



2017 Lenten Devotional Book

**All Saints Lutheran Church
Palatine, IL**

<http://www.allsaintspalatine.org>

Introduction

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,
Once again this year during the season of Lent we invite you to use this booklet as your guidebook on the Lenten journey. These reflections were written by members and friends of All Saints for your use and your inspiration. As we read and as we pray, we mark these days of Lent with prayer and with penitence as we follow Jesus, the One who ultimately overcame death and the grave to open the way of life for us.

We share this book with you, giving thanks for the contributions of its writers, and we pray that it will be a blessing for you this Lent. During this season, we pray that you will also take advantage of the many opportunities for worship as we gather together around the journey and around the cross.

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Wednesday, March 1
Ash Wednesday

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

'Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

Thursday, March 2

Romans 1:1

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God

Paul was a great leader of the early church. And he was a servant. Those two things co-exist effortlessly in Paul's self-conception. He knows he's a servant and he has been called to be an apostle.

Notice that Paul emphasizes he was called. He didn't decide to be an apostle. He didn't decide to travel the world proclaiming the gospel. He was called by God. That is not to minimize his own contributions, but to emphasize God's. It's about God. God is the one who calls. God called Paul. And God has called you.

Pastor Seth Moland-Kovash

Friday, March 3

Jonah 4:3-4

And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.’ And the LORD said, ‘Is it right for you to be angry?’

Sometimes I can identify with Jonah. I find myself angry at life and sometimes think it would be better to just die. But....

What is that going to accomplish? Nothing. Look at all the celebrations of life we would miss. Life isn't always what we want it to be but God is there to hold your hand, carry you or just be at your side. He knows what we need.

Remember to rejoice in life and celebrate the good to overcome the days that are bleak and dark.

Kathleen Garner

Saturday, March 4

Matthew 18:3-4

[Jesus] said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

In a lot of ways I am like a child, young at heart and actually humble. I looked up humble: modest or meek in spirit or manner. What I do at church for God I don't seek recognition for. In fact, when someone recognizes me and/or says any words of praise I choke up inside. Don't get me wrong, it's nice to hear but hard to respond to. If you see me only nod it means I can't get the words out.

Does this verse mean never grow up? No. there is wisdom gained through the years of growing up that is precious. Do things that keep you young at heart, keeping the child in you alive.

Joy and peace to all.

Janet Lowe

Sunday, March 5 First Sunday in Lent

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." '

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone." '
Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." '

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him." '
Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Monday, March 6

Psalm 46:10

Be Still and know that I am God: I will be exalted in all the earth.

This was my confirmation verse, (way back in 1944) and has been with me constantly ever since. Whenever a disaster loomed in front of me, such as my friend's child near death or my own little girl having to have eye surgery, or my husband's illness, that somewhere, somehow this verse appeared – sometimes in a greeting card, or in a gift store window, or being read in church on a given Sunday. It was almost 'spooky' showing up as it did, just when I needed it. However, it always reminded me that it is God who is in charge, and not me, and that I should put my fears, faith and trust once more in His hands. The comfort this has brought to me over the years is more than I can say.

Thinking of this particular verse once more during the Lenten season makes it so clear that God having sent His only Son and allowing Him to go through such a horrible death for our sake is still in charge, and that His love for all of us is always here for us. But now, I feel another crisis is here – a political situation, if you will. It has pros and cons, and I feel that we have totally lost control of our reactions, no matter what our stand. This is frightening and uncertain at this time, but again this verse "Be still and know that I am God" reminds me once more, that I am not in charge, that He still sends His comfort to me, and that I should always be encouraged to remain faithful to Him, to know that His love for me is always here, and that He is still in charge.

"Be still, and know that I am God"

Lois Gotha

Tuesday, March 7

Genesis 4:3-5

In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

You know the rest of the story:

Cain is ultimately consumed with jealousy and anger

Cain murders Able

Cain denies the killing to God's face

Cain is banished

I struggled with this lesson (Genesis 1:1-16) before settling on verses 3-5—what became the motive for the first murder. Cain is perfunctory with his offering; Abel makes a sacrifice. God knows the difference. Which raises the question, what is my motive for giving? Do I offer my time, energy or finances out of a sense of duty, or compulsion, or an attempt to impress others? Or are my gifts motivated by a love for God? Do I give the best I have in gratitude for God's gift to me—the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Tom Germuska

Wednesday, March 8

Matthew 18:14

So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost."

As Christians, we can be role models for people new to the faith. Friends or family members coming into the faith need extra support as they come to know more about what it means to be a Christian. Some individuals experience life with a chronic physical or mental illness or struggle with the loss of a loved one, loneliness, or the possibility of not making financial ends meet for their families. Presented with a potential backdrop of such experiences, these are the individuals that need to feel the most patience from their faith community, friends and family members. These people who are struggling with their faith walk need to feel the most acceptance from their faith community.

Although not everyone will be able to relate to the same issues, everyone comes to their faith community with a different story to tell and different lessons to share. The importance of demonstrating patience and understanding to others around us, especially those struggling, is crucial. Like the shepherd who runs after the lone sheep, those who have a painful past are the ones who need to be protected by their faith community the most.

In my own life, I struggled with a painful past related to a physical disability. However, as a result of the constant support of my parents, close friends, and faith community, I have overcome those personal struggles. People might have even thought of me as the same lone sheep looking to be

found. It is true I continue to feel much protection from the same sources of support, but lately, I find myself acting more like the shepherd – offering protection to friends or family who are going through their own personal struggles or loss.

In your own life, are you seeking out ways to act more like the shepherd?

Tracy Williams

Thursday, March 9

Isaiah 51: 3

The Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord.

Our text brings to us some interesting metaphors – waste places, wilderness, and deserts.

We who are Cub fans well know our years – no, decades of wandering in the "wait-till-next-year desert," which has made last year's triumph all the MORE special.

Yet how absolutely trivial that story becomes when compared to the decades, even centuries, that the people of Israel had lived truly as refugees, subject to the overwhelming power of neighboring kingdoms – Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia. They knew all about waste places and deserts. Imagine then how ultra-special it had to be for them to receive this reassuring message from the prophet Isaiah – "the Lord WILL comfort Zion.....and make her desert like the garden of the Lord."

These days of Lent, if we but listen carefully to the comforting (and challenging) words of our Lord, journeying towards the cross, we have every reason to rejoice (as we meditate upon our Lord's journey) as well.

Del Anderson

Friday, March 10

Romans 3:22-23

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

It is a righteousness that comes through, in spite of our poor but best efforts to keep the Law. None of us can keep the law, no matter how hard we try. Through God's grace we are still able to be a part of His family. Thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

During this long time of Lent, we reflect and ask for forgiveness. We ask for Jesus to wash away our sins as he washed the feet of the apostles on Maundy Thursday.

Adrienne Bolbot

Saturday, March 11

Luke 7:9

When Jesus heard this he marveled at the centurion and turned and said to the multitude that followed Him, I tell you not even in Israel have I found such faith.

I took a course in my master's program that was entitled "Acts of Kindness in the Classroom and In Your School". My professor said the American writer Anne Herbert scribbled the phrase, "**Practice acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty**", on a placemat at a restaurant in 1982. The sentiment has since become popular in films and literature. The phrase has been sprinkled in our everyday vocabulary as well.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus heals the Roman centurion's slave without even seeing or meeting the soldier or his servant. One might ask "why"? Why did Christ heal this lowly slave whose master wasn't even a Christian or Jew? The Pharisees and friends of the centurion bragged of his stellar character, his generosity to the city and synagogue. Did our Savior consider these accounts when curing the slave? The answer is simple. The centurion had faith in Christ's tender mercy and kindness. He had faith in the Master.

Jesus uses those we perceive as our enemies, like the centurion, to teach us about faith. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you (Luke 6:27) in other words, "**practice acts of kindness**".

Our world and our nation need to remember not to hate or curse those who disagree with our perspective. We agree to disagree with love and kindness. We will never know what kindness can do, especially done in Jesus's name. It is never too late or too soon to show compassion and love.

Sandy Drucker

Sunday, March 12
Second Sunday in Lent

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above. 'Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

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

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Monday, March 13

Hebrews 3:1-6

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken later. Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope.

God's people—like the ones Moses led out of Egypt to the Promised Land – who detoured to the desert, bickering for 40 years because of their rebellion and hardened hearts. Paul explains that to avoid hardening our hearts, we must “exhort [encourage] one another every day...For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.” One of the hallmarks of God's people is faithfulness (perseverance).

It seemed like a good idea at the time. Six years ago, I started violin lessons. I loved hearing my daughter play as she grew up, and figured I could do that! Excitement with the new gadget and devotion to practice turned to frustration a year in as the sounds from my bow on the strings didn't match what I heard in my head. Continuing weekly lessons and daily practice showed me how much I had to learn and how demanding it would be—10,000 hours to master a skill, right? After three years, when my teacher said we had seven techniques to work on, I nearly gave up, but encouragement from my teacher and family along with my own determination help me persevere and recover the joy that drew me to play in the first place. It's a process.

The Christian life is like that. It's so easy to harden our hearts and forget what inspired us at first instead of practicing the patience and perseverance to encourage those around us.

Linda Foltz

Tuesday, March 14

Isaiah 65:21

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

In real estate, it's a buyer's market right now. My brother's realtor is of the opinion that he "invest" in a fair amount of upgrades to sell his "dated" home. To make the house more saleable, he has installed new appliances, countertops, and lighting fixtures. From my perspective, not only is he using resources on items he'll never enjoy but he is making decorating choices for the subsequent buyer.

On a spiritual level, we are inhabiting the houses we've built. Has mine become "dated"? Baptized in the 60's, confirmed in the 70's, does the smattering of adult education classes and regular attendance at worship services provide enough for me to grow spiritually since those early years? Have I let the secular world "decorate" my spiritual home? In less than one second, Google can return eight and a half million references for "spiritual growth". On the flip side, I've probably googled eight and a half million other things not related to spiritual growth. Just because God is a forgiving "buyer" doesn't mean I should let the place fall into disrepair. Exactly the opposite is true, in response to God's grace, I should ensure my life reflects my gratitude for His lovingkindness.

I'm pretty sure there is still a lot of work to be done on this fixer upper, but fortunately, God has led me to one of His better spiritual home improvement stores, the one we know as All Saints Lutheran Church.

John Nicholas

Wednesday, March 15

John 8:7

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.'

Wow! In today's tumultuous climate, this is certainly a thought provoking verse. There are friends who are no longer friends because one didn't like who the other voted for in the November election. People with differing opinions about a topic cannot even seem to listen to each other's perspective. We are hasty to bring someone's shortcoming or faults to light. The "I'm right and you're not" attitude seems to be the prevailing sentiment many people display today. Tolerance and understanding are lacking and forgiveness seems to be a word no longer found in many people's vocabularies. When did we get to this point? How did we forget that each of us falls short and is a sinner? We are not condemned because of this, rather we are shown love and patience. We are shown grace. God waits. He waits for us to realize we are not perfect and are in need of the salvation that comes in the form of Jesus hung on the cross. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we are assured our sins are forgiven despite what we have done and that a new life, a new beginning awaits us.

Lori Quinn

Thursday, March 16

Exodus 16:2-3

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

Who's in charge, who's in control?

As I critically read this familiar passage I actually saw it in a different light. Yes, there is the manna from heaven story – but I urge you to take a look at the whole story. The Israelites are complaining that Moses and Aaron are leading them around in the desert and they are going to die of hunger. The Lord steps in and provides, yet the people continue to complain about Moses and Arron.

In the hundreds of years since the story was first told do behaviors change? What do we hear every day; politicians and reporters telling the story. It's always the "other guy" who wronged us.

Who provides for you? What responsibility do you have for your own safety, security and happiness? We all have a free will to change our thoughts and actions.

Steve Fedota

Friday, March 17

Ephesians 2:19-21

You are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In high school I spent a year in Denmark as an exchange student, living with a Danish family. Along with learning the language, I spent a lot of energy figuring out how this new household worked. What behaviors were appropriate and expected? As a noncitizen and a newcomer to the language, the culture, and the family, I had to learn the basics of life all over again. I often asked myself: Will I ever belong here? Do I want to belong?

Maybe that question never really goes away: Where do I really belong?

But the place we all belong is in the household of God. And the household of God is wherever people are building their lives on Jesus. Together, the followers of Jesus are creating a holy temple, a temple built not with stones but with acts of repentance, forgiveness, generosity, faith, hope, and love. I'm still learning the language and the behavior of this household. With God's help, and that of everybody else in the house, I'm growing into it.

Pastor David Heim

Saturday, March 18

John 4:1-3

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, 'Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John'— although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized - he left Judea and started back to Galilee.

I wonder where Jesus learned about what the Pharisees heard. To me this passage feels like the rumor mill was pumping out reams of good stuff – not its typical output. Nellie Mae Batson wrote, “Rumors are like a flame blown by the wind.” That seems like the perfect metaphor for the spread of the good news of the disciples work in Jesus’ name.

The truth in works done in the name and spirit of the Gospel moves people and changes lives. Utterances from cowboys, street preachers, children, friends, choirs and pastors have changed mine. Painting schools in impoverished neighborhoods, being good company for our homeless friends, giving to abate hunger, inviting others to come and see our community at All Saints, and being present and open for those who aren’t interested in church are all holy acts in the name and spirit of the Gospel. Those and many more are all acts of our baptism that changes lives.

As we continue our march through Lent I pray for a heavy peace to fuel your fire. I pray that we all feel the stiff wind of the Holy Spirit whipping the flames of our faith into action. I pray that rumors of our acts are brewing and spreading fiercely.

Dave Harney

Sunday, March 19 Third Sunday in Lent

John 4:5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 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.' 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.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father

seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’ They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Surely no one has brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, “Four months more, then comes the harvest”? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.’

Monday, March 20

John 2:1-13

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding... Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Marriage and family...I think they are what life is all about. Jesus attended the wedding at Cana with his mother and his disciples, his family and friends. Weddings celebrate the joining of two people and two families. A wedding is a special event that celebrates the new life that comes from married love. It is a new life for the couple and their families. Jesus chose this special celebration to perform his first miracle. He performed this miracle as a prelude to giving himself to all of us in the Eucharist.

As I look to Easter as the celebration of God's promise of eternal life, I think about the importance of my husband and family in my everyday life. I think about my family members who are no longer here on earth. And both of these thoughts give me reason to live every day to the fullest. I want every day to be a celebration of the life given to me by God and my parents. I want to show my family and my God the love and appreciation that I feel for them.

Joanna Kostich

Tuesday, March 21

Genesis 29:2-3

As [Jacob] looked, he saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying there beside it; for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.

Almost every time I read a snippet of scripture, I look to see what came before it, and what comes after it. Sometimes I do this because it helps me see what the author was trying to say, on a bigger picture. For instance, in Luke the familiar story of Mary and Martha fits between the Good Samaritan and Jesus teaching what we know as the Lord's Prayer. The surrounding passages enlighten the struggle between doing and praying. The four verses from my assignment didn't seem to do much at all: they told of Jacob arriving from the home of his youth to the land of his uncle, Laban. Soon he will set eyes upon Rachel, the woman of his heart, and the story will move forward.

These few verses serve as a pause between two acts, an intermission if you will, as the scenery changes from his past life to his future life. We're about partway through Lent now. Maybe it's a good time for us to pause, too, and consider where we've been and where we are going. What does the field before you hold? Is there a well and water?

Pastor Jenn Moland-Kovash

Wednesday, March 22

John 7:14-17.

About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. The Jews were astonished at it, saying, "How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?" Then Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own."

When I went into a surgeon's office recently, I noticed that he had several diplomas on the wall showing where he went to college and medical school and where he studied to be a surgeon. I was reassured to know that the person operating on me had such fine credentials. That's probably why the diplomas were there. Of course, the only way I'd really find out if he was a good surgeon was to try him out!

Jesus didn't have any special credentials. He had no letters of recommendation, no diploma from a great school. He didn't even claim to be a self-taught genius. He said he was simply passing on the message that God had given him.

Is Jesus really the one sent by God? The only way we find out is by letting his teachings operate on our bodies and souls. We find out who Jesus is by trusting him with our lives.

Pastor David Heim

Thursday, March 23

1 Samuel 15:10

The word of the LORD came to Samuel: 'I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me, and has not carried out my commands.'

Regret. As much as we try to avoid it, there comes a time in everyone's lives when we feel regret. It could be over something as insignificant as making a recipe by memory rather than actually looking at it while baking or it could be as monumental as foregoing a relationship with a parent who is now gone. I have experienced regret before and will in the future, I'm sure, but I try to meet it head on with optimism rather than resignation. Maybe the recipe will turn out anyway or be a new family favorite or maybe I'll just have the opportunity to practice it again. The relationship with the parent might not have been the desired one, but it was a good one nonetheless and one to be cherished.

I guess I didn't realize that God had regrets. If that's the case, I feel like His approach must be optimism in the form of forgiveness. It's not that He is necessarily okay with whatever isn't going His way—and there's a whole lot of that these days, I'm sure—but He is optimistic about us being able to change our ways and, eventually, choose the right path. That is comforting to me and should be for everyone. My faith in God allows me to be optimistic about everything going on in and around my life and that there will be good in it. I just have to look.

Margo Ban

Friday, March 24

Ephesians 5:4

Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving.

“Keep your words soft and sweet...

...for you never know which ones you’ll have to eat.”

Here within the friendly confines of All Saints Lutheran Church, that is not too tall of an order. However, it does get a tad trickier “out there” during the daily grind. Current political events have polarized our nation to levels not seen in decades. Too often, factions seem intent on shouting down opposing viewpoints with labels and slurs. Even as an observer, I sometimes feel that internal knee-jerk reaction when the news of the day includes impassioned responses that differ wildly from my own. On occasion, I find myself talking at a screen with words that might not be too appetizing when they turn up on my own plate. It certainly has been difficult to find the cause for thanksgiving when considering the political climate of late.

For me, most often growth and betterment stems from adversity, not when things are sailing along smoothly. Being grounded in Christ compels us to put away the obscene, silly, and vulgar rhetoric so that we can find common ground through meaningful discussion. Where we can learn about ourselves and about each other and how to coexist in that newfound knowledge? We then, individually, together, and as a nation, come out of the rough patch better off because of it. And therein lies the cause for thanksgiving.

My prayer is that we can rejoice in that thanksgiving soon.

John Nicholas

Saturday, March 25

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

Ouch my brain hurts...

Some may call it metacognition. In our house, we often talk about “a view from the balcony.” The three synoptic Gospels authors tell a common story of Jesus’s life and death, but this guy “John” watched it from the balcony and then, after the fact, told us about it. John starts his story before time, and refers to the “alter ego” of God – the Word. After defining the Word was present at the beginning of time – he takes us BACK in time to before the beginning of time; not forward like the story we hear in Genesis at the beginning of the Old Testament.

Here in the first line of this epistle we are challenged in our understanding of how something can exist before the start and how one thing (that we need to personify to aid us in our understanding) can be two things (persons) at the same time. Ouch, brain cramp... this is worse than a word problem or puzzle box.

It’s not too much later that John “lets us off the hook,” and tells us that “The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.” This is the redeeming light who will make sense out of it for us.

Steve Fedota

Sunday, March 26 Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus

said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

Monday, March 27

Acts 9:18-20

*Then Paul rose and was baptized and took food and was strengthened. For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And in the synagogues, immediately he proclaimed Jesus saying **“He is the Son of God”**.*

In the Old Testament, Hagar, Sarai's slave or maid servant, called the Lord "EL ROI", which means the *God who sees me*, {Genesis 16:13}. God visited Hagar at one of her lowest points, pregnant, confused, alone, and hurting in the desert. After her encounter with the Lord she knew she was not alone or abandoned but rather loved and accepted with a purpose.

In Acts 9, the Lord saw Saul differently than the people of Damascus. Saul's reputation preceded him as a murder and persecutor of Jews and Gentiles alike. His job was to halt the spread of Christianity in any way he saw fit. The Lord had different plans and saw what Saul could be and could do. His vision for the feared man was to be a "light" for the Gentiles, Jews, and kings, a leader and believer of the faith. Our Savior used a reluctant Ananias as an instrument to fill Paul with the HOLY SPIRIT, a spirit with a new heart and soul. Through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT Paul was baptized into Christ's family. What a turnaround?

Paul was seen and loved by Christ. The Lord called the least likely to serve Him and to spread the good news of salvation. Our Savior sees deep into our souls, far more than the world can see and forgives far more than the world can forgive. Thanks be to God who sees us as His saved and loved children.

Nate Drucker

Tuesday, March 28

Isaiah 42: 14

*For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;*

It is easy for many Christians to attend church on Sunday, but unintentionally not follow Christian principles for the rest of the week due to busyness of life. These Christian principles include patience, love, and care for others who may carry burdens heavier than our own. During the week, we are so busy accomplishing goals of this world, but it is important to use Christian principles throughout the rest of the week in how we relate and communicate with loved ones, friends and coworkers. Each person we meet in life might have different life experiences than us, so we need to use the Christian principles of patience, love and showing care for others anytime we communicate during a stressful situation or difference of opinion. Sometimes during high stress situations, it is hard for people to relate to struggles of others because we do not know what others are dealing with in their own lives.

In my own life, it has been a journey to think in a more altruistic way. I have noticed that when I began to think in a more selfless way, my social anxiety started to lessen. A person may have expressed less patience with me because of what might have happened during a stressful day. The more patient I was with others the less I would worry about how they may react towards me, because some people might feel they need to speak for me, to speed up the communication process. People might even consider giving me a pass on unselfish thinking because of my personal situation as a

person with a physical disability. People can look at my physical situation and be perplexed about how I could be of service to others. Sometimes people think they need to always serve me rather than thinking they can come to me on a stressful day for support. Some people may believe that my life may be too complicated on a daily basis to ever rely on me in their times of need. Many of my closest friends and family know this is the farthest thing from the truth. People have encouraged me to be less giving to help me save energy. My friends have nicknamed me the “Energizer Bunny” because they say I have the gift to inspire others to always do what is good for the world around me.

How can we work together to improve the world we live in?

Tracy Williams

Wednesday, March 29

Matthew 9:27-34

Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." And their eyes were opened. The Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." ...After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed.....

But everyone knew, because the men formerly known as blind told. Today, Facebook and Twitter would go wild:

☐ I mean, Jesus just completely healed two blind men!

He's so amazing!

☐ So the one who couldn't talk—well, now he can't stop!

☐ Do you believe Jesus told them not to tell?

☐ Never seen anything like it in Israel!

☐ Why do you hicks in Galilee always think Jesus is so great?

@TeamPharisee By the ruler of demons he casts out demons. #Demons

@JDisciple Dear hypocrites, you're so worried about your religious standing! You don't care that the Messiah is here now, actually healing people, just like Isaiah predicted.

#MessiahProphecy

And tomorrow, *The Roman Post* would weigh in: Jerusalem-- An itinerant rabbi made waves yesterday in the northern district of Galilee. Many there believe he miraculously healed people of leprosy, paralysis, excessive bleeding, and blindness. Religious authorities verify that the healings are

authentic, but claim the rabbi himself may be demon-possessed. [E-mail to staff and peace-keeping Legions: RIOT ALERT! DO NOT mention the so-called raising of Jairus' daughter, also attributed to this rabbi.]

Messiah? Vote Yes or No

Linda Foltz

Thursday, March 30

Ezekiel 2:8

But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious people; open your mouth and eat what I give you.

The Lord is spending time directing Ezekiel, lots of time. These first several chapters seemingly prepare Ezekiel for his difficult duties related to prophesizing. Like many of us and many of those described in the Old Testament, sometimes we need repeated encouragement and explanations.

I find myself explaining lessons to students using a variety of methods. Some students seem to be tactile, some like to listen to lectures while others want to watch videos. I use multiple methods with different vocabulary, different English forms of simile and metaphor. People understand different ways. The Lord seems to be explaining things repeatedly, in different ways. Christ spent much time preparing his followers. While reading the Bible I sometimes scratch my head saying to myself “do these guys listen?” Sometimes it seems the followers are always questioning, but never coming to an understanding of the Truth.

Our Truth is clear and Christ leads the way, sacrificing all, for us and all who profess belief in him. Our direction is clear, Micah 6:8 – To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Patrick J. Beach

Friday, March 31

Revelation 11:18

The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and all who fear your name.

There will be a time of judgment. There will be a time when all will be set right. All the horrors and injustice of the world you see – God will fix them. All the faithful people you see being hurt or not being rewarded the way they ought to – God will provide comfort.

The words of Revelation can sound like a threat or like the plot of a horror movie. But really – they are promise. God will restore. God will repair. God will reward.

Pastor Seth Moland-Kovash

Saturday, April 1

Luke 24:46-48

Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

You had to be there.

You can have something described to you—an event, a person, a place—but the words just don't do it justice. Someone can retell a joke, but the situation in which it was first told may have just been the best or only way to hear it for it to be hilariously funny. You can describe French silk pie to me but Lord knows I will have to actually eat it to get the pure joy out of it that was meant to be.

I think the disciples were unaware of just how little these words would prepare them for what was going to happen. In their minds, they knew the order of events to come, but no way did they know how violent and crushing and sad and horrible the actual events would be. Nor do we. We read these words every year at this time. We know what happens but we weren't there. In the same vein, the amazing and uplifting and awe-inspiring events that take place after this must have been surreal to actually experience. We know what happens then, too, but we weren't there.

Bottom line is that we are lucky enough to know the story even if we didn't experience the immense lows and highs associated with it. Sharing the story is what brings us our experience. Be there!

Margo Ban

Sunday, April 2
Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 11:1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But

some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Monday, April 3

Acts 20:7-9

On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer.

Teachers often make a distinction between hearing and listening in an effort to engage students. I explained hearing as the acknowledgement of sound, and listening as interpretation of that sound. And yet, the dictionary defines hear as “to learn by the ear.” It defines listening as “to give attention with the ear.” The definitions are in direct opposition to my previous thoughts.

Especially during Lent, I try to attend services more often. I listen to God’s word and the interpretation of it by the pastors. Regardless of the distinction, I think Lent is a time to actively both listen to and hear God’s word.

Paul took this opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist **and** to preach the word of God. These are two important aspects of our Christian lives. Lent prepares us for the celebration of our greatest Christian belief in the resurrection and in life everlasting. Let’s not fall asleep during this important time. Let’s stay awake and be alert to God’s word, and his promises. Let’s listen attentively, trying to connect the meaning of the word to our daily lives.

Joanna Kostich

Tuesday, April 4

2 Kings 4:23

He said, 'Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath.' She said, 'It will be all right.'

This is a long story of a woman who offers regular hospitality to a prophet when he is in town. God blesses her with a son, who dies young. She has faith the prophet can heal him, bring him back to life. She is so focused on her mission, to ask healing of the closest person to God, that she doesn't tell her husband or the prophet's assistant what the problem is. She only tells the prophet. She has faith that "it will be all right"

The word in Hebrew is actually "peace", with the implication that everything was ALL RIGHT. The woman was not willing to tell anyone until she had accomplished her mission to bring the prophet to her dead son—who was healed, after the prophet was tested and held strong to his faith.

As we approach Palm Sunday and Holy week, the key is trusting God. If we knew where our lives would take us, we wouldn't need to trust God. That's what the twists and turns are about, building our trust in God. Even when he has the long view and we don't.

We trust in Him to see us through.

Remember, "It will be all right."

Adrienne Bolbot

Wednesday, March 5

Matthew 22:32

I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is God not of the dead, but of the living.

I was a history major in college. Looking back to those days, I realize how MUCH history I didn't study, simply because it hadn't happened yet! And now I find myself realizing that days long past are "interesting" but now what is REALLY important is what is currently happening around us – in our community, our nation, our world – and what lies immediately ahead. We don't live looking backwards, although knowing our past certainly gives us a sense of direction facing forward. Faith too – "faith of our fathers" (and mothers) – to be sure, but faith that is very contemporary, grounded in the past, but constantly facing forward, and counting on our Lord's strengthening and forgiving presence every step of our onward way.

This is at least part of what I "hear" when reading today's assigned text. That we look back upon Lent, but always forward towards Easter – "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is God not of the dead, but of the living."

Del Anderson

Thursday, April 6

1 Samuel 16:12

He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said rise and anoint him for this is the one.

The Lord chose David to be king. He wasn't the strongest or the greatest. He was a shepherd and he was a man after God's own heart.

God chooses us to spread His word. He sees our love and trust in him to do that.

How do we accomplish this in today's world? It's not easy with all the turmoil, but we have God's help. Each morning when I get up I thank God for my life and ask his help to follow him – make him proud. I don't always succeed, but try again and again and again. When I do get it right, there is a great "I can do it!" moment that keeps me going. I know you can do it too. God has chosen you. You got this!!

Janet Lowe

Friday, April 7

Philippians 1:27-28

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, ... I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents.

Paul was exhorting the Philippians to live Christ-like lives so that whether he was with them or still in prison and got reports he'd know that they were following his teaching. I'm not directly accountable to Paul today, but do know that trying to live a life that is worthy of the gospel is more satisfying than some other methods I've used. Additionally, I've learned that it has been easier to live a gospel-worthy life when I've been striving to do that side-by-side in the faith community here at All Saints. Having that support also has made it less difficult to "do the right thing" in the face of opposition when I'm out in the world the rest of the week, or month, or year.

Tom Germuska

Saturday, April 8

Mark 10: 32

They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him.

Growing up I lived in a small town in a rural county in west central Indiana. Mom and Dad used to love taking drives through the hills and hollers, kicking up dust on gravel roads and passing through the county's many covered bridges. On most drives the words, "would the three of you stop poking each other and keep your hands to yourselves" would be spoken, usually accompanied by various adjectives indicating my parent's exasperation. There were five of us in the same car, going to the same place, but on very different trips.

Sometimes I feel amazed by of the events and message of the Gospel. At others I can barely keep up with the pace and direction of the story. If I'm honest, a sort of fear sets in when I realize where Jesus is heading and I encounter the reality of my own mortality and the way I live out my faith. It's not just a question of would I have been following in amazement or in fear were I in the story. It is a very real question of where I am in the story today. Where are you? How does your faith drive the way you encounter the world?

God, help me to believe. Help us all to believe.

Dave Harney

Sunday, April 9 Sunday of the Passion

Matthew 27:11-54

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?' For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.' Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son." ' The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save

him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

Monday, April 10
Monday in Holy Week

John 12:1

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

Oh to be a fly on the wall in this household! The majesty of the Lord, the presence of Lazarus, crowds coming to the home and the intrigue the Chief Priests. I am touched by the importance of the Christ, the obligation of death, hades and resurrection scares me just thinking about this during holy week.

Last season's Adult Forum included the viewing and discussion of Rob Bell's Nooma Video Series. Profoundly talented people produced this thoughtful and insightful series. The lessons describe individual life stories explaining them from a Christian perspective. Make no mistake, these are wonderful. I recall saying I missed the majesty of the Lord in these stories. With the Lord's majesty comes Him rising up after his crucifixion leaving behind his ministry's miracles.

When coming to All Saints do I acknowledge the efforts of others to lift up the Lord? Doug's music choices, the Pastor's message connecting bible verses with our lives or the changing banners all serve to glorify the Lord. I wonder if I am glorifying the Lord daily when reading these verses.

Patrick J. Beach

Tuesday, April 11
Tuesday in Holy Week

John 12:34-36

The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.'*

Yes, who is the Son of Man? Many had questioned as I am sure many still do to this day. Jesus told them the light would be with them and they should not let the darkness over take them. This is a very hard task to follow. We all have times of darkness. I know mine come quite often fighting health issues, but Jesus said not to let it over take us, as then we would not know where to go. Believe in the light. It is there to guide and help you become children of the light.

Kathleen Garner

Wednesday, April 12
Wednesday in Holy Week

John 13:32

If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

We have always lived in uncertain times. Maybe it is just me, but the current times in which we are living seem more uncertain and crazier than usual. An older friend told me recently that the 1960s were very uncertain and turbulent times when she was a young adult and maybe we are entering a new cycle of upheaval.

After some recent current events I have awoke with a feeling of unreality. Did that event really just happen? That can't be right? But after I'm awake for a while I realize that yes that event actually did happen. This leads me to ask various questions: what the heck is happening around here? Who's in charge here?

I eventually get to the reassuring answer to my question which is that God is still in charge! Thank you God! God sent us Jesus to teach us how to live and how to love each other. When we follow Jesus's example to love and take care of each other we are glorifying God and Jesus. Now let's get out there and glorify God!

Diane Johnson

Thursday, April 13

Maundy Thursday

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Friday, March 25

Good Friday

John 19:16-19:42

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

*'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'*

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Saturday, April 15
Vigil of Easter

John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For

whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Sunday, April 16 Resurrection of Our Lord

Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'



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