Cheryl Harder-Missinne*

*Psalm 126 • Isaiah 43:1-7 • Philippians 2:19-24*

The psalm’s opening line refers to a time “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,” and verses 1-3 describe the people’s memory and experience of that time. Virtually all interpreters see here a reference to the return of Judahite exiles from Babylonia and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem during the latter half of the 6th century BCE, which is celebrated in the psalm as an occasion of joy so intense as to be dreamlike, and as an instance of God’s restorative power so impressive that even the surrounding nations took note of it.

This restoration of the people on a grand scale is the essential background of the psalm. All that the people have to say here is conditioned by their memory of this most stunning turn from a life of suffering and exile under the just punishment of God to a life of rejoicing in Zion under God’s favor. It is because the people remember that God has acted in this way in the past that they can pray. It is clear that the recollection of the dramatic events of the return from exile lend confidence to the people’s prayer.

Where in your life had God “restored your fortunes”? Have you ever felt a joy this intense?

**Friday, April 1, 2022 (Day 27)**

*Becky Moseman*

*Psalm 126 • Isaiah 43:8-15 • Philippians 2:25-3:1*

Philippians is a collection of letters from Paul while he was in prison. The Philippians in the early church are poor yet they manage to scrape together some essentials to send to Paul in prison—the most recent to this letter delivered by Epaphroditus.

In this scripture Paul is asking the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus. To encourage their welcoming this messenger, Paul tells them Epaphroditus has just recovered from a grave illness that almost killed him. It may also be a way of showing Epaphroditus’s willingness to die for his faith. How hard Epaphroditus persisted to do the work of God despite illness, opposition, suffering, etc. This is a theme in Paul’s letters.

Paul writes, “Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people, <sup>30</sup> because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.” In our daily grind, how much risk are we willing to take to live into our faith? In the face of suffering, opposition, oppression, where do we find joy and the light of Christ?

**Saturday, April 2, 2022 (Day 28)**

*Fr. Chris Cole*

*Psalm 126 • Exodus 12:21-27 • John 11:45-57*

*“So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, “What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.” John 11:47-48*

How many times have we feared that what we have worked so hard for, what we have cherished and built up over time, may be undone by the words and actions of another advocating for change? Ours is not the only religion that teaches that this world is transitory, that it changes, that things come into being, endure

for a while, then depart, dissolve, disappear. But that process of continual change can be very stressful on us. Everything seems so contingent, dependent on factors that can shift on us, sometimes at a moment's notice. We are never sure when the ground will shift under our feet, so we fight against the ground breakers.

This is true of institutions as much as it is of people. When reformers come along, they can seem very threatening to those in charge of maintaining our institutions. And yet, fear and backlash often can do nothing to alter the eventual outcome. Change still happens. For the Hebrew leaders of Jesus's time, their reaction to Jesus doesn't change what's to come. Their religion would, in fact, move into the synagogues, after the Romans put down a Jewish rebellion and destroy their temple around 70 CE. Their temple ends, their religion scatters, and yet what is essential about their nation endured, and endures to this day.

Change is inevitable. It can also be uncomfortable. It can seem dangerous. And yet it still comes, often with consequences that are not as dire or as threatening as we might imagine at first. Perhaps this Lent we can reflect on how change can often bring renewal in the wake of what comes to an end. Perhaps we can learn to sit with a bit more comfort in the presence of the inevitable.

**Sunday, April 3, 2022 (5th Sunday of Lent)**

*Linda Paul*

*Philippians 3:4b-14*

*But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

*– Philippians 3:13b-14*

Being Goal Oriented is a good thing, and as Paul shows us, we Christians do have a worthy goal. Like Alice Wine's song of the early 1900's, we have to Keep Our Eyes on The Prize. The Prize, according to Paul, is what God calls us to as we follow Christ.

Not easy in a world that demands we multitask ourselves into numbness, at times. Pressures, deadlines, children's and parents' needs, all squeeze in on us, making it hard to breathe.

And that's our clue that we've been seduced to the Vortex of Busyness, and our eyes are not on the prize. How do we exit?

*"Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts. Whenever your mind becomes scattered, use your breath as the means to take hold of your mind again." Thich Nhat Hanh\**

Only when we have our mind back into the present, getting our Eyes on the Prize, are we able to take deep breaths, end the numbness, and begin to feel Christ centered in our hearts again. It's where we feel at home. It's where God has called us!

\*The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation

#### **Monday, April 4, 2022 (Day 29)**

*Elizabeth Edwards*

*Exodus 40:1-15*

These verses remind me of my Sundays teaching Godly Play. The classroom has a dollhouse-size set of everything the Israelites needed to properly worship God. A little altar of burnt offering, a lamp stand, a basin, a curtain, an Ark of the Covenant. Quite a collection of objects to put in place, and many steps to be taken, before a tiny Israelite can even think about entering the tent of meeting and worshipping the Lord.

Contrast that with how we worship in Godly Play every week: two adults and seven or so children, sitting in a circle on the floor. After Jesus' sacrifice for us, that's all we need. We are down to fundamentals: joining together with our fellow Christians, encouraging each other, and helping each other grow. This is the "new and living way."

#### **Tuesday, April 5, 2022 (Day 30)**

*Colby Strong*

*1 John 2:18-28*

God is love. The apostle John proclaims this many times in his writings. The reading today is a warning to the followers of Jesus. John warns of antichrists. These antichrists originated as part of



the church body, but they were never truly part of the body of Christ. They were imposters. They are imposters wanting to lead the children of God astray.

The term “antichrist” refers to anything not of God. Many antichrists have weaponized the church to attack any person that does not fit their definition of Christianity. Their actions are not of God, because the impetus for their actions is not rooted in love.

As children of God, John instructs us to “continue in him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.” During this Lenten season as we look on with anticipation to the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; remember God is love. Pray for each other, the Church, and the whole world.

*O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions; take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP p. 818)*

### **Wednesday, April 6, 2022 (Day 31)**

*Sara Arnold*

*Luke 18:31-34*

In this Luke passage the Passion is foretold to the twelve. Imagine being told by your spiritual leader that he will soon be mocked and killed, and that he will rise again. They did not understand. In verse 34 is written “they did not grasp what was said.” I am comforted by this. Even the apostles struggled. I have often felt that I did not grasp aspects in my faith.

I recently had a discussion with a friend about prayer. We agreed that prayer to intercede for another’s healing from illness is worthwhile. That prayer has a positive effect on the person being prayed for as well as on me as the prayer. When we pray from

the heart, hope is given. But what if the outcome is not as we prayed. I don't fully understand, but I still know that the prayer was worthwhile.

**Thursday, April 7, 2022 (Day 32)**

*Bill Lunn*

*Psalm 31:9-16 • Isaiah 53:10-12 • Hebrews 2:1-9*

The selection from Psalms, Isaiah, and Hebrews all deal with men who have been labeled. They have committed iniquities of various sorts. They are perceived by many around them to be bad. But each set of verses stresses that such men who follow in Christ's path steadfastly will find redemption. Christ, too, was scorned by so many around him, but the Lord still looked out after Him. The Lord will look after you if you follow in his path.

**Friday, April 8, 2022 (Day 33)**

*Caroline Leithner*

*Psalm 34:15-22 • Isaiah 54:9-10 • Hebrews 2:10-18*

Jesus the Emmanuel, God with us: give us grace and focus to see your gifts when we previously could not. Grant us patience and renewal in this time as we remember your ministry and works. Help us not lose heart in the midst of political division, the ongoing global pandemic, and economic change. Be with us as we recall how you came into our earthly home to show us the inbreaking of the Kin-dom of the God who forgives, renews, and loves without condition. May it ever be so.

**Saturday, April 9, 2022 (Day 34)**

*Barbara Harlas*

*Psalm 31:9-16 • Leviticus 23:1-8 • Luke 22:1-13*

This psalm is about how awful we feel when we are in distress, how we know we have "hurt" our neighbors, and how we have become like a broken vessel. But then it reads:

*But I trust in you, O Lord;*

*I say, "You are my God."*

*My times are in your hand;*

*Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.*

*Let your face shine upon your servant;  
Save me in your steadfast love.*

This Psalm is a constant reminder in the Orthodox Liturgy because it is read every Sunday during the Matins. But, during the forty days of Lent, I feel it is a time that we can do our best to improve our own weaknesses so when Holy Week and Easter arrive, we are closer to God. But what I get out of this Psalm the most are the above verses, and that God is always there for us.

When I was diagnosed with cancer ten months ago, I was emotional, I was scared, there was so much I did not know. But I did know that God was with me and no matter what, I was never alone.

**Sunday, April 10, 2022 (Palm Sunday)**

*Mo. Cheryl Harder-Missinne*

*Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 • Luke 19:28-40*

Our Luke reading for today is the same one that we read just prior to the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday at church. I grew up listening to Jesus Christ Superstar and I can hear Caiaphas sing, "Tell the rabble to be quiet, we anticipate a riot. This common crowd is much too loud. Tell the mob that sings your song that they are fools, and they are wrong. They are a curse, they should disperse." Jesus responds with: "Why waste your breath moaning at the crowd. Nothing can be done to stop the shouting. If every voice was still the noise would still continue. The rocks and stones themselves would start to sing!"

When I was growing up, my church didn't "do" holy week. We went from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, completely missing the Passion. Palm Sunday used to be one of my favorite services, because we sang "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" and it was like a parade. Palm Sunday was a mini celebration. As I grew, I learned about Holy Week, and the role that we play every day in crucifying our friend Jesus that we just sang Hosanna to.

Palm/Passion Sunday, as the adult that I am, is painful to live through. It begins my walk through Holy Week, and reminds me daily of the ways that I forget to sing Hosanna to our Lord, rather than "Crucify Him!"

**Monday, April 11, 2022 (Day 35)**

*Becky Moseman*

*Isaiah 42:1-9 • Psalm 36:5-11 • Hebrews 9:11-15 • John 12:1-11*

As we enter Holy Week, Jesus's imminent journey to the cross is palpable. It seems so close I can feel it. In our readings today, I'm struck by the foretelling of Jesus's sacrifice. Lazarus is there reminding us of Jesus's greater miracle to come. Mary uses expensive perfume—the cost of a year's wages—to anoint Christ's feet and wipe them with her hair. She humbles herself in service to the one she loves with her whole heart. Jesus points out this oil is for his own burial.

The time is growing closer and I can't help but be reminded of Jesus telling his followers to be prepared, be alert, for they don't know when the Bridegroom will come. They won't know when, so they need to be in the practice of living faithfully. We see this glimpse of beloved community living in unconditional love. Martha serving as she does best. Mary listening at Jesus's feet. Lazarus, his beloved friend, present with him.

Judas's comments about the cost of the oil and Jesus's reprimand of him, knowing Judas's intentions are selfish, show us how misguided we can be even in front of what is holy and good. The miracle of Lazarus divides the faith community by some folks leaving to follow Jesus. The priests are scared by the influence Jesus and Lazarus have over the Jews. When was a time we missed something right in front of us because we were too blinded by what we thought was important at the time? When was a time we missed the big picture because we were too close and too scared to see what was happening, to step back and leave room for God to guide us?

**Tuesday, April 12, 2022 (Day 36)**

*Keith Gogan*

*John 12: 32-33*

*"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

In this short passage from John, Jesus makes it clear how he will die. He will be crucified, raised on a crude Roman torture device.

In 1610, Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens presented his painting *The Elevation of the Cross*, which shows several muscular men aggressively pulling an angled cross, bearing Christ, toward the vertical as others weep at the sight. What those determined men do not realize, though, is that they are not really pulling the risen Christ up—Christ is pulling them up, “[drawing] all people to [himself].” All they must do—all we must do—is realize that, accept it gladly, and follow him upwards.

### **Wednesday, April 13, 2022 (Day 37)**

*Becky Moseman*

*Isaiah 50:4-9a • Psalm 70 • Hebrews 12:1-3 • John 13:21-32*

On my first reading of this scene from John’s gospel, I couldn’t help but laugh at how melodramatic it sounded. I imagined a group of middle school girls with the queen bee capturing her followers’ attention with her decree of who was going to be the newest outcast of the group. Maybe it would also make for a good soap opera scene as Jesus dips the bread in the oil and passes it to Judas. Cue the music and stare off between the people at the table.

Dramatics aside, this story of Judas’s betrayal raises some interesting questions. At this point Judas has already met with the priests and made a deal to betray Jesus, by turning Jesus over to the authorities. The gnostic gospels all describe this scene a little differently but the truths in this story are the same: Jesus knows Judas will betray him and throws it out there among the disciples. Did Jesus know exactly how the next events would unfold? I don’t think so, just that he knew the gist of what would happen to lead to his sacrifice and resurrection. He was living by “all will be revealed in time,” which if you know me is what I tell my children when they ask what is happening next.

At the end of this scripture Jesus tells Judas to hurry up and do what he has decided to do. Jesus is basically saying, “you are now in control of what happens next” which begs the question did Judas have a choice? Was Judas at a crossroads to follow through with his plan?

When all of Jesus’s story began way back at the very beginning of time in the Garden of Eden, God gave humankind the power to

choose God instead of being forced to be obedient. God has always given us a choice. Often, we've screwed up God's message and done things in God's name that were awful, but it was still our choice to make. If it is still a choice for Judas to follow through on his plan, and if Jesus's sacrifice of death and resurrection is necessary for redemption for all of humanity past and future, what would have happened if Judas chose differently? How would the story unfold? No matter how we got there, I think the end point is the same. Jesus would still die and return to us. Which leads me to Judas's decision and hoping, praying, there is redemption for him.

In John we don't know what becomes of Judas. If this whole story is really a redemption arc in the greatest story of love, then isn't the greatest part that someone who does something so awful, betrays God's son, and feels horrible about it, that he too can be forgiven by God? It gives me hope for all the times I really mess up and feel I don't deserve mercy, that God has already said, "Come on, I forgive you. There is room for even you."

#### **Thursday, April 14, 2022 (Day 38)**

*Finley Wood*

*Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14 • Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 • 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 • John 13:1-17, 31b-35*

Thursday of Holy Week—Maundy Thursday—begins the “Paschal Triduum,” the Three Days before the Resurrection. The readings are filled with rich and varied imagery; the great mysteries of our faith, which we not only observe, but into which we enter. Exodus' lamb is sacrificed at Passover for deliverance from bondage, and we hear the Baptist hail Jesus as the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Psalm 116 speaks of the “cup of salvation” and Paul declares in I Corinthians that on this night, Jesus offered bread and wine—his body and blood—and we kneel at the altar with outstretched hands. John's Gospel tells of Jesus humbly washing his disciples' feet, commanding us to wash one another's, and our own bare feet are washed in cool water during the silence of this evening.

And we remember from childhood that “Maundy” comes from the Latin *mandatum* or “commandment” because Jesus says to the disciples in the upper room and to us: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love

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

Jesus faces the cross and first meets with those who are his own: he ushers them out of captivity; he cleanses them as both act and example of humility; and he feeds them with his own body and blood, making them not only part of himself but part of one another. Then, he gives his final command: we are to love one another just as he has loved us.

What is he asking of us in this one final injunction? We know that Jesus isn't speaking of mere feelings and emotion when he calls us to love as he has done. We sense that this is a command that will require our entire lives, both in sacrifice of self and over the complete course of our remaining days. He has made us part of himself and thus part of one another, so perhaps he means at least these things in his call to love, which is so clear as a command and yet so much a mystery in its outworking.

We are to experience and become the channel of his deliverance to all from all oppression. We are to cleanse and comfort every weary traveler on the pilgrimage of this life. We are to evidence humility toward all, rather than lording it over others or acting as if the call to discipleship is a spiritual merit badge. We are to love as he has loved—giving what we have received of him as a gift to this world, speaking the truth found in him as the Word of God that is life and the light of humanity, and offering his reconciling forgiveness to all who will open their hands to receive it. He lives in us now and we in him, and it is this sacrificial and giving love that tells all humans that he is the good Sovereign, whose yoke is easy. We enter into the darkness of this night and the nights to come with him, understanding that because we are his body, we will not only see, but as emblems of his love we will bear the light of his resurrection to one another and to this world.

**Friday, April 15, 2022 (Day 39)**

*Ed Roling*

*Isaiah 52:13-53:12 • Psalm 22 • Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 • John 18:1-19:42*

In the Book of Hebrews 5:8-9, we read, “Although Jesus was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having

been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.” Growing up in heavily Roman Catholic Northeast Iowa, for me Good Friday was a serious, solemn, and meant-to-be quiet day; a day to reflect on God as the essence of love. God as Creator is good and can only be good. The same is intended for all God’s creation - nature, plants, animals and humans. God’s plan is that all creation live into becoming all that God intended. Obedience is learning to live in harmony - with God, nature, self, and others.

Now well into my seventh decade, I experience that I and others are tempted to wrongdoing and to do much less than our God-given potential. We have inherited a weakened, human condition. So when I fall short, what then? Good Friday has taught me that God’s Son Jesus has paid the price for my failures, shortcomings, and sins. Jesus teaches us the mercy and loving forgiveness of our Father God. Jesus calls us to reverently offer up prayers and supplications. Reflections abound.

As I conclude, I ask you to pray today, tomorrow, and every day going forward, these words of The Breastplate of St. Patrick Prayer: “+Christ behind me, Christ before me +Christ beside me, Christ to win me +Christ to comfort and restore me. +Christ beneath me, Christ above me +Christ in quiet, Christ in danger +Christ in hearts of all that love me +Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.”

May these words, covering all events in life, be ever in your mind, on your lips, and in your heart, your mantra companion. For me, I believe this is what St. Paul means when he says, “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.”

### **Saturday, April 16, 2022 (Day 40)**

*Laura Duncombe*

*Job 14:1-14*

Today is Holy Saturday. We’ve made it through! Whether you spent Lent as you’d hoped or if it slipped through your fingers, we have arrived at the end. Today we wait for whatever tomorrow brings.

Often, like Job, I worry about what tomorrow will bring. I despair,



like Job, that we “grow and wither as quickly as flowers.” It seems like, since the beginning of time, humans have felt powerless against the relentless march of time. Have we done enough? Are we enough? Tomorrow, we get the answer.

Jesus is enough, and He died for all of us so that our death is not the end. You would think that victory would be enough for us to dance in the streets every day, but still we fretful humans worry and wonder. When the future feels uncertain, let us remember that even in the darkest night God is always with us—and Easter is coming.

## ABOUT TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, TULSA

We are a church family made up of varied backgrounds and faith stories, and we invite you to add your voice to our collective story. Trinity has room for longtime followers of Christ, for people new to their faith, for doubters, and for everyone in between; there is no "right way." Every person is entitled to their own beliefs - we encourage questions and celebrate civil debate. We honor every human as a beautifully made manifestation of God, affirming all individuals as their authentic selves. We believe in doing the hard work to break down injustice and barriers to equality. And we welcome you and your unique contributions to our community.

We do not expect our members to have the same beliefs now, or ever. We are at our best when we listen and grow together. What we do hope is that you will find in Trinity a true community of faith. Where every person is both a teacher and a student and all are valued equally as their authentic selves. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, Trinity welcomes you!

JOIN US IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

### **Sunday**

7:30am, 9:00am, 11:00am\*, 11:05am

\*streaming on Facebook

### **Monday-Thursday**

11:00am TrinityConnect daily meditation\*

9:00pm Compline

\*streaming on Facebook

### **Wednesday**

12:05pm Eucharist

@TrinityTulsa on these platforms



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