

BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY

2025 LENTEN REFLECTIONS



ST.
BARNABAS
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

REV. KAREN HAIG



For Christians, Lent is a time set apart. Forty full, rich, and long days to reflect and to pray, to look within, to discover the things in our lives that create distance between God and ourselves, and to consider gently letting them go. Lent is a time to discern how God may be calling us. What might we take on, or let go of, in order to more freely love God, our neighbors, and ourselves?

We offer you these Lenten devotions and invite you to spend some time each day reflecting on Holy Scripture with our St. Barnabas community. These reflections have been written with great care and attention by the people of our community, and they offer us an opportunity to move more deeply into our relationships with God, with one another, and with ourselves.

My heartfelt thanks to all who prayed and pondered and wrote so beautifully from the riches of their own lives to make this offering happen. This little devotional is a great gift to us all, and it has been my privilege to have had a hand in bringing it to you. I invite you to use it to pray with and to come closer into community by coming to know a bit more of the people who have written these reflections. May this Lent be an especially rich and holy season for us all.

Faithfully,

Karen +

Joel 2:1 *Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near.*

“Blow the trumpet in Zion,” the Prophet Joel proclaims. It’s as if he’s saying, “Wake up!” Or perhaps, “Snap out of it!” Because we need to be shaken up a bit. We’re in a bit of a stupor. And Ash Wednesday invites us to come back to our senses.

Because it’s easy for us to get sucked in by what Frederick Buechner terms “the great blaring, boring, banal voice of our mass culture, which threatens to deafen us.” It drowns out that still small voice of God that Elijah heard in the utter silence. It distracts us, turning our attention away from God and the things that draw us closer to God. And so we need to make time in our lives to intentionally return, to re-center, refocus, and re-establish our connection with God. To realistically face ourselves and where we have been and where we are. To see those patterns that pull us away from God, and make amends.

Make no mistake, today is about repentance. It’s looking at where we are in our lives and taking stock of it all. It’s in remembering that our time here on earth is indeed finite, and that what we do here with our time matters. So when we mess up, when we listen to that voice of our culture, or the voice telling us to follow the path away from God, it’s important to make things right.

Which is very counter-cultural. Far too often it seems that we’re encouraged to just focus on ourselves. Yet the way to God is through reflection and self-denial and reading scripture and prayer. It’s in seeing how we might need to change. It’s in being honest and then finding places for renewal. I hope we all can do that work these next forty days, for if we do, resurrection will likely be where we end up

Phil LaBelle

Bishop

Diocese of Olympia

John 1:29 *The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

A couple of weeks ago, I was at the airport, minding my own business. All of a sudden I looked up, and there was the governor. He was standing 20 yards away, waiting to board the same flight to Seattle. I could have introduced myself. Instead, I froze. It turns out that tending my email was easier than talking to him.

John the Baptist was not so shy. Before Jesus showed up in the flesh, John started preparing people. Once Jesus revealed himself, John immediately told anyone who would notice. Tending to God's business does that to people. What a gift it is when we are empowered to do God's holy, sacred work!

Rather than minding our own business, Lent is about tending our own souls. One aspect of that soul care includes tending relationships. This year, that work takes on special emphasis at St. Barnabas. Before you bid farewell to Karen, there is lots to do. Leavetaking is holy and sacred. It is also hard. In the next few weeks, you will celebrate each other and the ministry you have shared. Yes, there will be some grief, too. All of it is tender work. Rather than minding your own business, embrace what is happening. Pay attention to what you notice. Offer it up to God in prayer. Then, when you are ready, share what you feel. This is how you practice good soul care for yourself and with each other. It's also how you get ready for what is to come.

The night before Jesus left, he ate with his closest friends. They shared stories with each other. Then, Jesus assured them all would be well, even if it would be hard. That's how Jesus got his disciples ready for what was to come. It's how he getting you ready now.

May you be blessed in the holy work that awaits.

Cristi Chapman
Canon to the Ordinary
Diocese of Olympia

Deuteronomy 7:12 *If you heed these ordinances, by diligently observing them, the Lord your God will maintain with you the covenant loyalty that he swore to your ancestors.*

Deuteronomy starts with Moses retelling the story of Exodus from his perspective—how God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and to the promised land. In the chapter before this, Moses reiterates the telling of “the Great Commandment” to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your might.” The Israelites are told that if they follow this, and the other commandments, God will protect them as promised in the “oath he swore to your ancestors.” As a result of this unique covenant, the Israelites were placed in a special relationship with God. This all sounds wonderful, but the story retold in Deuteronomy is also a very firm warning to the Jews—meant for them to pass down through the generations—that they need to follow the laws or terrible things will happen to them.

When I read the story of Exodus retold in such a succinct way and riddled with chilling warnings, the first thing I thought about was what a big deal it was for the disciples to follow Jesus. There are frightening consequences to going against this agreement and the disciples knew them well! Although it seems clear that the disciples believed that Jesus was the Son of God and that he was not going against the commandments, the religious authorities at the time were warning everyone that following Jesus was NOT honoring God’s covenant. Perhaps this was not an issue when Jesus was alive, but right after he died and before the disciples saw him resurrected, I imagine that they wondered (even if just for a moment) if they had made a mistake; if they had unknowingly broken the covenant that their ancestors had made with God. Doing something “wrong” is a terrible feeling and I know they were also scared of their worldly fate, but I can’t imagine how crushing it would be for people so devout as the disciples to wonder if they had unwittingly gone against everything they believed and broken the covenant with God. During this season, and on Good Friday this year, I will try to put myself in their frame of mind and think about the warnings set out in Deuteronomy. To remember that I know the end of the story, but they didn’t.

Cathy Davies

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

John 1:50 *Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."*

Jesus invites us to look deeper into an ongoing growing relationship between us and him.

It is him giving us his promise. Can we give Jesus our promise to have faith and to keep the faith of his love for us at all times?

During Lent, let us remember to keep our promise to those we love and to God.

Lisa-Marie MacKenzie



Romans 10:8–9 *But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

The Word

Faith

Salvation

Paul’s masterpiece, Romans, was written from Corinth around 57 CE. This passage follows Paul’s recalling by Moses in Deuteronomy, in the 7th Century BCE, that if one follows God’s law that one will be rescued. Paul explains that the good news of Jesus, or the Word, if expressed outwardly by confession and inwardly by faith, will lead to God’s grace and salvation. This importantly does not require extraordinary works, but faith in Christ and belief in his resurrection. Humanity is forgiven, accepted, and accounted as being righteous by faith alone.

The justification before God in Christian theology is the act of God declaring a person righteous and free from sin through faith.

The law of the prophets from the Old Testament transitions and is fulfilled by God’s grace through Christ. By surrendering our lives through faith in Christ we are promised eternal salvation. This is God’s amazing gift that reconciles humanity so beautifully with God.

Newton (Trip) Duncan

John 2:10 *Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.*

One question I often found myself wondering is why God didn't send Jesus in the beginning? You know, when Cain murdered Able. Or when the wickedness of the earth warranted a flood. Or maybe when the Hebrew slaves were crying out for freedom. God could have sent Jesus up front and saved us all a lot of time and heartache.

Working through this question, I've realized that while I live in a world of process, I'm tempted to wish I lived in a still life. A still life painting is a scene where nothing happens—everything is static, frozen in time. God could have made us all perfect from the get-go, and then we'd never have to go through growing pains.

Think about it though—we humans can only paint a still life through a process. Process is everything for us. Maybe it is for God, too. God doesn't do everything all at once. God saves the best wine for last; God saves Jesus to come in the “fullness of time.” Which means his coming again will be the fullest fullness of time!

Why does God prefer a world of process? Maybe it has to do with who this world is for. In a still life, where everything is perfect, there would be no meek, no poor, no hungry to inherit the earth. They wouldn't exist. But in a world of process where we have to grow into the fullness—where it is only later in the party when the best wine comes out—the meek can inherit the earth in the end. That's who the best wine is for. Maybe that's why Jesus comes in the middle and the end of the story, and not at the beginning.

Michael Fitzpatrick

Hebrews 3:7–8 *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the wilderness.”*

The people of this community of Christian Jews had endured persecution, imprisonment, loss of property and alienation from their Jewish family and friends. I can only imagine how this could wear down one’s resilience and then play into the niggling thoughts of ‘is this all worth it?’ And when one’s secret thoughts are then heard mumbled by others, it could certainly be tempting to seek that solidarity of like minds and talk over dissatisfactions, fears, and unmet expectations.

This passage was a reminder to them of losing heart, of getting caught up in negative thoughts, of letting their faith dwindle. They were familiar with this passage as it echoes Ps 95:7b–8: “O that today you would listen to his voice! Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness.” During their exodus from Egypt, their forebears had quarreled with Moses about the scarcity of water, rebelling against his leadership, testing his authority and God’s promise of a new land. Moses appealed to God. He was guided to a rock and, with the witness of the elders, struck the rock with his staff to bring forth water. Because the people had rebelled and tested God, the place was called Meribah (Rebellion) and Massah (Testing).

What do I listen for today; what do I hear? I try not to listen to the noise of dissension, or hear only the voices of protest. How do I create space to listen for the guidance? Am I succumbing to a hardening of my heart when I cannot allow space for a political opposite to feel welcome? I feel I must foster inner silence; listen for the better way.

A passage that lifts me is an excerpt from Hebrews 1:1–3 “God...has spoken to us by a Son [who] is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being.”

Pat Todd

John 3:1–2 *Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.”*

Nicodemus comes to Jesus under the cover of night, his footsteps quiet, his heart beating perhaps louder. A leader of the Jews, a Pharisee—someone who was supposed to have the answers—yet here he is, seeking. There is something tender in this scene: a man of status and certain knowledge, willing to step into the shadows to find the light. Many interpret that Nicodemus, likely a member of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council), came by night because he didn’t want to be seen with Jesus. Whether that was the reason or not, he found Jesus there, ready and waiting.

Maybe we have all been Nicodemus at some point. We come to God not in the brightness of certainty, but in the hush of our questions. We might not even know what we are asking, just that something within us stirs when we see glimpses of the divine in the world around us. Like Nicodemus, we recognize the signs—moments of unexpected grace, kindness that feels larger than us, miraculous beauty that catches our breath—and we wonder: Could this be God?

Night can symbolize fear, doubt, or confusion, but it’s also the time when stars appear. Sometimes, it is in our darkest moments that we become most aware of the quiet, persistent presence of God. Nicodemus acknowledges to Jesus: “no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Even when understanding feels distant, we can still sense the Holy Presence working in and around us.

But there is another truth in this encounter: the answers we seek may come in ways—or from people whom—we least expect. Even from people who do not share our tightly-held worldviews or with degrees from the most respected universities. Nicodemus, a highly placed and respected leader, comes to learn from a wandering teacher from Nazareth. It was unthinkable for the time. It is a reminder that wisdom often arrives quietly, from unexpected corners, wrapped in mystery.

There is a gentle hope here. God meets us even in our midnight questions, in the spaces where certainty falters. Like the soft glow that builds just before dawn, faith doesn’t always come in blinding flashes but in the realization that God has been there all along—just waiting for us to notice.

Brian Forbush

Hebrews 4:9 *So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God.*

This short and succinct passage resonated with me immediately. I truly believe that what Rev. Karen says is true. She does not choose the appropriate Lenten passage for us, but having been given a passage, the Holy Spirit intervenes and speaks to us, often on a very personal level. I marvel at the mystery of it all.

Living in the twenty-first century in America has innumerable blessings. We recognize our good fortune in benefitting from the advances in medicine, unlike our ancestors. We also have enjoyed peace in our land. Technology has lifted the burden of daily chores; the conveniences available to us are abundant. Many of us are living the good life.

Covid brought new challenges, and for many, the rug was pulled from under our feet. Sadly, 2025 seems even more complex. The wonders of the internet have been overshadowed by misinformation; people are both confused and divided. Many are fatigued, if not downright depressed, in this topsy turvy world.

God has given us the gift of the sabbath and it still remains to help carry us through turbulent times. We are reminded that taking a “time out” and resting is a solid practice that can transform us and help build us up again to weather any storm. Honoring the sabbath underlines that we cannot do it on our own, that we need rest, reflection, and prayer to truly be God’s people.

Drucy Burnet Hodge

Deuteronomy 10:13 *Keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being.*

As usual, it's important to see the context of this verse which starts in 10:12 "Now Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and his statutes which I am commanding you today for your good."

We are probably more familiar with the pithier version of this found in Micah 6:8 "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." But the main idea is the same, and Jesus repeats these requirements several times as well—we'd do well to sit up and pay attention. The command to "fear the Lord your God" means to have a deep reverence and awe for God's power and authority; a profound recognition of God's holiness which leads to a desire to live in accordance with God's will and in communion with Him.

God commanded the Israelites on several occasions and through several prophets "to love and serve Him with all our heart and soul." What strikes me in this version are the final words, that God commands this for our well-being. God doesn't need our love or adoration, and he's not looking for hand maidens or servants. He gives us this commandment for OUR own good, not for His.

He gives us this command much as a wise and loving parent would teach a child, because following this commandment will bring us into more abundant joy, peace, and safety; into communion with God and with our brothers and sisters.

Linda Heller

Deuteronomy 11:18–19 *You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.*

Moses has returned from a second stay on the mountain where the Lord commanded him to replace the broken tablets of the original Ten Commandments with two stone tablets, as well as make an ark—which Moses made of acacia wood—in which to place them. The Lord wrote the commandments on the tablets and told Moses to place them in the ark. Moses stayed again forty days and forty nights speaking with God. God said: “return to your people and lead them to the land I swore to their ancestors.” *Deuteronomy 10:1–12*

Moses carried a lot of weight on his shoulders. God chose him to care for his people and lead them out of the misery of homelessness and fear. Moses returns to his people and admonishes them to follow the commandments in the new land God promised them and Moses will lead them to. God’s word was the way, but Moses needed them to be sure to live by those words—religiously, faithfully. But what guarantee did he have that they would? Or would they fall right back into the abyss they were leaving?

The commandments had to be more than a list of words to heed; they needed to be embraced in any way possible and during all aspects of life. So how am I doing with that? Hmmm. I love my God, but do I falter in my heart and mind? I love my neighbors as myself—except when I don’t. Living the commandments is a continual work in progress which I imagine it was especially for those way back in the age of Moses.

I love God for giving us Jesus who taught that our Lord is forgiving and loves us, the imperfect humans that we are. The least I can do is give it my best effort, of course with God’s help and grace.

Babe Kehres

Luke 13:34 *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*

“Resistance is futile!” If you are a Star Trek fan, this brief, dreaded sentence is painfully familiar. In Luke’s (and almost identically Matthew’s) writing, however, resistance rises beyond futile; it is self-destructive. We are beloved. The great, omnipotent power of universal love yearns to protect us, warm us, provide for us, let life unfold with all the beauty of which it is capable. Unfortunately, we resist.

Apparently, there was a practice of killing prophets and later recognizing them. It was repeated generation after generation, while sons claimed they never would have done such as their fathers had done but ultimately continued the practice. There was a sense that it was about to happen again. Learned leaders of the time hypocritically needle Jesus for healing on the sabbath. Herod is breathing down his neck. His time of trial is coming.

It’s not too great a stretch to relate previous generations’ persecutions that seem to be alternately repeated and denied by later generations to the material we’ve been studying in Sacred Ground, the Episcopal Church’s Becoming Beloved Community curriculum. It’s about seeking truth—no matter how painful—facing it and finding the path to ending centuries of oppression. Can we find our way? The path is steep and twisted; we’ll need light, encouragement, and food for the journey.

Making our lives beautiful is not the same at all as making them fun. Granted, fun is good. But beautiful is more closely knit to meaningful, loving, purposeful, generous, grateful, honest, kind, challenging, intentional, authentic, courageous. Jesus, gather us! We are willing!

Barbara Bolles

Jeremiah 1:18–19 *And I for my part have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.*

As a young man from a lineage of priests, Jeremiah was called to be a prophet. This quote is from the first chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, in which the author recounts his initial call and God's promises to sustain him through all manner of challenges. Jeremiah lived in tumultuous times of warfare, social injustice, and idolatry. He felt called to warn the people of Israel to stay focused on their relationship with God.

When we look at the world today we also see warfare, social injustice, and idolatry in contemporary terms. Where should we look for inspiration to stay the course, to remain faithful, to keep our focus on God?

The Book of Common Prayer is an essential resource for us. We have participated in and facilitated Compline services via Zoom the last few years, which redirects our attention to the collected prayers of the Episcopal Church.

“Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” *Book of Common Prayer, page 133*

We hope you might also find inspiration in these prayers as we continue to seek God's guidance moving forward together.

Brian Andvik and Laura Carroll

Romans 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth.*

I am very uncomfortable with the notion of a wrathful God and hesitated to write this reflection. I often struggle to understand Paul's language, so I decided to read the entire chapter for context. That's when this became a whole lot more difficult. Part of the chapter goes on to rail against homosexuality and lust. After that, my inclination was to dismiss the entire passage as hateful and anti-Christian. What is the Holy Spirit up to by giving me this passage? I wrote a whole reactive reflection around my truth vs. Paul's truth before I decided to look deeper at what Paul was saying.

The word "truth" is the focus for me. Paul describes truth as what is known about God, visible through all of creation. For me, what I know about God through creation is that God is love, beauty and balance. Suppressing this truth is sin at its core. Paul describes this suppression as worshiping created things rather than the Creator.

Paul concludes that God's wrath for this sin is that people become filled with deceit, envy, greed, malice, arrogance, etc., things I have at one time or another felt in my heart and know to be real separation from God. It does not seem to me to be the punishment of a wrathful God so much as a state of being that I have brought upon myself when I do not acknowledge God's love in all of creation. Maybe this passage is calling me to reflect on the ways that I suppress the truth of God's divine presence in creation, the truth of my own sin.

Perhaps I also learned something about myself from this exercise. We live in a world where "truth" (both factual and fundamental) is under attack. Sorting through what is real and true often leaves me feeling angry and with more questions than answers, but just as I struggled with this passage to find some truth in Paul's words, can I truly listen to both sides long enough to ferret out some truth in today's world? And with the help of the Holy Spirit, can I find ways to help reveal, rather than suppress, the truth of God's presence in the world?

Mary Anne Smith

Luke 2:45–46 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

The story of Jesus at the Temple is only in Luke's Gospel. Luke was a physician and so perhaps he had more of an interest in the physicality of Jesus, the man.

The story is one most parents, if not all, can relate to. Our hearts ache for Mary and Joseph as they realize their child is missing and as they spend the next three days searching for him. Jesus's response when they find him (and he maybe notices the concern on their faces) is so typical of a pre-teen's reaction. He says "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know. . ." (v.49) It's like, what's the big deal? I wanted to hang out with Dad!

We can almost hear the tinge of a scold in his mother's voice when she says, maybe out of her exhaustion, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you!" But here is how we know it's Jesus, the Son of God, not just a boy/man. Luke tells us "Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them." (v.51)

No spanking, no being put on restriction, no lecture. We parents and grandparents could learn from their example and only hope for similar results! And just like many of us feel when our children grow and change and become like strangers among us, ". . .they (Joseph and Mary) did not understand what he was saying to them." (v.50) What parent has not felt that same way?

But in the gospel of John we see a different Jesus. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (v.1) "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (v.14) And just as in Luke, we still don't understand. John says "In him was life, and that life was the light of mankind. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." (v. 4,5)

During Lent, perhaps we could ask ourselves, who is this Jesus? A man we can know as a boy, growing up in a family, just like the rest of us? Or Holy God, all powerful, Wisdom incarnate, Light from Light, true God, from true God? How do you best relate to Jesus? Who do you understand him to be?

Jeremiah 4:19 *My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent; for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*

Jeremiah prophesied the Babylonians would invade Judah and many would be taken into captivity. What would be a typical reaction? Fight or flight, right? But Jeremiah advised neither. Rather, he reflected God's will as given to him. He called out the Israelites' sins and told them to remove their idols, cleanse their hearts, and return to God. When the people did not listen and disaster loomed, Jeremiah told them to surrender to Babylon; and even to settle peaceably in their place of exile and seek the welfare of their captors. He never counseled war.

In the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper, Jesus was aware of the plot against him, and that his life was at risk. He prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26:39) He could have fled, or allowed his followers to fight. But he simply stayed the course, in keeping with his sense of God's will, and even forgave his tormentors.

Some years ago, a close family member living in a distant state was subjected to extreme pastoral (non-sexual) abuse. The pastor conducted a kangaroo court hearing, 'disfellowshipped' both husband and wife from the church, and tried to break up their marriage. The pastor even contacted Jeanne and me, to request we help with this. We were livid! So angry! My lawyer-self wanted to file a complaint with the denomination, and have this individual fired or at least censured.

Shortly thereafter, while I was still stewing about this, Jeanne and I made a week-long pilgrimage walk through the hills of Scotland. Each day we stopped at a peaceful place, perhaps by a stream, read a daily devotional on pilgrimage, and prayed. I specifically prayed for direction; what action to take. One day we stopped in a lovely beech grove. As I meditated, I heard a distinct voice say, "Let it go." I sensed the Holy Spirit was giving me good advice; to not embroil myself in retaliation. Immediately a sense of peace and calm came over me. I followed the advice.

During this Lenten season, perhaps each of us can consider our own situations that involve anger or conflict. And pray for a way of peace, rather than 'fight or flight.'

Dave Powell

John 5:39–40 *You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*

“That’s not the point!” Or, “You’re missing the point!” If you are like me, there have probably been times when you have said these words to someone, likely in frustration. It seems as if Jesus was having a similar feeling in this scripture.

In the beginning of this chapter, Jesus has healed a disabled man by a pool, but on the Sabbath, enraging the local Jewish leaders. Thus began the efforts to build a case against Jesus. Defending himself, Jesus cites the witness of John the Baptist, his own works, and the witness of his Father who sent him to convince them that he was the Messiah.

The Jewish leaders took great pride in their study of Old Testament scriptures, seeing their knowledge and adherence to the law as the path to eternal life. They diligently studied the teachings of Moses; Jesus taught that He was the Messiah to whom these scriptures pointed, but they refused to accept his teaching or to recognize Him as such. They read the words of God but didn’t grasp the Word of God! They were missing the point!

Certainly, study of scripture is important, but, as seems to be often the case in our restive times, it cannot be cherry-picked to conform with or support one’s preconceived ideas. And knowledge, itself, will not lead us to eternal life. Entering into the teachings of Jesus, having them abide in us, responding to them—this leads to eternal life. And perhaps that eternal life starts right here and right now? Living our lives in relationship with God can lead us to love all our neighbors, seek peace and justice, and care for our planet—works of eternal life in the present kingdom of God.

As we sang recently, “Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy kingdom’s goal!” (Hymn 594)

Elaine Percival

John 7:6–7 Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil.”

The context of the passage is this: Jesus’s brothers are urging him to accompany them to the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Jerusalem. Commentators say that they are teasing him; he resists because he knows the time is not yet right yet for him. When he feels it is right, he goes to that same festival alone and preaches in a way that astounds his hearers and alarms the powerful.

I take from this passage the message that we receive “truth” both from our experience of the world and from God and it’s a lot easier to follow what the world wants, which Jesus’s brothers seem inclined to do.

If we speak truth, and especially “truth to power,” there will be consequences. For Jesus this was betrayal, cruelty, crucifixion and death; he was only too aware of these consequences before he spoke. Now, and in all centuries since, we know we’ll pay a price for speaking God’s truth and often can’t bring ourselves to do it. We might feel that we are being tactful or respectful in not responding to wrong or just plain scared that what we say will provoke retaliation. The Temple authorities in Jerusalem felt their power and strength eroding when Jesus, at the festival, accuses them of hypocrisy. They were alarmed that too many people were becoming convinced that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and were determined to stop him, even if it meant killing him. Jesus felt that God had given him the authority and mandate to speak of the evils of the world fearlessly. We have choices when we know something is wrong or wicked: we can stay silent, or we can speak.

Mo Godman

Exodus 3:3–4 *Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”*

A few years ago, I was walking contemplatively in town and listening to some unfamiliar music. I suddenly felt prompted to stop and turn to my right. I looked, and there was a giant tree across the street. I had the distinct sense that it was looking at me and that when I looked back it said “Hello.” Astonished and delighted, I responded in kind. I had never experienced a connection like that with a tree! The conversation was simple, but it felt complete. I turned to walk away. And as I did, doubly astonished, I heard through my headphones the words “sea of trees calling humans.”

In the passage above, I’m struck by the repeated use of the phrase “turn aside.” In the preceding verse, it says “he looked” or in another translation “he saw.” And yet, Moses still hasn’t really looked. To do that, he would need to turn aside. Robert Alter in his wonderful translation and commentary on the Hebrew Bible says, “Moses is initially drawn by curiosity about the anomalous sight, scarcely imagining what he is getting into.” Perhaps it’s just idle curiosity that makes him consider turning. Is he thinking about ignoring it? He’s busy after all (herding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law). Does he think it might be an unnecessary indulgence? A distraction? He deliberately calculates and finally decides, “I must.”

In the Bible, turning is not always a good thing. Lot’s wife turned to look back and became a pillar of salt. (Genesis 19:26) Turning could mean that you’re straying from the path. “Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.” (Proverbs 4:27) Turning might not even be about what you’re doing but what you’re paying attention to. Two verses earlier (in Alter’s translation): “Let your eyes look in front, and your gaze straight before you.” (Proverbs 4:25) Alter comments, quoting the Mishnah (Jewish oral tradition): “He who walks on a road and says ‘how lovely this tree, how lovely this field,’ incurs mortal guilt.” (emphasis added!)

On the other hand we have “Turn! Turn from your evil ways!” (Ezekiel 33:11) and a plethora of other scriptures like it. I also think of the song “Simple Gifts”: “to turn and to turn it will be our delight, til by turning and turning we come round right” which for me evokes turning in repentance, living in right relationship with the earth, turning the soil, and turning in dance. To turn or not to turn might not be so easy to discern.

I like to think that the burning bush is something Moses easily could have missed. At first he could only see it out of the corner of his eye. If he was too focused, he would have missed it. So, too, if his attention was scattered (checking his Facebook feed, let’s say). But because he had just enough open awareness, he caught the glimpse. Or rather, it caught him. And when he turned aside, it grew and grew in his consciousness until it became an undeniable blaze of fire, implicitly speaking “Here I AM.” Then Moses had no choice but to respond in kind.

Jeremiah 7:6–7 *If you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors for ever and ever.*

In these few lines Jeremiah, “the weeping prophet,” tells the people of Judah what God says they must do to avoid being captured and removed to Babylon, which ultimately they were. He’s not pleading for obedience to dietary rules or those for worship or sacrifice. He’s showing a way of living that reflects God’s love out to the world.

The promised outcome of following Jeremiah’s plea is that God will dwell with his people in the land he has given to their ancestors. But I imagine the deeper meaning as dwelling with God, *period*. It is in the ongoing cleansing aligning of my desires with God’s wisdom that I move closer to God. It seems to me that God is saying it is in following his wishes that you will find the peace to be able to transcend life’s vicissitudes and choose to act with love, for yourself and for others.

As a contemplation I particularly reflect on the “if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt.” I think about false idols often because they are many and everywhere, and in our pursuit of those idols we bring on oppression, if even in a small way, to the alien, the orphan, and the widow.

And admittedly, I am drawn to their false promises daily to “my own hurt.” When I look for strength and security in the wrong places I erode my relationship with God, the true source.

I must be relentless then in not giving in to the distractions of shiny idols offering possessions, beauty, power, and control. It’s a work in progress, for sure, but each step brings its own reward as I remind myself that I belong to God.

In what is not my assigned passage but a few verses on, in Jeremiah 30:22, I delight in God’s embrace as he gentles me with his summing up words: “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

If the Bible used emojis I think there would be a big heart here.

Melanie Roth

Hebrews 10:10 *And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

While the Letter to the Hebrews was originally attributed to St. Paul, its authorship has been disputed by several scholars. The letter doesn't follow the Pauline format, nor does it reference scripture the way Paul's other letters do. While it is Pauline in its theology, scholars think this letter may have been written by Silas, or perhaps Barnabas!

The religious system in first century Palestine was a sacrificial system. Day after day, priests made sacrifices on behalf of the devout. In chapter ten of his letter, the author of Hebrews is clarifying the fact that those priestly sacrifices, no matter how important, do not remove the sins a person may have committed. Only Jesus can do that. Quoting Jesus, the author tells us:

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.'

Jesus came to offer himself for the life of the world, and God became human in some part so that we could be sanctified (set apart or made holy) through the offering of the body of Christ once and for all. This eliminated the need for all those other sacrifices.

Jesus wanted his followers to know themselves to be sanctified, because when we know we have been set apart for God, we experience increased love for God, increased sensitivity to sin, and better relationships with the people around us. Scripture, prayer and the sacraments all contribute to our sanctification. Sanctification is not for cowards; it is the effort of a lifetime.

Mike Killion

Romans 5:8 *But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us.*

I remember one New Year's Eve in the early 1970's, driving to a party with my brother and a carload of teenaged friends. We were pulled over by the police in a tiny town in Kansas and our party stash of alcohol was discovered in the trunk. Needless to say, our trip was curtailed and, after our parents were called, we were sent home with our tails between our legs. Of course the ride home was extremely quiet with each of us dreading the coming confrontations that we were facing at home. My mother was waiting for us in the kitchen. Without a single word of recrimination, she enveloped me in her arms and comforted me as I cried in humiliation. I knew that there would be consequences and that I wouldn't be driving again for a long while, but in that moment I felt nothing but love. I like to think that I learned my lesson well and have never again driven with an open container of alcohol in my car. But, in retrospect, I think I learned an even bigger lesson about love and forgiveness. Of course, I already knew that my mother loved me...but it was the steadiness of that love that surprised me. The fact that she could still love me unconditionally in spite of my transgressions was so unexpected and profound.

I like to think that this is somewhat similar to the steadfastness of God's love for us. He is well aware of our sins at all times, but loves us anyway. It's as if he knows that at our darkest hour, when we have been our worst selves, that is the precise moment that we need to know that he loves us anyway. And maybe we are called to follow this example in loving others even at their worst. It is so much easier said than done. Our natural instinct is to place blame and want to punish those who have threatened our sense of right and wrong. When someone has offended our sensibilities we don't often feel very patient, loving, or forgiving. It's hard to imagine a world where sinners are met with love instead of anger, forgiveness instead of punishment. To know that you are loved even when you have erred makes you want to do better next time. It sounds a little like heaven to me.

Claire Hicks

Romans 5:18 *Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all.*

Taken literally, this passage sets up the doctrines of Original Sin and Atonement, the first man being Adam disobeying God, and the second man being Jesus, dying to take away our sins.

Fortunately for us, the Episcopal Church does not deal in literalism. If you look at the church website's online dictionary, you'll find these definitions:

Original sin may be understood as humanity's innate self-centeredness. A consequence of this condition is human weakness and fallibility relative to sin.*

Atonement: The term (literally, "at + one + ment") has been applied since the earliest English translations of the Bible to the sacrificial ceremonies in the Hebrew temple on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). It has come to be applied universally to God's reconciling work accomplished by the death of Christ. (. . .) There is widespread agreement among contemporary theologians that God's reconciling work includes Christ's life as well as his death.**

Few of us can deny our self-centered approach to the world. It is a daily struggle to ignore all those little messages coming from our own egos. But it is the life and teaching of Jesus that keep us on the path. It's not that we try to be good in order to appease God; we try to be good in order to become what God wants of us.

We are taught that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine—it is certainly his humanity that we can relate to. In a recent sermon at Turvey Abbey, Brother John quoted Father Laurence Freeman, OSB: "Jesus did not rise from the dead 'because he was God' but because he was fully human." I do find this strangely comforting.

Peggy Eichenberger

*<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/original-sin/#:~:text=Original%20sin%20may%20be%20understood,we%20are%20subjected%20from%20birth.>

**<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/atonement/>

Romans 6:11 *So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Paul is speaking to the Romans. His voice is not one of condemnation but of understanding. He reflects on his own life and projects a better condition for all.

It is a bit overwhelming to read the words “dead to sin.” As I think about my own life, there is much of which I am proud. However, there are many things I would change. Much of this relates to sin. I’m sure many of us feel this way.

We say we are sinners; we mean it. Most of us haven’t killed anyone. We are not setting out to hurt others. We are not insensitive to others’ pain. However, we are not “dead to sin.”

Each day when I wake up, I count my blessings. I try to focus; I read “Day By Day.” I have a small atlas and look up the places with which I am unfamiliar. I pray for those people to be safe and to have hope.

Paul mentions hope. He states that tribulation brings patience. Patience brings experience and experience brings hope. Thus, a carefree life is not our goal.

It is scary to consider myself “dead to sin” thus alive to God through Jesus Christ. There must be another less challenging path.

In our Confession of Sin we feel badly about not loving God with our with our whole hearts, not loving our neighbors as ourselves. However, I ask, “Have mercy on me that I may delight in your will and walk in your ways.”

Perhaps trying to be “dead to sin” is as close as I can get.

Bonnie Chan

Romans 6:12 *Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions.*

In this portion of the letter to the Romans, Paul is addressing statements made by religious authorities who have mis-represented the gospel.

What is sin? I believe it is that which opposes God—doubting, disbelieving and living for ourselves, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We have daily choices to make in the struggle between good and evil. We are always forgiven even though we've not lost all desire to sin. It can still attract us. The shepherd of Hermas, a second century Christian said this: There are two angels within a man, one of righteousness the other of iniquity. The good angel is said to be gentle, modest, meek and peaceful. The other angel, wrathful, bitter, foolish and evil.

My reflection: I must no longer think of myself as self-reliant, self-serving and independent. Instead as a Christian forgiven, healed, renewed in Christ, dead to sin and alive in the God who sacrificed his only son Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, I must forgive others in the same way.

In Lent, as the spring blooms in renewal, I can embark on a journey of self-reflection, spiritual growth and renewal. Focusing on God in a time of repentance leading me toward gratitude for Jesus's sacrifice on Good Friday.

Dear God, thank you for every new day. Thank you that your compassion is renewed every morning. A new opportunity to love, give and be all that you want me to be. Open my mind that I may be aware of your presence in my daily life. Open my heart that I may offer you all my thoughts. Open my mouth and I will speak to you throughout the day. Help me to do your will. Guide my steps, bless my actions and fill my heart with your peace as I navigate each day. Amen

Peggy Vitale

Luke 15:20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

As I delved into the words, my thoughts began to swirl like autumn leaves caught in a gust of wind. The first notion that struck me was a profound reassurance: regardless of the paths we choose or the missteps we take, God's unwavering presence surrounds us like a warm embrace. While this truth resonated deeply within me, my mind shifted to my own children. A surge of hope filled my heart as I considered how vital it is for them to understand that their father and I will always stand beside them, steadfast and unwavering, through every trial and tribulation they may face. Life, with its intricate tapestry of consequences and lessons, is a journey filled with growth, and I fervently wish for them to feel our love and support as they navigate their own adventures.

Instill in them the importance of showing respect for all things, regardless of their perceived value or significance. Whether it's a cherished family heirloom, a simple toy, or even the natural environment around us, teaching them to appreciate and honor everything can foster a deep sense of responsibility and mindfulness. By cultivating an attitude of respect toward all items, they'll learn that every object, big or small, holds its own story and worth, contributing to a more caring and thoughtful perspective on the world.

As parents, it is our sacred duty to create an unshakeable sense of safety for our children, a comforting refuge they can always call home. No mistake, no misstep, would ever drive us away from our kids by choice; our love is unwavering. Maintain the lines of communication—reach out, check in, and ensure they feel our presence in their lives. It's essential that they understand we will always stand by their side. Pay close attention to their words and listen intently to their hearts; every whisper carries weight. Cherish the incredible blessings God has bestowed upon us! Let us celebrate the “little” victories and fleeting moments that grace our days, for you never know how profoundly impactful they may feel to someone else.

Stephanie Gibler

Jeremiah 16:16 I am now sending for many fishermen, says the Lord, and they shall catch them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks.

If anyone is to knock me out of complacency, Jeremiah does it best. Vivid are his images—boiling pots about to pour overhead, broken cisterns in the barren and deserted land while she-camels run around like wild donkeys in heat. There is no escaping the world he paints isn't right. Corruption and deceit is everywhere. Powerful and rich, the people have no limit to their evil; even children are sacrificed to foreign gods of wood and stone. Shockingly, descriptions of a wasteland with corpses strewn about as food for birds are recognizable, eerily similar to war zone pictures on the nightly news. Total desolation is fresh in my mind given the firestorms of Pacific Palisades.

And Jeremiah says not only is judgment coming, in verse 16:16, he warns the verdict will be deliberate, methodical and complete. There is no place to hide. No one escapes. There is no balm in Bainbridge Island.

The honest truth is disaster is man-made. A community becomes vulnerable when priorities are misplaced, false gods are followed, and there is a turning away from what any conscious human knows to be the right thing. Jeremiah was warning in 600 BC about a conquering threat, but Babylon becomes a metaphor for every generation to heed.

God tells Jeremiah in a famous declaration of omniscience and omnipotence, “Before you were in the womb I knew you.” God calls Jeremiah to tell the people the truth even at risk to his own life. Jeremiah obeys. Known as the “weeping prophet,” not all is doom and destruction. Jeremiah's first vision is an almond branch, symbolic of God's constant watch and calling; and Jeremiah describes verdant trees planted near water bearing fruit. He is the prophet of possibility—striking fear in hopes people come to their senses. And in chapter 29, God's promise is unforgettable to Israel, “I know the plans I have for you. . . plans to prosper. . . to (give you) hope and a future.” Remember this above all, Jeremiah is saying, the world holds great promise with God.

This Lent, I hope to weep with Jeremiah. It is a time to remember God's faithfulness while also considering what I can do to help our community. I pray for fellow sojourners. Together, we can keep Babylon at bay.

Romans 7:19–20 *For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.*

Chapter seven of Paul's letter to the Romans is about the struggle all Christians experience when they try to stop sinning and instead do the good that they are capable of. This chapter explores the relationship between law, sin, and the release from the law of death and sin that Christ Jesus enables.

Paul begins this chapter with an example of a women whose husband has died. If she had a relationship with another man before he died, based on the law that would be sin. But after he died, she was released from that law, and it is no longer sin. Similarly, we have been released from the law of death and sin by the example and offering of the life of Jesus.

Our nation is struggling with a new administration which is systematically dismantling systems that help the poorest and most marginalized people in this nation and in many parts of the world. I am struggling too, with evil thoughts towards those who are doing this dismantling. Jesus teaches us to love our enemies and yet I, like Paul, find myself “doing what I do not want.”

In the beginning of chapter eight, Paul says “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” This gives me hope!

George Robertson

John 6:35 *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

I'm writing this reflection in the midst of Girl Scout cookie season—perhaps you'll see me at our booth at TNC in the coming weeks. It's our Daisy troop's first year selling cookies and the girls were so excited. When asked to set sales goals they reached for the moon—1000 boxes! 2000 boxes! They would go door to door and sell a million boxes! Their enthusiasm was infectious.

In reality, this process has been one of learning and growth for the girls and their parents, and not without confusion, frustration and strife. Who knew cookies could cause so much chaos? The sales system is antiquated, no one has time to read the emails they get, people aren't in the mood for \$6 boxes, packages arrive broken. It turns out selling cookies is hard, and hard is disappointing for a five-year-old who wants to win the prize in the catalog.

So we're not going to sell a million boxes, but what if how many we sell isn't the point. What have we learned? So much actually. We learned we're a good team, that we enjoy spending time together, that certain sales tactics work better, that the Lemon Ups are really gross. We learned to have faith in the process and trust that no matter how many we sell this was a valuable experience.

I think many of us right now are worried about our world. I'm not someone who believes that having faith means giving up our agency in life. At the same time, this experience—and this reading—are reminders that hard things are made bearable when shared, and that the mere act of faith can get us through so much.

Sophie Avent

Psalm 69:1–2 *Save me, O God, for the waters have risen up to my neck. I am sinking in deep mire, and there is no firm ground for my feet.*

Lenten reflections invite us to sit with Scripture, to examine its meaning, and to consider how it resonates in our own lives. Sometimes, a passage takes our breath away—not because of its beauty, but because it speaks to a place of deep pain within us.

This psalm is one of distress, of feeling overwhelmed, abandoned, and drowning in sorrow. The psalmist cries out for help, desperate for solid ground. It is a plea for God’s intervention in the midst of profound suffering.

I wish this passage didn’t resonate so deeply with me. But it does. Last spring, at 41 years old, with three young children, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. The shock was immediate, the fear all-consuming. Questions raced through my mind: what does this mean? Will I survive? What will happen to my children, my husband, my family? The uncertainty was suffocating—I felt like I was drowning.

Life quickly became a cycle of doctor’s appointments, tests, and procedures, each one bringing its own wave of anxiety. I clung to my husband and family for support, yet the fear remained, ever-present, like water rising up around my neck. My husband suggested we turn to our faith. In a conversation at our church, I was reminded that when things feel out of control, we must hand them over to God. So I did. I prayed each morning and night with a small statue of the Virgin Mary, offering my fears to God, surrendering the burden that was too heavy for me alone.

In a time when life felt like freefall, those moments of prayer grounded me. I chose hope. I chose life. Even amidst uncertainty, I tucked my children into bed, watched my son play baseball, watched my girls play lacrosse, had dinner with friends, ran by the waterfront, music blazing in my ears, feeling the gift of life within me.

By the grace of God and the miracle of science, my prognosis was positive. A few months after surgery, I returned the statue. It was harder than I expected—I wanted to hold onto it, to the strength it had given me. But I carry that trust in my heart, knowing that when fear and anxiety creep in, I must once again hand it over to God. Lent calls us to reflection, to surrender, to trust. And in that trust, we find solid ground.

Jeremiah 23:3 Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

In this section of oracles (vv 21.1–24.1), Jeremiah conveys God’s anger toward Judah’s kings and prophets. They have acted unjustly and dishonorably, leading the people astray. The consequences are dire—extended exile and hardship. Yet God promises the people: “I myself will come and find you. I will bring you home, and you will flourish once again.” The broken covenant will be restored.

As I witness the actions of our own nation’s leaders, it is easy for me to feel validated and vindicated by God’s words. After all, I’m not the one breaking the rules—I’m just caught in the fray! And this notion is true in many ways. I strive to act with integrity, embody goodness and kindness, stand up against injustice. But is it completely true? Can I sometimes be a bad leader, too?

Let’s take a look at some of my choices during a typical day. What kind of leader am I when I push myself to accomplish one more task despite my body already feeling exhausted? Or when I find endless things to check or watch or research on my smartphone, failing to notice that what I really want is human connection? Or when I tell myself, “Go ahead, have another piece of chocolate,” in attempt to quell my underlying distress? Am I not being unjust to these deeper aspects of myself, sending them into exile?

Lent is an opportunity to create more room for God in our lives each day. What would it be like to create space for the God who goes looking for our exiled parts, offers them comfort and care, and invites them back into right relationship? Just the thought of it feels affirming, enlivening, freeing! And the more space we give to this God within ourselves, the more clarity, energy, and direction we will have to act justly and honorably in our community and world.

Danelle Whitmore

Psalm 108:1 *My heart is firmly fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and make melody.*

The Kyrie from Mass IX, sung from worn cardboard sheets of Gregorian chant notation, introduced me to church music at the age of eight. Seated in a dim pew at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pittsburgh, children in grade three joined the fourth through eighth graders (seated in reverse order, smallest far in the back) fasting, praying, singing, and receiving Holy Communion at eight o'clock each Tuesday morning, before school.

Fast forward 75 years to our small light-filled St. Barnabas Episcopal Church where, retired after 35 years in the choir at the front, I am again seated in the back of the church at eight o'clock on Sunday morning. For those many intervening years, singing drew me deeply into church. It was church, and listening to music is not the same as making music, a bit like listening is not hearing when we are learning from the parables of Jesus. Singing calls forth a different body-based experience of commitment, connection, and resonance. While this entails listening and hearing, there is more.

Many years ago, I heard the Hassidic teaching, "There are ten levels of prayer and above them is song;" so I began to wonder what is above song? What is included in song and in prayer and what precedes and accompanies and follows? Taize's Brother Roger suggests that "Remaining in silence in God's presence, open to the Spirit, is already prayer." In 1952, the composer John Cage wrote a piece called 4'33". He did not call it Silence but, much to the consternation, not to say outrage, of his audience, there were no notes played by the pianist for 4 minutes and 33 seconds. Performed outdoors, the silent piece invited listeners to hear the ambient music of birds, wind and woods surrounding them.

At Vespers, the Women's Schola includes 5 minutes of silence after the Anthem and before the closing prayer and song. In that silence we are invited to rest, to listen, perhaps to hear that still small voice, for silence is not the absence of sound but an opportunity to enter the presence of the Divine. The bell is also rung after scripture readings, sermon and at communion. Each time that vibration draws us within, to encounter another possibility of heart opening relationship, another world, a deeper resonance grounded in breath, relaxation and sensation from which to make melody with all our being, in silence.

Pat Speidel

Isaiah 43:18–19a *Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

To me, this passage is the essence of Lent.

It is part of the book of the consolation of Israel, the second part of the book of Isaiah. It speaks to the people who have been taken captive to Babylon, their temple and city of Jerusalem destroyed. In this passage, God says that they don't need to look back to the Exodus from Egypt, because he is about to do new miracles. He will make a road in the desert for their return, and springs of water in the wilderness, and they will praise him.

For us, in Lent, it can tell us that nothing in the past can keep us from returning to God. We can use this time to loose our hold on old idolatries, patterns that we thought we needed to keep us safe, or control our surroundings, or make us happy. We can strip all that away. And in the emptiness of our inner desert, our God will make a road for our return to him. He will turn our desert into a watered garden, and we will praise him.

Mari Bickford

John 9:3 *Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.”*

As I read the chapter of John 9, I was struck by the thought that in verse three Jesus is challenging a prevailing thought of his time. The man Jesus is speaking of was born blind. And in that time, people believed that an affliction was caused by sin. Since the affliction was from birth, people were inclined to believe the parents had also sinned.

The story goes on to explain that once the man was healed, the neighbors were skeptical that Jesus had the power to heal the man. They took the man to the Pharisees, the religious leaders of that time. The Pharisees concluded that because the man was healed on the Sabbath, Jesus could not possibly be a man of God. They berated the man and threw him out. The Pharisees also summoned the man’s parents to learn what had transpired. The parents quickly distanced themselves from their son due to their fear that the Pharisees would punish them if they told the truth about the healing brought about by Jesus.

Having learned of these encounters, Jesus sought out the healed man. It is in this encounter that the man professes his belief in Jesus.

This story is beautiful in several ways. First, the man can see. Can you imagine the thrill this man felt gaining sight for the first time? It was truly a miracle. Second, the man professed his belief in our Lord, Jesus Christ. This was an act of courage given the judgement and power of the Pharisees. Third, Jesus dispels the idea that any abnormality in us comes from sin.

I am struck by the amount of judgement and blame that goes on in this story. Rather than delighting in the man’s good fortune, the neighbors take him to be judged by the Pharisees. The Pharisees berate the man and throw him out for not believing as they do. And the parents distance themselves from their son because they want to protect themselves rather than stand up to the Pharisees and be punished.

The lesson for me in this verse and story is to pay attention to judgement in me and in others. How often do I want to “throw out” a person when his or her beliefs are different than mine? Given the political strife in our country right now, it’s more often than I care to admit. How often do I stand back rather than stand up when I see or hear of injustice? Do I want to behave as the man’s parents did and let my fear rather than truth guide my decisions?

These are challenging questions that are important to ask ourselves. As our country and world become more and more divided, my prayer is that all of us can shine the light of Christ brightly. I like to believe we can change the world for the better, one encounter at a time.

Holly Gray

John 9:35b-36 “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”

As I read my Lenten Refection, I thought—*Why did I agree to write a Lenten Refection and what does this passage mean?*

Yet, after turning to my Bible, I discovered that, probably like you, this is a story I heard as a child and have often heard since. It is the story of the man who was born blind and Jesus healed. While I knew the story, I did not understand this passage until I read deeper. So here is my insight:

Those who did not see the miracle of the man being given sight did not believe. Even after questioning the man’s parents, they did not believe. The passage tells us that even the man who experienced the gift of sight did not believe that Jesus was the son of God until Jesus told him.

Hence, why he asks Jesus “. . .who is he sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”

I cannot help but wonder how often we miss the miracles that God provides in our own life because we cannot believe. We are surround by miracles each and every day, we just need to watch for them, listen for them, and believe in them.

For me, the miracle of life is the greatest miracle of all. I have been at the birth of many babies and know that each and every one is a miracle.

How could I not believe in God?

And yet sometimes like the blind man, I wonder. Does he/she always hear my prayers, is he always with me, does he watch over those who have less, is he there for us when we suffer, and is he there when we take our last breath? I think so.

Rosalys Peel

John 10:7 *So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep."*

In ancient Palestine, Jewish shepherds led their sheep to a protected enclosure, to sleep after a day of grazing. The shepherd laid his body down across the threshold to provide shelter, safety and security for his flock. Drawing near with their protector, the sheep could rest with ease.

Initially, I experience this verse as an invitation to create a shelter within myself. A shelter in my soul, accessible through prayer and service, to experience Divine love as the only, genuine security I need. In the clarity of centering prayer in silence, I am often overwhelmed by the sanctuary and refuge ever present in God's love. A sacred and invisible embrace.

As Jesus declares himself "the gate," I feel his eternal compassion, generosity and sacrifice ultimately provides us the vital strength and protection we require to thrive in today's complicated world. Amidst present grief and suffering, I draw closer to God. In our hearts, the gate remains open, ever present and available to us all. There is no exclusive key code for access. We are the sheep, moving in and out towards the pasture, exploring the shadow and light within ourselves. In knowing we are held in God's love, we are protected and free to explore.

In this Lenten season,

May we all be blessed to awaken each morning, in the ease and security of God's love.

May we all be blessed to play each day, in the freedom and security of God's love.

May we all be blessed to lay down each night, hearts content in the shelter and security of God's love.

Truly I tell you, love is the gate.

Shannon Dorsey

THURSDAY, APRIL 10

Time to start wandering the deserts of my soul
Not because they are suffused with light
But because they are dark
like the caves
Where holy hermits prayed

Skeletons of old sins cause
me to stumble
shackles of desire
clank as I step

Finally, I am still.
Still still.

In the quiet I hear
Outside
The sounds of Jackals
hunting
People fleeing
Scratching at their prison bars

They Crowd into my solitary soul
with their hunger

I become a volcano
Inside out

Forty days is a long no time
With no past
No future
The eternal is without them

The rock is always
Rolling away from the empty tomb

Sue Ellen Case

Jeremiah 29:11 *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.*

Jeremiah is known as a weeping prophet charged with giving people bad news. Because of their practices of injustice born out of idolatry, the faith of the people of Israel would degrade to such a point of vulnerability that exile would become inevitable. The book includes the account of captives taken into Babylon, just as Jeremiah warned. And exile would be no short stint—a lifetime, really. Seventy years.

If exile begins with injustice, where does it end? In what state can abandonment of love, of body be restored? How do you begin to live in a land that does not feel like home?

Jeremiah's oft-quoted words—"I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord"—may sound trite in a landscape of suffering. Their echo feels more like an, "I told you so," than any real comfort.

Knowing that the people would live beneath a regime that did not honor God, Jeremiah takes a breath from his characteristic weeping and offers an olive branch of hope. Plant, he tells the people. Create families. Grow food. Give to the thriving of this place. Live here, at least for now, like it's home.

For us, in America this year, the news is bleak and getting bleaker. As a culture, our habits of injustice, bigotry, and consumerism have caught up with us. Those who are the most vulnerable are suffering and afraid. Even while these conditions are unfavorable, the news alarming, with no promise of next year's seed or this year's rain, can you imagine a garden in which hope continues to spring forth?

We sit with our losses, but we also sit with tools in hand—on this ground. On this ground, we sketch our hope. We write and rewrite our songs and practices. We insist on turning from injustice. We insist on turning toward thriving.

Carrie Beyer

Psalm 137:4 *How shall we sing the Lord's song upon an alien soil?*

If you type “Christian people” into your favorite search engine, you’ll find images of diverse individuals ecstatically worshipping with their hands in the air, or hymnals open with voices raised in praise, or sitting in Bible study circles smiling gleefully at one another. We’re supposed to be a hopeful and joyful people. And we are! We are a Resurrection people. We’re also human beings. We’ve got a lot happening inside of us and in the world around us.

Outside of the season of Lent, however, many Christian communities rarely provide space for the type of lamentation and longing found in Psalm 137. The Judeans allowed themselves the opportunity to be mournful frequently, particularly here as they grieve the exile and humiliation they were subjected to at the hands of their Babylonian captors. There are so many opportunities like this in scripture to sit in sorrow; to allow for the time and space needed to sort of. . . marinate in the entirety of our humanness, to process what is happening to us and around us, and to find a way forward with the fortification of God at our back.

And yet, we find ourselves saying things like. . .

“Everything happens for a reason.”

“God will make all things new for you. . .eventually.”

“The things of this world don’t really matter. . .in the end.”

Why do we respond to the lamentation of our neighbors in this way? Why does sorrow make us so uncomfortable that we struggle to sit with one another in our grief and pain? Why do we feel compelled to tidy up or suppress our neighbors’ full humanity?

The Psalms teach us that just as we are a people who rejoice, it is also ok to regret. It’s ok to wail. It’s ok to grieve our own suffering and that of our neighbors. It’s ok to feel justified in our bewilderment over the fear and anger and hurt in the world. It’s ok to be scared and sad. Go ahead and lament, feel *all* of your feelings, and sit with others as they feel *all* of theirs.

Even Jesus wept and flipped tables.

Luke 23:47b *Certainly this man was innocent.*

As we begin our journey into Holy Week, we are reminded that our God is one of surprises who continually offers us opportunities for a change of heart and direction. Quite unexpectedly, a Roman soldier (Centurion) standing near the Cross, whose job it was to make sure the execution of Jesus went as planned, rewrites his job description on the spot, first praising God for revealing the splendor of Jesus's outpouring of unconditional love and then declaring Jesus's innocence. It is not what people expected to hear from a soldier who had pledged allegiance to the Emperor of Rome and so the crowd "returned home beating their breasts" in what I believe was deep regret at their cowardice. Although we don't know what happened to the Centurion after this encounter with Jesus (we can imagine that he lost his job and probably his life), his bold witness continues to have a "rippling effect of goodness" in our world today.

This became very real to me when I followed a seminary classmate into Trenton State Penitentiary many years ago. My friend Jim McCloskey had become convinced that one of the inmates he had met during his time as a student chaplain was, in fact, innocent. Traveling through a labyrinth of concrete walls and clanging bars, I met "Chiefie" who had been serving a life sentence for a murder he had never committed. Somewhere in the mound of trial transcripts my friend Jim heard the Centurion's words, "Surely this man was innocent," and did something courageous and beautiful in response. Eventually Jim went on to create one of the first non-profit organizations in our country dedicated to freeing the imprisoned innocent (www.centurion.org).

As I travel the familiar steps of Holy Week this year, I will be listening with special intent to those in our society who are crying out for deliverance from a system that continues to do violence and perpetuate it. As my friend Jim discovered, quite to his surprise, we can all do far more than go home beating our breasts at the many injustices in the world. But the question remains, will we?

The Rev. Steve Best

Isaiah 42:1a *Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights.*

This passage is variously translated, “Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit. . .mine elect in whom my soul delights. . .my chosen one, in whom I delight. . .[or] my chosen one, I have greatly favored.” But the context indicates that the storm clouds are gathering, leading irrevocably to the lightning strike that is Good Friday. Who is this representative who serves, is destroyed, and redeems?

For at least four centuries the reading for the Monday of Holy Week was Isaiah 63:3 ff. It is a very angry picture of God, but it lends meaning to the four Servant Songs [Is. 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12]. For God is violently opposed to evil, but God has no conventional weapons. In the last analysis, God has nothing to fight with except God’s own self; and that is exactly what He does. He finally got mad enough to fight all the way to the death.

In the Servant Songs God proclaims with increasing intensity “I my very self will bring divine justice. I myself will be vulnerable to human sin. I will bring judgment that enables redemption and righteousness.”

Suffering love is hard for us to understand; but God’s suffering is what binds God’s life together with ours, saying that there is no place nor condition where we can go that God has not gone before us. God is with us, and God reigns.

Thanks be to God.

The Rev. Judith M. McDaniel

John 12:32 *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*

As I sat thinking about my page for the Lenten booklet, the Super Bowl was playing on the TV. Too many unsorted ideas raced around in my mind. The scripture, “I will draw all people to myself,” reminded me of Jesus and the fishermen. When they drew up their nets filled with an abundance of fish, Jesus did not tell them to throw out the inedible fish and keep only the good fish. He had them bring in all the fish; then said he would make them fish for people. Would they fish for all men and all women? Would Jesus draw all people into the Divine? What are the parameters? How many?

Football announcers interrupt my theological musings. Football and scripture began to mix in my mind. Whoops—time for a commercial. I wonder what God thinks about the people who create commercials making me want stuff I really don’t want and definitely do not need—will they be drawn up into heaven? And the people who create commercials showing cars driven at high speeds degrading the ground and setting examples of thoughtless recklessness—will they be drawn up? Does God grieve over the commercials that belittle people? What does that say about us consumers? How about the anonymous people who create those “Jesus Gets Us” commercials—surely they will be drawn up. But what if their intentions are manipulative and judgmental. Will they be drawn up then?

Does the Holy One favor logical Jason Hurts over charismatic Patrick Mahomes? Will one be drawn up and one tossed out? What about the players who play with a violent intention to hurt their opponents? What about the fans who cheer the violence? A spectator just said “God blessed the Eagles.” Did the Chiefs lose the game because they were not blessed—maybe even cursed?

What about me? And you? Have mercy on us, God, for we are not worthy. We judge. We envy. We find it impossible to love some people. We gossip. We want to be kingdom people. We want to be gathered into God’s love. Just as the disciples gathered in all the fish; Jesus said he will gather in all the people. In Holy Week we will hear of judgment and suffering. The divine referee makes the call.

Grace rules. The abundant and inclusive love of God is sufficient for us all.

The Rev. Nancy Tiederman

Isaiah 50:6a *I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard.*

According to Anglican Bishop and New Testament scholar N.T. Wright, the early church fathers called the section of Isaiah surrounding the verse above (that is, Isaiah 40–55) the “Fifth Gospel.” The reason for this becomes obvious when we see how Jesus and his early followers interpreted the meaning of his life, death, and resurrection through the lens of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant, described in these highly influential chapters of Isaiah.

In the verse above, we get a brief glimpse into the suffering of the servant—it was not only physical but also included what the philosopher Simon Weil described as “affliction.” In her view, affliction is the most extreme form of human suffering possible. It may begin with physical pain, but then goes much further to include humiliation, social ostracization, hopelessness, and finally despair as the sufferer’s very self begins to absorb the despised view of those around him or her. The servant was initially portrayed in Isaiah’s profoundly moving poetry as the entire nation of Israel as it emerged from the Babylonian captivity but then morphed into an individual of royal lineage. In hindsight, it is easy to see how the early followers of Jesus could use it to understand his own suffering.

This being said, the key to understanding the application of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant to Jesus is not Jesus’s suffering, per se, though it was real and beyond the ability of words to describe; rather, it is the voluntary and redemptive nature of his suffering that is key. It is perhaps the greatest mystery of the Christian faith, and a significant stumbling block for those who struggle with that faith, both inside and outside the church. Namely, how could the suffering of another human being, however innocent and however voluntary, somehow redeem us, redeem me, save me from my sins and, indeed, save all of humankind from their sins? There have been several theories over the centuries put forward to address this question, called theories of the atonement, but none of them has been able to capture or explain this mystery adequately. And yet that mystery stands at the heart of our faith, challenging us and beckoning us to enter into it with gratitude and humility.

The Rev. Jan C. Heller, Ph.D.

John 13:6b *Lord, are you going to wash my feet?*

This passage, captures a moment of profound humility and revelation. This verse reflects Peter's astonishment at Jesus's act of washing the disciples' feet, a task typically reserved for the lowest servant. Jesus exemplifies the importance of serving others, regardless of status. His willingness to wash the feet of his disciples teaches us that being the church, is rooted in humility and service. Being the church begins after the dismissal as we go about our daily lives. Being the church is a call to action. Jesus's actions challenge us to think about how we can serve others in our daily lives. It is a call to put our faith into practice by looking for opportunities to help those around us.

This passage is also a personal reflection. Peter's question invites us to reflect on our own lives. Are we open to receiving help and love from others even when it feels uncomfortable? This exchange reminds us that vulnerability is a part of human connection.

Ultimately, this verse invites us to embrace humility, serve others, and reflect on our relationships, encouraging us to live out our faith through loving actions, by remembering our Baptismal Covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Deacon Dan Fowler

Isaiah 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.*

Was it really necessary for Jesus to be pierced and crushed? And how exactly did his suffering and death make us whole? There has never been a conclusive single answer, because any attempt to “solve” the Paschal Mystery with a reductive formula is missing the point. The cross is an experience to enter, not an idea to be explained. “I wonder as I wander out under the sky,” says the old Nativity carol, “why Jesus our Savior did come for to die / for poor ornery people like you and like I. . .” And now, this Holy Week, we come again to the foot of the cross, and we wonder.

Let us discard any crude notions of the cross as a transaction, as if somebody had to pay for all the damage wrought by human sin, so Jesus stepped up like a big spender to declare, “This one’s on me.” Such “substitution” theology either trivializes the cost of sin (can Auschwitz or Gaza be so lightly dismissed?) or risks masochism by stressing the pain of the Passion, as Mel Gibson did in his notorious movie. The sacredness of God’s Friday is not in the violence or the blood, but in the Love that rewrites the darkest story.

And let us not reduce the salvific death of Jesus to a simple case of human cruelty claiming one more victim. Something more than human tyranny and human tragedy—something divine—was at work in the cross. But the divine presence on Calvary’s hill was not in the form of any punishment dished out by an angry God. God was there in the vulnerable, suffering body of Jesus, the Incarnate Word of self-diffusive love, who chose to share the human condition in all its forms—even the bleakest and most wretched. Jesus didn’t suffer instead of us. Jesus suffered with us. And through the humanity of Jesus, our own experience of alienation and affliction has been absorbed into the trinitarian life of God, where it is held in love’s eternal embrace and drained of its toxicity. As the prophet said, By his wounds we are healed.

Or as theologian Paul Fiddes put it, “Far from simply forgetting about the sins of the world, [God] journeys deeply into the heart of [the human] condition. . . God participates in our brokenness, to win us to the offer of healing.” In our own evil time, when hate and cruelty are running wild, sometimes we feel overwhelmed, discouraged, or powerless. But that’s exactly where Jesus comes to join us, not simply to keep us company on the countless crosses of this world, but to transform our sufferings into the seeds of resurrection.

*Near the cross, a trembling soul,
Love and mercy found me;
There the Bright and Morning Star
Shed his beams around me.**

The Rev. Jim Friedrich

*i For Salt of the Sound’s beautiful version of this Passion hymn, written by Fanny Crosby in 1869:
<https://youtu.be/nngJSC3b1AI?si=UAvpIekiHqaqfHU5>
(or Google: YouTube Salt of the Sound Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross, lyric video).

Lamentations 3:4–6 *He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago.*

In my 25 years of serving in parish ministry I can probably count on one hand the number of times we had a burial service with the body of the deceased present in a casket. We are a culture that likes to hide death away and deny its reality. Our lamentations are made privately unlike the public displays seen in other cultures. We miss so much by not taking the time to care for the body of our loved ones. The human body is a walking miracle in which the image of God is planted and grows among us. And while we know in our deepest being that there is much more in store for us beyond this physical manifestation, our body is the vehicle by which we become conscious and learn the ways of the soul and heart.

Jesus's mother, and close friends lovingly and gently took his body down from the cross on that Good Friday. They carefully wrapped him and placed him in a cave anticipating his burial. Holy Saturday is a liminal time when we pause to be present to the transition that we all will make. Just as Jesus did, we will pass from this material life into eternal life. May our bodies all receive such love and tenderness when and as we make that transition.

The Rev. Patricia Rome Robertson



John 20:16a *Jesus said to her, “Mary!”*

Today we find Mary Magdalene weeping outside the empty tomb where Jesus had been laid just days before. She had come early that morning, making her way alone, in the darkness just before dawn. I think she longed to be near Jesus. I know that feeling. I remember just after my dad died, going to the cemetery early one day, finding the tree that was near the bench by my parent’s graves. I went just to sit. To sit and remember and pray and to be as close as I could. I cannot imagine how Mary must have felt, arriving at the tomb only to find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. She ran to tell Peter and the beloved disciples what she’d found, and they all went running back, wanting to see for themselves. Finding the tomb empty as Mary had said, the other disciples looked around and then went home. But Mary stayed. She stayed, weeping at the tomb. And then it happened. . . “Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?” She didn’t know it was him—of course she didn’t! Not only was he dead, his body was gone. But the moment he spoke her name, “Mary,” she knew. Jesus, who was not the gardener, spoke her name and she recognized him.

We can’t help but see Jesus through the lens of his resurrection. But that wasn’t true for Mary and the rest of those early disciples. No matter how many times Jesus told them he would suffer, die, and three days later rise again, that wasn’t what they were looking for. Even Mary wasn’t looking for a resurrected Jesus on that third day. . . she was looking for his dead body.

Mary couldn’t see Jesus right in front of her, because she thought she knew the whole story. How many times have I been blind to what is right in front of me because I am sure I know exactly what is going on? How many times have I missed God’s presence because I’ve already decided what’s true? Mary knew Jesus had died and that was the end. But God’s story doesn’t end in death, God’s story doesn’t end at all. God’s story, our story, is resurrection!

Alleluia, Christ is risen! I pray you will hear God speak *your* name again and again and again this Eastertide, and that your eyes and hearts and minds and hands will be wide open, to recognize, give, and receive the many blessings God offers. You are Christ’s shining light in the world, a beautiful icon of God’s redeeming love. So go, and be God’s blessing in the world.

The Rev. Karen Haig

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

AT ST. BARNABAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Holy Week is a time to reflect on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. During this sacred time, we remember Jesus's actions, reflect on his teachings, and recommit to living as his disciples here on Earth. We hope this schedule serves as a tool in helping you to plan your observance of these holy days, both on your own and with your church family here at St. Barnabas. May you have a blessed Holy Week and Easter.

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION, PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 13

8 a.m. Liturgy of the Palms & Holy Eucharist, Rite I

10 a.m. Liturgy of the Palms & Holy Eucharist, Rite II

8 p.m. Tenebrae

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK, APRIL 14

9 a.m. Morning Prayer

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Private Confession by Appointment

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, APRIL 15

9 a.m. Centering Prayer with Mary Magdalene and Anointing

6 p.m. Private Confession

7 p.m. Holy Eucharist for Healing & Reconciliation

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, APRIL 16

9 a.m. Morning Prayer

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Private Confession by Appointment

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 17

6 p.m. Dinner in the Parish Hall, followed by
Holy Eucharist with Foot Washing & Stripping of the Altar

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

Noon Good Friday Liturgy with Communion

7 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy with Communion

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 19

8 p.m. The Great Vigil of Easter

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

10 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt, Hot Cross Buns, Coffee & Mimosa Hour

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II



HOLY WEEK & EASTER OFFERINGS



PALM SUNDAY | SUNDAY, APRIL 13 | 8 & 10 A.M.

Holy Week begins with a liturgical “overture,” summarizing the major themes of Jesus’s last week in a powerful blend of ritual, hymns, and story. The Triumphal Entry with palms, a dramatic reading of the Passion Gospel, and celebration of Holy Eucharist initiate our “contemplation of those mighty acts” by which Christ has redeemed the world, preparing us for the great three-day journey of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. Bring an open and joyous heart.

TENEBRAE | SUNDAY, APRIL 13 | 8 P.M.

The ancient monastic liturgy of Tenebrae (“Shadows”) is a sequence of chanted Psalms, readings, and prayers contemplating Christ’s Passion. Throughout this unique Holy Week service, candles and other church lights are gradually extinguished until a single candle, symbolizing Christ, remains. This candle is then hidden from view, as if the Light of the World were extinguished by darkness and death. But then a great noise is made—the earthquake of resurrection—and the Christ candle reappears. As it burns with hope on the altar, the people depart in silence. Bring an open and contemplative heart.

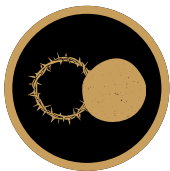


HEALING & RECONCILIATION | TUESDAY, APRIL 15 | 7 P.M.

Each Sunday before we come to the altar to receive communion, we make our public confession, asking God’s forgiveness for things done and left undone. When we find ourselves confessing the same grievances, the same inability to forgive, the same hurts week after week, public confession may not be enough to bring us God’s peace. The Rite of Reconciliation offers the opportunity for private confession and absolution that gives a profound experience of God’s forgiveness, love, and grace. Join us Tuesday of Holy Week at 6 p.m. for a Service of Healing and Reconciliation, where you will have the opportunity to make a private confession, or to spend time in quiet reflection before we celebrate Holy Eucharist together. Whether or not you wish to make confession, you are welcome at this quiet, contemplative service. Bring an honest heart and self-compassion.

MAUNDY THURSDAY | THURSDAY, APRIL 17 | 6 P.M.

At the last supper with his friends, Jesus showed them (and us!) what it is to be God’s love in the world. Maundy Thursday holds within its liturgy an unspeakable tenderness that invites us into humble and vulnerable love and reflection. In the intimacy of table fellowship, we will listen to the words Jesus said on that last night, offer heartfelt prayers, share a simple supper, and receive the blessed sacrament Jesus gave to us on the night before he died. Then we will enact one of the holiest and most tender gestures Jesus ever offered as we stoop to wash each other’s feet. This deeply moving liturgy concludes with the Stripping of the Altar and prayers at the Altar of Repose. Bring a hungry heart.

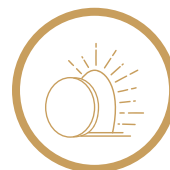
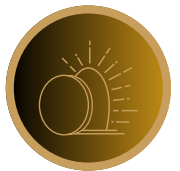


GOOD FRIDAY | FRIDAY, APRIL 18 | NOON & 7 P.M.

This uniquely powerful liturgy takes us to the foot of the cross with eloquent prayers, somber hymns, compelling rituals, and profound silences. In word, gesture, and symbol—from the Veneration of the Cross to Christ’s transformative sacrament of self-offering—we enact and embody the meaning of compassion (“suffer with”), not to glorify suffering, but to participate in the healing mystery of Love poured out for us on this “good” day—God’s Friday. Bring your worried, wounded, longing heart, and prepare to receive the immeasurable riches of the Holy One who knows us all by heart.

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER | SATURDAY, APRIL 19 | 8 P.M.

This is a night like no other, the Christian dreamtime when we pass through darkness and mystery into the risen life! You won’t want to miss this most glorious, vibrant, and essential liturgy of the entire church year—a visionary, multi-sensory, wondrous, festive, Spirit-filled evening of song, chant, story, drama, sacraments, processions, candles, bells, fire, water, prayer, praise, Baptismal Renewal, Holy Eucharist, abundant joy, and so much love! Bring your children! Let them wear their jammies and stay up late. This is the night when heaven and earth are joined! Experience the mystery, and share the joy. Bring noisemakers, your families, and joyful hearts! *The journey is how we know.*



EASTER SUNDAY | SUNDAY, APRIL 20 | 9 & 11 A.M.

Christ is risen! Join us to celebrate the Resurrection at 9 or 11 a.m., with an Easter Egg hunt, hot cross buns, mimosas, and coffee in between services! Easter Sunday continues the great celebration begun at the Easter Vigil, with glorious music by organ, choir and brass, a gorgeous festive liturgy, and the boundless joy of resurrection! Bring your family and friends, and hearts filled with joy and gratitude!



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