



StGs Lenten Devotional





Zoom Links for Events and Services

Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 7pm	Ash Wednesday Service	Zoom Meeting ID: 891 9289 9598 Passcode: 790139
Sunday, February 21 at 10 am	First Sunday in Lent	Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299
Friday, February 26 at 10 am	Stations of the Cross	Zoom Meeting ID: Passcode:
Sunday, February 28 at 10 am	Second Sunday in Lent	Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299
Friday, March 5 at 10 am	Stations of the Cross	Zoom Meeting ID: Passcode:
Sunday, March 7 at 10 am	Third Sunday in Lent	Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299
Friday, March 12 at 10 am	Stations of the Cross	Zoom Meeting ID: Passcode:
Sunday, March 14 at 10 am	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299
Friday, March 19 at 10 am	Stations of the Cross	Zoom Meeting ID: Passcode:
Sunday, March 21 at 10 am	Fifth Sunday in Lent	Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299
Friday, March 26 at 10 am	Stations of the Cross	Zoom Meeting ID: Passcode:
Sunday, March 28 at 10 am	Sunday of Passion Palm Sunday	Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299



A wonderful gift of the liturgical calendar is that it brings us through all of life's ups and downs, joys and sorrows, and then reminds us that we are not alone in any of it. In fact, our very souls cry out in gratitude to Christ for our salvation. The church calendar moves us through the Lenten season of self-examination, repentance, and renewal to prepare us for the joy of Easter.

How much we practice our faith through the Lenten season can have a tremendous difference on our experience of the joy of Christ's resurrection. I invite you to consider how you might fully participate in Lent and Holy Week in preparation for the gift of Easter. When we expose our souls to God, we are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Ask God in prayer to guide you to the practices that will be most transformative for you this season. Whether it is fasting from food, altering your use of technology, participating more fully in worship and/or study, or taking on another practice, be intentional with Lent. Come to worship. Spend time with God, and commit to the unfolding drama and transformation that is the Triduum.

This guide is meant to be a tool for you this season. We pray it assists you in preparing for, and practicing your faith through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Blessings to you on your journey.

God's Peace,



**An excerpt from Psalm 51:10
(NRSV)**

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

Reflection from Meredith Potter:

A psychologist recently suggested that adopting and repeating a mantra daily has helped many people remain emotionally and mentally healthy during this period of isolation from family and loved ones. As I reflect on this verse from one of my favorite psalms, I find the words, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," to be the perfect mantra for me to adopt for my spiritual well-being during Lent. And so I will begin each day during Lent with this prayer, and continue to pray these words throughout each day.

Painting by Ellie Stadelmann.

MUSIC

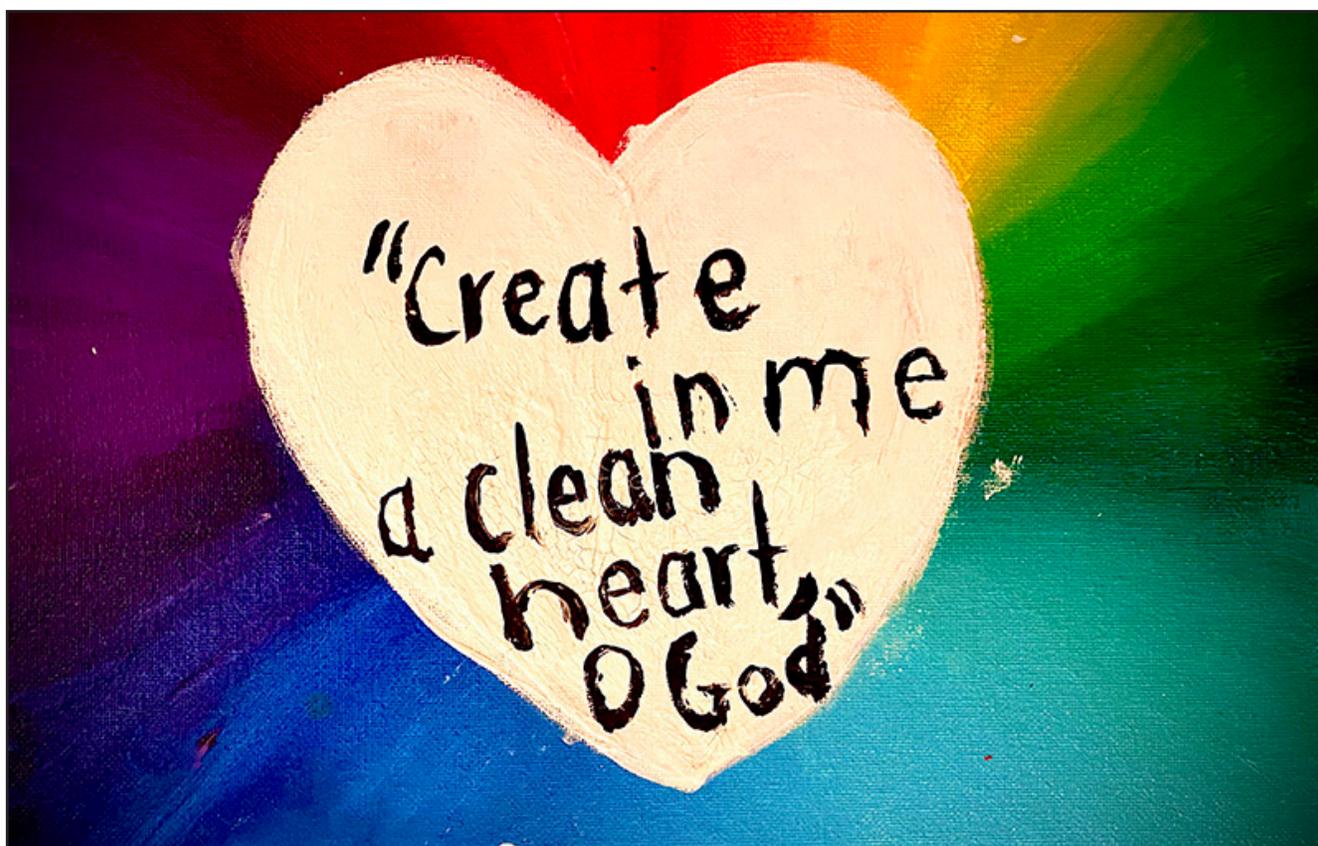
"Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis"
by R. Vaughan Williams played
by the BBC Symphony Orchestra

This video was recorded in Gloucester Cathedral, where it was first conducted by the composer in 1910. While obviously there is no text, the journey on which Vaughan Williams brings his listeners feels like a pilgrimage, intended to refresh, renew, and revive the Spirit.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
- Psalm 51:1-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10





An excerpt from Daniel 9:3 (NRSV)

Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

MUSIC

"O Lord God"

by Pavel Chesnokov

*"O Lord God, hear thou my prayer;
Help thou me and give ear to my prayer.
Daily do I worship thy great name
and thy power.
Thou alone canst help me,
O send me thy peace and love."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 25:1-10
- Daniel 9:1-14
- 1 John 1:3-10

Reflection from Marjie Koons:

Not quite sure about my finding sackcloth in my belongings, but more familiar to me is recognizing having a heavy heart, the need for help, and then taking the time to open my mind to God and identify those troubled thoughts. As I settle into my quiet space, I focus on my breathing, in and out, then I begin to relax just knowing that He formed me from ashes, he knows all my accomplishments and all my failings, yet He loves and accepts me the way I am. The answers I receive are the settling of my mind, organizing my thoughts and realizing and accepting His love for me. No step-by-step instructions, no sticky notes to follow, just the assurance of His love and knowing that I am not dealing with things alone.



FRIDAY – Persistence in proclamation

February 19, 2021

An excerpt from 2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NRSV)

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.

MUSIC

“Rejoice the Lord is King”

Text Charles Wesley, arr. Dan Forrest, recorded by the StGs quartet

*“Lift up your voice, rejoice!
Again I say, rejoice!”*

Reflection from Catherine Martin:

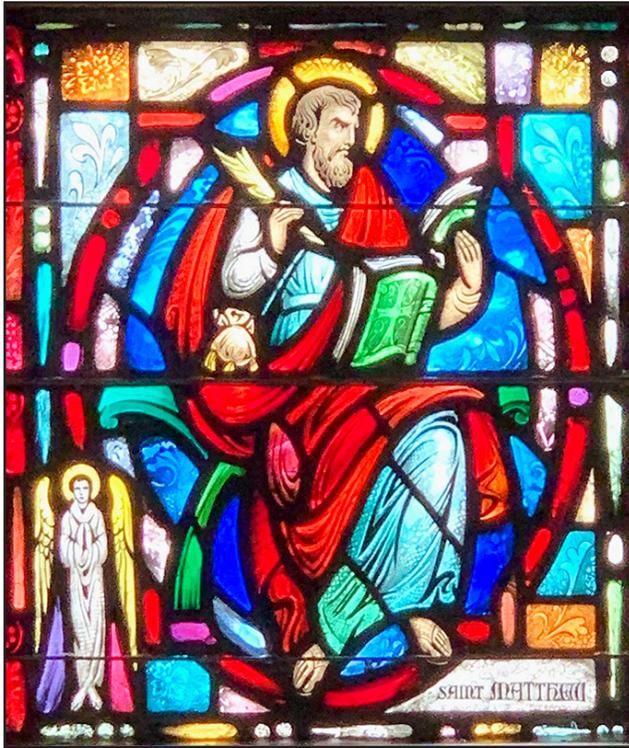
Consider recent national events and debates through the lens of this passage. We have certainly endured much preaching, rebuking and extolling over the past many months! What is “truth”, “fact” or “reason”, and how can we feel certainty about anything? Or anybody? The verses remind us to look for consistency in the message, for unfailing patience and consideration in the messenger, and to maintain our faith in Christ and in our ability to love others as he loved us. Whether we are the hearer or speaker, we can do this!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 25:1-10
- Daniel 9:15-25a
- 2 Timothy 4:1-5





Window from the south wall of the Nave.

MUSIC

“Lacrymosa”
from Mozart Requiem

English translation:
*“Full of tears shall be that day
On which from ashes shall arise
The guilty man to be judged;
Therefore, O God, have mercy on him.
Gentle Lord Jesus,
grant them eternal rest. Amen.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 25:1-10
- Psalm 32
- Matthew 9:2-13

An excerpt from Matthew 9:12b-13 (NRSV)

Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

Reflection from Jenny Stadelmann:

A few years ago my daughter had a bad break in a leg from a gymnastics accident that affected her growth plate. This injury not only took her out of gymnastics for most of her first competitive season, but it was very painful for her. Though she was incredibly positive and determined throughout her recovery, when we found out at her one year check-up after the accident that the injury had led to the growth in her leg stopping and a leg length difference that would only continue to increase as she grew and cause lifelong crippling if we didn’t address it, she was devastated. The surgical approach he suggested seemed risky (breaking 4 bones) and would result in months in a wheelchair afterwards and a year of therapy and healing (and no promise that there wouldn’t still be some resulting problems), so we got two other doctors’ opinions from some of the best in the Chicagoland area, thinking if two of the three agreed that was the way to go. How confusing when we got three completely different opinions on three different approaches to take! In the end, it came down to which doctor we trusted most. They all had excellent credentials. However, throughout Ellie’s recovery, we had developed a special relationship with the doctor since she had a number of complications requiring a lot of extra appointments.

This doctor’s kindness, compassion and understanding he showed during a difficult time in our lives only continued when we were honest with him about our concerns – once we chose one of the three approaches there really was no going back and it would be hard to reverse what could be lifelong impacts of the road chosen. I think it was after he spent an hour over facetime with us while he was in the hospital after a surgery – still in his scrubs, likely missing out on making it home in time to have dinner with his family and to put his young kids to bed – pulling up her xrays, drawing over them to show us measurements, explaining the history of this surgery and how he developed it with his mentor, going into the details of why it was better than older approaches, pulling out his growth chart books and showing us the math of why his approach would work (he knew how much Ellie loves math and how I as the engineer needed to be convinced with the science), and with patience answered every single one of our questions (and there were many!) that we were ready to take a leap of faith and go with his (what seemed to be radical) approach.

What won us over in the end, though, wasn’t necessarily all of the mathematical and scientific explanations (though that helped), but it was knowing he was speaking as a caring father with young children of his own, understanding the stakes of how we addressed Ellie’s injury and the potential lifelong problems not only in continuing sports and being active, but even in the everyday ability of walking we take for granted. When he said he would trust his own children to this surgical approach if they were ever in the same situation, we were won over by his empathy and understanding. He never made us feel during the extra time he spent with us addressing our concerns before, during, and after the surgery like he was making a big sacrifice for us, but it was his mercy and care that showed through. Going through this experience with this doctor (a journey that still continues today as Ellie began having an unrelated painful bone growth problem which she sees him for now) reminds me that the overwhelming gratitude that I feel for him as I watched my daughter go through such pain, anxiety, and all the emotions that have come with this difficult journey is because we were in such need and he met us during this low moment and went above and beyond to bring healing to her. I truly understood in a new way that it is the sick who experience mercy to the greatest depths. In the same way, how true is it that the times when we are most broken and feel the most unworthy is when we are most open to experiencing the unconditional love and overwhelming comfort, mercy, and peace that Christ can bring.

I printed all of Jenny’s devotional. It is currently 7 pt type for something that is normally 12 pt type. So the rule of thumb should be that you should lose half the copy. I will work with the hyphens when the copy is edited.



SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER

Please join us to worship on Zoom, Facebook Live or streaming live on our website –
Sundays at 10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 842 861 148 Passcode: 414299

Or pray at home: Morning Prayer – adapted from the Church of England Common Prayer

The kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God of all, to you be praise and glory for ever. In your tender compassion the dawn from on high is breaking upon us to dispel the lingering shadows of night.

As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

THE READING FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT MARK 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

■ Look towards the east, O Jerusalem, and see the glory that is coming from God.

■ Offer your intercessions for the world, the country, and our city.

Offer your intercessions for the church.

Offer your intercessions for the sick, sad, lonely, and afraid.

Offer your praise of joy and thanksgiving.

■ Prayers

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

■ LORD'S PRAYER

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

■ Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT MARK 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT JOHN 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT JOHN 3:14-21

Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT JOHN 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – Father, save me from this hour? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die



MONDAY – Mercy and grace

February 22, 2021 – First week of Lent



An excerpt from Ephesians 2:4-5 (NRSV)

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.

Reflection from Sharon Henley-Gramer

We all have our trespasses, and many of us have sinned (by not following the 10 commandments). God is rich with mercy and forgives us so that we can enjoy our lives. We need to always remember that it is through grace we are forgiven. During this time in Lent, may we all be conscience of daily prayer and ask for forgiveness for our trespasses.

MUSIC

“What Stood Will Stand”

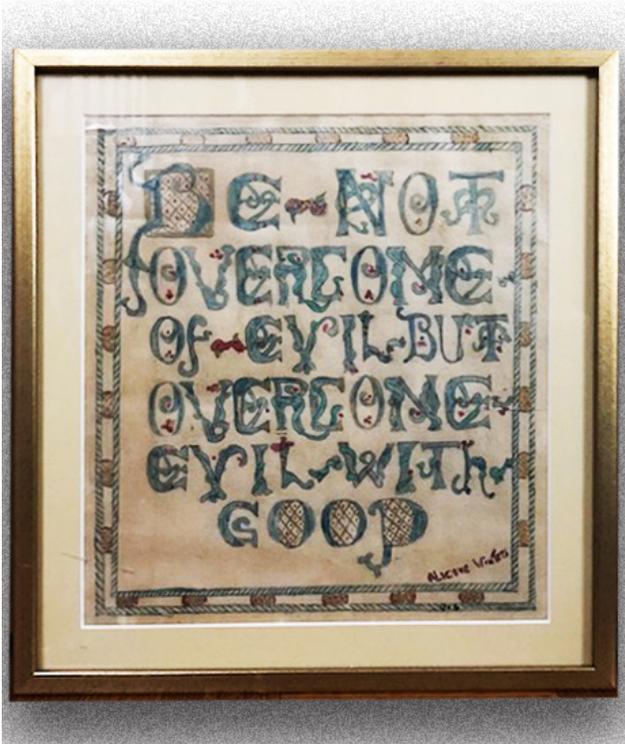
Lyrics by Wendell Berry;
music by Paul Halley”

*“Field and wood and all in them
Rejoin the primal Sabbath’s hymn
Et expecto resurrectionem motuorum
(And I look for the resurrection of the dead)
Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen, alleluia!
(And the life of the world to come.
Amen, alleluia!).”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 77
- Job 4:1-21
- Ephesians 2:1-10



Photograph by Lisa Halpin. This photo is of an ink and pencil drawing done by her mother, Aliceve Winters Schmid, when she was a teenager in the early 1920s.

An excerpt from 1 Peter 3:8-9 (NRSV)

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing.

Reflection from Lisa Halpin:

'When the announcement for the Lenten booklet appeared in the weekly parish e-mail on 1/20/21, I was hoping there would be a scripture passage to complement the accompanying scripture art from Romans 12: 21. This passage from Peter filled the bill. It's a message repeated many times throughout scripture in a variety of ways. What made it all the more special is that it was Inauguration Day and President Biden's speech focused on unity and respect for one another. It is unfortunate that we have to be reminded of this message time and again.'

MUSIC

"Ubi Caritas by Duruflé
sung by Octarium"

Translation:
*Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ's love has gathered us into one.
And may we love each other with
a sincere heart."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 77
- Job 5:8-27
- 1 Peter 3:8-18a



WEDNESDAY – God’s might

February 24, 2021 – First week of Lent

An excerpt from Psalm 77:11-14 (NRSV)

I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord;
I will remember your wonders of old. I will
meditate on all your work, and muse on
your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy.
What god is so great as our God? You are
the God who works wonders; you have
displayed your might among the peoples.

Reflection from Fran Ingram:

When we are feeling down and forsaken
in depression, doubt, or sorrow, we need
to remember God’s words and miracles.
He gave the Israelites food and water in
the wilderness. He saved Daniel in the
lion’s den. Through Jesus, he healed the
sick and blind and multiplied the few
loaves and fishes to feed thousands. He is
still performing miracles today. We need
to open our eyes and hearts to his power
and great deeds.

MUSIC

“Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel?”
Traditional spiritual arr. Moses Hogan”

*“He delivered Daniel from the lion’s den,
Jonah from the belly of the whale,
And the Hebrew children from
the fiery furnace,
Then why not every man?”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 77
- Proverbs 30:1-9
- Matthew 4:1-11

Four seasons of our sugar maple tree.





MUSIC

“Mozart Clarinet Concerto, movt 2”

While this concerto has no text, the gentle and delicate melody invokes a similarly profound peace to the feeling we have as benefactors of God’s grace and love.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 22:23-31
- Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18
- Romans 3:21-31

An excerpt from Romans 3:23-24 (NRSV)

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Reflection from Julia Nelson:

What is a sin? Breaking the ten commandments? Breaking the 613 commandments (Mitzvoh)? I admit I eat grapes often (Commandment 220/613 [Numbers 6:3]). Does this mean that some sins (murder) are greater than others (eating grapes)?

I recall a sermon on sin from a pastor who described driving through rural South Dakota at 70 mph (an acceptable 5mi over the speed limit). After a windy, hilly section, he came across a sign permitting resumption of normal speed limit. It turns out he was driving 70 in a 40-mph zone and what he thought was a minor transgression was quite significant. Yet both situations were transgressions. This led to an epiphany: human perspectives are skewed. When it comes to sin, magnitude is irrelevant.

Recently, Mother Meredith and I discussed this concept of sin. She pointed me to the Catechism in the BCP. Simplified, sin is anything that turns us away from God. From this vantage point, I see that the magnitude of sin truly is irrelevant. Grace, therefore, is everything.



FRIDAY – The whole world worships

February 26, 2021 – First week of Lent



An excerpt from Psalm 22-27-29 (NRSV)

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

Reflection from Dan Nicholas:

The beginning of this passage, "All the ends of the Earth", brings back memories of various places my wife and I have traveled. From our explorations across the globe there has always been a presence of the Lord. One of the most moving experiences was attending a papal audience at the Vatican and seeing people from around the world participating in the service. Truly the people of all nations are of one Christ.

Photograph by Dan Nicholas.

MUSIC

"O Be Joyful"
by John Rutter

*"O be joyful in the Lord,
all ye lands:
Serve the Lord with gladness,
And come before his presence
with a song.*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 22:23-31;
- Genesis 16:1-6;
- Romans 4:1-12



Window from the south wall of the Nave.

MUSIC

“For Unto Us a Child is Born”
from Handel’s Messiah,
recorded by the StGs quartet”

*“For unto us a child is born!
Unto us a son is given.
And his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
the Prince of Peace.”*

An excerpt from Mark 8:27-30 (NRSV)

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Reflection from Anne Jolly:

David and I poured ourselves into deciding what to name each of our girls. We wanted their names to carry the value of the history of our family, to sound beautiful to us and to them, and to not be something that offers quick insults to mean children. All of this care, in a way, would help the girls know how very much we love them. Names matter. What we call Jesus helps to tell us and the world what Jesus means to us – and to the world. Who do we say Jesus is, and what difference does that make to us and the world?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 22:23-31
- Genesis 16:7-15
- Mark 8:27-30



MONDAY – Laughter and joy

March 1, 2021 – Second week of Lent

Reflection from Kathryn Duncan:

I chose this symphonic piece to go with this reading because even though there's no text, I feel like Respighi has composed a masterwork illustrating the range of human emotion. When I listen, it feels like I run through every possible emotion - from despair to deepest longing to triumph to wonder to ebullient joy. I get goosebumps EVERY time. It reminds me that all emotions are gifts from God – but especially joy. In every moment of our life, no matter how challenging, God has given us the capacity to experience joy. When my life is the most difficult, I find I am also most capable of experiencing the most happiness. Suffering and sadness do not prevent joy and laughter – they give it meaning. This scripture and this song remind me to appreciate and lean into the breadth of human experience – from horror to rapture.

An excerpt from Genesis 21:6 (NRSV)

Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

MUSIC

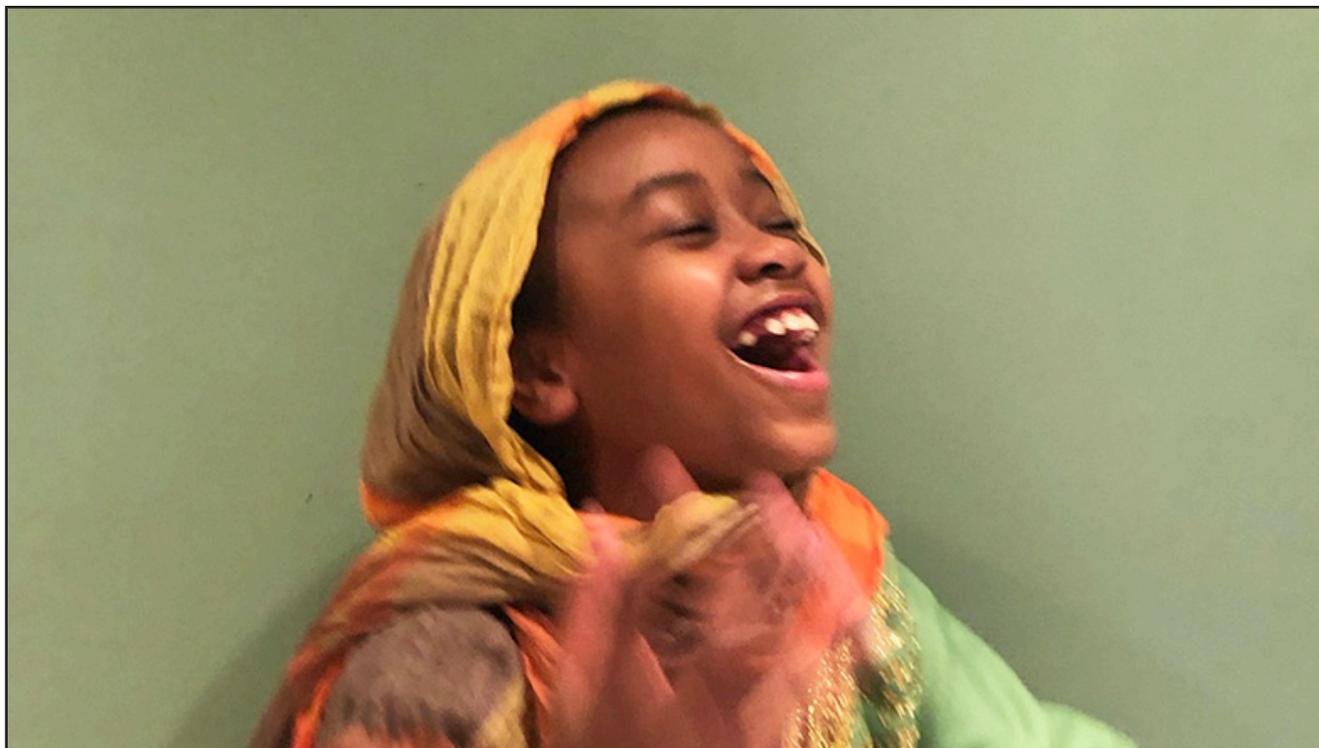
"Pines of Rome"
by Ottorini Respighi"

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
- Genesis 21:1-7
- Hebrews 1:8-12

Myha Francis practicing for the Epiphany Pageant.





Photograph by Kyle Soonthornsima.

Reflection from Sudi Johnson

As I write this reflection, it is the 19th anniversary of my husband's death.

I think about our decision to enter into hospice and how my faith had stirred up in me the confidence to propose this. I felt deeply that we needed to 'go home' – to enjoy the days we could have, without the merry go round of doctor appointments, looking for a physical healing where none was to be found.

Surprise! We got more time than we were told to expect – only God knows, right? This passage reminds me of all of our hopes for our family that we didn't 'realize' at the time and that my husband did not get to 'see'.

- within months, both daughters had begun advanced schooling or new career paths – one in her dad's profession.
- Within 2 years, both daughters' FIRST boyfriends became future sons in law.
- 8 years later, both daughters were pregnant at the same time with their first child. They welcomed their second children – again within months of each other.

Please consider continuing to read this chapter. I found verses 13-16 especially meaningful. The Message, the paraphrase Bible, also was comforting.

An excerpt from Hebrews 11:1 (NRSV)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

MUSIC

"hope faith life love"

Text: e.e. cummings; music: Eric Whitacre"

*"hope, faith, life, love
dream, joy, soul, truth"*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45
- Genesis 22:1-19
- Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19



WEDNESDAY – Sing and praise

March 3, 2021 – Second week of Lent



Art by Olivia Polzin, "Singing Praises to the Lord."

MUSIC

"Sing and Rejoice"
sung by the StGs quartet

*"Sing, sing, sing and rejoice!
All that hath life and breath sing
and rejoice!
Clap your hands and make a joyful noise,
Oh sing alleluia, sing and rejoice!"*

An excerpt from Psalm 105:1-2 (NRSV)

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

Reflection from Ana Soonthornsima:

I see these verses are verbal acts of worship and expressions of praise. God's people are told the importance of praising Him in song and spreading his glorious deeds.

We are blessed every Sunday by the lovely voices we hear during our service at St. Gregory's. For instance, Kathryn radiates God's love with her soul touching voice but for the rest of us who are not as talented as she, we can still share the Lord's marvelous work through our actions.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45;
- Jeremiah 30:12-22;
- John 12:36-43



An excerpt from Exodus 19:5-6a (NRSV)

Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.

Reflection from Marjie Koons:

You shall be my treasured possession” what a goal that would be to achieve!! Being with my mother when she was dying, she awoke, reached over and felt the bracelet I was wearing. She touched each of the stones, then stopped at the smoothest one and said, “Out of all my children, you are the shiniest and most special.” My relationship with her was always very fractured, so these words of endearment will always be a treasure to me. “You shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation”huge task, sounds way too overwhelming, but I can, and I will..... continue to say kind words, take time to smile and offer encouragement to others. I will be there for those alone, loving those that feel unloved and be that supportive listening ear to those that need it. I will continue to hug and to hold someone’s hand, loving them as my Lord loves me.



Photograph by Anne Regalado.

MUSIC

“His Eye is on the Sparrow”
sung by Gladys Knight

*“I sing because I’m happy,
I sing because I’m free
His eye is on the sparrow,
and I know he watches over me.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 19
- Exodus 19:1-9a
- 1 Peter 2:4-10



FRIDAY – Holy ground

March 5, 2021 – Second week of Lent



Photograph by the Rodgers-Geiger family.

An excerpt from Acts 7:33 (NRSV)

The Lord said to Moses, "Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Reflection from Meredith Potter:

When I was living in Japan as a youth, our family adopted the Asian custom of removing our shoes before entering one's home. Our family continued this custom after we returned to the United States, and to this day, we still remove our shoes as we enter our home. God's words to Moses remind me that God is indeed present in my home, and by removing my shoes, I acknowledge my desire to make home a holy place.

MUSIC

"Alleuia"

by Eric Whitacre,
sung by the Eric Whitacre Singers

The entire song, the only lyric used is "alleluia," which means "praise God."

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 19
- Exodus 19:9b-15
- Acts 7:30-40



MUSIC

“The Heavens are Telling”
from Haydn’s Creation oratorio

*“To do all which may achieve and cherish
A just and lasting peace
Among ourselves, and with all nations!”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 19
- Exodus 19:16-25
- Mark 9:2-8

**An excerpt from Psalm 19:1
(NRSV)**

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and
the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Reflection from Leigh Stewart:

Sun and moon
Stars and planets
Thunder and lightning
Clouds and rain and snow
Rainbows and sunsets
Wondering where God is?
Look out and up!



Photographs by Grace Stadelman.



MONDAY – God’s temple

March 8, 2021 – Third week of Lent



Snow wall built by Renzo Rodgers-Geiger.

An excerpt from 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NRSV)

Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Reflection from Sharon Henley-Gramer:

I remember when I gave birth to my first child and I shared the “wonder” with a parishioner who already gave birth many times over. I couldn’t believe that something so precious starts with just a “seed.” I truly believe that we are all born with a gift, and it is God’s spirit. We are all born good, and we learn evil. God’s temple is in all of us and we can contain it or share it. It is so exciting when we share our gifts. Maybe during this time of Lent, share God’s spirit with another through kindness and forgiveness.

MUSIC

“In Paradisum”
from the Faure Requiem

*“May the angels lead you into paradise;
May the martyrs receive you at your arrival
And lead you to the holy city Jerusalem.
May choirs of angels receive you
And with Lazarus, once a poor man,
May you have eternal rest.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 84
- 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-23



An excerpt from Psalm 84:10 (NRSV)

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.

Reflection from Max Smith:

How often when presented with the choice of prayer or Netflix, do I choose Netflix? Or the myriad of other ‘tents of wickedness’, i.e. diversions I choose over consciously connecting to God? As Augustine prayed: please God make me willing to be willing...to choose time with YOU, to choose attending to my neighbor, to choose fully to live in and with Christ—and become your doorkeeper.

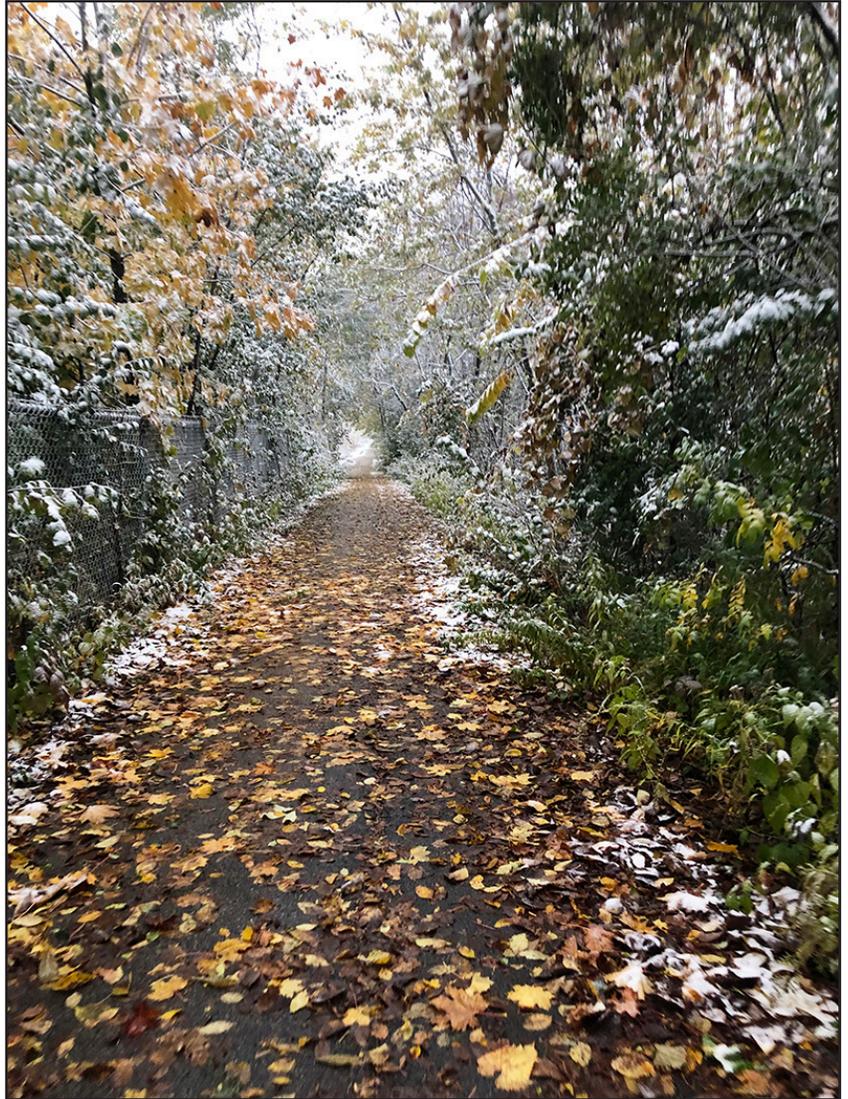
MUSIC

“How lovely is your dwelling
[Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen]”
from the Brahms requiem

*“How lovely is thy dwelling place,
O Lord of Hosts!*

*For my soul - it longeth, yea fainteth for
the courts of the Lord.*

*My soul and body crieth out yea for
the living God!”*



Photograph by Sarah Regalado.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 84;
- 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19
- Hebrews 9:23-28



WEDNESDAY – Spellbound by Jesus

March 10, 2021 – Third week in Lent



Photograph by Matthew Regalado.

An excerpt from Mark 11:18-19 (NRSV)

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city..

Reflection from Dan Nicholas:

Have you ever felt threatened by another person? It could be a bully trying to take advantage of a situation or a coworker that may have a hidden agenda for their own benefit. Jesus cares about how we respond in these situations, as his way of life is to always love your neighbor as yourself. Think about turning the situation around and helping those that may have threatened you. Maybe there is something you can offer to help ease the tension. In an extreme situation, get out of town like Jesus did!

MUSIC

"Give Me Jesus"

Trad. spiritual sung by Keanon Kyles

"In the morning when I rise...

When I am alone...

When I come to die...

Give me Jesus.

You can have all this world,

Give me Jesus."

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 84
- Ezra 6:1-16
- Mark 11:15-19



“Pilgrimage to a Dream World” by Julia Jameson

An excerpt from Genesis 9:8-10 (NRSV)

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.”

Reflection from Susie Dutcher:

On my way home on the Metra one afternoon, a full, bright, double rainbow arched across the sky over Lake Michigan. It was the most beautiful rainbow I’ve ever seen. My fellow commuters left their seats and we watched it together. God’s covenant with his faithful servant Noah, his descendants and all living creatures is promised to us as well. In this covenant I hear a call to be faithful stewards of God’s creation.

MUSIC

“Springs in the Desert”

by Arthur Jennings,
recorded by Kirstie Felland (organ)
and the StGs quartet

*“And the ransomed of the Lord will return
with songs of everlasting joy,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22;
- Genesis 9:8-17;
- Ephesians 1:3-6



FRIDAY – Seal of the Holy Spirit

March 12, 2021 – Third week in Lent



An excerpt from Ephesians 1:13-14 (NRSV)

In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Reflection from Butler Sharpe:

I was baptized at age 11, in 1954, in a North Carolina river (full with snakes). The minister sealed us with the 'Holy Ghost' as it was called in those days. I can assure you that I had little or no idea what I was experiencing at that time. However, at age 77, I can now tell you that I am very thankful that my parents and church community knew the importance of this act for my spiritual journey. Thanks be to God.

MUSIC

"Spiritus Sanctus"

by Thomas Grassi,
recorded by the StGs quartet

*"Sanctus Spiritus - Holy Spirit, come.
Come in your power and reign supreme,
Come as my Teacher and fill my mind.
Come, loving and gracious,
Come joyful and filled with great love,
Spirit come in Light."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
- Daniel 12:5-13
- Ephesians 1:7-14



An excerpt from John 3:8 (NRSV)

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Reflection from Ellie Stadelmann:

It was a couple of years ago, 2 days before my very first gymnastics competition, I was practicing my bar routine, then, there was pain. I had fractured my growth plate – two days before my very first competition, after a year of practicing my routines and preparing. And I felt as if all my hopes were lost. Through the journey of recovering, I reflected on the situation. It was then that I realized, maybe this is just a small detour in my life. Maybe the Spirit– just as the wind – is taking me a different route to get to my final destination, though the direction had been unexpected and unplanned. I worked exceptionally hard to recover, with new hope and faith in God through the blowing of the spirit, I would learn something in this process. During this season of recovery, I saw the Spirit blowing me in new and unexpected directions as well as I began painting, exploring new areas of science, and even began a new sport: swimming. It was through this experience that I realized, we cannot control the unexpected twists and turns in life, but through God, we can sometimes get back on track and push through the challenge – or we sometimes can head in completely new directions.



Photograph by Kyle Soonthornsima.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
- Numbers 20:22-29
- John 3:1-13



MONDAY – God’s provision

March 15, 2021 – Fourth week in Lent

Reflection from Scott Hamilton:

Water – the Source of Life. Water refreshes, cleanses and quenches, common experiences that we all wish for everyone in this world. My travels throughout this world have been few and don’t compare to the challenges facing Moses and the Israelites when they left Egypt during Exodus. Yet, whenever I visited such stunning natural sites like Lake Michigan or Glacier National Park in Montana, God’s power is always on display. My six trips to Quetico Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada, in my youth and later as an adult Boy Scout leader showed God’s generosity as you paddle its vast lakes by canoe and then later savor its waters to drink. Believe me, after a hot day paddling a canoe several miles, you can’t wait to enjoy this drink of life.

An excerpt from Exodus 15:24-25 (NRSV)

And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” He cried out to the Lord; and the Lord showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

MUSIC

“Wade in the Water”

Traditional spiritual arr. Allen Koepke

God has repeatedly used water to demonstrate his power to his children, but also used it as a medium through we are saved (the parting of the Red Sea, the waters of baptism, and the instance in this Exodus reading).

*“Wade in the water, children!
God’s gonna trouble the water.”*



Painting by
Jon Dutcher,
“Gibson Beach.”

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 107:1-16
- Exodus 15:22-27
- Hebrews 3:1-6



**An excerpt from
Psalm 107:1-3 (NRSV)**

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Collage by Remy Rodgers-Geiger.

MUSIC

"His Voice"

Lyrics J. Swain, music arr. by Sondra Tucker

*"He speaks, and eternity
fills with his voice,
Re-echoes the praise of her Lord."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 107:1-16
- Numbers 20:1-13
- 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Reflection from Butler Sharpe:

I often think about all of the wonderful people that God has placed in my life over the many years; my parents, wife, daughters, sisters, teachers, coaches, co-workers and many others. All have been very helpful and caring during these years. Even those individuals, who I totally disagree on many topics, have taught me various lessons about myself. I give thanks to God, for he is true and good.



WEDNESDAY – God’s support

March 17, 2021 – Fourth week in Lent



Photograph by Dan Nicholas.

An excerpt from Isaiah 60:19 (NRSV)

The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

Reflection from Scott Hamilton:

The prophet Isaiah’s words offer a road map to lead your life. His message offers hope, renewal, faith, judgment and salvation, to name a few. This passage looks rather bleak yet it foretells that you are not alone, that God is there to support and guide your path. Personally, this feeling has happened where God’s support shown light when darkness prevailed during a long stretch of unemployment and financial strain. Looking back, it’s really clear to me that God’s light was in the hearts of family, friends and many others to help us survive that difficult time.

MUSIC

“My Song in the Night
arr. Paul Christiansen”

*“Unto Thee, O Lord in affliction I call,
My comfort by day and my song
in the night.*

*O why should I wander, an alien from Thee,
Or cry in the desert Thy face to see,
My comfort and joy, my souls’ delight,
O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 107:1-16
- Isaiah 60:15-22
- John 8:12-20



An excerpt from Hebrews 4:9-11a (NRSV)

So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest.

Reflection from Jon Dutcher

In the creation story, God created the world in six days. But the story did not stop there. On the seventh day, God "blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation" (Genesis 2:3). So, in effect, rest is an integral part of creation. And it is an intentional act, just as important as the creation of the earth and sky, plants, creatures and humankind.

Paul is inviting the followers of Christ to share the "sabbath rest" in their tradition. This message is as relevant today as it was in the time of the early church. We need to be intentional in our rest, just as we are in our daily work. Only then can we re-create ourselves in God's image.



Painting by Jon Dutcher, "Summer at Hamlin Lake."

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 51:1-12
- Isaiah 30:15-18
- Hebrews 4:1-13

MUSIC

"Sleep"

by Eric Whitacre, sung by VOCES8"

*"The evening hangs beneath the moon,
A silver thread on darkened dune.
With closing eyes and resting head,
I know that sleep is coming soon.*

*If there are noises in the night,
A frightening shadow, flickering light,
Then I surrender unto sleep
Where clouds of dream give second sight.
What dreams may come both dark
and deep,
Of flying wings and soaring leap,
As I surrender unto sleep."*



Photograph by Dan Nicholas,
"Baby Elephant."

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 51:1-12
- Exodus 30:1-10
- Hebrews 4:14-5:4

An excerpt from Hebrews 4:16 (NRSV)

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Reflection from Grace Stadelman:

This is a reminder that we shouldn't be ashamed of asking for help. God is so forgiving, no matter what sins we commit. When Jesus was awaiting His death on the cross, He prayed to God because He is gracious. And that simple truth is reason to turn to God without being scared. Despite being imperfect, we are still worthy of His love, and God wants to give us mercy, especially when we need it most.

MUSIC

"It Is Well With My Soul"
recorded by the StGs quartet

*"When peace like a river attenders my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught
me to say*

*"It is well with my soul."
All things work together for good
for those who love God,
And are called according to His purpose."*



Window from the south wall of the Nave.

MUSIC

"The Sun Goeth Down"

Mary's solo from Elgar's "The Kingdom"

*"To do all which may achieve and cherish
A just and lasting peace
Among ourselves, and with all nations!"*

An excerpt from John 12:3 (NRSV)

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Reflection from Zion Lutheran Confirmation Class:

Mary knew that Jesus was someone special and anointed his feet with expensive perfume; He deserved something very precious to honor him. To dry his feet with her hair is to show great respect, and was a very personal gesture. The scent permeated the room, signifying that this was an action that would show honor to all, and how this was a perfect worship of the Lord and what He has done. Should we do any less than Mary?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

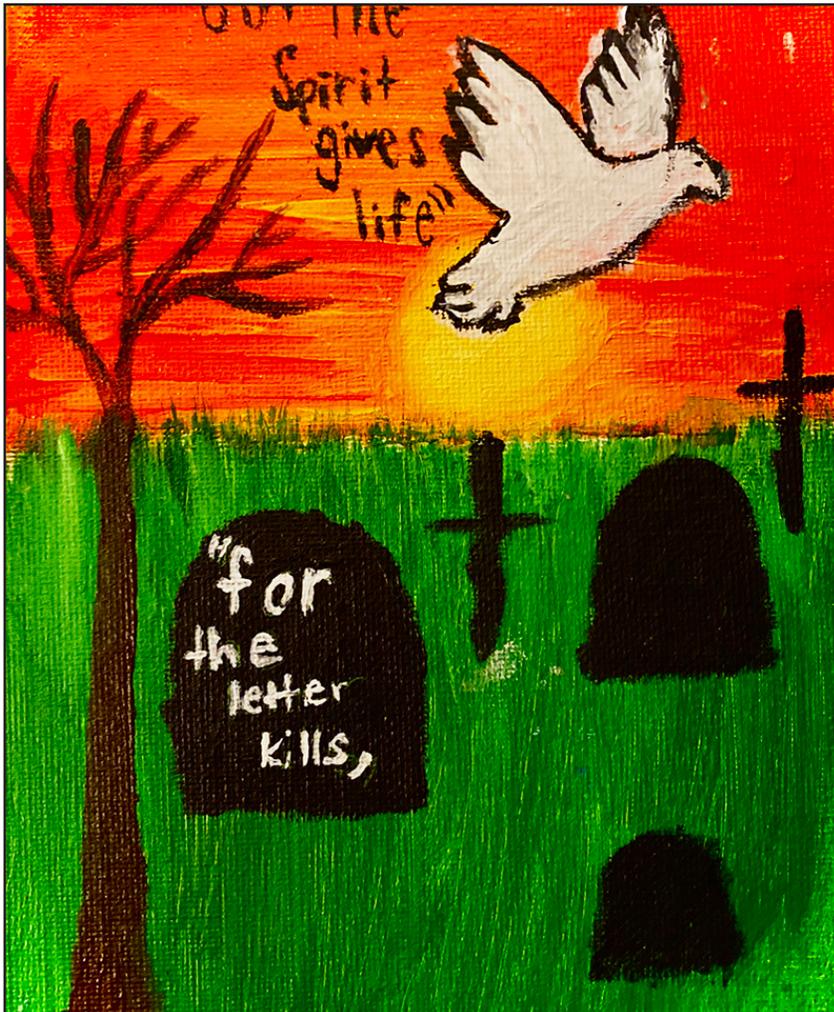
For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 51:1-12
- Habakkuk 3:2-13
- John 12:1-11



MONDAY – Competence from God

March 22, 2021 – Fifth week in Lent



Painting by Ellie Stadelmann.

An excerpt from 2 Corinthians 2:5-6 (NRSV)

Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Reflection from Donna Shelton:

Through our lives, we may find ourselves in a position we never foresaw, requiring unexpected skill, tact, or insight. What experience do we have to draw upon? This is new territory. How are we to navigate through this? It is in those times that faith in the Lord's guidance and workings provide the clarity and roadmap we need to respond.

MUSIC

"Bach cello suite #1: prelude"
played by Yo-Yo Ma

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 119:9-16
- Isaiah 43:8-13
- 2 Corinthians 3:4-11



An excerpt from Isaiah 44:8 (NRSV)

Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one.

MUSIC

“Tonight Eternity Alone is Near”

Text: Thomas S. Jones,
music: René Clausen

*“Tonight, eternity alone is near.
The sunset, and the darkening blue.
There is no space for fear:
Only the wonder of his truth.”*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 119:9-16
- Isaiah 44:1-8
- Acts 2:14-24



Reflection from Keanon Kyles:

“Finishing my academic studies on top; I was for certain I would jump right into the opera world accepting lead roles across the globe I ended up not having any offers and accepting a janitorial position at ABC 7 News. I was so frustrated with God and asked him often, how did I get here? It wasn’t until I silenced my anger, embarrassment, and ego and allowed my heart to be still and listen to God’s voice that doors started opening for me. Performance opportunities started to roll in to the point where I had no other choice but to quit my janitorial position. In my silence no one but God elevated me, in fact, no one could elevate me like he did. God was cleaning the path and polishing the doors to be opened for me while I too was cleaning offices night after night. We often are so anxious to do and want what our flesh desires that we forget about our spirit. When we rely on our flesh to cuddle our emotions we are met with fear and anxiety when things don’t go as planned. However, when we rely on God to cuddle our emotions and every move we will always stand tall – even when things look dark. God will always help you see the light.

Keanon Kyle making his debut at Carnegie Hall.



WEDNESDAY – Salvation over Judgement

March 24, 2021 – Fifth week in Lent



Photograph by Susie Dutcher of Lake Michigan.

An excerpt from John 12:47 (NRSV)

I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

MUSIC

“Adagio for Strings”

by Samuel Barber - either the original orchestral version or the choral arrangement set to the Agnus Dei text ”

*“Lamb of God, who takes away
the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away
the sins of the world,
Grant us peace.
As the darkness clears away.”*

Reflection from Susie Dutcher:

Judgement is easy. It may be the nagging thought that we would behave better in the observed situation. After all, we have heard the teachings of Jesus. One of those teachings is not to throw stones. Jesus came to save all of us, even the stone throwers.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 119:9-16
- Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23
- John 12:34-50



Reflection from Anne Jolly:

I remember distinctly the moment I knew I was pregnant with my first child – my complete amazement at the miracle that is life in general, and that is this life in particular, and that this miracle is worked out in normal people all the time. Rarely has life seemed such a miracle to me as it did in that moment. The miracle, the salvific work, of Jesus Christ is not exclusively in the crucifixion, but in the inception, birth, life, death, and resurrection. This moment when Jesus began to be human that we call the Annunciation is worth pondering – God who created the universe chose to become human in the multiplication of cells in a young woman named Mary. Miracle indeed!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Deuteronomy 16:1-8
- Philippians 2:1-11

An excerpt from Luke 1:30-33 (NRSV)

The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

MUSIC

“Ave Maria”
by Franz Biebl, sung by VOCES8”

Translation: The angel of God visited Mary and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Mary said: See the servant of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word.

Painting by Ob Soonthornsima of angel wings for StGs outdoor nativity.





**An excerpt from Jeremiah 33:9
(NRSV)**

And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them; they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

MUSIC

“Beautiful City”
from Godspell

*“Come sing me sweet rejoicing
Come sing me love
We’re not afraid of voicing
All the things. We’re dreaming of
Oh, high and low, And everywhere we go*

*We can build. A beautiful city
Yes we can. Oh yes we can
We can build. A beautiful city
Call it out. And call it the city of man*

*We don’t need alabaster
We don’t need chrome
We’ve got our special plaster
Take my hand (Take my hand)
I’ll take you home (I’ll take you home!)
We see nations rise
In each other’s eyes (in each other’s eyes!)*

Reflection from Shelley Byrnes:

When I first read this verse I flashed back to middle school and our church production of Godspell and the song Beautiful City.

At first, it’s kind of pithy, I know. But the music is totally joyful and makes me want to dance! And the words remind me of something we say in the Lord’s Prayer without really thinking about it. “Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.” We are praying for God’s Kingdom to be here on earth. We are not just living through life to get to go to heaven! We are here to help create heaven ON earth!

“When the Bible talks about ‘Sin’ (capital S), it’s describing a consciousness of separation where we are blinded to our already existing connection with God, one another and all of creation. But Jesus rescues us from the delusion of separation and reveals that we are intimately and radically connected.”

Radical connection! We are connected to every other person, and to God always. When we remember that and truly experience it in our bodies and souls, we can work toward that beautiful city that is God’s Kingdom on earth.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Jeremiah 33:1-9;
- Philippians 2:12-18



Window from the north wall of the Nave.

MUSIC

"Jesus Christ the Apple Tree"
by Elizabeth Poston"

*"The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit, and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be compared
with Christ the apple tree.
This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree."*

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Jeremiah 33:10-16
- Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

An excerpt from Mark 10:51-52 (NRSV)

Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Reflection from Ellie Stadelmann:

I remember when I was around the age of 5, and learned the song Amazing Grace. It was with lots of other children in the room at a church I used to attend in Chicago. The lesson in Church that day was about God healing the blind man, but that was all I caught, and I didn't understand a word they said. But what I did grasp that day was a realization through that song: I once was lost, but now I am found, was blind, but now I see. Those lyrics taught me that God loves us greater than we could ever fathom – that with the tiniest bit of faith in Him, he could move mountains for us. He is the creator of us and is with us through situations that are hard – as the blind man turned to Jesus for help in his overwhelmingly difficult life situation, so we too have access to an all-powerful, all loving, and compassionate God. Only our faith is required to reach out to Him. Before this realization of how He is waiting for us to come to Him in faith for any reason, I was blind, but after that day, I could see.



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815 Wilmot Road • Deerfield, IL 60015

P: 847.945.1678

www.StGschurch.org
parish@stgregoryschurch.org