

# Ever Walking in Your Sight

Daily Meditations for Lent, A.D. 2014

Written by Members of Christ Church, Frederica  
Saint Simons Island, Georgia

Inspired by the  
Daily Office Lectionary Readings



# Christ Church, Frederica

An Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia

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Stan Kyker, financial administrator

Glenn Queener, parish administrator

Ed and Lynn Turner, Sunday school coordinators

Kathleen Turner, organist and choirmaster

## Worship Schedule

### Daily

8 a.m. Morning Prayer (Wednesday - Friday) – St. Ignatius Chapel

5 p.m. Evening Prayer – Christ Church

### Sunday

8 a.m. Holy Eucharist – Christ Church

9:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist – Christ Church

11:15 a.m. Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist – Christ Church

5 p.m. Holy Eucharist – St. Ignatius Chapel

### Friday

11:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (healing service) – Christ Church

### Saturday

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist – St. Ignatius Chapel

## From the Rector

*“You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts, and prepare with joy for the Paschal feast; that, fervent in prayer and in works of mercy, and renewed by your Word and Sacraments, they may come to the fullness of grace which you have prepared for those who love you.”—The second proper preface for the season of Lent, Rite II*

Many of us view Lent to be a time of penitence, fasting and denial. We deny ourselves indulgences. We remind ourselves of our brokenness to prepare for Christ’s brokenness on the cross (ultimately, a moment of healing for the world). We’re good at making Lent a solemn season. The proper preface above couches it in slightly different terms: “prepare with joy”; “fervent in prayer and in works of mercy”. Joy in Lent? Works of mercy? These aren’t the things we think of during Lent. The closest this preface gets to the purple penitence of the season is “cleanse their hearts”!

I hope that the meditations in this booklet will, in fact, renew you through God’s Word as it is interpreted to us through the Holy Spirit and members of our community. I pray that we may be joyful in our preparations for the great feast of Easter, and that the end result of our penitence in this season is not a self-satisfaction that we were able to stay away from chocolate for the duration of the season, but that we are moved, through our fervent prayers, to a place of devotion and action. May we know love and mercy in the name of God and share it with others. If anything grows in this season of spring in the church we know as Lent, I pray that it will be this.

With Joy for the Paschal feast to come,  
Tom

## About this Booklet

Welcome, to the Christ Church, Frederica Lenten devotional booklet. This is our fourth annual publication of daily meditations written anonymously by members of our parish family. The Daily Office Bible readings are given at the bottom of each meditation. A compact form for daily prayer and Bible reading is on the following page. There are useful prayers for various occasions in the back of this booklet.

Our title, *Ever Walking in Your Sight*, is a phrase borrowed from the Collect for Guidance in the Book of Common Prayer Morning Prayer service (p. 100). On the cover is a photo that I took of a detail in the Ascension Window in the south transept of St. John’s Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida. It shows Jesus walking with the two disciples who at first did not recognize him but later realized that he was with them regardless of their ability to perceive him (see Luke 24:13—34 and Mark 16: 12—13). It calls to mind how true it is that we are *always* in the presence of the Divine.

I invite you to make full use of this devotional booklet with daily Bible reading and prayer, knowing that in doing so you will be taking a shared pilgrimage with everyone else using it. No matter our differences, we are one family on a common journey. May your Lenten experience be especially blessed this year.

John A. La Boone, editor

# LENTEN DAILY DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS

*Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer*

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: come let us adore him.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father: We have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone. For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us all our offenses; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*(Here you may read one or more Bible readings from the Daily Office lectionary. See notations at the bottom of each day's meditation.)*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

*(Here you may make personal thanksgivings and intercessions.)*

*(In the morning)* Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Or*

*(At midday)* Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. Amen.

*Or*

*(In the evening)* Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

# LENT, A.D. 2014

*Collect for Ash Wednesday – Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## Ash Wednesday, March 5

*Show me where to walk, for I have come to you in prayer.—Psalm 143: 8b*

I have no words of wisdom of my own about this momentous day, but I like what Episcopalian author, educator and theologian the Rev. John H. Westerhoff, III has said:

“It all begins with Ash Wednesday. Jesus warns us in the gospel about showing off our religious practices in order to gain favor with God or other human beings. We gather to communicate with God and to begin the church’s season of personal storytelling, for that is what Lent is about. Those who receive the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday are saying something about themselves. We are fragile beings. Each of us knows people whose lives have been snatched from us. And our own life, no matter how stable, how secure, or how satisfying it appears to be, is but a transient splash in the rapids of history. We flourish and in a moment we are gone. That’s not gloom, that’s life. Still, it is important to remind ourselves of our mortality; the ashes of this day drive home that sober truth.” – *A Pilgrim People: Learning Through the Church Year*, p. 83.

I pray for a blessed Lent this year as I spend time in prayer, study and listening.

*Ps 32; 95; 102; 130; 143   Amos 5:6—15   Heb 12:1—14   Luke 18:9—14*

## Thursday, March 6

*Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things.—Philippians 3:15a*

Brian finally said yes to teaching me how to ride his motorcycle. So, there in the empty Pizza Hut parking lot I climbed on the Kawasaki Eliminator ZL600 and pulled back on the clutch. Brian told me to ease off the clutch, give a little gas, and just roll. So I did...and it was going well, until he called to me from behind. I looked back to see

what he was saying, and BAM! Into the parking bump I went at 20 mph. That might not sound fast, but I can tell you that laying a bike down at 20 mph hurts!

I learned a valuable lesson that day: when in forward motion, looking back might not be the best option. The Apostle Paul alludes to this principle in Philippians 3:13—14. Paul goes so far as to say he is forgetting what is behind him, those accomplishments in life that others would cling to, he claims they are of no value any more.

Paul is focused on one thing: that which lies ahead. The “upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” We, too, are called to have that attitude, let the past be that – the past. The hurt. The joy. The accolades. The failures. The celebratory moments. Let them stay there, in the past, and focus on the call of God in your life. Focus on who God, in Christ, is making you to be. What things do you need to let go of today? What areas of your past are you clinging to? What is preventing you from keeping your eyes forward?

*Ps 37 Hab 3:1—18 Phil 3:12—21 John 17:1—8*

## Friday, March 7

*But I am trusting you, O Lord—Psalms 31:14a*

We are not meant to read the psalms—or any other part of the Bible—in a vacuum. We are meant to bring to our reading whatever may be happening in our personal lives.

Following my mother’s death after a 12-year illness made worse by blindness and suffering (but without one complaint, save the concern that she was burdening us), I searched for scripture to read at her funeral. Something which would somehow be right and perhaps comfort my father and siblings. I came to Philippians 4. I invite you to read that chapter – with a mother’s voice in mind. I read selections from that chapter at her service and suddenly, everyone heard what I had heard; her voice. Saying things she’d said all her life: Encouraging us, reassuring us, teaching us, thanking us, loving us and asking us to always seek our refuge in the Lord.

Today’s verses speak of hurt, of gossip, of unjust persecution, of malicious intent, of people who are just simply unkind—even mean—who act with intent to cut others down. And the scriptures offer us rescue. If you will take whatever is happening in your life today and every day to the Lord, if you will seek His voice in the stillness and in the scriptures, He will speak to you.

*Ps 31; 35; 95 Ezek 18:1—4, 25—32 Phil 4:1—9 John 17:9—19*

## Saturday, March 8

*At the moment I have everything I need – and more!”—Philippians 4: 18a*

Once, a young man was attending a worship service. The leader presented the challenge: “Is there someone here tonight who is willing to turn his life over to Christ?” Yes, there was. He gave his life to Christ. He applied to serve as a medical missionary and received an invitation to work in Africa. In 1963, he and his family set out for their

new home in the heart of the Congo. He was the only doctor serving nearly 100,000 people. The strain was difficult, but he was sure he was doing God's will. One day they received news that a rebel tribe were on their way to the village.

The American Embassy ordered all women and children to evacuate. The doctor chose to stay. He considered the pregnant woman who was not able to bear her child normally. He knew that both mother and child would die if he were not there when her time came. The rest is history: Dr. Paul Carlson was murdered by the rebel tribe.

As we go through life and find ourselves constantly exposed to different trials and tribulations we can be sure that we can do all things in him who strengthens us.

*Ps 30; 32; 42; 43   Ezek 39:21—29   Phil 4:10—20   John 17:20—26*

*Collect for the First Sunday in Lent – Almighty God,  
whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come  
quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as  
you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to  
save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## **Sunday, March 9**

*Your unfailing love is better than life itself—Psalm 63:3a*

John 12:44 says: Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me." Similarly, in John 14:15, he said, "If you love me, obey my commandments." Putting those two scriptures together, it is evident he meant: Keep God's commandments. When I taught school, I wanted to say, "If you love me, (or if you don't) do your homework, for that will save you, and I cannot." Teaching public school, pushed me to my limits. I thought daily of the grief of Jesus. Teen-agers delighted in a class party with soda and snacks, while they greeted precious subject hours with time-killing resistance. The treasures of civilization were unwelcome. It is one thing to know that and quite another, as a teacher, to fight against mediocrity and failure, day after day. The grief of Christ was not only for the sweet life he must lose early, but for His beloved who refused to hear or see the Glory of God in all that is good and virtuous.

*Ps 63; 98; 103   Dan 9:3—10   Heb 2:10—18   John 12:44—50*

## Monday, March 10

*This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true.—1 Corinthians 1:6*

The Psalms for today tell us that even as faithful believers it seems that God has forsaken us. We see all around us the ways that the world presses in on us. It seems that God lets these things continue when we know that He has the power to do something about them—to make things right again. Sometimes the world is more than we can bear. The powerful part of today's scripture comes from 1 Corinthians. It tells us that the cross for us becomes the very power of God. God proves through the cross that whatever the world throws at us, it cannot overcome that power. So as we travel through Lent this year as faithful participants after the cross. We can be comforted in knowing that God is with us in and through everything the world can throw at us. He will see us through.

*Ps 41; 44; 52    Gen 37:1—11    1 Cor 1:1—19    Mark 1:1—13*

## Tuesday, March 11

*“Here comes the dreamer!” they said.—Genesis 37:19*

A lesson learned later in life for me has been not only to look before you leap, but pray before you leap! The story of Joseph in Genesis is an excellent example of this and contains instructive applications for today's world. Joseph was prideful and overconfident as he was the favored son of Jacob. Others in his family were jealous and arranged to get rid of him by eventually selling him into slavery. Envy and jealousy can lead to evil and malice in both families and the work place. When Joseph was sold into slavery, he did not waste time wondering why this happened to him, but sought God's help and guidance to get him through the situation.

What matters in the story about Joseph is that he kept his focus on God and responded in a positive way to all the bad things that happened to him: being betrayed by his family, tempted sexually and punished for doing the right thing. Eventually he rose to ruler of Egypt and prepared the nation to survive a famine. When you don't understand why an injustice has happened to you, continue to trust God and walk in obedience. Joseph knew that “this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end” (Psalm 48).

*Ps 45; 47; 48    Gen 37:12—24    1 Cor 1:20—31    Mark 1:14—28*

## Wednesday, March 12

*When they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”—Mark 1:37*

“A time out on the field has been called.” So says the announcer. Football fans have all heard that. Confusion on the line? Too many players on the field? An unexpected



defense? Whatever the reason, the quarterback has seen a need for a time out before proceeding with the play, to take time to consider other options, to come up with a new play, to confer with the coaches. Perhaps we, with the legions of fans that spend time watching high school, collegiate or professional football should take more notice of the time out option, emulate it and put it into practice off the field in our daily busy-ness as well; to reconsider, to think through, to allay confusion, to talk with the capital-C “Coach”. In today’s Gospel reading, “...Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” He knew the importance of the time out option.

*Ps 49; 53; 119:49—72    Gen 37:25—36    1 Cor 2:1—13    Mark 1:29—45*

## Thurs, March 13

*“Come and sleep with me, “ she demanded.—Genesis 39:7b*

Have you ever been falsely accused of something? How did you react? Try to get even? One of my clearest memories of childhood involves a trip home from 1st grade in the car with my Mom. I was sitting on the passenger side of the front seat when I said something (still to this day I have no idea what) that so angered my Mom she immediately reached across the seat and backhanded me across the mouth. Now my Mom was not a violent person so the shock was profound. Even when all my protests went for naught and I was hurt at being unfairly punished, ultimately I didn't love her any less—she was my Mom.

In the reading from Genesis, Joseph is falsely accused by his master's wife of trying to seduce her and thrown into prison. We are told that the Lord was with him so, rather than spending his time and energy trying to get even, he focused at his assigned tasks and rose to be the prison administrator.

I was lucky. I had my Mother's love to help me overcome my anger and hurt. Joseph had the Lord with him. Maybe there's a similarity?

*Ps 19; 46; 50; 59; 60    Gen 39:1—23    1 Cor 2:14—3:15    Mark 2:1—12*

## Friday, March 14

*Let us sing psalms of praise to him.—Psalm 95:2a*

The liturgical Psalms 95 through 100 are my favorites! The first part of the 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a beautiful reminder of the essence of worship: to praise God with songs and words of thanksgiving; to be grateful for his mercy and grace; to be awed by his infinite and diverse creation; to be mindful that God loves us, the sheep of his hand, the vulnerable and defenseless equally; all should harken to his voice.

Christ Church is blessed with inspiring liturgy, beautiful music, inspired “shepherds” and people who share talents to praise God, and those who work tirelessly

to help those in need. How appropriate that the liturgical psalms of joy are shared universally in the Book of Common Prayer as we all sing to the Lord.

*Ps 40; 51; 54; 95    Gen 40:1—23    1 Cor 3:16—23    Mark 2:13—22*

## Saturday, March 15

*What makes you better than anyone else!—1 Corinthians 4:7a*

In the passages leading up to this selection, Paul warns the followers in Corinth not to think of themselves as wise and begin boasting about their thoughts and whether they or others are the best teachers/leaders. Their thoughts are foolish and full of folly when compared to the wisdom of God. As God's temple, His spirit dwells within them and God's temple is holy. Thus, they belong to no other leader but to God.

Using the language of a courtroom, Paul stresses that as stewards of God's mysteries they should concentrate on being loyal to His teachings and trustworthy as servants and stewards. The one and only true God is the only judge of our successes and failures as stewards. Paul insists that it is not the Corinthians but The Lord who will judge even him, Paul.

Paul seems to be saying to the Corinthians: “Look those of you who think yourself so wise and are such terrific teachers, don't you know even *those* gifts you are boasting about come from God? And since it is a gift, what gives you the right to boast? Why, you are simply an instrument of The Almighty and All-knowing God!”

*Ps 55; 138; 139    Gen 41:1—13    1 Cor 4:1—7    Mark 2:23—3:6*

## *Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent –*

*O, God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## Sunday, March 16

*Jesus replied, “I assure you, the Son can do nothing by himself.”—John 5:19a*

Has there ever been a Christian who has not asked the question: what is the real relationship between Jesus and God? When we say the Creed, we say that Jesus is “the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father.” This, of course, is the Church's official position. It is also clear in the gospels that Jesus consistently calls God his

Father (and teaches us to call him “Father” as well) and calls himself the Son, especially in the Gospel of John and in this passage. As Christians we can say convincingly that Jesus is “of one being with the Father.” Therefore, the answer is that Jesus is God's Son and is at the right hand of God.

*Ps 8; 24; 29; 84    Gen 41: 14—45    Rom 6:3—14    John 5:19—24*

## Monday, March 17

*So Joseph took charge of the entire land of Egypt.—Genesis 41:45b*

Prior to entering service to the Pharaoh, Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, lied about by his master's wife and imprisoned. But he had found favor with God who provided the gifts he needed to fulfill God's will for him. It was made known to him that famine would come so he harvested and stored grain during times of plenty. When the famine came he was well prepared. He might have said, “I told you so” or hoarded what was stored, but he did not. He could have refused to sell to his brothers, but instead he forgave them. Joseph accepted the trials and tribulations in his journey and never lost sight of his God. He knew God would provide all that was needed to do what he was put there to do. I firmly believe that God has given me everything I need in order to do what he put me here to do. When trials or tribulations block my path, I need only remember that they are part of God's plan for me to fulfill his will for me.

*Ps 56; 57; 58; 64; 65    Gen 41:46—57    1 Cor 4:8—20    Mark 3:7—19a*

## Tuesday, March 18

*Joseph's brothers didn't recognize him, but Joseph recognized them. – Genesis 42:8*

How incredibly current is our reading from Genesis for today. A family is hungry and needs to eat. There is abundant food in neighboring Egypt. A father sends all but his youngest son to try to solve the hunger problem. Joseph, despised and rejected by his brothers, is in Egypt, and is the person who must be approached to buy the much needed food. Joseph recognizes his brothers, his very own family, long separated from him. He is overwhelmed, even in remembering the hurt and pain his brothers have caused him. He makes the family emissaries wait three days. (A future tie to our Savior's three-day prison?)

But, bottom line, he still loves them, and forgives them, everything—period! One of my family members once told his son, who had been deeply hurt by a young cousin: “Son, you don't have to like him, but you do have to *love* him. He's family!” Joseph understood this concept: Love is God and God is Love! Let us live today determined to love those who we don't really care for or who have hurt us, maybe even some of our own family. After all, it has been commanded of us, to love our neighbors as ourselves!

*Ps 61; 62; 68    Gen 42:1—17    1 Cor 5:1—8    Mark 3:19b—35*

## Wednesday, March 19

*“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed.”—Mark 4:3*

Where do I fit in the parable of the sower?

My prayer: Keep me from the path where Satan dwells and  
robs me of the word that is sown,

And from the rocky places where joy is sudden  
but roots lack depth and joy is brief,

And keep me from the thorns where I hear the word  
but anxieties and desires for things lacking worth  
choke the word and render it unfruitful.

I have ears but do they hear? Please, God, I long to sow on good soil,  
to hear the word, accept it and produce what you have sent me here to produce.

*Ps 72; 119:73—96    Gen 42:18—28    1 Cor 5:9—6:8    Mark 4:1—20*

## Thursday, March 20

*“A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light will shine.”—Mark 4:21b*

Mark’s message, dated around A.D. 65, says that the truth is to be seen. Christianity is to be seen. He warned us that as Christians we will be challenged and threatened. We must be committed and stand up for our beliefs. The road for Christians can be tough. Not so today in this country. We are free to choose among numerous denominations without any obstacles from our government. In fact, many brave service men and women have given their lives to assure us this freedom. How much thought have we given to the Christians living in the Middle East at this season of the year?

We are in the process of celebrating the ministry of our savior, Jesus Christ, and yet there is an oppressive environment in most Middle Eastern countries that rewards Christians with death if their observance is prominent. We can display wreaths on our doors, lights in the windows and decorated trees in our homes, but the Middle Eastern Christian can’t do any of these things without great risk to themselves and their families. Maybe it is time for the Christians in this country to take note of this injustice and turn on a light every night for the Middle Eastern Christians. But again, maybe that is too risky and not politically correct. What do you think Mark would suggest?

*Ps 70; 71; 74    Gen 42:29—38    1 Cor 6:12—20    Mark 4:21—34*

## Friday, March 21

*Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck.—Psalm 69:1*

Over twenty years ago I was diagnosed with a very serious and deadly cancer. After surgery, eight chemo treatments and a “second look surgery,” my very competent surgeon declared me to be “cancer-free.”

I was so very grateful to God. During my illness I was isolated much of the time. Prayer and the Book of Psalms brought me great peace and comfort. Two years after my “cancer-free” declaration, I was scheduled for a cat scan. After the scan I went into my doctor’s office. My heart turned to ice when the doctor said, “You have spots on your liver.” Cancer! – I thought. Another CAT scan was scheduled in two weeks.

Fourteen fear-filled days were over and I was lying on a gurney in the waiting room. Icy cold and filled with fear, I felt as if someone had lifted my right hand and a feeling of peace came over me. Throughout the hour-long ordeal, the feeling of peace remained. Verdict: All OK. Thanks be to God.

During these days of Lent, I remember the peace that passes all understanding. You love me! You are holding my right hand! You will keep on guiding me all my life with your wisdom and counsel—and afterwards receive me into the glories of heaven!

*Ps 69; 73; 95    Gen 43:1—15    1 Cor 7:1—9    Mark 4:35—41*

## **Saturday, March 22**

*Yet I am confident that I will see the Lord’s goodness while I am here in the land of the living.—Psalm 27:13*

David lauds God’s goodness in the 27<sup>th</sup> Psalm. In times of trouble he remembers that God has helped him in the past against enemies and armies. He can wait confidently for God’s help again.

Some people choose to keep a journal of notes written each time God has helped them come through difficulties or fearful events or answered their prayers for help. In times of trouble when emotions rule, they are comforted by looking back at this validation that God has been with them. The unexpected money in a coat pocket, check received in the mail, the rainbow in the sky on a day of despair or the healing when it was thought to be impossible. These reminders of God’s faithfulness help us to believe and wait.

When faced with a challenge in your life, you can panic or choose to wait on the Lord, remembering the past when God kept his promises. Because you believe, you are willing to wait.

*Ps 23; 27; 75; 76    Gen 43:16—34    1 Cor 7:10—24    Mark 5:1—20*

*Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent – Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## Sunday, March 23

*Why have you repaid an act of kindness with such evil?—Genesis 44:4b*

Today we are invited to bring our story to the story of Joseph. At 17, he was Jacob's favorite son, a gifted young man of whom his brothers were jealous to the point of desiring to get rid of him. They planned his death but decided rather to put him in a pit and sell him for twenty pieces of silver and then lie to their father that he had been killed.

Joseph was sold in Egypt to the Captain of the Guard who recognized early on that the Lord was with Joseph. Along his way there was desertion, temptation, imprisonment, betrayal, loneliness, victim of cruelty and deceit, yet Joseph did not forget that he belonged to God and lived out his faithfulness. After years of trials, his integrity was rewarded by becoming governor over the land.

In a time of famine his estranged brothers came before him to ask for grain. They did not recognize their brother whom they had sold. Their lives were now in his hands. After testing them, Joseph, in a memorable loving act, embraced them with forgiveness and mercy. Does not Joseph's life reflect the life of Jesus who calls us, *whatever comes*, to walk a faithful journey with him each day?

*Ps 34; 93; 96   Gen 44:1—17   Rom 8:1—10   John 5:25—29*

## Monday, March 24

*But Jesus ignored their comments and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me."—Mark 5:36*

Just have faith. How simple it sounds, and yet how difficult it can be to accomplish. When times are at their darkest, it is not easy to believe that all will be well.

Like many people, I do not like uncertainty. I like having a sense of control. I remember the moment, when my children were young, that I realized that no matter how hard I worked at it, I could not control every aspect of their lives. Wow! Before that, if I wanted something, I just worked a little more, studied a little harder, and I was usually pretty successful. But having children was a different story. I could only do so much and after that, it was out of my control. I had to have faith.

I am very fond of the saying, "Let go and let God." It reminds me that, when life takes a course that I neither anticipate nor desire, it's okay to not be in control. I find a sense of comfort and relief in letting go, and placing faith in God.

*Ps 77; 79; 80   Gen 44:18—34   1 Cor 7:25—31   Mark 5:21—43*

## Tuesday, March 25

*But they kept testing and rebelling against God Most High. They did not obey his laws.—Psalm 78:56a*

"Give ear, oh my people to my teaching." Listen! This psalm touches my teacher heart. When I was teaching fourth-graders, I gave careful directions before any

assignment. I reminded the children of previous discussions and of the rules of writing in my class. Invariably, somebody would raise his hand politely and ask, “Can we use pens?” The fact that I had specifically asked, only moments before, that they use pencils went over his head and in one ear and out the other. It was frustrating!

This psalmist is crying out to his people in frustration, saying, “God does great things for us. God gives us commandments to order our lives. He cares for us. He forgives.” And we do a fourth-grade job of listening. We hear with our ears but our hearts remain stubborn. We listen but His words go in one ear and out the other. God grant us the gift of hearing with our hearts and our minds. Help us to see the wondrous things that God has in store for us. Grant us the wisdom to listen.

*Ps 78    Gen 45:1—15    1 Cor 7:32—40    Mark 6:1—13*

## Wednesday, March 26

*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.—Psalm 119:105*

My readings for today are varied and uplifting. In the story of Joseph who had been sold into slavery by his brothers, when we enter, the brothers find Joseph as the Governor of Egypt and highly favored by the Pharaoh. He has been given many riches and the fertile land of Canaan for his family. Although the brothers are undeserving, Joseph does not harbor anger or feelings of retaliation for their unforgiveable deed. When Jacob, his father, is told that Joseph is alive his response is one of gratitude that his son lives, with no thought of the earthly riches gained. For me, his joy and Joseph's forgiveness mirrors the joy and forgiveness of our Heavenly Father in His love for us, His children.

In Psalm 119:98 we learn that: “You, through your commandments made me wiser than my enemies. For they are ever with me.” For me, my enemy is pride. I can easily fall prey to the *how will this look to others?* trap. When I am mindful of God's word it truly is a, “lamp to my feet and a light to my path”. When I'm faithful to God's word, that snare of pride catches me less frequently. When I let the busyness of life dilute my commitment to the Word, I am wide open to failure. In 1 Corinthians 8:1 we learn that, “...while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church.” That is my mantra and prayer for myself and each of you this Lenten Season.

*Ps 81; 82; 119:97—120    Gen 45:16—28    1 Cor 8:1—13    Mark 6:13—29*

## Thursday, March 27

*“We have five loaves of bread and two fish.”—Mark 6:38b*

The feeding of the 5,000. This is the only miracle Jesus performed (other than the Resurrection) that is included in all four Gospels, so it must be important! In Mark's Gospel, the Apostles were in need of some R&R. Jesus took them away by boat to a deserted place, but a great crowd recognized them and came from all the towns in the

area. When Jesus saw the crowd He had compassion for them, comparing them to sheep without a shepherd, and began to teach them. When it became late, the disciples asked Jesus to send the crowd away to the villages to buy something to eat (I imagine they were tired and hungry also), but Jesus answered, “You give them something to eat.” Taking the five loaves and two fish they collected, Jesus looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves (a foreshadowing of the Eucharist?), and gave it to his disciples to feed the people.

If Jesus could feed so many both spiritually and physically with so little, imagine what He can do with us. We are his disciples now, and the commandment is clear: FEED MY SHEEP! Whatever we have within ourselves to give to others may seem insignificant, but in Jesus’ hands our gifts and talents to touch the lives of others are boundless!

*Ps 42; 43; 83; 85; 86    Gen 46:1—7, 28—34    1 Cor 9:1—15    Mark 6:30—46*

## Friday, March 28

*“It’s all right,” he said. “I am here! Don’t be afraid.”—Mark 6:50b*

I love to sing, and it seems that I am always relating a song to what I am thinking about or doing. When I read today’s Gospel about Jesus walking on the water and asking his disciples to touch his cloak and trust him, I immediately thought of a hymn that I grew up listening to: “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey.”

Mark tells a story about fishermen who had witnessed Jesus feeding 5,000 people with only two small loaves of bread and five fish. It is a story about the disciples watching Jesus heal people who were blind, diseased. These same men were asked to leave everyone they loved and everything they had in this world and follow Jesus. Even so, they had trouble doing what Jesus asked them to do: to simply trust him. It is still our problem today.

Is it just as simple as “trust and obey?” I believe Mark is telling us this is the foundation of Jesus’ love for us. Let go of the burdens, turn over the sorrows, give him the problems, and then trust him to lead, guide, feed and love us. Grab on to his cloak, everyone, and trust and obey!

*Ps 88; 91; 92; 95    Gen 47:1—26    1 Cor 9:16—27    Mark 6:47—56*

## Saturday, March 29

*If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin.—1 Corinthians 10:12*

1 Corinthians 10:1—13 was a warning against overconfidence. Baptism, partaking of communion and attending Church are not guarantees of salvation. This brings to mind what my mother always told us when she thought that one of us might be headed in the



direction of self-importance: “Don’t get too big for your britches!” This puts a funny, figurative spin on prideful, haughty behavior. The image alone of someone’s “britches” or “clothing” bursting off as a child is enough to diffuse the urge of “getting too full of oneself.” That has always stayed with me!

*Ps 87; 90; 136    Gen 47:27—48:7    1 Cor 10:1—13    Mark 7:1—23*

*Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Lent – Gracious  
Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be  
the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this  
bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen.*

## **Sunday, March 30**

*The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.—Romans 8:11a*

During the past year, we have had numerous opportunities to see the Spirit living within the members of Christ Church. We have had dramatic readings, a homecoming event, the All Hallows Eve celebration, our pig-pickin’, Advent and Christmas activities. We have celebrated the Spirit of God and his Son Jesus Christ as we gather together in fun, fellowship, and in sharing our knowledge and love of God with each other and our friends from the greater community. On Sunday mornings, you can just feel the spirit as we pray, sing songs of joy and listen to meaningful messages from our inspiring priests. Our service is streaming out on the World Wide Web to all who wish to see and hear the word of Jesus Christ. It is obvious the Spirit of the Lord does live within us. We are truly trying to walk in His sight. Let us rejoice and continue to spread His word in our thoughts and actions every day.

*Ps 19; 46; 66; 67    Gen 48:8—22    Rom 8:11—25    John 6:27—40*

## **Monday, March 31**

*So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.—1 Corinthians 10:31*

A passage from today's reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians stands out to me as particularly meaningful. In chapter 10, verses 16—17, Paul says, “And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.”

It is mind-boggling to realize that we are a part of all other believers, in all places and all times. This means we are joined not only to every other Christian around us, but also to those who came before us, and those who will come after.

We are all spiritual descendants of the Disciples of our Lord and of all the

Saints. What a blessing and responsibility we have as the body of Christ! I am reminded of the prayer of St. Theresa of Avila, “Christ has no body now on Earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless His people.”

Lord, grant us the will to always be Your hands, feet and eyes in our world.

*Ps 89    Gen 49:1—28    1 Cor 10:14—11:1    Mark 7:24—37*

## Tuesday, April 1

*“I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat.”—Mark 8:2*

This story continues to tell how Jesus went on to feed thousands even though the disciples only had seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. This is definitely one that I remember from childhood and as I grow older I never tire of it for a couple of reasons. First, I think you cannot help but create a visual of this scene once you read it and then begin to realize how impactful it must have been for both the disciples and the people whose lives were changed with Jesus’ extraordinary act. Second, I believe it is inspiring that the disciples were quite willing to give Jesus what they had with the faith that he could increase it and make a difference in doing so. We, too, should be so willing to give our treasures in a manner like the disciples did. If we can do that, I am hopeful that we can continue to grow in likeness to Jesus.

*Ps 94; 95; 97; 99; 100    Gen 49:29—50:14    1 Cor 11:17—34    Mark 8:1—10*

## Wednesday, April 2

*When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him.”—Mark 8:11a*

In this scripture, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure. His disciples struggle with belief. Jesus asks, “Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Do you not see? Do you not hear?”

As I ponder the dilemma of the disciples, I understand their need for a sign. So many times my faith fails me and I desperately need a sign. On bended knee, in some of my darkest hours, I cry out for a physical sign. But, just like the disciples many times I can’t see the sign, I can’t hear it, nor understand it. If these disciples were living day by day with the living Christ, no wonder I have a hard time understanding his teachings.

How much greater is our task, without the physical presence of Jesus. I would like to think that I would not struggle with the same issues of the disciples. But, I do. Thanks be to God, we were not left alone to see, to understand and hear. For Jesus sent those

who followed the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. Even though we do not have his physical presence, we were given the Holy Spirit, and for that I am forever grateful.

*Ps 101; 109; 119:121—144    Gen 50:15—26    1 Cor 12:1—11    Mark 8:11—26*

## Thursday, April 3

*“Get behind me, Satan! You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.—Mark 8:33b*

Jesus uses strong language in his rebuke of Peter. It can be painful to read when you consider that Peter wishes only to protect Jesus from harm. Does Peter deserve to be called “Satan” just because he wants to save the Messiah’s life? Isn’t it natural to want to shield the ones we love from danger? But, as Jesus explains, Peter is looking at the situation with a worldly view, trusting his own instincts, instead of relying on the strength of God. Jesus foresaw the punishment ahead of him, yet he knew his suffering would bring about the fulfillment of a greater design.

In this context, Jesus’ words to Peter ought not to be seen as condemnation, but as exhortation. He expects humans to act like humans: to have fears, doubts, weaknesses. “When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.” (Psalm 73:21-22) But his hope is that the disciples, and all Christian people, will ultimately transcend their worldly concerns and seek refuge not in their own wits but in the love of God and His promise of eternal salvation.

*Ps 69; 73    Exod 1:6—22    1 Cor 12:12—26    Mark 8:27—9:1*

## Friday, April 4

*Those who are wise will take all this to heart—Psalm 107:43a*

Hear my prayer; O Lord: Let my cry come to thee. Do not hide thy face from me in the day of my distress. These words are part of the readings for today and our choir had sung these words just a short time ago. I remembered them recently when we received some disturbing news: our oldest grandchild might have a serious health issue. Certainly, I spent time worrying and agonizing over the various possibilities and outcomes. However, those words kept running through my mind, and I turned to the Lord in prayer. A calming peace enveloped me and I knew the Lord had heard my plea. Our grandchild is fine and we praise the Lord for the outcome. But the important message for us is to place our love and trust in the Lord. That is what ultimately will free us from ourselves and lead us to everlasting life. O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

*Ps 95; 102; 107:1—32    Exod 2:1—22    1 Cor 12:27—13:3    Mark 9:2—13*

## Saturday, April 5

*Love is patient and kind.—1 Corinthians 13:4a*

We hear it over and over: Love is the answer. Not only from the Bible and all good teachings, popular songs also echo this wisdom. Why is this simple answer so hard to remember?

Well, what is this thing called Love? We can begin by knowing what it is not. Love is not fear. Fear, and the negative thoughts fear generates, are trimmed away in today's teachings. A clear pattern for Love emerges.

Actual Love does not hold onto the negative but dwells in the steadfast. The "I AM," the eternal foundation of our lives. This concept shines throughout as we see the effects of love versus non-love outlined in the readings. Overall, when living within the protective "I AM," we learn to put down childish, negative concepts. We choose to grow up, and we begin to see, more clearly through the dark glass of our misperceptions.

In becoming a real grownup, we learn to walk within our God-given Love energies. Our choices are simple: go for the Love-based, not the fear-based answers in our lives. We choose to see with Love every second of every day. We choose to be, or not to be, Love.

*Ps 33; 107:33—43; 108:1—6   Exod 2:23—3:15   1 Cor 13:1—13   Mark 9:14—29*

*Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent – Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## Sunday, April 6

*God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.—Romans 12:6*

What is your spiritual gift? St. Paul says each of us has at least one, maybe more. God has blessed our church with many spiritually gifted people who are consistently putting their gifts to good use by serving, showing mercy, praying, teaching, leading, discerning, writing, singing, healing, encouraging, shepherding, administering, giving, interpreting and showing hospitality. So what is *your personal gift*? You may already have some ideas, but finding out for sure is as easy as clicking on this link to an assessment offered by St. David's Episcopal Church and School in Ashburn, Virginia (Father

Stephen McWhorter's former church): <http://www.sdlife.org/Spiritual-Gifts/Spiritual-Gifts-Assessment>.

Once you complete the assessment and identify your spiritual gift, think of ways you can use your gift to advance the church's mission, and be ready to volunteer. But take heed: St. Paul, ever the admonisher, warns us not to overdo the exercise of our gift. He says we must be humble, cheerful, sincere, responsive and always show love and respect. In other words, don't take over, don't be bossy, and don't be self-serving!

*Ps 118; 145   Exod 3:16—4:12   Rom 12:1—21   John 8:46—59*

## Monday, April 7

*"No one who performs miracles in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me.—Mark 9:39b*

The Significance of Speech. The Psalmist doesn't hesitate to ask God to silence his enemies, while praising God for His constant support. Yet when God sought out Moses for the seemingly impossible mission of setting the Israelites free from Egyptian bondage, Moses' first excuse was his inability to communicate well: "I am slow of speech; please send someone else." God refused to let his chosen servant off the hook. He responded by providing Moses with a voice—his brother Aaron—and the message: "Let my people go!" Moses used his voice and made earthly and spiritual history.

How often do we ask God for direction, and then ignore God's answer by arguing with Him that we are unable to deliver His message or that we don't know what that message is? Paul tells us that five intelligible words of God's message spoken to others are worth far more than 10,000 words of individual communication with the Spirit, and Jesus instructs that anyone performing miracles in His name is speaking for Him.

Let us pray for the strength and the wisdom and the courage to let God speak through us without our own uncertainty and lack of confidence censoring Him.

*Ps 31; 35   Exod 4:10—31   1 Cor 14:1—19   Mark 9:30—41*

## Tuesday, April 8

*"Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again?"—Mark 9:50*

We all love to think that we are responsible for our successes; and many of us also obsess over our failings. In truth, the burdens of either are more than any of us can bear. Clinging to the fallacy that we are either good enough to make it on our own or so bad off that we cannot possibly be saved traps us on a vain and treacherous road.

In times of comfort and success, take heed, as blessings are a danger to your soul if you succumb to the illusion that they are your own doing. Only when you surrender your blessings and successes back to God as their rightful builder and guard, do they become a source of genuine and lasting joy.

In suffering, know that fiery trials, when surrendered to God, lead to the salt that preserves your soul for eternity. You are not alone. Let Him use them to strengthen you, purify you, and grow your faith in the saving grace and mercy of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Regardless of where you are in life or how you think you got there, the Good News is that God is always with you, arms open, eager to replace your burdens with His unfathomable peace—and end forever the “anxious toil” that comes from the delusion of self-sufficiency.

*Ps 120; 121; 122; 123; 124; 125; 126; 127    Exod 5:1—6:1    1 Cor 14:20—33a, 39—40    Mark 9:42—50*

## Wednesday, April 9

*He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”—Mark 10:14b*

Last summer, my husband and I had the pleasure of the company of our two youngest granddaughters, ages 10 and 7, for an entire month as we shared a lakeside cabin in the Canadian woods. Every day after breakfast, we would lather on the sun screen, saturate ourselves with mosquito repellant and set off to find new adventures on the trail in the woods. Some days we found beautiful wild flowers which became bouquets for the dinner table.

Other days, we found abundant blueberries and raspberries which were intended for pancakes and pies but which often became snacks for the return trip to the cabin. We discovered the remains of butterflies, the carcasses of small frogs and the skeletons of mice and other small rodents. With each of these, we stopped to examine the specimen, talk about the miracle of life and speculate as to the cause of their untimely demise. We didn’t leave them without an appropriate burial ceremony.

Through the eyes of children we saw the world, again, as an ever fresh and radiant possibility. They discovered the wonders of nature. These little moments created special days which will be remembered lovingly and cherished for a lifetime.

*Ps 119: 145—176; 128; 129; 130    Exod 7:8—24    2 Cor 2:14—3:6    Mark 10:1—16*

## Thursday, April 10

*How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!—Psalm 133:1*

As our journey to Easter morning grows closer, we are enjoying the fellowship of our friends who are anticipating the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We are praying for the saving grace that Jesus has given us. We pray for His support and we hope to give praise to Him for all He does for us. May we also support our friends and family members by sharing God’s great love for everyone. Amen.

*Ps 131; 132; 133; 140; 142    Exod 7:25—8:19    2 Cor 3:7—18    Mark 10:17—31*

## Friday, April 11

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”—Mark 10:45*

Pharaoh experienced God’s wrath because he hardened his heart toward God. The Israelites wandered for 40 years never seeing the Promised Land because they hardened their hearts toward God. Many of David’s Psalms echo the hardships of the Old Testament man. And it’s no wonder. The Israelites of that time had an inferior covenant with God. They died if they disobeyed Him.

Through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, man’s covenant with God changed instantly, immediately and forever. The war between God and man was over. Through Jesus Christ we can have constant contact with God if we choose. Through Jesus Christ we have hope. For those who are saved by accepting Christ and all that God offers, it is up to us to shine the light of the Gospel at all times. We may stumble, we fall, but we are not destroyed. That is something to think about in these difficult times. It becomes so simple for me sometimes. I just thank God for Jesus.

*Ps 22; 95; 141; 143    Exod 9:13—35    2 Cor 4:1—12    Mark 10:32—45*

## Saturday, April 12

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Lift your hand toward heaven, and a deep and terrifying darkness will descend on the land of Egypt.”—Exodus 10:21*

Pharaoh was not happy when change came a-knockin’ at his door. He liked the status quo just fine. He was comfortable so why change anything? After all, they call it a “comfort zone” for a reason. Sometimes we all choose darkness because it is comfortable to not see that change is needed. At Christ Church we have a need for a new church building that can adequately meet our present-day and ongoing worship needs and help us expand our congregational life by welcoming new people – hopefully, lots of new people. As lovely and historic as our present building is, we outgrew it decades ago.

Our small, crowded worship space says to visitors and prospective members: *We are full – glad you stopped by but please don’t come back. We’ve barely got enough room for ourselves.* That’s really what it communicates to newcomers, to the handicapped, and to young families. *We are full; no room for you.*

But a new day is dawning, one of great promise and inspiration. Christ Church has a good heart and perhaps it is our time to grow and develop, with the Holy Spirit’s help, beyond our self-imposed limitations. May we become willing to move forward and truly embrace a bolder and more inclusive sense of growth in Christian mission. May we become willing to leave Egypt.

*Ps 42; 43; 137:1—6; 144    Exod 10:21—11:8    2 Cor 4:13—18    Mark 10:46—52*

*A Prayer for Holy Week – Journey with us, O holy God, as we continue our way to the cross. sharpen our focus, that our attention may center more on you than ourselves; lead us through the shadows of darkness and prepare our hearts, that we might be a people of prayer, ready to perceive and respond to your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ; in his name we pray. Amen.*

## **Psalm Sunday, April 13**

*Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.—Zechariah 9:12*

Hope. It may be the best one word definition of faith that most folks would agree with. The New Oxford American Dictionary defines hope as: “A feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.” That certainly seems to describe how I imagine the crowds that gathered and waved their palm fronds as Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey must have felt. These prisoners of hope believed it was the entry foretold by the Oracle in Zechariah 9:9. (“Lo your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey.”)

That same feeling of expectation seems to perfectly explain the Psalmist’s confession to God that “I hope in your word.” Psalm 119:81. And isn’t that what we mean when we respond to the familiar suffrages during Morning Prayer with the prayer: “Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.” Life is a mysterious struggle, “but I will keep on hoping for you to help me.” Psalm 71:14a.

I am a prisoner of hope. I wave my palm leaf at Jesus and hope each day as I read the Daily Office and listen to the comforting words and rhythms of Morning Prayer. I hope in those words because I know that I am one of the poor whose hope I pray each day will never be taken away.

*Ps 24; 29; 103    Zech 9:9—12    1 Tim 6:12—16    Luke 19:41—48*

## **Holy Monday, April 14**

*He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”—Mark 11:17*

“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?” So Jesus taught in the temple following his casting out of the merchants and traders. The meaning of this story has long been debated. It was not the “cleansing of the temple” as that term has been understood in other contexts. Such a process would have had to involve priests and rituals. Some commentators have suggested that Jesus condemned the commercial activities because they turned the temple into a device to market religion.



Jesus saw the temple as a place where a racially, socially and economically diverse community could worship, as a house of prayer for all peoples.

New Testament scholar Joel Green writes that through these words Jesus reminds his listeners that prayer is “the persistent pursuit of justice and the humble openness to God that spurns self-aggrandizement.” Through prayer, Jesus asks that we consider how our lives may advance the kingdom of God and how we may respect the dignity of every human being; how all may be welcomed into our community of faith.

*Ps 51: 69   Lam 1:1—2, 6—12   2 Cor 1:1—7   Mark 11:12—35*

## Holy Tuesday, April 15

*Listen, people everywhere; look upon my anguish and despair;—Lamentations 1:18b*

The grief expressed in all three of today's Psalms and in Lamentations is intense. The writers' only hope is to plead to God to intercede on their behalf. Even Paul writes to the Corinthians: “*We do not want you to be unaware of the affliction we experienced in Asia, for we were so utterly crushed that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*”

The oppressed and downtrodden get it. It's no wonder the church is growing most rapidly in Latin America and Africa. Christ warned of how difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. The more riches one has—and I'm not just talking about monetary wealth but also things like good health or popularity or independence or a beautiful island to live on etc.—the easier it is to be contented with this life and therefore feel somewhat independent of God. What a trap!

Maybe our prayer should be, “Dear Lord, please bestow upon me that measure of discomfort and trouble necessary to turn me from self to You. Make me sufficiently unhappy with this life that I may focus on the real and eternal happiness You wish for me. Amen.”

*Ps 6; 12; 94   Lam 1:17—22   2 Cor 1:8—22   Mark 11:27—33*

## Holy Wednesday, April 16

*He ransoms me and keeps me safe from the battle waged against me, though many still oppose me.—  
Psalm 55:18*

Today's group of readings has a somber tone, yet brings to mind the extraordinary life of Nelson Mandela. When Mandela passed away at 95 years of age at the end of 2013, this remarkable man's life was much celebrated, justifiably so. He was a man who struggled for equality for all people across South Africa, against the policy of apartheid. He was spared hanging but sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island for treason. Mandela was freed from prison after 27 years and was subsequently elected President in that nation's first democratic elections.

To the white Afrikaners, Mandela was a terrorist; to his black countrymen, a freedom-fighter. Most remarkable, however, is this giant of a man's humility, his forgiveness and reconciliation. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 2:10: *Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ.*

He walked the walk, propelling his country through a peaceful transition to a new government in the 1990's. (A stark contrast from neighboring Zimbabwe.) It is a rare person, much less an iconic leader in today's world who embodies such Christ-like values. Nelson Mandela was surely a man of God.

*Ps 55; 74   Lam 2:1—9   2 Cor 1:23—2:11   Mark 12:1—11*

## Maundy Thursday, April 17

*"He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal."—Mark 14:15*

Maundy Thursday is a time to reflect on one of the most significant events, fundamental to our worship, where Jesus instituted the Eucharist with the words "this is my body, this is my blood." But as easy as that is for us to remember, we don't always recall what I would consider one of the more poignant moments at that Last Supper when Jesus announced that one of the disciples would betray him. Poignant because each of them immediately engaged themselves in asking, "Is it I, Lord?" "Surely you don't mean me?"

It seems strange that they needed to ask themselves that question. One would assume that they should have been certain that it was not them (except, of course, for the one who really was about to betray him). Part of the joy of Easter is that each of us renews our relationship with Christ in such a way that we shouldn't need to ask "Is it I, Lord?" when it comes to thinking about those who betray Him. He gives us, through His death and Resurrection, the power to KNOW that we are indeed blessed and in that "resurrection moment" we have confidence that "surely He doesn't mean me!" And that is good news at its very best! Thanks be to God.

*Ps 102; 142; 143   Lam 2:10—18   1 Cor 10:14—17   Mark 14:12—25*

## Good Friday, April 18

*It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.—1 Peter 1:19*

What a day it was for Christ, and still is for us. How do we remember Good Friday: as a day we want to get through before the start of Easter celebrations or a day of enormous meaning and consequences? How we remember will often define how deep and faithful our loyalty to Christ Jesus is. It must be a special day lived in the presence of our crucified Christ. In that one day He set before us so much of what His death still

means: condemnation, obedience, sacrifice, redemption, alienation from God and loved ones, pain, thirst, appeal to the Father, reflection on the past, shedding of His precious blood for us, hope, faith, the end of a short and outstanding life in this world, the coming wondrous day of resurrection—and more.

Let us spend this good day reflecting on these, not as an event in history but as a day of hope and faith as we move forward to a future filled with blessings to last to eternity. Assuredly, Easter will then be an unending day of rejoicing!

*Ps 22; 40; 54; 95   Lam 3:1—9, 19—33   1 Pet 1:10—20   John 13:36—38*

## Holy Saturday, April 19

*Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.—Psalm 27:14*

In the *Bhagavad Gita* (the central text of Hinduism that predates the Bible by 2000 years) the mighty general Arjuna loses heart as he surveys the battlefield and sees many relatives and loved ones arrayed on both sides. He confesses this to his charioteer whom he soon recognizes as Krishna, god of war. Krishna helps Arjuna to come to terms with his own identity as a warrior and reminds him that any worthy endeavor should be done with a full heart.

We all face times when we lose our resolve. The challenges of life can be overwhelming. Do we ask God to change the world or do we ask to be stronger? The Psalmist evokes ancient wisdom that rings true. The knowledge that God is close (maybe alongside us in our chariot) and can fortify even the most discouraged heart.

*Ps 27; 88; 95   Lam 3:37—58   Heb 4:1—16   (no Gospel today)*

*Collect for Easter Sunday – O God, who for our redemption did give your only begotten Son to the death on the cross, and by his glorious resurrection has delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same your Son Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## Easter Day, April 20

*“He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead!”—Luke 24:6a*

The women awoke on that first Easter morning with Jesus on their minds. It was a sorrowful morning as they prepared to complete the preparations of his body in

darkness. As they left at first light, they did so with a great cavern where hope had once been. Their Lord was dead, and nothing would be the same.

The past week has been so powerful because it fully allowed us to experience the incredible roller coaster of emotions from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem through the devastation of the cross. We easily forget just how dark the world was for those three days—and how equally bright Easter morning was in comparison. Spend a moment this morning capturing the joy of Easter morning and giving thanks.

As they approached the tomb, the women were unsure how they were going to move the heavy stone, its weight rivaled only by the heaviness of their hearts. But the stone was rolled away, and the tomb was empty. This is where we are left on Easter morning—with an empty tomb, unsure of what comes next. The great cavern becomes hope. Our Lord is risen, and nothing will be the same! Alleluia!

*Ps 113; 114; 118; 148; 149; 150    Exod 12:1—14    Acts 10:34—43    Luke 24:1—12*

*That Easter day with joy was bright,  
The sun shone out with fairer light,  
When, to their longing eyes restored,  
The apostles saw their risen Lord.*

*His risen flesh with radiance glowed:  
His wounded hands and feet he showed;  
Those scars their solemn witness gave  
That Christ was risen from the grave.*

*O Jesus, King of gentleness,  
Do thou thyself our hearts possess  
That we may give thee all our days  
The willing tribute of our praise.*

*All praise, O risen Lord, we give  
To thee, who, dead, again dost live;  
To God the Father equal praise,  
And God the Holy Ghost we raise.*

*5<sup>th</sup>-Century Hymn*

# PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer

*(For Christ Church, Frederica)* Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for the common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(In the Morning)* Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(At Bedtime)* 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. Amen.

*(For the Human Family)* O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(For a Church Guild, Committee or Other Group)* Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceived what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(In Times of Illness)* O God, the source of all health: So fill my heart with faith in your love, that with calm expectancy I may make room for your power to possess me, and gracefully accept your healing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(When Studying the Bible)* Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and the comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and always hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

*(For Travelers)* O God, our heavenly Father, whose glory fills the whole creation, and whose presence we find wherever we go: Preserve those who travel, especially \_\_\_\_\_; surround them with your loving care; protect them from every danger; and bring them in safety to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(For Guidance)* Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(At a Birthday Celebration)* O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servant \_\_\_\_\_ as *he/she* begins another year. Grant that *he/she* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *his/her* trust in your goodness all the days of *his/her* life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(For Those We Love)* Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(For the bereaved)* O merciful Father, who teaches us in your holy Word that you do not willingly afflict or grieve your children: Look with mercy upon the sorrows of your servant, \_\_\_\_\_, for whom our prayers are offered. Remember *him/her*, O Lord, in mercy, nourish *his/her* soul with patience, comfort *him/her* with a sense of your goodness, lift up your countenance upon *him/her*, and give *him/her* peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(For quiet confidence)* O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(After worship)* Grant, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may, through your grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honor and praise of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(For church artists and musicians)* O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who strive through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Notes on My 2014 Lenten Journey



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