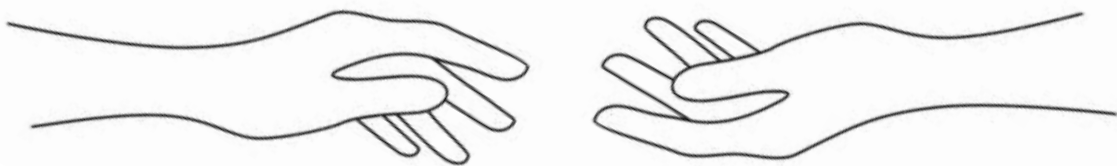


# *Mend the Gap*

**Fourth Presbyterian Church  
Lenten Devotional 2025**





Dear Fourth Church,

These days, it doesn't take much time paying attention to the news before you're confronted by the seemingly unbridgeable gaps between people in our country. As Christians, God calls us to love our neighbors and our enemies – and how else can we listen to that call other than by working to “Mend the Gap”?

While selecting the verses for the devotional this year, I found myself drawn over and over again to passages that challenge us out of complacency and toward justice and love – passages that call out the boastful, warn against judging others, and remind us that ultimately, it all boils down to love. I hope you find inspiration, solace, and strength in this year's installment of the Lenten Devotional.

In peace,  
Laura Blanton

## **ASH WEDNESDAY**

### **Wednesday, March 5 – Matthew 3:13-15**

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” <sup>15</sup>But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.

Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire

Sometimes

I feel that baptizing the world with fire would be simple and effective

But

Jesus compels John to do the baptizing  
not with fire but with water  
to fulfill all righteousness

Righteousness seems distant  
unachievable  
impossible

Would it not be simpler to burn the chaff  
and plant anew?

Would it not be more effective for Jesus  
to baptize us?

But

Jesus invites us to do the baptizing  
to baptize the world  
every bit of it  
no matter how lost it seems  
with water  
and not with fire

*–Janine Warrington*



## **SECOND DAY OF LENT**

### **Thursday, March 6 – Mark 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup>As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.”

My dad was a fisherman. Some of my best memories are of fishing with my dad. I can recall early mornings on a camping trip to Lake Cumberland which is where he said he wanted his ashes spread so he could “feed a big bass,” mosquito filled nights on the Ohio River laying out lines for catfish, and casting around a farm pond on a summer day. Fishermen are noticers and appreciators; they take in details about the water, the bait, the seasons, and the time of day. I learned by watching my dad about the patience, care and persistence it takes to be a fisherman. I think Jesus was wise to pick fishermen to be by his side.

– *Diane DeVore*

## **THIRD DAY OF LENT**

### **Friday, March 7 – Psalms 31:3-5**

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- <sup>3</sup> You are indeed my rock and my fortress;  
for your name's sake lead me and guide me;
- <sup>4</sup> take me out of the net that is hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.
- <sup>5</sup> Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

I got sick in December. I thought I was going to fight off an infection quickly, but I was wrong. As weeks turned into months, while having the unwavering support of family, friends, and a care team that is second to none—I faced a personal hurdle. I had to have a procedure that my mom had 35 years ago that led to a diagnosis that led to complications that led to her dying.

I miss her, especially when I get sick. I become like a toddler who only wants her mom. I had so much fear about this upcoming appointment. I thought about it a lot and I thought a lot about my mom and how much I wanted her with me.

I believe God places people in my life for a reason, and He placed a wise man in mine. One who encouraged me to go to the 6pm prayer group. It was in those Zoom boxes – surrounded by the prayer saints of Fourth Church that I felt safe enough to safe enough to show my vulnerability and talk about my mom – her name was Mary Lou—and how I wanted her close to me so she could make me feel better.

The Holy Spirit lives in those Zoom boxes. The saints of the Zoom held space for my vulnerability and they shared strength with me. I went there looking for comfort and I found it.

The saints of 6pm provided me with a fortress and a mother's love.

*– Barbara Erikson, aka MaryLou's daughter*

## **FOURTH DAY OF LENT**

**Saturday, March 8 – Isaiah 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove your evil deeds  
from before my eyes;

cease to do evil;

<sup>17</sup> learn to do good;

seek justice;

rescue the oppressed;

defend the orphan;

plead for the widow.

Wait a second - I thought religion was about going to church, and praying, and giving money, and being thankful for each day, and being nice to the clerk at the store, and humming the hymns on the way to work, and keeping my temper in check. I thought it was personal and private and small scale. I thought it was, you know, spiritual. I didn't think it was about oppression and justice and vulnerable populations of people. I didn't think it was political. I hate politics - hate it! The arguments and the controversies and the anger - yuck! And me, so small and uninformed and inconsequential, I don't even know where to start.

God, you're gonna have to help me with this one. I don't want anything to do with politics - but you're calling me to live in public, with other people, in a way that doesn't make you want to hide me from your eyes. And hopefully in a way that doesn't make me feel like a politician, or act like some angry Twitter warrior.

Help me to be bold, help me to be public, help me to do justice.  
Amen!

– *Layne Jacobs*

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday, March 9

"...But because Thou art my Father, I am not afraid. Because it is Thine own Spirit that stirs within my spirit's inmost room, I know that all is well. What I desire for myself I cannot attain, but what Thou desirest in me Thou canst attain for me. The good that I would I do not, but the good that Thou willest in me, that Thou canst give me power to do.

Dear Father, take this day's life into Thine own keeping.

- Control all my thoughts and feelings.
- Direct all my energies.
- Instruct my mind.
- Sustain my will.
- Take my hands and feet and make them swift to do Thy bidding.
- Take my eyes and keep them fixed upon Thine everlasting beauty.
- Take my mouth and make it eloquent in testimony to Thy love.



Make this day a day of obedience, a day of spiritual joy and peace. Make this day's work a little part of the work of the Kingdom of my Lord Christ, in whose name these my prayers are said. Amen."

*—excerpt from John Bailee's "A Diary of Private Prayer", 1949*

*"Fish", by James Williams*

## **FIFTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Monday, March 10 – Luke 4:1-4**

<sup>1</sup>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’ ”

My first memory on reading this passage is a Fourth Church youth group, maybe ten years ago. We read that Jesus went into the desert, fasted for 40 days, and was tempted. Then (trying to make it interactive), we asked the teens, “What do you think the devil used to tempt Jesus?” “Food!” “That’s right! What else?” “More food!” “Lots of food!” “Cake!” “A buffet!”

This was hilarious (and a charmingly wholesome list of temptations), but they had a point—Jesus had been fasting for 40 days, so, being human, he was hungry, weak, and probably thinking about food all the time. And so bread was the strongest temptation the devil had to offer. What he offered after this passage—power over the world and over God—was grasping at straws. What use is power when you’re starving?

I’ve been thinking that it’s easy to glamorize evil and temptation—to imagine evildoers as brilliant masterminds, and to think we need to be brilliant and eloquent and confident to defeat evil. But here, middle schoolers brainstorming for 5 minutes could come up with smarter ideas than the devil. And Jesus is brave and self-controlled—but he’s also hungry, weak, and answering with simple scripture rather than complicated arguments.

– *Katie Stansifer*

## **SIXTH DAY OF LENT**

**Tuesday, March 11 – Acts 4:11**

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<sup>11</sup> This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;  
it has become the cornerstone.’

Peter is telling the religious authorities who Jesus is, using language they would be familiar with. It was not too long before this that Jesus had told them the same, as written in Matthew – using a phrase from Psalm 118 – words written hundreds of years beforehand. (Matthew 21:42 Psalm 118:22)

On one level, this passage tells how Jesus was rejected by the religious authorities. On another, it speaks to me of how God uses the seemingly most humble people or things or situations to do his wondrous works: From shepherd boys to prostitutes to tax collectors to even Paul, who persecuted Christians...

Towering trees out of tiny seeds, that sort of thing...

A poor widow’s couple of coppers...

A couple of loaves and fish becomes a feast for the multitudes...

Water into wine...

A little broken-down church with no more than a couple dozen people about to close, in a less than desirable corner of a hardscrabble neighborhood in Boston...

A carpenter’s son, from a humble town, born in a barn - a birth of questionable legitimacy?

What is God using in my life today to do his great things?

Will we recognize him or reject him when he comes again?

– *Al Circeo*

## **SEVENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Wednesday, March 12 – 1 Corinthians 2:9-10**

<sup>9</sup>But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the human heart conceived,

what God has prepared for those who love him”—

<sup>10</sup> God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

In current times I am often finding myself feeling disconcerted and overwhelmed, and I know there are many others who are experiencing the same. There is a sense of burnout that seems to be challenging many of us from the onslaught of what is happening in the political arena (on both a national and global level) to personal work/school, family, health situations, and general concerns about the future and wellbeing of our communities and society as a whole. With so much going on that is hard to wrap one's head around, the words written in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 are particularly comforting.

The passage is focused on the wisdom of the Spirit, not the wisdom of rulers at that time. In verses 7-8 that precede this section in the NIV translation it is captured as “No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

How comforting it is to know that there is a true higher power with deep wisdom out there. When I feel anxiousness, sadness, or even anger kicking in around the many things that can make me feel overwhelmed in current times, it is comforting to know that God is here and even though I cannot even imagine what is in store for us, we have hope for the future and to carry us through.

—*Sarah Cooper*

## **EIGHTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Thursday, March 13 – Proverbs 2:6-11**

- <sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
- <sup>7</sup> he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly,
- <sup>8</sup> guarding the paths of justice  
and preserving the way of his faithful ones.
- <sup>9</sup> Then you will understand righteousness and justice  
and equity, every good path,
- <sup>10</sup> for wisdom will come into your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
- <sup>11</sup> prudence will watch over you,  
and understanding will guard you.

This passage speaks to me of the feeling of ease and flow that can come from seeking to discern and live in accordance with the word and will of God. When we do our best to live rightly – to be mindful of God’s presence in our daily lives, and to align our actions with that mindfulness – we are blessed with the experience of deep peace and joy. It’s noteworthy to me that this passage from Proverbs does not guarantee us material gain or other exterior forms of gratification. Rather, God promises us the tranquility of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. This resonates with my own experiences of being able to find solace in God’s peace even in times of outward turmoil, if I can just open my heart to God’s still, small voice.

– *Laura Massie*



## **NINTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Friday, March 14 – Mark 6:41-44**

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<sup>41</sup>Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and he divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>And all ate and were filled, <sup>43</sup> and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup> Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

Mark keeps it so simple.

Five loaves. Two fish. All are filled.  
That's what Mark wants to make sure we know.

But how did that happen? Pure magic? Extra bread materializing out of thin air? Fish flopping onto land from some nearby body of water? Remarkable sharing? The Mother of all Potlucks?

We don't know. But we do get filled, and that assurance is what I choose to lean into.

There are days when I look unto the hills and wonder, "Whence will my help come?"

There are days when we all hunger in one way or another.  
Mark's unadorned words promise a Filling.  
Stay focused. Keep breathing. Share. Trust.

Five loaves. Two fish. All are filled.

*–Burns Stanfield*

## **TENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Saturday, March 15 – Jeremiah 17:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

In my assigned passage, the word “blessed” could easily be swapped out for “happy” or “trusting”. The first line “blessed are those who trust in the Lord” is a true leap of faith. Those who trust in the Lord, believe (KNOW!) that the sun will rise tomorrow and that hurt and hard times will pass in time. They may not know when that will take place, there may be times when they question themselves and question their beliefs, but ultimately, they believe that their faith will “bear fruit”. It also speaks to a higher power. When you look around and you see trees that are hundreds of years old, you know that at some point those trees faced drought, faced storms and other forces beyond their control. However, all these years later, they remain. Similarly, in the times when we feel challenged, by financial strain or politics, or the noise of life, it's important to remember that the Lord has a plan and that belief in him allows for even slivers of happiness and slivers of optimism, even in the darkest times. There's an old gospel song where one of the lyrics is “I'm satisfied with just a cottage below, a little silver and a little gold” and the chorus is “Because I've got a mansion just over the hilltop, in that bright land where we'll never grow old”. That song reminds me a lot of the sentiments of this passage.

–Matt York

## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

**Sunday, March 16**

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*“That Day”, by Denise Levertov*

Across a lake in Switzerland, fifty years ago,  
light was jousting with long lances, fencing with  
broadswords  
back and forth among cloudy peaks and foothills.  
We watched from a small pavilion, my mother and I,  
enthralled.

And then, behold, a shaft, a column,  
a defined body, not of light but of silver rain,  
formed and set out from the distant shore, leaving behind  
the silent feints and thrusts, and advanced  
unswervingly, at a steady pace,  
toward us.

I knew this! I’d seen it! Not the sensation  
of déjà vu: it was Blake’s inkwash vision,  
“The Spirit of God Moving Upon the Face of the Waters”!  
The column steadily came on  
across the lake toward us; on each side of it,  
there was no rain. We rose to our feet, breathless—  
and then it reached us, took us  
into its veil of silver, wrapped us  
in finest weave of wet,  
and we laughed for joy, astonished.

*“Angel”,  
by Maeve Meier*



## **ELEVENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Monday, March 17 – Isaiah 61:1**

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The spirit of the Lord God is upon me  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners...

I am trying to remain positive and feel hopeful in these very difficult times we are facing; however, it is hard. I keep asking myself, what can I do?

Then I read Isaiah 61. I immediately thought of Fourth Church's mission statement: "Through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, we seek to glorify God and shine as a beacon of hope in the community with open doors, eager hands, and caring hearts."

So, I am grateful to be part of this community because we minister to those who are hurting among us, as we also fight for justice. I pray that we will continue to feel empowered as we seek to be a beacon of light and to fight against the systems of oppression.

*–Sharon Matthews*

## **TWELFTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Tuesday, March 18 – 1 Corinthians 1:27-31**

<sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

"For us." There's a lot going on in this passage, but these are the two words I want to highlight. The rest of the passage seems to be all about reminding us of what we don't have: knowledge, achievement, mastery, something it can feel like we're built to want. I see this kind of turbulence in my 6 year old: "I'm so good at this, I'm doing awesome" will suddenly switch over to despair: "I'm so bad and I'll never be any good!" (If I'm honest, I still do the same thing, just not as loudly.)

When this dynamic starts, I try to remind Abe to let other people tell him how great he is. And believe them when they say it. (And then I usually say it.) And I realized, reading this, that's pretty much what Jesus is doing "for us" in this passage - becoming the wisdom and righteousness that we want and need, for us, in our corner. My dad always described his mom as his biggest fan. I'd describe my dad as my biggest fan. And that's what I want to be for my kids too. Like Jesus. The one who reminds us not to be proud while always also being proud for us.

*–Michelle Sanchez*

## **THIRTEENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Wednesday, March 19 – Matthew 18:1-5**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”<sup>2</sup> He called a child, whom he put among them,<sup>3</sup> and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

When do we stop being children? If the streets of our cities were filled with sick and suffering children, how different would our response be than what we collectively do today?

*–John Meier*

## **FOURTEENTH DAY OF LENT**

**Thursday, March 20 – Acts 4:32**

<sup>32</sup> Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.

As a community, it is important to not only share our time with one another but also our experiences because with experience comes knowledge. Sharing your knowledge with your community is very important. It enriches the community that you are a part of, and deepens your connection with one another.

– *Fiona McCusker*

## **FIFTEENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Friday, March 21 – Micah 3:5-7**

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<sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets  
who lead my people astray,  
who cry “Peace”  
when they have something to eat  
but declare war against those  
who put nothing into their mouths.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision,  
and darkness to you, without revelation.

The sun shall go down upon the prophets,  
and the day shall be black over them;

<sup>7</sup> the seers shall be disgraced  
and the diviners put to shame;  
they shall all cover their lips,  
for there is no answer from God.

John Calvin once posed the question: how do you know whether a church community is living out the Gospel? How do you recognize that? Is it by observing large and full churches, on a Sunday? Major political pull with the powerful? Perhaps, a lively youth program?

Calvin’s answer was to point to the City of Amida (modern day Turkey). In the fourth century, famine ravaged the city and its regions. Bishop Acacius ordered the cities religious officers to melt down the gold and silver, in their churches, and buy food and medical provisions for the destitute: “Our God needs neither plates nor cups, for he neither eats nor drinks”. Providing for the most vulnerable in our societies is the outward marker of the presence of the Holy Spirit, in the church (Calvin’s Institutes Bk4: Ch 4).

In his great Temple Sermon, Jesus warned that when you preach/prophecy a mask of religious piety with the practice a callous disregard for “...the least of these...(then)...everlasting fire” (Matthew 25; 31-46). A reverberation of Micah’s terrifying poetic condemnation of Judah’s covenant infidelity: “...Night...Darkness...Shame...no answer from God”.

We celebrate Fourth-Fest...in Fear and Trembling...seeking answers from the God of Hope - who can also answer with Judgement.

*–David Craig*



## **SIXTEENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Saturday, March 22 – Matthew 7:1-5**

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. <sup>2</sup> For the judgment you give will be the judgment you get, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. <sup>3</sup> Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye but do not notice the log in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.

This is one of those moments in Jesus’ teaching when he isn’t messing around. And for good reason. Here Jesus is calling out hypocrisy and judgement, two of the ugliest and most damaging of human tendencies.

We’re all guilty of judging someone too quickly or unfairly, based on limited information, an incomplete picture, or rumors. If you spend any time on social media—or even pay any attention to the news—it’s clear how harmful this can be. Careers, reputations, and lives can be destroyed. And at a broader level, we are living in a time of profound social division, due not in small part to our tendency to cast judgement, make assumptions, and publicly shame or condemn a person, a group, or a set of ideas. The damage this brings can be profound and far-reaching. And, it seems to me, is directly counter to Jesus’ message of love, compassion, understanding, and forgiveness.

Jesus is calling on us to remember that none of us is without sin or above reproach. So before casting judgement on another, remember to reflect on yourself and your own fallibility. Remember that “log” in your eye. Doing so will hopefully help us choose to act with love and compassion rather than shaming and judgment.

*–Lena Serpa*

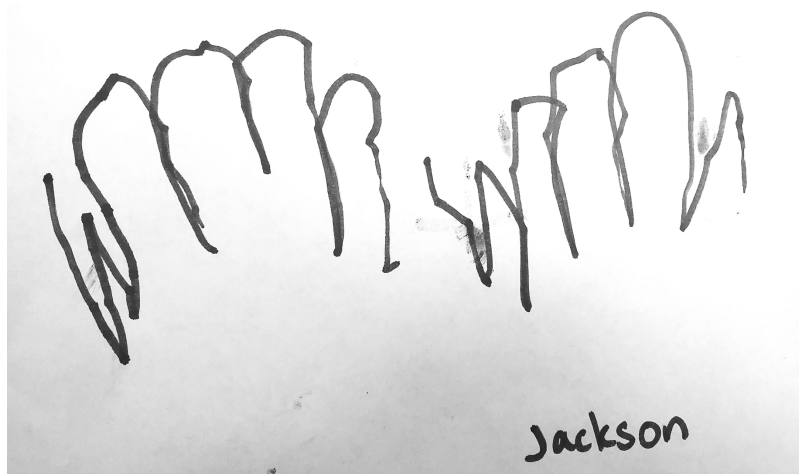
**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Sunday, March 23**

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“Dear God, I cannot love Thee the way I want to. You are the slim crescent of a moon that I see and my self is the earth’s shadow that keeps me from seeing all the moon. The crescent is very beautiful and perhaps that is all one like I am should or could see; but what I am afraid of, dear God, is that my self shadow will grow so large that it blocks the whole moon, and that I will judge myself by the shadow that is nothing.

I do not know You God because I am in the way. Please help me push myself aside.”

*—excerpt from Flannery O’Connor’s “A Prayer Journal”, ~1946*



*“Hands”, by Jackson Williams*

## **SEVENTEENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Monday, March 24 – Psalm 9:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,  
a stronghold in times of trouble.

<sup>10</sup> And those who know your name put their trust in you,  
for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

I find myself drawn to this image of God as a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble or, as translated in *The Message*, “a safe-house for the battered, a sanctuary during bad times.” This imagery goes beyond just being a source of comfort though and can serve as a powerful call to action: God stands with the oppressed and so should we.

The text helps me remember that God calls us to stand in solidarity with the marginalized and to work to bring more justice into the world. As an excerpt of a poem attributed to St. Teresa of Avila says:

"Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world."

– *Melissa King*

## **EIGHTEENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Tuesday, March 25 – Galatians 3:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, <sup>26</sup>for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

What kind of parent is God? What kind of parent am I?

These questions are on my mind all the time as a person of faith who is also raising rambunctious 3 and 5 year-old boys. I'm drawn to these verses from Galatians for precisely this reason, although they don't completely clarify the matter.

In the life of faith, writes Paul, we are "no longer subject to a disciplinarian," but rather are "children of God." Fascinating - because as a parent of children I am frequently - maybe too frequently - in the role of disciplinarian. As parents, Perry and I want to provide so many things for our kids - love, safety, joy, nourishment. And yes, structure. Structure requires rules, and some level of discipline when rules are violated.

But I think we know at a gut level that rules are not an end unto themselves. Our job as parents is not to raise perfectly behaved automatons, but rather human beings with the capacity to love fully as they have been loved fully. That kind of love requires self-regulation, but self-regulation is not the end game. I think that's what Paul is getting at here. In Christ, we are children of love, children of freedom, children of God. Disciples, yes, but for a higher cause that at the end of the day, doesn't have much to do with rules at all.

On my good days, I like to think that I parent in this way - structure in the service of love. Structure that eventually gives way, paradoxically, to freedom.

On my good days, I think that God parents this way too. We are blessed, if so, to be children of God.

*– Tim Hughes-Williams*

## **NINETEENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Wednesday, March 26 – John 4:13-15**

<sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

To me this passage highlights the difference in filling yourself with faith versus trying to fill yourself from external fleeting things.

Faith is like repairing a leaking boat with the hole in it so that it is new, whereas “outsourcing” by is like whack-a-mole. Once that “water,” is gone, you will be thirsty again and reach again for the unfulfilling things in an ever-revolving cycle.

I believe that Jesus uses water as a metaphor for the constantly renewing and ever-present understanding of your human worth through the love and grace that comes with faith.

*–Ingrid Gerdes*

## **TWENTIETH DAY OF LENT**

### **Thursday, March 27 – 2 Corinthians 5:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

A new creation. It's a wonderful thing to realize – the Creator wants to be in relationship with you, and is willing to forgive all your sins to make that happen. Wow. Thank you, Jesus.

You know, a lot of businesses are set up as partnerships. In some cases there is a Limited Partner and General Partner. The General Partner runs the business. The Limited Partner(s) bring an investment for the business.

In the business of salvation – Jesus is certainly the General Partner, reconciling, comforting, assuring, and empowering through the Holy Spirit. When we accept Jesus, as we each do in our membership questions, as our Lord and Savior, we are bringing ourselves to the Partnership. We're invested. The beauty is that we bring a fairly broken and sometimes messy thing, but also a precious thing to God. We might think it's not much, might not make a difference. That would be incorrect.

Paul talks about ingrafting in the letter to the Romans. Branches being grafted to the tree of God's People where other branches were broken off, sharing in the nourishing roots – God. Joining the business of Love or as Paul says in this passage, reconciliation, is a profoundly life changing endeavor. We get to walk with Jesus, and we are nourished by God, despite our "wild olive shoot" former status. That is the grace, that is the power and the glory we wonder about as we wander through Lent.

*–Thatcher Freeborn*

## **TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF LENT**

### **Friday, March 28 – Matthew 5:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

This makes me think of the church I grew up in. At the end of the service for the benediction the pastor would always say “You are the light of the world, the salt of the earth, now go and be what you are.” Which, to me, is a nice way of saying let’s try and take what we’ve been thinking about here in church, practicing here in church out into the world and into our daily lives.

– *Andy Ward*

## **TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF LENT**

### **Saturday, March 29 – 1 John 4:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

It is true that no one has ever seen God. But I see God's presence in many things every day. The morning sunrise is one of my favorite things to see God in. I bask in the colors spreading across the sky and the sea as I walk with Sadie, my goldendoodle, down Savin Hill beach. I can feel God's love showering over me and it gives me energy for the day ahead. It changes my whole outlook.

I always feel God's love at Fourth Church. I enjoy coming to church on Sunday's and feeling God's presence bouncing off everyone there. Looking in the faces of my church family, I see God's light shining through them, jumping into me, and through me to the next person. It is like we are all connected by a string of light and it makes me happy.

Of course, the world can be a hard place and the people in it can be in difficult places. That also finds its way into Fourth Church. One Sunday, a young man known to the church from the community arrived in the middle of the sermon. He struggles with some mental health issues and he makes me nervous and uncomfortable. This morning he was in an agitated state and was a little disruptive. I cowered and looked away trying to ignore the behavior as he passed by. But Danae got up and walked to him and consoled and calmed him. She sat down with him in the pew. In that moment I recognized God shining through Danae. She met this man where he was and welcomed him. That was love in action. I will continue to practice seeing God and allowing God to be seen in me.

*–Kathy Burger*



## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

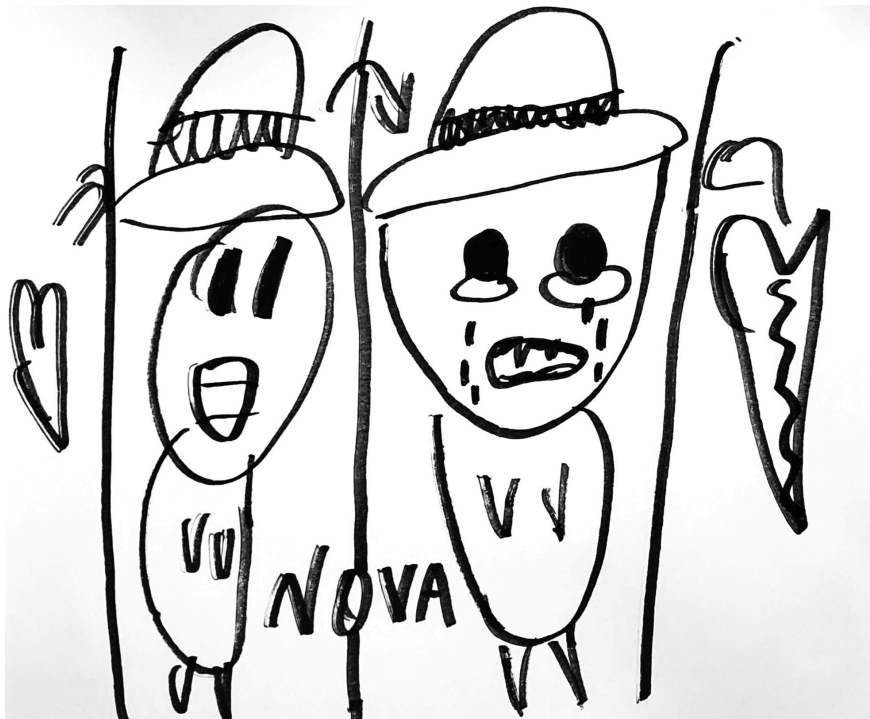
### **Sunday, March 30**

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“Very often the only way to get a quality in reality is to start behaving as if you had it already. That is why children’s games are so important. They are always pretending to be grown-ups – playing soldiers, playing shop. But all the time, they are hardening their muscles and sharpening their wits so that the pretence of being grown-up helps them to grow up in earnest.

Now, the moment you realise ‘Here I am, dressing up as Christ,’ it is extremely likely that you will see at once some way in which at that very moment the pretence could be made less of a pretence and more of a reality. You will find several things going on in your mind which would not be going on there if you were really a [child] of God. Well, stop them. Or you may realise that, instead of saying your prayers, you ought to be downstairs writing a letter, or helping your [spouse] to wash-up. Well, go and do it.”

*–excerpted from C.S. Lewis’s “Mere Christianity”, 1952*



*“You Can Feel Different Feelings All the Time”, by Nova Meier*

## **TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF LENT**

### **Monday, March 31 – Isaiah 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove your evil deeds  
from before my eyes;  
cease to do evil;

<sup>17</sup> learn to do good;  
seek justice;  
rescue the oppressed;  
defend the orphan;  
plead for the widow.

If you've been around for a while, you might know Burn's original song – The Holy Way. It's a beautiful song about Jesus's ministry; may it be your background music for this reflection. This passage from Isaiah is a map for us. One commentary called it the "Highway of Holiness". I like that (and we borrowed their notes). It's a lot better than that other Highway song with a catchy Rock Riff. This is the Highway you want to get on.

"Hey Siri," I said.

"Uh huh," Siri replied.

"Get me directions to the Highway of Holiness," I reply back.

"Getting AC/DC..."

"NO SIRI, Highway of Holiness."

"Recalculating" ...

REPENT - "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove your evil deeds from before my eyes;"

REFRAIN - "cease to do evil;"

REEVALUATE - "Learn to do good; seek justice,"

RELIEVE - "rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead the widow's cause."

This is an ancient map. Isaiah showed it to the people. Jesus showed it to the people. It would be nice if Siri could to, but I guess it's our job then.

"Siri, play The Holy Way, by Burns Stanfield and the Fourth Church Choir."

– *The Freeborn Family*

## **TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Tuesday, April 1 – Psalm 19:14**

<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

When I talk to people, the words that come out of my mouth are things that I want to say to people that matter to me. I know that the words that come out of your mouth are very important. The Lord is my savior, and I will say things that will be okay with the Lord.

*–Barry Monteiro*

## **TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Wednesday, April 2 – Luke 10:38-42**

<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister named Mary, who sat at Jesus's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her, then, to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, <sup>42</sup> but few things are needed—indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

The other day, I had a friend over for tea. I spent a few hours the day before cleaning my house. Her house had been so clean and inviting that last time I visited, I wanted to return the favor. As we sat and enjoyed the tea, she asked me if my house was normally this clean. I admitted that I had spent some time working to make it presentable. She too informed me that her house was always chaotic. She would take hours to prepare when someone came over. We thought that maybe each of us didn't need to go to such great lengths to prepare for the other.

In this passage, I think Jesus is inviting Martha, and us, to be present, even in our cluttered, imperfect homes. We don't have to spend hours making everything clean before welcoming him in. True connection happens in the midst of real life, not in perfection. Jesus meets us in our messiness, just as true friends do.

– *Shelby Hall*

## **TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Thursday, April 3 – 1 Corinthians 12:26**

<sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

It is a relief when I can offer my concerns and celebrations during our services. The faith I grew up in didn't allow that opportunity and frankly, I would have had a hard time being vulnerable. I have been at Fourth for 3 years and have felt that my fellow members have walked my journey with me. As my daughter transitioned from her school to her new home and from the daily routine of school to day program, Fourth has been with us. I was so touched when I shared that Ann got into a day program. So many people shared my joy. And not just that day. I'd run into people for days and weeks later, and people would tell me how happy they were for us. Our congregation has suffered with me, cheered me on and celebrated the joy and relief. Life is tough. It is so much better to do life with others.

*–Carrie Austin*

## **TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Friday, April 4 – Mark 4:24**

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<sup>24</sup> And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and it will be added to you.

In some of the readings that I’ve read, the more attentively you listen, the more understanding you will gain in Jesus’s teaching.

In Mark 4:24, when it says ‘measure’, that means to me the more kind, understanding, helping others, and loving I am to others, the more I will get in return.

Why wouldn’t I want that in my life?

*–Mark Abbott*

## **TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF LENT**

**Saturday, April 5 – Matthew 11:28**

<sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

There are some Sunday mornings where I feel tempted to stay in bed. Boy, wouldn't it be nice to just stay home in my pajamas and sleep in and just rest? But there is a difference between that kind of rest and the rest that I feel when I ground myself in the word of God and spend time with my church family. Sometimes, the more earthly “rest” I get the more tired I feel. The kind of rest that I think this passage refers to is the peace and calm that we give our minds and souls when we are with God and each other. We can bring our weariness and our burdens and feel them lifted, even if our bodies are still tired and we could use a good nap. Having a spiritual practice is like giving ourselves a spa day for the soul. We can cleanse our minds, our bodies and our spirits by giving them the chance to rest in Jesus.

*–Lauren Basler*

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Sunday, April 6**

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One wants a Teller in a time like this.

One's not a man, one's not a woman grown

To bear enormous business all alone.

One cannot walk this winding street with pride,

Straight-shouldered, tranquil-eyed,

Knowing one knows for sure the way back home.

One wonders if one has a home.

One is not certain if or why or how.

One wants a Teller now:—

*Put on your rubbers and you won't catch cold.*

*Here's hell, there's heaven. Go to Sunday School.*

*Be patient, time brings all good things—(and cool*

*Strong balm to calm the burning at the brain?)—*

*Behold, Love's true, and triumphs, and God's actual.*

—Gwendolyn Brooks, from "The Womanhood"



## **TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Monday, April 7 – Romans 12:12**

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer.

We live in a world that can be so uncertain. Sometimes it is hard to feel the joy that God's has promised us. It is also easy to lose our focus. Reading this passage reminds me that the promise is for the future not here on earth. We must remember and believe in God's promise so we will feel the joy.

Also, we all have trials and afflictions throughout our lives. Jesus told us we would, and I believe they are lessons that shape us, and teach us how to be better people. We must remember to be patient, and remember it is ok to admit to God in prayer that we are powerless and need his help. We need to trust him. He will always take care of us.

Praying is our way to feel close to Jesus. It strengthens our faith and comforts us. Prayer is also important to give thanks for the all the blessing we receive.

*–Susan Devine*

## **THIRTIETH DAY OF LENT**

**Tuesday, April 8 – 1 Peter 1:22**

<sup>22</sup> Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual affection, love one another deeply from the heart.

I read this as a promise that if we try to obey God's word, we are bound to become better people, who will attract and seek others on the same path with which we can form a better, more pure love that comes through the holy spirit and surpasses anything I can manifest on my own.

– *Dave Courage*

## **THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF LENT**

### **Wednesday, April 9 – Philippians 2:3-5**

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...

I love this passage and it deeply resonates with me. I have many spiritual teachers...Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Rumi, Confucius, Dalai Lama and others. There is a common thread embroidered in the fabric of the twelve classic religions and their adherence to following the Golden Rule... "Do not unto others what you do not want them to do to you." (Analects.) We must recognize and engage fully with one another in our shared humanity and relinquish our strong sense of "I and they" and replace it with a love filled "we". In Zulu, there is a word "Ubuntu" meaning "I am because we are". Sharing similar heart-felt sentiments in Sanskrit there is a word "mudita" or sympathetic joy... "sharing in the joy of others good fortune." The more love you give away, the more love you will have... and may it be forever so.

*– Jon Hazilla*

## **THIRTY-SECOND DAY OF LENT**

**Thursday, April 10 – John 14:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

The stigma of being orphaned doesn't settle pleasantly in some cultures of the world. Most of the time children have been victim of brutality of wars, disease, or natural disaster, and left alone to care for themselves. When Jesus told his disciples that he was leaving them, they became anxious. Jesus was the only loving parent, who they knew and could understand their needs. He assured them to send the Holy Spirit the helper. We have heard of Holy Spirit, but we don't experience it in our lives. Just a shallow vague idea. Holy Spirit is the essence of God. Our relationship with God involves the Holy Spirit. We will never be orphaned as long as we love and trust God, and keep his commandments.

– *Shemiram Fabian*

## **THIRTY-THIRD DAY OF LENT**

**Friday, April 11 – Luke 21:1-4**

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He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; <sup>2</sup> he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. <sup>3</sup> He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, <sup>4</sup> for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

The widow didn't give more than the others money-wise, but she gave more than everybody else fortune-wise.

God feels sad when people are sad, like when widows lose their spouses. God feels bad for widows and poor people and tries to help them. God is angry when people show off how rich they are.

We should be like the disciples and listen to Jesus. If you see a poor person, you should help them. You could give them food or money, you could talk to them, you could help them if something is wrong, you could help carry their things, or you could pray for them. And not just poor people - you should help anybody who needs it.

– *The kids of Fourth Pres*



*“Collection Jar”, by Nova Meier*

## **THIRTY-FOURTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Saturday, April 12 – Matthew 21:1-5**

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

<sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

<sup>5</sup> “Say to Daughter Zion,  
‘See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

In this short scene, the word that grabs me is “gentle.” Though Jesus’ popularity with the crowds might have allowed him to ride into Jerusalem on a mighty stallion or another noble mount, Jesus has thought this through. He knows a specific donkey, and where it can be found. He knows the owner will understand when his disciples say, “The Lord needs it.” And he knows the donkey will trust him enough that he can mount it and guide it through a shouting crowd. One could attribute all these things to Jesus’ divinity: a prescient knowledge of where to find a donkey, a sort of Star-Wars-Force-like ability to win people over to his purposes, a divine skill for calming donkeys. But one could also read these details as part of Jesus’ humble personhood: a previous journey to Jerusalem, a friendship built with the owner of the donkey, a relationship of trust between Jesus and this “beast of burden.” Jesus doesn’t want to demonstrate mastery of a horse with a parade that imitates Roman conquerors. He rides into his final hours on a smaller, humbler animal, and the crowds hail him anyway.

Your king comes to you gentle.

*–Ro Robinson*

**PALM SUNDAY**  
**Sunday, April 13**

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“Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.”

–*Anne Lamott*



“*Good Friday*”, by Jackson Williams

## **THIRTY-FIFTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Monday, April 14 – John 12:44-47**

<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. <sup>45</sup> And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. <sup>46</sup> I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. <sup>47</sup> 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.

When I look at you, what do I see?

When I look at you, I want to see you as a baby in your mother’s arms. I want to see you as someone who once smiled for the first time; someone who started to walk, fell down, giggled, and got up and tried again. I want to see you as your mother did - beloved and miraculous and a delight. I want to see you as your Father does - beloved and miraculous and a delight. I want to see past your imperfections, your mistakes, even your cruelty and indifference - not that they don’t matter, but that they’re not the foundation of who you are.

When I look at you, I want to see you through the eyes of the Holy - because that is a truer reflection of you than what my own limited senses can tell me.

And when I look at you, trying to see you through the eyes of the Holy, I think I understand the Holy better, too: that love, that delight, that patience, that unconditional grace.

Thank you for lighting my way, illuminating the Holy. I can’t wait to see you again.

*–Katie Walsh*



## **THIRTY-SIXTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Tuesday, April 15 – Matthew 26:26-29**

<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”

<sup>27</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

This passage is so familiar – we hear it all the time as we prepare for communion. Unfortunately, it becomes very easy to take familiar things for granted. I must admit that I’m not always receiving these words with the gratitude or thoughtfulness they deserve. Sometimes the first thing these verses evoke for me is that it's time to get myself and my daughter organized to get out of our pew and line up! But of course, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins is like, the main thing. So fundamental to our faith, so central and repeated so often it can almost become invisible. Today I’m taking these words out of the background and paying attention to all that they really represent. And I’m considering what other beautiful, miraculous things in my life need to be seen for what they are, not taken for granted because they are always there.

*–Julianna Cogswell*

## **THIRTY-SEVENTH DAY OF LENT**

**Wednesday, April 16 – Luke 22:25-27**

<sup>25</sup> But he said to them, “The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But not so with you; rather, the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

This passage is a bit disorienting and hard to untangle. It's not that complex, really, but Jesus could have phrased it a little more clearly. Maybe that's on purpose, so today I'm letting the feeling of confusion wash over me.

Humans get organized into hierarchies of greatness. It's been that way since approximately forever, and we're really good at navigating them. But, from a divine point of view, it's just a tedious and pointless puzzle where everything is upside-down.

It's a game we have to get good at playing — after all, well-run organizations make their hierarchies explicit for good reasons! But we shouldn't mistake it for being the way God looks at the world at all.

*–Paul Stansifer*

## **THIRTY-EIGHTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Thursday, April 17 – John 13:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

This passage teaches us that we are all equal, no one person is better than another. Jesus is setting an example of how we should treat each other, whatever I have done for you, you should do for each other. It is not about washing of feet, but an attitude of humility and self-sacrifice. Christians are never “too big” to love and serve others.

I had the experience of practicing my humility with someone that I felt had been hurtful towards me. I was at a church retreat and one practice was that we were to wash each other’s feet. I ended up washing the feet of this friend who had moved away and came to join the retreat. Our final good-bye to each other had not ended well.

I felt very humbled to be washing her feet, I was very emotional and tears were falling down my face as I washed her feet. When we had finished I left and hurried to the room I was staying in and continued to cry and let my reaction to the experience overcome me! My friend came to me and we were able to make amends to each other.

– Cheryl Sessler

## **THIRTY-NINTH DAY OF LENT**

### **Friday, April 18 – Mark 14:37-38**

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<sup>37</sup> He came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? <sup>38</sup> Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

This reminds me of a funny interaction that I had with Layne Jacobs. As liturgist, Layne said that he viewed Jesus as his personal lawyer. I told Layne that I was having trouble with this analogy having just passed a billboard for injury law firm, Morgan & Morgan, on the way to church. We joked that any human analogy for Jesus inherently breaks down pretty quickly. The flesh is weak and undoubtedly will always disappoint.

This is on full display with Peter and the disciples, who despite direct orders from Jesus himself to stay awake and keep watch, fell asleep within an hour’s time. It’s comical and reminds me of asking my kids to stay still or be quiet, only to have any stillness or quiet last for mere seconds. However, the connection to the passage is not lost on me. Jesus knows that we are weak and that we will fail, but it doesn’t (and shouldn’t) stop us for striving to be better. Nor does it stop Jesus from demanding more from us. As with my parenting, I’ll continue to ask for still and quiet, knowing that ultimate success isn’t likely, but even incremental progress is helpful as is setting expectations and standards for my kids to become better versions of themselves.

So, unlike Layne (no shade to Layne), I don’t see Jesus as my lawyer, but more like my parent, who never gives up on me despite knowing that I’ll fail time after time.

*– Perry Hughes-Williams*

## **FORTIETH DAY OF LENT**

### **Saturday, April 19 – John 13:33-35**

<sup>33</sup> Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ <sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus’s commandment seems so simple, “love one another.” But as everyone knows, it can be very hard to always act in a loving way, even towards those we care about the most, let alone towards our enemies. If you follow this commandment, it is likely that you will also be following the commandments of the Old Testament. But this commandment demands even more of us. It demands compassion, mercy, kindness, hospitality, and sacrifice. It demands repentance - a changing of our minds away from our instinct to hurt those who hurt us. It demands forgiveness. This Lent, I hope to do the personal work necessary to become more loving in all that I do.

*–Jacob Blanton*

**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**Sunday, April 20**

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*"Holy Spirit", Hildegard von Bingen – translated by Stephen Mitchell*

Holy Spirit,  
giving life to all life,  
moving all creatures,  
root of all things,  
washing them clean,  
wiping out their mistakes,  
healing their wounds,  
you are our true life,  
luminous, wonderful,  
awakening the heart  
from its ancient sleep.

LESS IS  
MORE



many  
cup



jesus!

BY. MAEVE

*Maeve Meier*

