



2018 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, February 14
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 consume and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

Thursday, February 15

1 John 1:3-10

“ . . . but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

My husband is a runner. He can be seen all over Palatine and Inverness on most days running farther than a person really should. He mostly runs alone but sometimes goes out with one or more of our daughters and then brags about how they can barely keep up with him. My daughters all run too. The younger two are cross-country runners at Fremd while my oldest is more of an occasional runner at college to keep in shape. I, too, have been known to run. I like to think I'm a runner (despite the fact that I'm injured most of the time!) even though my mileage is paltry compared to that of my family members. We all enjoy it regardless of how we do it, and that's the important thing.

What's cool about the running community is that just about anyone can be a part of it—just start running. You don't have to run every day or run a bunch of miles every time you go out or have a fancy watch to track your mileage/heart rate. You just have to try to get out there and do what you can. You can race or run for fun or run to be fit or run and then walk. There aren't really many rules, and the time spent on it are up to you. There aren't many other groups that are that welcoming and so low-maintenance on requirements or time commitment, whether it be other sports groups or social clubs or volunteer organizations.

The Christian community is actually one such group. We are a welcoming bunch, and all we have to do is walk in the light with Jesus. Seems pretty easy. And kind of relaxing and pleasant. It isn't always easy for sure. You can be part of this community even when you're not being particularly good at being Christian or when you're cooking with gas at being one. You decide how much time you put into it, but, like running, the more you put in, the more you get out. What I love most about this community is that, like the running community, you really can't spot a fellow member from afar unless you're engaged in said activity and then you feel automatically connected even if you don't know each other well. So, shine your light, while running or doing whatever it is you love to do, and keep your eyes peeled for your fellow members.

Margo Ban

Friday, February 16

2 Timothy 4:1-5

As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

I recall decades past, my parents living the life required to raise 7 children, yes SEVEN. Mom and Dad endured much, I recall there being 5 children, all teenagers at the same time. They endured; they modeled behavior to us, attending church, more often during Lent and Advent. They served the church & their children. They persisted during good and bad times. Some of the children wandered away at times, but we all returned, to the family and God's church. Our parent's efforts were blessed.

I count myself most fortunate to serve All Saints Lutheran Church. God's church welcomed us with open arms merely wondering if we were children of the Lord. During Lenten times my faith is strengthened recalled the sacrifice made 2,000 years ago. "It is finished". Verse 2 calls for patience. Our extra faith time this season includes Wednesday evening services & service to our community, perhaps through PADS or a different service opportunity. I have times of endurance and patience; I recall my family's model and the Lord's model. How can we pray daily for endurance and patience? Let's follow young Timothy's direction being wise and carrying the ministry fully.

Patrick Beach

Saturday, February 17

Matthew 9:2-13

And behold some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Rise, pick up your bed and go home."

Patience is an important attribute when it comes to healing. If you ever had a splinter, stitches, a broken bone, surgery, or a life-threatening disease, you know how rapidly you want things to go back to normal. Patience on any level is a huge challenge for me. If something is broken physically or mentally in my life, I want to fix it and fix it now. Moving patiently with God through our ups and downs is extremely hard. Such was the case this last year when our daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer. I wanted her healed, I wanted her whole, and I wanted a miracle. My fears many times were greater than my faith and trust in God. I am truly thankful that Christ did not give up on me.

We do not know in Matthew's gospel the history and background of the paralytic that was brought to Christ for healing by his friends. Was he Jew or Gentile, or had the paralysis been short lived or been with him for a long time? What we do know is Jesus saw the man's faith, forgave his sins and healed him. We also know that no matter our condition, our Savior walks beside us every day.

I know for sure I am not in control, and I'm dependent on Christ for everything. My prayer is for God to increase my faith and reduce my fears. How blessed I am to have a patient and

forgiving God who loves me and forgives me no matter what I do.

Just as the paralytic was healed, so was our daughter. She is cancer FREE!

Praise and thanks be to you O Christ.

Sandy Drucker

Sunday, February 18
First Sunday in Lent

Mark 9:1-15

And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean. Then they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" He said to them, "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him."

When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him.

Monday, February 19

Ephesians 2:1-10

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages, he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Someone once asked me what Christianity was all about, and driving down the Kennedy one day, I got to thinking about how I would answer this. I cannot think of anything more simple regarding this and my salvation than to just believe, love, and promote God's message of salvation, and to accept his gift of grace. We are what he has made us, created in Christ for good works. God's preparation for us to do good works is sometimes a mystery, but faith does guide and lead us to carry out his message of salvation.

This is the greatest gift of God. As a child of God, I can accept this gift with faith that my salvation lies in Christ – simply to believe and accept Christ as my Savior = no bragging, no boasting, just carrying out his message.

Lois Gotha

Tuesday, February 20

1 Peter 3:8-18a

For 'Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'

The verses that follow this text are a lengthy dissertation on the importance of doing good regardless of the consequences. But that's not easy. I want to be liked, and comfortable. So, the "regardless of the consequences" part of this directive is difficult.

Until I get to verse 18:

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

That puts it in perspective. Do good because it is the right thing to do, regardless of the consequences. I'm not the judge. My job is to share the love of Christ with the world by doing what is right.

Tom Germuska

Wednesday, February 21

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."'

After fasting for forty days and nights in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by the devil three times. This verse is Jesus' final response to being tempted.

How often we are tempted in our daily lives. We put someone or something in a place of priority to worship – something other than our God! We see Satan showing us all the things that can be ours if we follow him.

In "Hostiles", a current movie, one of the characters says, "There's times like this that bring us closer to God. If I did not have faith, I could not get through this." Our faith can help us meet and defeat temptations as Jesus did.

Consider taking time to stop and reflect. Are we being tempted by Satan to put something else ahead of God in our lives? Are we so intent on "...the kingdoms of the world and their splendor..." (verse 8) that our spiritual life suffers? God has promised to be with us always, but have we pushed Him into a back corner of our lives?

Lent is a perfect time to thank Him and put Him first in our lives.

Carol MacCabe

Thursday, February 22

Romans 3:21-31

“ . . . through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed . . . “

Participation in sports as children is a great way to teach a variety of life lessons. One lesson children may learn from playing a sport is that being active feels good and is fun. Another is that being part of a team and playing a role on that team (and maybe not the starring role!) can be immensely rewarding. A third lesson might involve being able to accept criticism and use it as motivation to be better. My three daughters have participated in a variety of sports throughout their elementary and high school years and have learned all these lessons and more as a result. Witnessing them learning these life lessons through soccer, softball, dance, track, etc., has been amazing and has made all the running around worthwhile for us as parents.

Now it hasn't been ALL rainbows and unicorns all these years! There have been a lot of lessons involving how NOT to be as a person and how to sift through the criticism being thrown out to find the constructive part. There have been a ridiculous number of lessons in discipline and commitment—both of which seem to wane when it comes to having to get somewhere on a weekend at 6am or having to move or lose family vacation for a tournament (really?!). Forget the kids—these were the lessons my husband and I learned!

There was one softball coach, however, who taught all of us a lesson that I will never forget, and this passage reminds me of that. Although he said “lay off the high ones” to all the girls so many times I can still hear it in my head, he said something else to the girls at the end of every inning regardless of whether we were winning or losing. He would tell them to forget what happened last inning or even the whole first part of the game and start fresh here and now and play your best and have some fun out there. To me, that’s what this passage is telling us—don’t dwell on what’s happened in the past. Don’t let our past failings affect how we go forward. Sure, we’ve sinned. We sin a lot. But the second we ask for forgiveness, the slate is wiped clean, and we can go out there and do our best and have some fun. I say play ball!

Margo Ban

Friday, February 23

Romans 4:1-12

Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due.

Every once in a while, I have a stretch like these past three days where it seems like either I'm sleeping or working. Water main breaks and a whole lot of snow will have that effect. Now I am not complaining, despite being a tad bleary eyed as I write this. But I can assure you that come payday I will not reckon that little extra as a gift.

Sunday morning is not the only time you'll find me at All Saints. Plenty of members show up (and not necessarily at the church building) several times each week for various activities. From charting the course of the congregation to making sure the recycling containers are empty, there are a myriad of volunteers pulling together, helping fulfill our mission "For All to Know Christ!"

And the inspiring part is that I've never gotten the sense that anyone is here trying to "earn" heavenly points. Overwhelmingly, people are doing the work with an attitude of gratitude. They get it, they know there is no task, no job, no activity that will gain everlasting life. But God's gift, sending Jesus to the cross to atone for our sin is the lone path to eternal life.

How can we not respond gratefully to such a gift?

John Nicholas

Saturday, February 24

Mark 8:27-30

He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah, And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

This verse is a befuddlement. Especially as we prepare for Easter. Jesus and the disciples are on their way to Caesarea Philippi and He asks: Who do people say that I am? He gets the stock answers for the day—John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets. Then Peter gives the right answer, the Messiah, and the disciples are told, don't tell anybody.

I don't know if Jesus was afraid of attracting too much attention to himself. He had a lot of work to do before they got to Jerusalem and the horrific end of the Journey. But I do know that the journey didn't end there. After the Resurrection we are charged with proclaiming the good news of Christ to all the world. Here at All Saints we proudly declare, For All to Know Christ, at the close of every service.

Our mission is to carry the good news of Christ's resurrection and victory over death to all of God's children and welcome them into a safe place of worship and community. The directive on the road to Caesarea Philippi (do not tell anyone) has been rescinded.

Tom Germuska

Sunday, February 25
Second Sunday in Lent

Mark 8:31-38

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

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

Monday, February 26

Hebrews 1:8-12

Of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

The author of Hebrews had a special talent for descriptive writing. We see this in the text above, and certainly in a line several verses earlier. There the writer gives this description to God's Son---"He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word." It almost sounds like the Hebrews author is picturing God using the very first (cosmic) 3-D printer.

Now, as we follow Christ's Lenten journey, we see the full 3-D dimension of "God's glory" which Christ reflects---God's power to be sure, but also God's love---even sacrificial love---as in this journey Christ identifies with the "poorest of the poor" and the "weakest of the weak"---all the way to Good Friday. And WE pray that we might be faithful followers along this sacrificial journey, and ever grateful for our Lord's blessings day by day along the way.

Del Anderson

Tuesday, February 27

Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19

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

Can you see it? Faith, I mean. To encourage us, Paul lists some of our ancestors in “the cloud” of faith from Abraham to David, proving their faith by describing their actions. Though blessed, he says, they did not receive the full reward until Jesus fulfilled God’s unseen plan.

My family genealogy shows a legacy of faith--Roger Williams, rogue founder of Rhode Island and devoted Quakers and Schwenkfelders (look them up!)--in my direct line. My grandmothers come to mind: Helen, a Sunday School teacher who prayed for me every day, and Jean, who took in three orphans from church. One of those orphans, my mother Jane, chose nursing as her mission. My father Wesley’s faith and army experience inspired him to be a diplomat. Uncle Pete served as a pastor later in life. More mature friends Mary, Judy and Gwenyth serving in church and Helena in synagogue have nurtured my adult faith. Along with blessing, they all have experienced deep sorrow, yet have persevered in faith. I see now how their presence in my life, is part of God’s unseen plan.

How about your ancestors, relatives or others who have inspired or strengthened your faith? Give thanks this Lent for all who point the way to Jesus. Let’s see faith!

Linda Foltz

Wednesday, February 28

John 12:36-43

Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue.

We are taught from an early age to have confidence in ourselves. We are told we do not have to just follow the crowd. And yet, we also know from an early age and lasting much longer that it doesn't often work out that way. Peer pressure is a thing because it actually works. As adults we call it peer pressure and think it's only something that kids and teens struggle with. But let's be honest. Adults deal with it too.

We don't want to stand out in a crowd. Or we desperately want to stand out from the crowd. Either way, our behavior is determined by the reactions others to our behavior.

Sometimes our decisions are determined by what others will think of us. Maybe it's a family member. Maybe it's a boss or a client. For fear of what others might think or do, we make decisions. Try a simple experiment on yourself. Next time you're out in a restaurant, say grace before the meal. See what happens. You probably won't get thrown out of the restaurant. But see how you feel inside. Are you self-conscious, embarrassed, overly proud? That's the important part. Walk in the path of God. Let the rest take care of itself.

Pastor Seth

Thursday, March 1

1 Peter 2:4-10

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight.

As a middle school teacher, I'm pretty used to trying to help students discern good choices from bad ones. Although they don't always want to hear it, my years of observing adolescent behavior have taught me some pretty good lessons. For example, did you know it's actually a good idea to keep your shoes on when walking between classes? Sure, it might initially be more comfortable to pad along hallways in your socks, but what is that wet, squishy thing you stepped in that's now seeping through the fabric? I know the advice of an "old" person is likely not as fun sounding as their own ideas, but if these kids would ever listen, they would be so much better off! Thank goodness all of us are always wise enough to listen to the words of those who know better...

Jesus was not the most popular person of his day, nor was his message. However, God tells us that despite what others think, Jesus is someone special. Although the world often encourages us to follow our own path, take the advice of our God who has seen it all, and keep Jesus with you always.

Megan LoPresto

Friday, March 2

Acts 7:30-40

'Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight; and as he approached to look, there came the voice of the Lord: ³²"I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look.

I caution people that periods of time in scripture aren't necessarily a calendar equivalent. Numbers have meaning, and "forty years" means a really, really long time; and scripture writers use the number forty to indicate times of testing. It's an effective measure and use – even knowing this story, I read "when forty years had passed" and felt it in my gut: *Dang. That's a long time to wander in the wilderness. That's a long-time wander, anywhere, really.*

Whether it is after forty years or forty days or just feels like forever, the promise of God appears in amazing sights and wonders. God speaks those words of promise, "I am the God of your ancestors." God's faithfulness has not deserted Moses during the time of wandering, and God's faithfulness doesn't desert us. (While this story appears first in Exodus, Stephen retells it as part of the living faith of his ancestors; after he finishes recounting, the leaders become enraged and stone him.)

Pastor Jenn

Saturday, March 3

Mark 9:2-8

"And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus... 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' "

One theme that comes to mind is friendship. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him up the mountain. They are his trusted, close friends. We, too, need our friends and family for support at times when we may be afraid or unsure. Jesus wants Peter, James, and John to be with him when he undergoes this life changing experience. In the story of the transfiguration of Jesus, he's a changed man. The dazzling white clothing represents Jesus' purity and godliness.

Another theme is responsibility. Jesus is identified as the Messiah in this passage. God proclaims his place in history and tells everyone to listen to and trust what Jesus tells them. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to his people. Jesus takes his place in God's plan. He becomes the son that God wants him to be. He accepts the responsibility of being the Messiah.

At fifteen, my father died and left my mom and me without a male to care for us. My mom had always depended on someone else to help her through life's difficulties. I had grown up as "daddy's little girl," also depending on him. My mom and I were left to rely on each other. As a result of this sad, unexpected experience, it was necessary that I become a

mature, responsible adult. God guided me through this difficult time and helped me when I needed Him.

Many of us have a moment in life when we're asked to "step up." Let us use Jesus' example this Lent to step up when God presents us with a challenge. Answer God's challenge as Jesus did.

Joanna Kostich

Sunday, March 4
Third Sunday in Lent

John 2:13-22

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

Monday, March 5

1 Corinthians 3:10-23

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

I've always told myself I would not refuse to do anything asked of me by All Saints. It was the "deal" I made with myself (perhaps God had something to do with it 😊) for being reunited with Jesus after a long "vacation". There have been times when I questioned the request, but I remember "the deal", and plow forward hoping to discover what it is I'm supposed to contribute. Today is one of those days.

My assigned passage deals with destruction and Paul chastising the Corinthians. In my world, today, I see so much destruction and division. It is very hard to read and watch the news. Much worse, it seems everybody I know is angry most of the time with friends' and family relationships being strained.

And then I go to All Saints. The spirit within those walls is just amazing. Laughter, smiles, and good will just oozes out of people. So...are we Paul or are we The Corinthians in this passage? If Paul, we need to spread to the "outer world". If we are the Corinthians, we need to rethink.

George Buerger

Tuesday, March 6

Hebrews 9:23-28

Thus it was necessary for the sketches of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these.

I am drawn by the idea of sketches of heavenly things. We express our understanding of God's nature in art, music, worship, theology and in many other ways. I for one can become overly committed at times to my own ideas unaware that my expressions are incomplete, and no doubt often flawed.

Penny and I have been a part of a Bible study home group for many years. Though we formed out of the Lutheran congregation of which we were all members, we have learned over the years that we all have very different relationships with and understandings of the nature of God. At times I've been inclined to argue, or worse, roll my eyes in reaction over one person's perspective or another. Imagine the arrogance of believing my own beliefs were intellectually and spiritually superior to one of my closest friends....in Christ. The heavenly things indeed need a more open, humble and true sacrifice than that.

May your sketches be impressions that enhance the lines that others perceive in the nature of God. May you see the beauty and truth in the incomplete sketches that your brothers and sisters in Christ draw for you. And may your passion for Jesus drive you to sketch abundantly.

Dave Harney

Wednesday, March 7

Mark 11:15-19

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.

I have a unique story in relation to this verse. We all remember how difficult the recession might have been to your personal budget or financial future. Some of you may not realize how difficult the recession might have been on a recent graduate in 2010 into the tough economy of the recession, especially for someone in my situation of living with a disability. I had known that there would be an increased likelihood that I would have to find ways I could make my personal income from a home-based source because of needing to make my own schedule.

My original outlet to work from home was a corporation that offered the opportunity to be a home-based consultant. I called friends and neighbors to see if they were open to a consultation with the products I sold. Some of these friends and neighbors included members of either Bethel Lutheran Church or another local church Trinity Lutheran Church. I never discussed making sales at church, but people would request I delivered products at either church where money would exchange hands on the church property. I now understand with a particular maturity how bad it looked to follow their particular requests of delivering at church, even though I never “pushed” sales on church premises. With this former chapter in my life, I am much more grateful for this

current chapter in my career, which includes public speaking, freelance writing and menu analysis within the nutrition profession.

Tracy Williams

Thursday, March 8

Ephesians 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

“...every *spiritual blessing*...” that’s big, but what are spiritual blessing? Knowing our sins are forgiven? Peace? Redemption? Adoption? I think so.

Forgiveness of sin.

Life through Christ.

Be(ing) in Christ.

Acceptance in Christ.

Peace of God.

Filled full in Christ.

All of it and more from God, through Christ.

That’s why it is so important for ALL to know Christ.

Easter will be here in a few weeks. We have work to do.

Adrienne Bolbot

Friday, March 9

Ephesians 1:7-14

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us.

Paul speaks to us as he did to the early church of Ephesus. Paul is responsible for the spread of Christianity and bringing the word of Christ to those who never had the opportunity to walk with Jesus of Nazareth. Paul brought the message of God's work and vision for man to those who, like us, had no physical connection with the experiences of the apostles. In this portion of his letter to the church in Ephesus Paul provides an understanding of God's forgiveness by his grace through the blood of Christ. This vision of forgiveness is compelling and humbling, as well as liberating. The redemption of us from our failing, slights and evil acts is hard for us to understand, and one we need to be reminded.

We, like the members of the church of Ephesus, need to understand and accept the gift God has provided. Paul speaks to us about the need to accept His gift of grace. Through his grace we are to accomplish all things and live for the praise of his glory. Lent is our time to reflect on God's grace, how it enhances our existence and lead us, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, to accomplish his vision for us.

Curt Siegel

Saturday, March 10

John 3:1-13

If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

Jesus has told us about lots of earthly things. And we want to know more. We want to know what heaven is like. We want to know who is going to be in heaven. We want to know why bad things happen to good people or why good things happen to bad people or bad things to bad people or.... But I confuse myself. We want to know everything. We all have lots of questions and sometimes we “blame” God because everything isn’t clear to us.

Maybe things aren’t clear to us because we aren’t ready for it. We can’t handle the truth, as Jack Nicholson once said. I struggle sometimes to understand my daily to-do list, and I think God should make all the mysteries of the universe clear to me? God’s wisdom is beyond our wisdom. The heavenly things that Jesus is talking about are things for God to worry about. Today I’ll try to let God worry about them and focus on what is in front of me.

Pastor Seth

Sunday, March 11
Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 3:14-21

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

Monday, March 12

Hebrews 3:1-6

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.

We ARE his house. Notice the wording there. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews does not tell us that we live in God's house but that we ARE God's house. Is it just me, or does this bring up lots of interesting mental images for you? Who is the window? Who is the stairs to the attic that creak in the night?

But my strange architectural musings aside, there is something important about thinking of ourselves as the house, not as residents of the house. Houses are firm. Houses stand for a very long time. Houses are well constructed. Houses can resist storms and wind and rain. Houses will last. You can hold firm in confidence and hope because you (y'all Christians) do not just live in a house. You are a house.

Pastor Seth

Tuesday, March 13

1 Corinthians 10:6-13

No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

It has been 2 years since my mom passed away. Last fall was 20 years since she faced her greatest health challenge. My mom was receiving treatment for her second occurrence of cancer. Things weren't going great. Her treatments were very taxing on her and she had just about had enough.

My mom was always a woman of great faith. When things were at their bleakest, she had a talk with God. She told God she wasn't sure how much more she could endure. But if God was willing and would give her the strength to endure, it was her desire to see her granddaughters grow up to become young women. Needless to say, things got a lot worse before they got better, mom persevered her faith never wavering. The granddaughters grew up and after the last one graduated high school, Mom was called home to God.

Her faith in God always sustained her, God tested her mightily. He also rewarded her unwavering faithfulness to Him. God never gives us more than we can handle. I think each of us can think of faith stories like my mom's. We know there will be tests of our faith along the way, but our faith will always sustain us. It's not always easy but our faith is our greatest hope to help us endure!

Sandy Herweg

Wednesday, March 14

John 8:12-20

Jesus said, "I am the one who bears witness about myself and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."

Have you ever needed a witness to verify an incident or conversation? Recently our family's (friends that are now our family) daughter was involved in a terrible car accident. Thankfully she and her two daughters were not severely injured. Her van was completely destroyed. It all happened very quickly and unexpectedly. When the police arrived to take her statement, she wanted to be sure the information was accurate. Thankfully the lady in the car behind her saw the collision and gave her observation to the police and verified the event. A girl had run a red light and hit her van. It was most reassuring to know from the witness that she was not at fault.

In John the eighth chapter, Christ was His own witness to explain to the Pharisees his identity {origin} and mission {destination}, but they continued to argue and judge his statements. They wanted validation through a second party as the Jewish law stated was necessary. If two people were witnesses, the testimony was true and valid. Jesus's word was not enough for the religious leaders and the Jews. Throughout the New Testament, especially the gospels, Christ proved His divinity and His mission by works and actions. There were many witnesses to proclaim the good news of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection then and now, but there are those who still don't believe like the Pharisees of long ago.

During the Lenten season, who is Christ to you? Search your heart and be a witness for our Savior. For all to know Christ, thanks be to God.

Sandy Drucker

Thursday, March 15

Hebrews 4:1-13

So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his.

The Merriam Webster Dictionary lists six definitions for the word "rest": freedom from activity or labor, a state of motionlessness or inactivity, the repose of death, peace of mind or spirit, a place for resting or lodging, a rhythmic silence in music, something used for support. In our everyday world, we typically think of rest as relaxing from work or ceasing activity.

God rested. God saw what He had done in the six days of creation and rested. The creation of the universe had been accomplished. It brought great pleasure. It is the rest that comes with achievement, completion of a task and satisfaction.

God's rest, on the other hand, encompasses not only earthly rest but the "rest that believers have that Christ has provided." A person enters into that rest by simple faith in Christ.

While making a profession of faith in Christ is simple, truly believing in Jesus leads to a life of commitment and discipleship that often puts believers at odds with the world today. People who believe in Jesus find that each day requires a continuation of faith and obedience.

God rested from his creative work, but what kind of work do we rest from? What do we quit doing when we come to have faith in Christ? The work of trying to earn our salvation, the

work of trying to qualify for the kingdom, the work of trying to be accepted by God. When we look to Jesus for our salvation, we quit looking to ourselves. And find rest.

Lori Quinn

Friday, March 16

Hebrews 4:14 – 5:4

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin... He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people."

Almost daily I ask God to forgive me for sins I commit without thinking. I ask forgiveness when I say something that offends another person. I ask forgiveness when I don't treat others as Jesus would.

I sometimes hold grudges against people who have hurt me or wronged me. I have tried to work through one particular grudge, hoping that time will heal the hurt this person has caused me. But I'm not sure it's possible. I pray for God's help. My humanity makes it difficult to forgive so easily. Jesus' sanctity and Godliness made it possible for him as man to forgive those who wronged him.

We are the ignorant and the wayward. We don't always understand the divinity of Jesus as man. As Redeemer, Jesus died to make amends for our sins. Jesus as man understands our weaknesses and our inclination to sin. But Jesus as the Son of God sacrificed himself to help us understand our sinfulness.

Lent is a time to look at our sinfulness. We should reflect on Jesus' sacrifice for us. His example is there for us to emulate.

Joanna Kostich

Saturday, March 17

John 12:1-11

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

Mary did something extravagant for Jesus. The picture of doing something extravagant includes the idea that it is somehow wasteful or unnecessary. If something were not unnecessary we wouldn't call it extravagant. I guess we'd call it travagant?!? Mary worshiped Jesus. Mary served Jesus. Mary expressed her bare and raw human emotion for Jesus who was facing down his own death. She anointed his feet with VERY expensive perfume, so much perfume that the fragrance filled the whole house. And we know she was criticized for this wasteful act.

One of my favorite books every about worship is subtitled *A Royal Waste of Time*. Because worship is a waste of time. According to rules of productivity and getting things done, not much happens. We pray. We sing. We listen to people read to us from the Bible. We eat a bit of bread and drink a bit of wine and we go home. It's a waste of time. But it's not just a waste of time, it's a ROYAL waste of time. Because we spend that time in the presence of our King. And it is beautiful. The fragrance of this time spent in the presence of the King fills our whole lives. Waste some time this week. Spend it in worship and prayer.

Pastor Seth

Sunday, March 18
Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.³ Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

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

Monday, March 19

2 Corinthians 3:4-11

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

Before writing about this passage, I did some research about the writer, Paul. He was a zealous Pharisee who persecuted Christians. Upon his conversion, he became Christianity's chief theologian and committed missionary to the Gentiles. So, he went from persecutor to preaching God's word. His message is that we have to depend on God's power. The old way was the law, but now the Holy Spirit guides us. That was true in Paul's time and it's still true for us today.

So how can we do that?

For me it really helps to belong a Christian community. That, of course, is All Saints Lutheran Church. Every Sunday we hear God's word preached and listen to how people are helping one another, such as helping with PADS, contributing to the ASLC Food Pantry, Stephen Ministry, bible studies, singing in the choir, playing in the orchestra, counters, ushers and many others. It was a great comfort for us when my husband was in the hospital and I had knee surgery to have our pastors visit us. We in turn have to do likewise. We must listen to the Holy Spirit and follow his direction.

Kay Weir

Tuesday, March 20

Acts 2:14-24

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning.'

In the verses before this passage, the Holy Spirit has descended upon the people, causing them to speak in different languages – and be understood! And, while all who witnessed this event were amazed, some among the crowd sneered and said – “They’re full of new wine.” I’ve long loved Peter’s admonition to the crowd – they’re not drunk! It’s only 9 in the morning! But he goes on to quote the prophet Joel, proclaiming that “your sons and daughters will prophesy; young men will see visions, and old men will dream dreams.”

Sometimes our instinct might be to sneer or dismiss the sound of the Holy Spirit in our lives, or the lives of those around us. I confess I am guilty of this at times – I don’t always recognize the Holy Spirit in the noise around me, or see it for the grace of God when it descends. I’m thankful for these words today that remind all of us that when we might be tempted to look sideways or write off a new idea, that perhaps we should instead hear the prophecy and witness the dreams and visions in our midst. Thanks be to God!

Pastor Jenn

Wednesday, March 21

John 12:34-50

Then Jesus cried aloud: Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me.

The word that sticks out to me is BELIEVE. These days you can buy the word to hand on your wall, door refrigerator or sit on your desk. There are even posters with a breakdown of the word letter by letter. Well, here's my version:

By God's grace we were saved a long time ago but, yet we are stilled saved every day. Oh yeah!

Even in your darkest hour God is there beside you, carrying you, guiding you, challenging you, protecting you.

Live life to the fullest and laugh often-it's good for the soul.

Initiate the conversation to spread the word of God. Don't be afraid-God is with you-he's got your back.

Ever present is God in our lives. Look for him every day in the blessings and miracles you receive.

Vanquish fear with faith. One meaning of vanquish is to defeat and take control of completely. I saw a church sign that said: Fear knocked on the door and when faith answered no one was there.

Every day thank God for your blessing and miracles and that you are alive.

Janet Lowe

Thursday, March 22

Philippians 2:1-11

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

It looks like God is encouraging us to be busy bodies. The verse is out of context. God doesn't want us to be gossips, or judgmental. Each of us is entrusted with the responsibility of the One church. It's not just all about us. It is about our fellow persons, all the people around us. We are all responsible to help each other. Not just with enough food, clothing, or shelter. But with our spiritual growth. We need to welcome each other into the Body of Christ. For ALL to know Christ.

Adrienne Bolbot

Friday, March 23

Philippians 2:12-18

Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world.

What causes the stars to shine? Pumbaa, the warthog from the Lion King and possessor of a great scientific mind tells us “they were balls of gas burning billions of miles away”. Timon, the doubter, replies, “Pumbaa, with you, everything’s gas.”

I know I can be a big hot bag of air that emits the light of words and actions beyond my physical presence. There are times when my ego gets heated up to the point that it constructs blinders on me keeping me from seeing others, understanding how they feel, or from even stopping to try. Being left on my own unchecked is not a place I want to inhabit. Can you relate?

I believe that selfishness is in me and in all of us from all generations that have ever been. God still chose and continues to choose us and use us to be a light upon the world. Lent is especially helpful for me in realizing how much I need other believers to guide and shape me to shine. As Martin Luther said, “When God wants to speak and deal with us, he does not avail himself of an angel but of parents, or the pastor, or of our neighbor.”

May you be blessed by those who care enough to guide you to shine.

Dave Harney

Saturday, March 24

Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' ⁵²*Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.'* *Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.*

Mark in his presentation of the journey to Jerusalem provides a number of experiences demonstrating the God given capabilities of Jesus. There is the healing of the blind person, who through faith and willingness to seek out Jesus is made sighted so that he can become a follower of Jesus. Accepting Christ as our Savior from evil, doubt and despair is our challenge too. We need to be willing to see our failings and weakness, to seek Him out, accept His liberating gift through grace, and become a follower.

During the journey, Jesus further reveals Himself as God on earth when He takes the apostles aside to tell them of His future crucifixion and resurrection. The experience is startling and discomfoting as it is for us. We are taken back from the amazing work Jesus has been doing to consider the tragic end of the journey. The foreboding of the events to come provides meaning for the journey as is our journey during lent. We contemplate what Jesus does for us as we follow Him on our journey through lent.

Curt Siegel

Sunday, March 25
Sunday of the Passion

Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Monday, March 26
Monday in Holy Week

John 12:1-11

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor? (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

Tuesday, March 27
Tuesday in Holy Week

John 12:20-36

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

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

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

Wednesday, March 28
Wednesday in Holy Week

John 13:21-32

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples — the one whom Jesus loved — was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

Thursday, March 29 Maundy Thursday

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not

greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 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.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Friday, March 30 Good Friday

John 18 – 19:42

¹After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" ⁵They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." ⁹This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

¹²So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that

disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

¹⁹Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." ²²When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

²⁸Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went out to

them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." ³¹Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." ³²(This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

³³Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." ³⁷Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the

face. ⁴Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." ⁵So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" ⁶When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." ⁷The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

⁸Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" ¹¹Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." ¹²From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

¹³When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" ¹⁵They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." ¹⁶Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus; ¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he

went out to what is called *The Place of the Skull*, which in Hebrew is called *Golgotha*. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰Many 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. ²¹Then 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.'" ²²Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." ²³When 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. ²⁴So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

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

²⁵And 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. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." ²⁹A 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. ³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he

bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹Since 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. ³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) ³⁶These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." ³⁷And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

³⁸After 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. ³⁹Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now 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. ⁴²And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Saturday, March 31 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 11
Resurrection of Our Lord

Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.



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