

# Lenten Standard Time

## A Devotional Guide to Reclaiming the Sacredness of Time

*“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”*

Mark 1:15



From the  
Trinity Presbyterian Church Family  
Herndon, Virginia  
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## Welcome

Dear Friends,

When Jesus began his ministry, he said, “The time is fulfilled.” The time is coming this month for the season of Lent. This is the time; the time is now. As Lent begins this month, let us seek to reclaim the time in and by which we live.

We all have to keep track of time. There are deadlines to meet, planes to catch, meetings to attend, projects to complete. Calendars and clocks have become our masters. Jeremy Rifkin’s book, *Time Wars*, details how time came to control our lives. Rifkin notes that it was not until the fifteenth century that clocks began to show up at town squares. It was not until the seventeenth century that those clocks began to have minute hands.



When life became divided into hours, minutes, and seconds, much was gained. But a lot was lost as well. We live at an increasing distance from the ancient but timeless understanding that each day, each minute, each moment, is an unearned gift from a gracious God rather than a commodity to be traded or spent for something else.

As we move into the season of Lent, let us seek to reclaim the sacredness of time as a gift from God and an opportunity to draw ever closer to Jesus Christ. We’ll explore this theme of time this Lent here at Trinity. Special events will be offered throughout the six weeks between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. After getting ready for Lent with the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, we’ll have something for everyone: the Ash Wednesday Service of Ashes, a Lenten Coffee House featuring guest musicians, a Lenten Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction, a Lenten Prayer Supper, and even a Lenten Reflection on Art with special guest leaders. Holy Week worship will include special services on Palm/ Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. And our Lenten observance will conclude on Easter Sunday with a congregational potluck Easter breakfast, the children’s Easter Egg Hunt, and two Easter Celebration worship services with Holy Communion, special music, and a sanctuary adorned with Easter lilies.

“The kingdom of God has come near,” Jesus announces. Jesus knew all there was to know about time. He knew when the time had come to give his life. “The time is fulfilled,” said Jesus. Now, this Lent, is the moment of our salvation.

This Lenten season, this Lenten time, is rich with divine possibility. Here we stand at the threshold between “chronos” or human time, and “kairos” or divine time, Christ time. “The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand.” It is time for Lent and time for us to reclaim the sacredness of time. The time is now for us to live in Lenten Standard Time.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Stephen Smith-Cobbs Pastor



10 am

*Easter Egg Hunt*

11 am

*A Time to Rejoice Worship Service*

## Secular or Sacred Time?

During 2005-2006, the Bible study undertaken by the Presbyterian Women's Circles was For Everything' A Season—A Study of the Liturgical Calendar by Kathleen Long Bostrom. In our Circle meetings we discussed the effects of time on our lives, our worship, and our relationship with God. As Kathleen Long Bostrom said in lesson One:

...Time has been with us since, well, the beginning of time! When God formed creation out of chaos, the measurement of time was a critical factor in providing structure. ...Each day has an agenda. The cycle and rhythm of creation continues until there is a week of seven days, thus forming a pattern that gives order to the newborn world.

In Genesis 2:4-3:24, we find a very different sense of time. Eden conveys an aura of unordered, unrushed time – in ways, a sense of timelessness. The first man and the first woman live in a place where there are no deadlines, no hurry. When Adam and Eve break God's only rule by eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God banishes them from Eden and the measuring of time begins. Adam and Eve learn that they will die; time that was endless has now become limited.

Without some ordering and measuring of time, life would be chaos... ...Time can be an anchor, without which we feel tossed by waves of chaos...

Before the invention of clocks, people tracked time by watching nature – the rising and setting of the sun and moon, the changing seasons, the movement of the stars in the sky, the phases of the moon. Over the centuries people developed a daily schedule that revolved around prayers. In the time of Christ, times set for prayer and meditation included dawn, noon, sundown, and midnight.

In the book, Brunelleschi's Dome by Ross King, the author discussed many of the innovations which arose during the building of the massive dome for the Santa Maria del Fiori cathedral in Florence, Italy. One of these innovations was a method for tracking time.

...Upon arriving at the cathedral, the men had their names inscribed on a gesso board, rather like punching a clock in a factory, while the working hours were recorded by a sand hourglass. Later [Filippo] would institute an even more precise form of discipline on the building site of Santo Spirito, where an *oriuolo di mezz'oro*, a half-hour clock, regulated the working day by chiming every thirty minutes. The conception of time was changing in the fifteenth century. Throughout the Middle Ages it had been associated with the liturgical hours. The Latin word *hora*, hour, was in fact synonymous with prayer. Each of these hours had been divided into four parts of ten minutes' duration, while each minute was divided into forty moments. By 1400, however, it had become the custom to divide the hour into sixty minutes, and each minute into sixty seconds. The pace of life was increasing. [See Vincent Cronin, *The Florentine Renaissance* (London: Collins, 1967), 96.]

Following the invention of the clock to mark the hours and minutes of the days, towns began displaying clocks in prominent places such as church towers. Where before people had looked to the church as a place to connect with the sacred and to withdraw from the demands of time, they now looked to the church building to determine the time.

Now we find the need to perform a balancing act between secular (chronos) time and sacred (kairos) time. It is important to observe sacred time through such spiritual pursuits as prayer and meditation which help us connect with the eternal reality of God. These sacred moments allow us to withdraw from the restrictions of secular time and move forward in our personal faith journeys. We find ourselves in the midst of sacred time when we pray, meditate, pursue artistic endeavors, stand still and listen to music, lose ourselves in the pages of a book, or dance, just for the fun of it.



Within the pages of this Lenten Standard Time booklet, we have the opportunity to deepen our faith by spending some sacred time in prayer and meditation – reading the suggested Bible verse for each day, allowing God to speak to us through the words of the meditations, praying for understanding and inspiration, and responding to God’s calling.

May you feel God’s presence in these sacred moments of sacred time in the midst of your busy days.

Jane

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.*

*Psalm 19:14*

**February 17, 2010**

**Ash Wednesday**

**Take Time – Now**

By George Forner

Read: Ezekiel 18:30-32

The book of Ezekiel is unique in that it covered the life of Israel for a fifty-year time frame that included the capture and destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The writing of today's Ash Wednesday scripture occurred before the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel was warning the Israelites to repent and stop sinning; appealing for a new heart and spirit so that they would not die but live on in God's world.

That same message is "spot-on" for us as we enter the Lenten season. It is up to us to take time, repent, and renew our hearts and spirits in God's work. It is a call for us to move on by renewing our spirit and devoting our energies to work in God's kingdom. There is much that we can do in this world by devoting our time and energies to God's work. Let us, therefore, go forward into this Lenten season with a positive spirit dedicated to his work!

**Questions for Reflection:**

Are there any specific actions I can take to better my role in the life of Trinity.

If so, when might I start?

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*Help us, O Lord, to pause and give thought to ways that we can change our selfishness in life and contribute more to your work among others around us here at Trinity and in Herndon--and to those who are in need around the world.*

**February 18, 2010**

***This Is Your Life***

By Betty Eidemiller

Read: Deuteronomy 30:19-20

*I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse...for this is your life and the length of your days.....*

I am a peer counselor for a breast cancer hotline. The caller and I are matched based on similarities of disease and treatment, and our conversation begins with these comparisons and related questions. Regardless, the query always lurks, “what will be the length of my days?” Nothing like a cancer diagnosis makes you ponder that question. Linda McCartney and I got the news the same day. In spite of all the earthly things the wife of a Beatle could command, her lifespan was less than 3 years more.

Wondering why, second guessing, is futile human frailty. We counsel “step back, take time, one day at a time, live life each day as best you feel you can.”

Christ knew that his days on earth were numbered. I cannot know when Christ, fully human, fully divine, clearly saw what his earthly end would be. But we do know that among his trials were 40 days in the wilderness, seeking divine counsel, denial of temptations, and resolution to accept and trust the path that was before him.

**Question for Reflection:**

How can I set time aside in my own personal wilderness to separate the conflicting voices, to study the scriptures, to hear the one true God, and determine my path in the footsteps of Christ?

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*Glorious and eternal God, you are the alpha and omega, and we are like the seed that withers on the rocky path when we encounter the difficulties of life. Help us to take time, choose life, to till the fertile ground, to walk with confidence on whatever length path that you have set before us, loving the Lord our God, obeying your voice, and holding fast to You. In full assurance of your promise all the way back to Abraham, the promise fulfilled in Christ, Amen.*

**February 19, 2010**

***Linear or Sacred Time***

By Chris Dancy

Read: Romans 8:38-39

**38** *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Time has become a commodity. And in our Northern Virginia, Nation's Capital, rush-rush world, a commodity far more precious than it ought to be.

Time, for us, is linear. It has a start. It has an end. Every minute, every second, has a shelf life. Once past, that minute, that second, has lost its usefulness, even if it was spent pleurably and productively.

But there is another time. Sacred time. God's time. Time without end. Time immemorial. Today's verses from Romans are some of the most uplifting, most inspirational to be found in the New Testament.

Think about it! God's love for us knows no end. It always was and it always will be. There is no time, no thing that God will allow to come between us.

During Stephen Smith-Cobbs' first summer as pastor at Trinity Presbyterian, he preached a sermon on the 23rd Psalm titled, "Pursued by Goodness and Mercy." The premise was that the phrase, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me..." is more accurately translated as "pursued by goodness and mercy. *That is the God we see here. God actively chasing us down, keeping us close so that nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

May it ever be so!

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*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

*God, You know our hearts and our needs even before we do. Thank You for never turning your back on us, even though we, in our arrogance and ignorance, may try to turn our backs on You. Hold us close no matter how much we may struggle and squirm. This we pray in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

**February 20, 2010**

***A Time for Leaving Everything***

By Carroll Leslie Bastian

Read: Luke 5:27-28

*After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up, left everything, and followed him.*

This two-sentence account of Jesus' calling of Levi (Matthew) to be a disciple is a popular Sunday school story easily passed over by adults. We think it's from another time and place, not about us, but about those society nobodies that Jesus snatched from their humdrum lives and totally transformed to become The Church. In those days tax collectors, who worked for Herod or Rome and skimmed off excessive amounts for themselves, were hugely despised. Perhaps following Jesus on the open road would have been seen by Levi and other disciples as more opportunity than sacrifice? Did they have family problems that eased their decision to leave? Anyway, they went. It's not for us.

Oh, yes, we know that "Follow me" applies to us. We Presbyterians are aware of our "calling" and responsibility to "discern" which path of career and discipleship is best for us and for God. We go on retreats and map our "journeys of faith" with hills and valleys of acceptance and rejection, with false turns down dead-end lanes, and detours into thorns and thistles. Our faith in God Incarnate, Immanuel, sustains our hopes that if we discern poorly, we'll be able to serve God wherever we land. Next month perhaps we'll think about our present bearings and future directions...

But we Presbyterians, no matter how much we talk about grace, still have nagging doubts. There's that "total depravity" thing. We can't shed all our guilt about priorities. But as we make charts and cost-benefit analyses and pencil in appointments on work and personal calendars, there is no consideration of leaving everything to follow Jesus. Only a handful of missionaries and weirdoes-for-Christ think that way! We have families to feed, workers who depend on us .... There just isn't time!

Our lengthy explanations of why we can't be like Levi use up all our remaining time and cover up the many opportunities for everyday discipleship. OK, I'll stop and abandon these comfy "we" generalities. **I** am a poor steward of my daily moments. **I** am always rushing around like Alice chasing the white rabbit. **I** schedule my moments of spiritual devotion as if they were committee meetings. When holy possibilities "come to me" in prayer or "out of the blue," **I** fail to give credit to the Holy Spirit's initiative, and **I** decide when and whether to pay attention.

I believe myself to be a strong Christian believer, a "good" Presbyterian, and one for whom church life is, in many ways, my life. Yet I still cannot give myself over totally to God's different way of thinking about time and what's important in "passing" time. Yet, when a real crisis comes, it is easy to drop everything and change priorities. I can get on the next plane to fly far away for the funeral of a dear person I could not earlier find time to visit. I can write checks for hurricane and earthquake relief to organizations whose pleas I ignored in calm times. I can marvel watching persons affected by catastrophic disasters cast aside all previous priorities and rejoice in God's present blessings. They don't have to choose to drop everything to follow God's path, because they have nothing left—except God, who to them is everything.

A blessing of my occupation is the opportunity to visit Sunday school classrooms. Recently the first/second grade class was studying the Calling of the Disciples. After telling the children that Jesus called the original disciples and is still calling disciples today, the

teacher asked, "How many people do you think Jesus calls to be disciples?" Without hesitation one child said "three billion." [Had she been reading Wikipedia, which gives 2-3 billion as an estimate of the present Christian population?] But another, perhaps not to be outdone, answered "infinity." Wow! Yes! That IS possible for the God of nothing-is-impossible. Jesus has been and will be calling everyone, forever, and is able to succeed, in the end, in establishing an endless number of disciples who will be much better followers than Levi, you, or me.

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*Dear Lord,*

*Please help me, and everyone, follow Jesus at the time when Jesus calls...and calls....and calls again. Help us to leave everything, even our own timepieces, even our own idea about what we "should" be doing in Christ's kingdom, so that "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**February 21, 2010**

***First Sunday in Lent***

***A Time to Be Tempted***

Read: Luke 4:1-13

**Questions for Reflection:**

How does temptation feel?

What form does temptation take in my life?

What has or might help me in times when my faith is challenged?

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*God of creation, of all time and space,*

*Sometimes I am so busy filling time, that I forget to leave space. I need space to ponder, pray, and simply just to "be." You created order out of chaos and brought time into existence. I use time in such a way as to invite chaos back into the world. I keep time, lose time, waste time, spend time, even kill time, as I fill each day and night with a checklist of chores. Time is such a precious gift! For you have made everything suitable for its time. This day, this hour, this minute, this second, I shall cherish time. And I thank you for all the times and seasons of my life. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray.*

*Amen.*

Kathleen Long Bostrom, *For Everything, A Season – A Study of the Liturgical Calendar*

**February 22, 2010**

***Time Moves Forward: For Those in Need in Other Countries...and Down the Street... Now is a Critical Time***

By Gene Lucas

Read: Matthew 25: 34-35, 40

*... Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me," ... And the King will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."*

Many of us learn about tragic and devastating events by watching coverage on our televisions, listening to radio newscasts or viewing information from various internet sources. One of the most devastating tragedies occurred on January 12<sup>th</sup> of 2010, when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti and resulted in over 100,000 casualties. This earthquake has also impacted over 3,000,000 Haitians who are dealing with many issues including hunger, life threatening wounds and illness, and homelessness. Many of these people involved in this daily struggle to survive are young children and youth who have nowhere to go for help. Another similar natural tragedy that occurred was the so called Christmas Tsunami that occurred on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004. A massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake caused a tsunami to sweep across the Indian Ocean causing high waves that crashed over ocean-front areas in many Southeast Asian countries and killed over 150,000. And in the United States, we all are aware of the devastation that Hurricane Katrina caused in the Gulf Coast states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

These three massive tragedies, along with other tragedies, have deservedly garnered world attention and prayer, medical assistance, and financial aid which came from many sources around the world. And in all these cases, much more prayer, medical assistance, and financial aid will be needed to help these affected people move forward in time.

While these mentioned tragedies are so massive in scope, we also should not overlook other situations that require our prayers, our love and concern, and our assistance. Jesus said that it was God's Will that we help those in need. There are many people in need in our local area who need our love and support because they are suffering through bad times caused by family, medical, employment, or financial issues. There are many opportunities with local, regional, national, or world-wide charitable organizations where we can assist those in need.

There are no "preferred" people, organizations or approaches that should be considered the norm when we think about helping the needy. There are just so many that need help that we need to act whenever we can. When we help others, as Jesus says, we are helping a child of God.

**Questions for Reflection:**

How can I make a difference?

How can I help others when I already have a life full of responsibilities for my family and job?

Remember that with God's help you can do so much more than you ever thought was possible. How will you respond when a need arises?

---

*Father, there are so many of your children that are needy in close and far away locations. Help me to follow the words of Jesus to pray and to give my time, talent, and resources to assist those in need.*

**February 23, 2010**

***Jesus Teaches Us to Pray***

By Mary Ellen Jones

Read: Matthew 6:7-8

*And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

Prayer is such a deeply personal part of our religious life and practice, as individual as each of us and our relationship with God. Prayer can be simple and spontaneous or very eloquent and well-planned. There are prayers of joyful praise and thanksgiving, contrite confession, intercession, and requests for guidance and forgiveness.

Prayer is a conversation with God. We would probably all agree that our most meaningful conversations with family and friends are usually those that are uninterrupted and free from distractions, and are from the heart. Somehow I think God would be happy if we entered into prayer, our conversation with him, by setting aside a quiet time and place, free from all the distractions and demands of our daily lives. Doesn't God deserve this? Don't we deserve this too?

The Life Application Study Bible tells us that it is "not wrong to come to God many times with the same requests — Jesus encourages persistent prayer. But he condemns the shallow repetition of words that are not offered with a sincere heart. We can never pray too much if our prayers are honest and sincere." And when we pray, we need to make sure we mean what we pray.

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*Heavenly Father, teach us to be honest and sincere in our prayers. Amen.*

**February 24, 2010**

***A Time to Speak and a Time to Listen***

By Debbie Burgener

Read: Philippians 2:12-15

*“Therefore my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe...”*

The Apostle Paul was most likely imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter to the church in Philippi. It was written to convey his gratitude for the gift of money they had sent him in support of his ongoing work spreading the Gospel message. In it, Paul also took the opportunity to encourage the congregation to continue in their spiritual growth and their reverence of God. Do you think in Paul’s earlier life he ever imagined he would become an evangelist for Christ taking him to far corners of his known world and even then being sent to prison for carrying out that life mission? Life took many turns for Paul and led him in many directions over his lifetime. Yet Paul never questioned his fate, but instead *rejoiced* in his situation that allowed him to be an even greater witness to Christ and to fulfill everything that God’s plan intended for him. That is because Paul never wavered in his faith, he unceasingly recognized the awesome sovereignty of God, and stayed obedient to Him and His will. All in God’s time.

When we face challenges or difficulties in our lives, our first reaction is probably to grumble or ask why me? When we are called by God to do something that seems impossible or too uncomfortable, we argue with him and offer excuses to avoid the commitment. But the will of God will never take us where his grace will not protect us. Why? Because God rejoices in each one of us as well. His plan for every person is to bring that good work to completion with salvation in Jesus Christ even if it takes a lifetime.

Paul challenges us to do everything with a Christ-like attitude, to exercise humility, to shine like stars, and let God work out his sovereign plan through us. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, rejoice!

---

*Lord, God. You are so awesome. You have given each of us a life to enjoy in relationship with you -- one that fits perfectly in Your plan. Help us to live out our lives like Jesus did – righteously, with humility, and giving all glory to you, remembering that our lifetime is all in God’s time. Amen.*

**February 25, 2010**

***Rejoice in the Lord***

By David Wilkinson

Read: Hebrews 10:35-36

*Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.*

The author of Hebrews wrote to people who had been suffering persecution and imprisonment. They had little to hope for in the life of their times. Occupying Rome was still denying them the rights of their own leadership. This was within fifty years of when Jesus came with the promise of eternal life. Without hope, there is nothing to live for. Maranatha! Lord, come quickly!

Today, we look back on over two thousand years of saying, "Maranatha! Lord, come quickly!" Will he be coming? Will it be soon? Come rescue us from the problems of this world; it is hard to live here in these conditions. This Thursday, we look at the news. More unemployment, more hungry people, possibly another earthquake or major storm. How can we live without hope that your promises are true? How easy would it be to throw away the knowledge of the promise. Jesus hasn't returned for two thousand years. How easy to say there is no hope.

What is God's work that we can do, and focus on his promise that will be seen? People are cold and hungry. There is a deep need for a miracle - Now!

Yesterday, some of us helped to feed hungry men, women and children who see Trinity - Herndon as their place to worship God and sing praises. Coming in, they can bring my spirit down as there seems to be little hope for them in Herndon, but they bring me up again with their hands raised in worship. They see some hope in looking toward Jesus, and his love promised in the gospel. These people come in with smiles, maybe knowing that there is a warm meal ready for them, but with heavy hearts. They often group with others from their homeland. They share concerns; a mother sick at home in El Salvador, a father in Guatemala with cancer, and the frustration that they can't be there. A prayer unites them for the meal, and gives them a topic of hope to discuss. After the meal, the songs are raised, praising God and stating that Jesus cares for them. A message of hope and promise brings smiles to their faces; they share what is happening in their lives. They leave with bigger smiles and sometimes a bag of food to eat later or to share.

I leave with the knowledge that Jesus was there for them to see. Christ is there in the hands of those who prepared the meal, in the voice of the person with the message, and in each person who stayed to participate in the worship. Christ is in your heart when you reach out to the person in need.

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*Lord, keep my focus out of the depths of distress in all that I see around me and let me focus on You and Your love. Teach me to share that love with those who are brought to me as my neighbor, even if they are from far away. We both need to see and feel Your love, and together we can overcome the barriers of language and other difference. Teach us to see Your love for each other. Amen*

**February 26, 2010**

***Be Reconciled***

By Tom Mawson

Read: Matthew 5:23-25

*"So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison."*

In this time of Lent, it is good for us to reflect on the sins that Jesus endured before his crucifixion: betrayal, doubt, fear, and sin. Those who crucified Jesus were not aware of the full scope of what they were doing because they did not recognize Him as the Messiah. While their ignorance of Jesus as God on earth did not mean they deserved forgiveness, Christ's prayers for forgiveness while on the cross are an expression of His limitless compassion of divine grace.

Lent helps us remember how Jesus suffered for our sake. However, if we look closely in our hearts, we know that sin still dwells in us, that we still carry darkness. As sinners, every day our wrongdoings pile up, and we feel their weight and may become overburdened. God understands the weight of our sins and reminds us we do not have to carry them any longer. We remember that Christ died for our sins. Let us take this time to resolve to forgive our neighbors, our accusers, and our enemies, because when we forgive others, our sins are erased. When we forgive, our anger and frustration are forgiven and we feel the love of God. So strong is God's love for us that we are totally overwhelmed.

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*Merciful God, forgive us our sins and help us to forgive those who sin against us.  
Amen.*

**February 27, 2010**

***Sun and Rain for All***

By John Wilson

Read: Matthew 5:44-45

*“But I say, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be children of your father in heaven; for He makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” Matthew 5:44-45*

As I write this, 23 inches of snow has fallen and the power is out: A perfect illustration of snow and power outage falling on the righteous and the unrighteous! I may have an unrighteous person in my neighborhood but I can't blame this on him.

Good and evil, the righteousness and the unrighteous have been with us from the time of Adam and Eve. We are all “children of your Father in heaven” and so we not only live in a world of good and evil, we all have the capability to choose good or evil. God has given us free will and desires that we do “good”. However, the Apostle Paul recognized that we sometimes choose evil in spite of our best intentions.

History has taught us that it's not always easy to distinguish good from evil. The inquisition was considered good and righteous by the church leaders. The killing of doctors who performed abortions was considered good and righteous by those who committed the acts and their supporters. Generally our actions fall in between extremes; our “evil” may be a harsh word and our “good” a word of encouragement. The Bible reminds us that we all fall short of the example set by Jesus and are in need of forgiveness whether we recognize it or not.

Every Sunday we recognize our imperfection through the Prayer of Confession. The purpose is not to berate ourselves. Rather, for me, it's a corporate acknowledgement that we are all children of God and the struggle between good and evil is with us always.

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*Lord, help us discern good from evil in our lives; forgive our trespasses and encourage our goodness. Help us to pray for the righteous and unrighteous, for we are all your children. Amen.*

**February 28, 2010**

**Second Sunday in Lent**

***A Time To Be Healed***

Read: Luke 6:6-11

**Questions for Reflection:**

Who do I know who is in need of healing?

How might I help this person to mend?

What wounds do I have which need God's healing touch?

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*God of the beginning and of the end, and of all the times in-between; my spirit is in need of some mending. There are pieces that have come loose, and need some tightening. There are items that no longer fit, and need to be replaced. There are stains that I cannot remove, no matter how hard I try. Only you can do that. I give to you the torn scraps, the cast-off garments, the needles and thread; and wait with joyous expectation to discover the new creation that you will make of me and of all your world, through Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and ever shall be.*

*Amen.*

Kathleen Long Bostrom, *For Everything, A Season – A Study of the Liturgical Calendar*

**March 1, 2010**

***Letting God's Mercy Free Us***

By Nancy Wilson

Read: Luke 6:36-37

*“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged;  
Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”*

The Scripture reading describes Jesus teaching his disciples and a large crowd who have come to be healed. What Jesus seems to be saying to them and to us is that, when we truly accept the mercy and forgiveness of God, we can create that kind of atmosphere in which to live. We teach others how to treat us by the way we treat them and the way we treat ourselves.

If we are merciful toward others and ourselves, as God is merciful to us, we are more apt to be treated mercifully. If we are tolerant and non-judging, we accept our own imperfections more gently, as well as those of others, knowing God loves us all just as we are. And if we can forgive ourselves and others, as God forgives us, we are more likely to be forgiven by others and to be able to receive that forgiveness.

So often, we are our own harshest critics. Jesus seems to be telling us to be merciful, to not judge or condemn, and to forgive – ourselves as well as others.

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*Oh merciful God, thank you for your mercy and grace and forgiveness. Help me to receive it deep into my being, and to radiate it out to my brothers and sisters.  
Amen*

**March 2, 2010**

***Time to be Last***

By P.J. Miller

Read: Matthew 23-11-12

*But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

The snow is coming and people are all scurrying around doing things they think can't wait – mostly shopping for lettuce, ice cream, and Cheetos. Mercy, you'd think the forecast was for months of being cut off from all we know and love rather than for just a few days.

But scurry we do and standing in lines or driving in traffic makes us crazy. Other people just don't move quickly enough. The things we need to get done are way more important than what other people want to accomplish. We just can't get to the front of whatever fast enough.

And then the message comes across loud and clear in the form of 20 to 24 inches of weather that we can stop, we can adjust, we can wait . . .

In this passage from Matthew, we are reminded that in getting caught up in the small details of everyday life we can lose the chance to see and experience the Bigger Picture. When we are so involved in the "busyness" of keeping a schedule or making a meeting, we can miss the chance to appreciate the "a-ha" moments that truly fed our spirit. It is when we take the time to breathe and be in the moment that we keep our faith alive. When we get the message.

Hopefully by March 2 we will have dug out from the snows that have stopped us all. And hopefully we will remember that our joy comes from following Jesus and from learning that by lightening our load of obligations we will have room in our lives to be the servant Jesus calls us to be.

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*Heavenly Father, help us to live in your time, to truly believe that your load is easy and your burden light, and to walk humbly with you.*

**March 3, 2010**

***Serving Others***

By Tom Pierson

Read: Matthew 20:26-28 (RSV)

*... But Jesus called them [the twelve] and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many."*

For me, this passage teaches humility; it is consistent with many of Jesus' other teachings that were viewed in his day as revolutionary, or heretical, and are viewed by many in this way to this day, such as loving our neighbors and praying for those who would do us harm.

On its surface the statement is counter-intuitive; or at least counter to human experience as recorded in most of our history, including during Jesus' time. Then and now, leaders in the political, corporate, and military realms would not have achieved their status by behaving as servants or slaves; this seems so improbable as to be impossible in human society. It runs counter to current frames of reference, such as the very persuasive and influential sports culture, where, for many, to be anything other than number one is to be a loser.

But for me this begs the question of the lesson that Jesus intends in this passage. For Jesus, leadership means not conquering through force of arms, profit, or the law, but through force of humble and selfless example, and ultimately through love for others. How disarmingly confounding is the notion that whoever would be great must be a servant and whoever would be first must be a slave. But Jesus proved the power of this notion through his example of service and sacrifice.

Nothing demonstrates the force of his example better than the willingness Jesus showed to accept mankind's failings and weakness as his responsibility. The result was to offer us a better way to relate to others. If Jesus was willing to sacrifice so much for this ideal, how difficult should it be for us to do the same, on a simpler and far less painful scale? We have opportunities every day to live up to this ideal of servanthood, of putting others first.

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*Heavenly Father, help us to understand your word and to act in accordance with your will. Help us to understand what it means to be a servant in today's world and to recognize how we can serve others using the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that we have been blessed to receive. Amen.*

**March 4, 2010**

***Time and Time Again***

By Ginger Wilkinson

Read: Jeremiah 17:10

*“The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But I, God, search the heart and examine the mind. I get to the root of things. I treat them as they really are, not as they pretend to be”* Jeremiah 17: 9-10, The Message

We all have a problem. That problem is hiding behind masks—being who the world wants us to be, not who we really are. How often do we hear the phrase “I just had no idea that...” used by an interviewee in describing the perpetrator of a crime or reacting to some other tragedy. Another problem is the deep longing of our hearts for a soul mate, or other deep relationship.

But it takes time to become comfortable enough to remove our masks, let our hair down and become truly vulnerable with others. This is often true of our relationship with God as well. It is all too easy to assume that we are hiding from God as well as our neighbors. It feels safe, and we like it that way. However, as Jeremiah reminds us, God sees all the ugly “stuff” that we hide behind our masks. He calls us to let go of it and come honestly to spend time with Him. God is big enough to handle all the complaining and railing that we have within us.

Read some of the Psalms, especially the Psalms of lament. You can be honest with God, sharing any anger, complaining, and “how long” that we have within us, as well as our thanks and praise. As a dyed in the wool perfectionist, I find this difficult, because, after all, I need to be Miss Perfection to the world including God. I’m learning to be vulnerable with others, but it has been a very long process of confession and re-confession, of admitting the things I hate about myself to God and asking him to remove them or to help me see them through his eyes. Being involved with PW, the prayer chain, and in other small group settings at Trinity has helped with the process because it is a place that is safe to take that chance and be honest. People hold each other up in prayer as they walk and encourage each other to grow. And God is infinitely patient and waits for us to come and to be honest before him. How freeing it is to be in a place where we can admit our faults to one another and to be rid of the masks and walls. May you find that peace as you learn to take time this Lent to remember that God knows everything about you and still loves you so much that if you were the only sinner on earth, he would have sent Jesus to die and pay the penalty for your sins. Thank God today for this great love.

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*O God of second chances and new beginnings, here I come again. Give me the courage to live honestly before you, myself and others. Teach me to take time to know you. Thank you for your patience and love. In Jesus precious name I pray. Amen*

**March 5, 2010**

***Feeding the Body and the Soul***

By Dixon Boulware

Read: Matthew 21:43

*"... Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom."*

Matthew in chapter 21 is relating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem upon which he runs out the money changers from the temple and begins immediately teaching the people. Jesus is confronted by the priests and the Pharisees and shares two parables with them, each of which describes services rendered and denied. Jesus is demonstrating that Heaven is a gift earned through service and not inherited, and that all that seek to become part of the kingdom of Heaven are welcomed. Jesus as related in Matthew 21:43 tells the priests and Pharisees that the kingdom they believe to be theirs can be taken away and given to others based on the lack of service that bears fruit in the name of the Lord.

**Questions for Reflection:**

How do I interpret these words as provided by Matthew?

How can they help me today or tomorrow?

These are tough questions and for me it comes down to service, Jesus is asking us to serve God and be fruitful, in word and deed. The first parable of the two sons demonstrates that we always will have the chance to do the right thing and that saying one thing and doing another will surely cost us in the end. The second parable certainly outlines how wicked men can become to include those that profess a belief in God; but Jesus also tells the priests and Pharisees that even wicked men can become part of the foundation of heaven.

So Matthew 21:43 warns us that the Kingdom of heaven can be lost to us without service to God and his word, so I try to the best of my ability to provide some of the service requested of us as the people of God. I try to help through Rebuilding Together, Service days at Trinity, with the youth and with those who would ask me for help, I do these things so that I can be part of the foundation of Trinity and heaven and expand it to others.

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*Father hear my words and let your wisdom become part of my heart and that through this grace that I may serve You as You have saved me. Amen.*

**March 6, 2010**

***How Long Must I Wait***

By Jane Bourne

Read: Luke 15:18-20

*I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion' he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.*

This Bible passage is part of the Parable of the Prodigal Son; a familiar story to most of us. Like all parables, each time we read or hear it, we find new depths of meaning and insights. As I read these verses and thought about our Lenten theme, time, I began to visualize this young son, practicing the words he would say to his father when, or if, he saw his father again. The young man had little reason to believe that he would even be allowed to work as one of his father's hired hands. By telling his father that he wanted his inheritance now, he had, in essence, said, "I don't have time to wait for you to die. I wish you were dead so that I could really begin living my life. What you can give me is more important to me than you are."

I imagine this young son, destitute, hungry, disheveled, making the journey back to his home. Imagine him approaching his home town, fearing that the towns people would beat him for disgracing his father, dreading facing the pain in his father's eye at his betrayal. Imagine him seeing his father in the distance. How time must have stood still for him, until his father lifted his robe and ran forward to embrace him. For him, the wait was over and he knew his fate.

Lent is a time for waiting. Waiting to hear the familiar scripture readings again, waiting to renew our commitment to a loving and forgiving father, waiting for the reassurance of the resurrection, waiting, and waiting. How we choose to use this time of waiting is up to us.

**Questions for Reflection:**

Listed here are typical occasions when we find ourselves waiting for something or someone. As you find yourself in one of these situations, try thinking about the questions listed here. Then quietly listen for what advice or comfort God offers you directly or through others. End with a prayer of petition or intercession, naming those who are waiting. You may wish to share what you learn from these "waiting experiences" by writing in a journal or sharing your thoughts and feelings with someone.

What are the thoughts and emotions involved?

What is at stake?

What might you learn from this waiting?

How might you involve God in this waiting?

Today I experienced waiting...

In line at a store

For someone to go with me

For a ride                      For a telephone call  
For something to dry        To feel better  
For a meal                      To get home  
For something to begin    Waiting for something to end  
For a letter or package    To be forgiven  
For a friend to visit        For someone to get well  
To get over being angry    For someone to die  
For a child to be born      For meaningful work to do  
For a job                        My turn to speak  
To share something        For my road to be cleared  
For someone to be in a better mood  
For the courage to say something

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*God of all time, grant me patience as I wait. I thank You for giving me the opportunities to wait and to grow closer to You. Amen.*

**March 7, 2010**

**Third Sunday in Lent**

**A Time To Repent**

Read: Luke 13:1-9

**Questions for Reflection:**

Why does God call us to repentance?

Are there things I hold onto which interfere with my relationship with God?

What would it take for me to turn away from these things and begin anew?

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*How I long for spring – when fresh air blows through curtains of lace and linen; when buds break forth on barren branches; when sunlight tickles the chill and sends it, laughing, away. But now, O God, is the time when Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, with dusty and calloused feet that never yielded to the temptation to take another path. As I yearn for spring and new life in the making, keep me steady on the path, keep me balanced as I go; teach me what to keep and what to release. Lead me through the valley of shadows into the springtime of the soul. In the name of the Christ of all seasons I pray. Amen.*

Kathleen Long Bostrom, For Everything, A Season – A Study of the Liturgical Calendar

**March 8, 2010**

**Acceptance**

By Renee Maxwell

Read: Luke 4:24, 28-30

*And he said, "Truly, I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. ... When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.*

It's so easy—accepting things. I accept that I now need reading glasses. I accept, although a little more reluctantly, that I will not be able to pay fully for Allison's and Erin's college educations. I even sadly accept that my efforts to help others will have a very small impact on ending hunger and poverty. "Accept" must be a weak, almost passive word for me, for, in today's contrasting passage, the hometown Nazareth congregation does not accept Jesus and, in a rage, seriously considers killing him!

These friends and family in Nazareth must be a little over the top. I find it hard to see myself as ever feeling so strongly that I would want to kill someone, especially a member of a local family. While my days are full of wonderful people and things, many of which bring me joy, I rarely find the energy and inner peace required to feel overly strong or passionate. At my best, I can be an inspiration, and, at my worst, I can be numb. The latter are the days that I lose to my "to do" list. They are the days that I worry about events and programs I've planned months in advance. They are the days I wish I could have back. My bland acceptance, and occasionally my lack thereof, has left me here.

The emotion conveyed by the Nazareth congregation is far from my idle acquiescence. The congregation furiously did not accept Jesus. The crowd showed real emotion—emotion that only someone or something that we personally know can invoke, and, in doing so, gave "acceptance" the true passion it deserves.

I should be able to feel this passion for the people and things about which I care. No, it's not that I should be able to; it's that I need to. I need to become involved and personal in my caring, loving, and knowing of my friends, my family, and my Lord. I pray that this Lenten season brings the growth that I, and perhaps all of us, need to *accept* Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

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*Lord, thank you for helping me to accept those things that stand in the way of my relationship with others, and more importantly, my relationship with You.*

**March 9, 2010**

***Are We Setting Impossible Standards for Our Brother?***

By Doug Reas

Read: Matthew 18:32-35

*“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”*

When Peter asks Jesus how many times we should forgive someone who has hurt us or sinned against us, Jesus gives a parable of the unmerciful servant. No doubt there is someone in your life that you find extremely hard to forgive. You may have found courage to forgive this person once and possibly a second time. The third and fourth offense seemed much harder to forgive. You attempted to overlook the offense. On occasions you pretended that you were not aware of all the circumstances. However in the back of your mind, you have started to connect the dots. You have begun to conclude that there is a definite pattern; and after a while you start to look at this person in a different light. You may even decide to hold this person to a much stricter standard. After all, the offenses seem to be habitual. The challenge comes when our Savior asks us to forgive not seven times, but seventy-seven times. For minor annoyances, like Neville Longbottom who always forgets things, forgiving seventy-seven times doesn’t seem that challenging. Yet when it comes to the abusive cruelty of Lord Voldemort and an unrepentant heart, how are we to interpret this passage? The cruelty we observe distances us from any sort of fellowship.

At the stoning of Stephen, Saul stood there giving full approval to Stephen’s death. Yet in a vision our Lord assures Ananias that the same person, Paul, is to be God’s chosen instrument to carry the message to the Gentiles. In the book of Acts, Paul repents; in Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort never repents. Should that make any difference? He, who angers us, controls us. The last six words of today’s scripture passage may hold the key: “... forgive your brother ... from your heart.”

**Questions for Reflection:**

Is there someone in your life for whom you have withheld forgiveness?

Is there someone in your life for which your anger towards them controls you?

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*Lord, help us to forgive our brothers in true sincerity from the depths of our heart. Forgive us when we hold tight to resentment. Forgive us when we hold our brothers to impossible standards and show no mercy toward their errors or mistakes. In Christ name we pray. Amen.*

**March 10, 2010**

***Keep Your Soul Diligently***

By Bill Brennan

Read: Deuteronomy 4:9

*“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.”*

“Shut up,” said God. No, really. You can look it up – Deuteronomy 3:26. (I’ve abridged the text somewhat, but that’s what it say – see for yourself).

“Shut up,” said God, who was angry with Moses. He had told Moses (over and over and over again) that Joshua would be leading the people into the Promised Land. Moses might look, but could not enter. And so I think of the remainder of Deuteronomy as an extended valedictory address by Moses to the people of Israel, reminding them of God’s greatness, God’s faithfulness, and charging them to keep the Law always, every bit of it.

So take care – and keep your soul diligently. That seems like an appropriate Lenten discipline. If only it were so easy...

Keeping the Law is not easy. But, thankfully, someone did it for us. The Good News is that the Greater Joshua –Yeshua – Jesus of Nazareth, kept the Law perfectly. And His death on the cross serves as the propitiation for our sins. (Such an odd word, “propitiation,” it just means that through Christ’s death on the Cross, God has been made favorably disposed towards us – that is Good News.)

And now, confident that God is with us – and more, that God is favorably disposed towards us – we need not keep the Law out of fear. But we can keep the Law with grateful and obedient hearts, knowing that – should we go astray, though there may be consequences – we have but to turn around and put our faith in the Lord. Then every tear will be wiped away...

Law and Gospel. Lent and Easter. They go together, hand in hand, like Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Blessed Trinity.

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*Oh, gracious and merciful God. We thank you for giving us Your law and for your grace that pulls us back when we go astray. We give thanks with grateful and obedient hearts. Amen.*

**March 11, 2010**

***Eternity***

By Jane Bourne

Read: Luke 11:23

*Jesus said to her [Martha], "Your brother will rise again."*

Most of us are familiar with the story of Lazarus, how Martha chastised Jesus for not hurrying to save her brother. Jesus could have arrived sooner, before Lazarus died, but chose to wait until Lazarus was dead to clearly demonstrate the power that God had given him, so that the people would believe. When Jesus tells her that her brother will rise again, she thinks Jesus is speaking of the end times when all the dead would be raised. Martha lived in standard time (chronos) and was looking to Jesus to save her brother from death in the here and now. She didn't want to wait for eternity.

As I write these words, I am reminded of a description of eternity from Frederick Buechner page 100 of *Beyond Words: Daily Readings in the ABC's of Faith* (Harper Collins, 2004):

Eternity is not endless time or the opposite of time. It is the essence of time...

As human beings we know time as a passing of unrepeatable events in the course of which everything passes away – including ourselves. As human beings, we also know occasions when we stand outside the passing of events and glimpse their meaning. Sometimes an event occurs in our lives (a birth, a death, a marriage – some event of unusual beauty, pain, joy) through which we catch a glimpse of what our lives are all about and maybe even what life itself is all about, and this glimpse of what "it's all about" involves not just the present, but the past and future too.

Inhabitants of time that we are, we stand on such occasions with one foot in eternity, God, as Isaiah says (57:15), "inhabiteth eternity," but stands with one foot in time. The part of time where he stands most particularly is Christ, and thus in Christ we catch a glimpse of what eternity is all about, what God is all about, and what we ourselves are all about too.

**Questions for Reflection:**

Have you experienced those moments (a birth, a death, a marriage) when the past, present, and future seem to come together?

Have you ever thought what it might be like to stand with one foot in eternity and one foot firmly planted in this moment?

During times of meditation or prayer, have you felt that same sense of eternity?

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*Lord, slow me down. Help me to experience this sense of eternity here and now. Lead me, Lord, in paths you wish me to follow, so that the moments of my past, my present, and my future may blend into a white light of clarity. You are my Lord, for time and all eternity. Amen.*

**March 12, 2010**

***Perfect God***

By Les Dorland

Read: Mark 12:30

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”*

God is perfect and God loves me.

What is perfect love? The most perfect love imaginable is unconditional... a love that is constant, unwavering and without judgment. So if God is perfect, then God's love is perfect too: unconditional, constant, unwavering, without judgment.

But if God is perfect, and God's love is perfect, then what prevents me from being in a constant state of grace? Me.

I'm the impediment, not God. I need to listen with my heart open and my mind quiet. God didn't give me a heart to close off or a brain to use as a doorstop. God speaks to me in the silences and then bids me to have the patience to understand what He's said.

I hope I will gain faith. That's my journey to God, if and when I decide to undertake it.

All I need to practice my faith is God, and seek to reach that level of perfection in love that God has for me.

For me, that is my mission.

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*Let us pray:*

*Dear Heavenly Father, we have been blessed with Your gift of love. Give us the strength to go forward and share this gift. Let us not keep our lamps under a basket but let our vision serve as a beacon to light the path that we have chosen. In the name of Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**March 13, 2010**

***God's Healing Love***

By Char Wales

Read: Hosea 6:1-2

*"Come let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days, he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence."*

Reading this passage, just by itself, is deceptive. It appears so easy. The Lord will be there; all we have to do is to go to Him and all we be solved. The Easter message is there, even within the Old Testament.

But read it again --look at the words "He has torn us to pieces". Why are those words there? The answer lies in the chapters preceding, which paint a picture of the Lord exceedingly angry with Israel for all kinds of sinfulness starting with a massacre at Jezreel and including the worship of Baal and overall licentious behavior (by both men and women). It describes punishments of various sorts that the Lord will inflict on those who do not acknowledge Him and the role he plays in their lives. And then in the midst of all this unbelievable doom and gloom, we find passages like, not only Hosea 6:1-2, but also in the verse that follows (Hosea 6:3) before spending the rest of the Book in the same vein as before: "Let us acknowledge the Lord, let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

If one strips away everything else from Hosea, this is what we should focus on - not the God who tells Hosea to marry an already adulterous women, so that the Lord can use the children she subsequently bears as scapegoats — but on God's healing love.

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*Lord, hear my prayer. Lead me to greater understanding of your Word. Amen*

**March 14, 2010**

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**A Time To Give**

Read: John 12:1-8

**Questions for Reflection:**

What gifts have meant the most to me over the years?

What does it mean to “give generously, with your whole heart?”

What gifts do I have that I might share with others?

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*Creator of branches, rivers, and stones, of fiery flames and startling stars; kindle the spark of your spirit within us; set our hearts on fire. Knit us together – the hands, feet, ears, and eyes, and voices, and yes, even the elbows and knees, until we become one body in Christ. Gather us together as your people, into one person in Christ. Your will be done, in earth and in heaven; world without end.  
Amen.*

Kathleen Long Bostrom, For Everything, A Season – A Study of the Liturgical Calendar

**March 15, 2010**

***Believing in Miracles***

By Jane Bourne

Read: John 4:46-50

*...Jesus said to him, "Go your way, your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and went his way. John 4:50*

In this scripture passage a nobleman entreats Jesus to save his dying son. Jesus tells the man that his son lives. Without hesitation, the nobleman believed Jesus, returned to his home, and found that the fever had left his son at the exact time Jesus had spoken to the man.

As a nobleman, the man to whom Jesus spoke would have been accustomed to ordering people to do something and having them immediately obey. Yet, here he begs rather than demands, he believes what Jesus said, without requiring proof, and returns to his home.

As a parent, I can understand why the nobleman would try anything in hopes of saving his child. I can even understand that the nobleman would turn to Jesus; stories of Jesus' miracles were spreading. What I find difficult to comprehend is how the nobleman could believe so quickly in Jesus' power and then return home without taking Jesus with him for assurance of the miracle.

**Questions for reflection:**

How good am I at recognizing truth?

Is my faith strong enough to ask for help and believe that it will be given?

Am I more likely to depend on myself or to look to Jesus for healing?

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*Dear Lord, thank you for being patient with me as I struggle to reach out in faith.*

**March 16, 2010**

***Healing***

By Pat Howard

Read: John 5:14

*Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."*

John 5:1-15 tells us a story about a man who was an invalid for 38 years and was healed by Jesus at a pool in Jerusalem. When Jesus first saw this man, he spoke to him. After a brief conversation, Jesus told him, "Pick up your mat and walk", and the man did. Jesus later saw this healed man at the temple and he was still carrying his mat. Since this healing occurred on the Sabbath, it is forbidden by law to carry your mat on a holy day. Jesus cautioned him, saying that now that he is healed, he needs to put down his mat, to stop sinning. The possibility of this man continuing to sin now that he was healed was the cause for Jesus to issue the warning that he did, that something worse could happen to him.

What was the "something worse" to which Jesus refers? Worse than being an invalid for the last 38 years, I suppose. I've often wondered, does time heal all wounds? This man in the scripture lesson was probably a frequent visitor to that healing pool in Jerusalem, waiting to be cured from his disease. He was miraculously cured, healed by Jesus, and told to sin no more. He spent a great deal of time waiting for a cure and it eventually happened.

On this day seven years ago, I lost my mother to the dreaded disease, cancer. She fought her disease for five years. The doctors did not expect her to live a year after the diagnosis, although they did not tell us this. Those four extra years gave us precious time together, to enjoy each other's company as often as possible and to make new memories to last us forever. Mom believed she would be cured, and it was that positive thinking, strength, and courage that kept her from giving up hope. As for healing, time has helped to somewhat ease the pain of losing her. It has made me realize that each day is truly a gift and it's essential to make time to do the things that are important and really matter in life.

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*Lord, as I travel through this faith journey during Lent, make me ever mindful of Your love and the sacrifice You made for our salvation. Help me to lovingly reach out to those who need comforting during this special season. In Your precious son's name, I pray. Amen.*

**March 17, 2010**

***Making Time for God***

By Diane Bayless

Read: John 5:14

*John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*

In this text, Jesus has just healed a man and is explaining his actions to the Jews who have taken an interest because this healing took place on the Sabbath. Jesus' answer stirs even more interest because he declares himself to be the son of God. In today's language, he explains his actions by saying "like Father, like son."

Jesus declares his total dependence on his Father. He watches his Father and does only what he sees His Father doing. Not only is he dependent on his Father, as the Son of God, he cannot act against his nature - he must act like his Father. Jesus possessed all the powers of God, his Father, and thus could easily have performed miracles in his own right, yet he acknowledged that he could not separate his powers from the powers of God, his Father.

If Jesus, with all his powers, was dependent on God, how much more dependent are we! Without any power of our own, how can we think and act like we can do things on our own? Once we acknowledge how dependent on God we are, we realize that we must take time - or make time - for God in our lives.

But how do we do this with all the demands on our time - children (or grandchildren) begging for our attention, phone calls, meetings, commutes, and all the other business that fills our daily lives? Sometimes we even get so busy doing what we think is good work - or God's work - that we forget to take time out to check in with God.

Jesus watched what His Father was doing and so we must watch too. Often we can watch God through the action of others, remembering that He sometimes speaks to us through the people and situations He places in our path. We can talk to God - pray - anytime and anyplace as God is always ready to listen. But prayer is not just talking *to* God, but listening as well, so it is important to set aside time away from other distractions to listen. And to get to know Him better we must also set aside time to read His Word and reflect on it.

Making time for God may seem difficult at times, but remember what Jesus said - that he could do nothing on his own. One way to start making more time for God is to ask Him for help. And then listen and watch Him begin to show the way.

**Questions for Reflection:**

What have you been trying to do by yourself?

How can learning to be more dependent on God help you?

How can you be more aware of what the Father is doing so you can act more like Jesus in reflecting the Father's work?

How can understanding dependence on God help you make/take more time for God?

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*Heavenly Father, help me recognize my dependence on you in all that I am and all that I do. Help me look for, and make more time for You so I can live my life more like Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.*

**March 18, 2010**

## ***Healing Hands***

By Mike Fudge

Read: John 5:44

*“How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God.” John 5:44 (New International Version)*

Although individual Bible passages can contain much wisdom – as I would argue this one does – it is also telling to examine this passage in context. In John 5, Jesus has healed an invalid in Bethesda (a part of Jerusalem); however, Jesus performed this healing on the Sabbath. As John 5:16 says, “because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.” Jesus defends his work by saying that “his Father is always at work, to this very day,” which made the Jews in question “try even harder to kill him,” as “he had made himself equal to God.” Over the next 25 verses, Jesus explains that what he does he does through the father, and that those who believe in the Son will have eternal life.

Starting in verse 41, Jesus says, “I do not accept praise from men, <sup>42</sup>but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. <sup>43</sup>I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. <sup>44</sup>**How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?**”

On its own, the power of this verse is unmistakable, and very relevant to today's world. We often look to approval from our fellow man. Whether seeking the often spurious approval of modern culture – having the popular car, buying the popular clothes, making lifestyle choices more in-line with what is seen on television dramas – or seeking the well-intentioned approval of our friends and family, the one from whom we should seek approval is God. Making the effort to obtain God's praise helps strengthen our belief.

Given what I have gone through in the last year, however, the context speaks volumes to me. As some of you know, I was very ill last March. Post-surgery, I had two life-threatening medical events on back-to-back Sundays. As I lay at home and in the hospital, I felt the closeness of the Lord and humility at the healing of his hands. I also appreciated the get-well wishes and visits from many of you. The skill of the doctors and the visits and correspondence from my Trinity friends and other friends were appreciated in and of themselves, and as manifestations of God's glory. Feeling the Lord's closeness and grace, and accepting God's praise and grace did strengthen my belief.

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*Lord of healing, we thank you for all those times you have touched and healed us through the hands of others. Keeps us ever mindful of all we owe to You. Amen.*

**March 19, 2010**

***Knowing God***

Read: John 7:28-29

*Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him.*

Read this passage from your favorite version of the Bible. Now, read the text again, slowly. Read the passage a third time and allow the words to speak to you.

**Questions for reflection:**

Which word or phrase resonates with you?

What is happening in your life today that might give this scripture special significance to you today?

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Breathing slowly, repeat the following, and then sit quietly, and allow God to touch your thoughts.

*Be still and know that I am God.*

*Be still and know that I am.*

*Be still and know.*

*Be still.*

*Be.*

**March 20, 2010**

***Don't Forget***

By Nancy Wilson

Read: Deuteronomy 4:9

*“But take care to watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.”*

I suspect we have all had transcendent or peak experiences in our lifetime – moments when we feel God’s nearness in a soul-deep way. Perhaps a special time in nature or the birth of a child, maybe being with someone at the moment of death. These times are very real, but like dreams, they can slip away as we go on with the practical details of living.

I think our Scripture passage from Deuteronomy may be cautioning us to not discount or doubt the depth of these “God sightings”. We need to remind ourselves of what we’ve experienced, of how we have known God. Even though these sacred experiences slip away from our awareness, they can change us as we keep our hearts open to God, remembering and thanking God for all the times God appears to us.

Keep expecting God to appear!

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*Dear God, how often we are “going through the motions” as we live our lives, not expecting or noticing your nearness to us. WAKE US UP, O Lord, that we might walk through our days consciously with you.*

*Amen (May it be so!)*

**March 21, 2010**

**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**A Time To Forgive**

Read: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

**Questions for Reflection:**

What do I gain by holding on to the memory and the pain of betrayal, treachery, disloyalty, insolence, derision, contempt, or condescension?

What might I gain by offering forgiveness, even to those who do not wish to be forgiven?

How can Christ forgive me, when I refuse to forgive those around me?

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*Lord, you know how hard it is sometimes for us to bring ourselves to forgive those who trespass against us. We argue that it isn't fair or right for others to treat us this way, and yet we pray that you will forgive us for our trespasses – big and small. We cling to our hurt feelings and carry our grudges with us – wanting for others to see the error of their ways and beg our forgiveness. By refusing to forgive we poison our bodies and our hearts. We place barriers between us and others – between You and us. Help us now, with loving grace, to truly forgive those who trespass against us, just as You forgive us our trespasses. Amen.*

**March 22, 2010**

***First Stones***

By David Wilkinson

Read: John 8:3-7 (NLT)

*As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and Pharisees brought a woman they had caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. The Law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"*

They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, stone her. But let those who have never sinned throw the first stones!"

This story is not in many of the oldest manuscripts of the gospel, and may have been added later. It may have been from some other writing, and was included at this point in the gospel. We may never know why or when it was added, but it says a lot about the person of Jesus, and his love for every one of us. Notice that he knew that this was a trap, for only the woman was brought to him. Shouldn't the man have been brought also? The law gave the punishment and they had no need to bring her to him.

I would like to know what he wrote in the dust. Was it the commandment, "Thou shall not commit adultery"? Was it the names of the people there? Was it a list of each of their sins that were even worse than their accusation against this unknown woman? (There is no evidence that this is Mary Magdalene.) Did they see and read what was written? Whatever he wrote was not important to the author, or we would be able to read it. What is important is that Jesus had compassion for her, and forgiveness of her sin, whether real or just accused. He actually condemned her to the punishment according to the law, but laid the guilt of carrying it out on those who accused her. None could do it. Nobody is without sin apart from Jesus.

Sitting on my desk is a stone, about 1.5 inches long. It was given to me in March 1993 on an Emmaus weekend. On it is written the word, FIRST. It is a reminder that I am a sinner, always have been and will be. I am a sinner who was washed clean in the blood of Christ who died on the cross that I might be forgiven. I am a sinner who is required to pass the chance to be forgiven on to those who need to hear and accept it. When I see a person who has done wrong, I have to think about whether I would have done better.

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*Lord, help me to have compassion when I am serving you. Help me to not judge, but to show your love to even the one who has caused his own problems. Help me to bring them to you, that you can give them your love. Amen.*

**March 23, 2010**

***He Has Not Deserted Me***

By David Wilkinson

Read: John 8:28-29 (NLT)

*So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will realize that I am he and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak what the Father taught me.*

*29 And the one who sent me is with me-- he has not deserted me. For I always do those things that are pleasing to him."*

Jesus was responding to the Jewish leaders, telling them that they would not be able to go with him into the kingdom as they were. I have read the verse many times and never noted that he told them that he knew their plans on how to kill him. He told them that when they had him killed on the cross, they would realize that they were wrong, and they would grieve that they had killed the son of man, the long awaited messiah. Scripture doesn't dwell on the details of the grief and awareness of the guilt of the leaders. Maybe Jesus was talking to Judas Iscariot as much as the Jewish leaders, for he had joined with them. Judas tried to stop the process. Judas hanged himself (cleaned up version) in his grief and despair.

Jesus was also telling his disciples that he knew them. They would not be able to follow him; they would desert him because of fear. I have to wonder how I would have reacted if I were Peter, or John, or any of the other disciples. I don't know that I would have pulled out a sword against the Roman guard, cutting off an ear, then seeing Jesus heal the man who came to arrest him. I don't know that I would have followed the guard into the courtyard to see how I could help; but would I have run away to hide like the others? I don't know that I would have entered into conversation near the fire. Is there a right time to risk my life for another?

I think of the young woman in Colorado who, looking at the gun pointed at her, said that she believed in Jesus, and was murdered. I think of the firemen and medics who tried to rescue people on September 11, 2001. I think of the man who dove into the frozen Potomac and rescued the person when Air Florida hit the bridge. I remember saying to Ginger that if I had been there, it might have been me who dove in. I remember diving headfirst into an empty rowboat with my hand on the shut-off before thinking about the danger. I did it to save my father, not for any other reason. Would I desert Jesus like the disciples, or would I be bold like the teenager in Colorado. I don't know, but I can strive to live a life that is for Jesus, sharing his love with those who need him.

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*Lord, make me a strong witness for you. Give me opportunities to share your love, and take away any fear that would hinder me. Make me an instrument of your peace. Amen*

**March 24, 2010**

## **Obedience**

By David Wilkinson

Read: John 8:31 (NLT)

*Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings.*

Jesus was being very problematic to those who were questioning him. He had just told them that they were from below (of the devil) and he was not. He implied that he was sent from God, but they wouldn't believe him even if he said, "I am God!" Indeed, a short time later in the garden, they asked who is Jesus, and he replied, "I am"; he used the unspoken holy name of God, and they all fell on the ground in shock. Even then he wasn't believed.

But this statement was directed to those who believed in him. These were his own. They had been with him for three years, and were still struggling to understand. I try to think of myself being there. I am standing listening to his conversation with the leaders of the Jews. Suddenly, he speaks to us. He has called us his disciples, and now indicates that we are only true disciples if we continue obeying teachings. There are many, most agree with the teaching of scripture, many change the meaning of loved laws. How am I going to obey all of his teachings; there is no way to remember them. Does that mean that I can't be a true disciple? Back in the year 2010, I still have to ponder the same thoughts.

Jesus promised to forgive all sins--past, present, and future. If I fail to continuously obey, he will wash the sin away when I repent. This does not give me permission to deliberately sin. He also said, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

Now, the only hard part is to know who my neighbor is. Is he the person who lives next door, in the same town? Is he the person I can talk to with the same dialect? Is he the person in need of comfort and food? Is he the person who speaks Chinese and some English, and is in shock from the death of his 5 year old daughter? Is it the person who is depressed from trying to save a life and couldn't?

After years of study, and trying to be available to the Lord and serve him, I think that my neighbor is the person who is suffering and needs to know that God loves him or her. My neighbor may speak a different language, might be Hindu or Muslim, but can feel that I care because I am listening to Jesus. This person may not become a believer in Jesus because of me, but maybe will no longer be against God because of my action.

---

*Lord, help me to be open to all in need, to be ready to share your love. Give me the words to say that I might be able to help in a bad situation, and let your love fill the area around us. Cultivate the life to receive the seed of your love in all that I may meet, and use me to plant the seed. Amen.*

**March 24, 2010 (part 2)**

***You Are My Disciples***

By Sue Jelinski

Read: John 8:31

*Then Jesus said those Jews who believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are My disciples indeed."*

Jesus has just explained He is the Light of the World, spoken these beautiful words, and an intense conversation seems to have erupted. Christ is now speaking even stronger words, words of confirmation to His followers. These Words of confirmation are "the key" to our salvation. Notice, Jesus is not talking to everyone; it is made clear there has been some misunderstanding here. Interesting questions have been raised, and answers have been given. Jesus has actually been asked by these people who knew him by name: Who he is.

Now, he is speaking to those same people who have taken in his teachings, listening carefully to his words, and have already shown believe in Him. These followers tend to be his 'disciples', and he is giving His disciples the rules by which they are to live "the game" of life. Living as a disciple means not only to be a follower, but to accept and assist in spreading the doctrines of another. But what are these doctrines?

Here Christ makes it clear there is more to being a disciple than merely following. One must DO. Do what? Do as one has been taught by the teacher. No longer are these followers able to hide behind the shadows of the teacher, to just listen to Jesus, and only quietly follow him.

Here, Jesus is telling his followers: The time is at hand for individuals to profess their faith, and actually take their first, and every step thereafter, walking "Christ-like." Jesus has now set it straight; the example you set as my disciple in your everyday living will make a difference. To be my disciple you must live everyday in my words.

**Questions to ponder:**

So where does one go from here?

Are we seeking to share the love of Christ we understand?

How can one be sure there is really room in one's life for the word/teaching of our Lord?

What exactly needs to be removed so there is enough room?

Do these particular words of Christ have any special meaning to you?

Will working at holding to Christ's teachings tend to make one a truer disciple?

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*Lord, give me the knowledge and understanding to follow you. I want to be your disciple. Amen.*

**March 25, 2010**

**God Is**

By Dave Gillard

Read: John 8:51

*"I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." John 8:51*

Jesus made this declaration in conversation with the Pharisees and other Jews. Later in this same discussion, when they asked whether Jesus had seen Abraham, Jesus said, "before Abraham was born, I am!" I don't generally like the term "OMG" because it trivializes a phrase that should only be used in reverence, but I think this might be an appropriate time to say, "Oh, my God!" God is truly a god of eternity, from beginning of time to the end times as we know them; a god of covenants, first with Abraham, and then with all people through the life, death, and resurrection of God incarnate, Jesus. So what of this covenant through Jesus? God assures us of reconciliation, of eternal life itself, if we but love God. Is this what Jesus is saying? Do we love God and show our love by keeping His word?

Compared to God, we have much less time on this earth. In the rush to accomplish, to get "important" things done, to make a difference, we sometimes let the tyranny of time rule our lives. I am as guilty as anyone of letting myself get too busy, of not using my time wisely, and letting my priorities get skewed in an attempt to catch up. All of these things are of my own making, a result of free will decisions. Our use of time is our responsibility. God has blessed us with the intellect to use technology as an enabler in almost all situations, but it is what we do with that technology that results in good or bad. The technology of time has allowed humans to make many under-appreciated advances. It wasn't until John Harrison in 1733 developed the "H-1" chronometer that mariners could successfully measure their position in longitude to navigate the high seas. In modern times, it is the precise measurement of time that makes it possible for us to launch a rover to Mars and have it land within feet of the intended spot, for you to follow your GPS unit and not get lost on the road, or even to use your cell phone. We ought not to confuse the technology to use time precisely with our unwise use of it.

One of the things I love about being a Presbyterian Christian, especially at Trinity, is that we treasure the study of God's word, meaning both the study of scripture and other professions of faith, as well as study of and prayer through the Word, Jesus. This takes time, God's time, to pray, to listen, and to receive God's answer. This time is itself a gift from God, a gift to be treasured, invested, and spent wisely. If it is, I believe we can come to know Him, to keep His holy word, and to love Him. This is our part of the covenant with the holy, eternal God, the master of time, the God I Am. May it be so. Amen.

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*Thank you, Lord, for the gift of time. Time to pray, time to listen, time to receive, time for all things under Your heavens. Amen.*

**March 26, 2010**

***Doing the Right Thing***

By Will Beneck

Read: John 10:32

*Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?"*

When we walk past a beggar in the street, we know it is the right thing to do because we don't want those kinds of people congregating in areas we frequent. We support rules and laws that require proper documentation for jobs and schools because "illegal" is not "legal". We critically study the Middle Eastern looking man in the airport because we have been warned to be hyper vigilant in observing those around us – particularly those who look like they are of a different religion. We do the right things but are they always right?

**Questions for Reflection:**

How many times does it seem like doing the right thing is in conflict with doing things the right way?

How often do we choose do to something the right way to avoid the stones, knowing that it might not be the right thing to do?

How often are we given an opportunity to show our love of God but don't out of fear of embarrassment or ridicule?

We can suffer many stones if our shield is our love of Christ and we use that shield to shelter others. We can use our shield to feed those that come to Trinity every Wednesday. We can use our shield to seek out and encourage people to know God. We can use our shield not as buffer against, but as a shelter from, a world that is quick to throw stones at those who believe because they choose to and not because they are made to.

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*Dear God,*

*Help me do the Your right things today, tomorrow, and always. Open my eyes to see all the good works You have done and be ever grateful for them. These things I ask in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**March 27, 2010**

***I Will Make A Covenant With Them***

By Bill Huneke

Read: Ezekiel 37:26-27

*I will make a covenant with them to bring them prosperity; this covenant shall be theirs forever. I will greatly increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary for ever in their midst. They shall live under the shelter of my dwelling; I will become their God and they shall become my people.*

I picked this particular selection because it is associated with my birthday. However, it is a passage that does not immediately resonate with me. The people referenced are the Israelites who always fail in their side of God's covenant and eventually fall out of God's grace. The covenant is never permanent.

On the other hand if we look at the covenant from a New Testament perspective, maybe that helps. The covenant is then open to all peoples: all who will follow Jesus. All who follow the lone rider on a donkey on Palm Sunday. All who follow the cross on Good Friday. This is also a hard covenant to maintain.

Furthermore, don't we already have prosperity? We now have economic prosperity beyond anything previous generations could have imagined. It has not brought universal joy and happiness. Our society is filled with anxiety and despair.

Maybe prosperity should be viewed without the lens of economic well-being. Perhaps it is better to think of a prosperous spirit, achieving an inner peace; an inner peace that allows us to weather the storms and turbulence that can engulf us.

**Questions for Reflection:**

What does it mean when prosperity does not come to those who are faithful to the covenant?

Is the covenant only available to Christians?

What about Jews who the people referenced in this passage?

Does not God care for all the peoples of the earth?

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*Lord, help me to keep your covenant. Strengthen me to follow Jesus from his entry into Jerusalem to the darkness of Calvary and the joy of Easter Sunday. Help me to find your peace. Amen.*

**March 28, 2010**

***Palm Sunday***

***A Time To Die***

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: Luke 19:28-40

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on March 28)

**March 29, 2010**

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: John 12:8

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on March 29)

**March 30, 2010**

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: John 13:21

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on March 30)

**March 31, 2010**

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: Matthew 26:18-19

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on March 31)

**April 1, 2010**

***Maundy Thursday***

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: John 13:31b-35

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on April 1)

**April 2, 2010**

***Good Friday***

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: John 19:30

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on April 2)

**April 3, 2010**

***Holy Saturday***

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: Romans 6:3,4,8

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on April 3)

**April 4, 2010**

***Easter Sunday***

***A Time To Rejoice***

By Stephen Smith-Cobbs

Read: Luke 24:1-12

(Available via email and on the Trinity website on April 4)

## Our Creators

This annual labor of love devotional booklet would not have been possible without the assistance and personal insights provided by the wonderful people listed on these pages who gave of their time, talent, and knowledge to bring this booklet to life. With sincere thanks for all you have done – and particularly for your time.

Thank you,

Jane Bourne



## *Administrative Help*

**Rev. Stephen Smith-Cobbs** and **Rev. Rebecca Messman** for initiating the request for writers and for providing the list of scripture selections for each day.

**Harriet Pinansky** for sending out the writer invitations, for assisting with the publication of the final booklet, for sending the email notifications for the website link to the booklet, and doing the final proof reading and correcting the spelling of member names.

**Lee Conley** for assisting with the publication of the final booklet.



## *Writers*

**Carroll Bastian**, Trinity's Director of Christian Education for the past 7½ years, first felt called to church ministry in junior high, but resisted for many decades. After a long career in environmental science policy, with side involvement in writing and teaching, and graduate degrees in History and Gifted Education, she decided to turn her 30 hours a week of church volunteering into a "real" job and go back to school again to become a Certified Christian Educator. Her husband Bob is an environmental scientist and singer. Their daughter Meredith will soon return from spending much of the past 7 years researching wild orangutans in the jungles of Borneo, Indonesia, before and after earning her Ph.D. in Biological Anthropology and Anatomy.

**Diane Bayless** first came to Trinity Presbyterian Church in 1984. She has served as a Sunday School teacher and Vacation Bible School helper and currently participates in the Sunday Morning Live class, the Trinity Bridge group and is a Deacon. She and her husband Glen have two daughters and three young grandsons. She has worked as an economist, elementary school teacher and Girl Scout staff. Now retired, she currently serves as a Girl Scout national volunteer.

**Will Beneck** is a newly elected Elder, can frequently be found with his wife, Mitzi, ushering on Sunday morning. They have two sons, Jacob and Samuel.

**Rev. Dr. Kathleen Long Bostrom** is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the author of the 2005-2006 Horizon's Bible Study, For

Everything, A Season—A Study of the Liturgical Calendar. She and her husband serve as copastors of the Wildwood Presbyterian church near Chicago. Kathy is the author of more than a dozen books for children and currently serves as president of the Presbyterian Writers Guild. She earned a Master of Arts and Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching from McCormick Theological Seminary.

**Dixon Boulware** has been a member of TPC since 1995, and can be found in the Contemporary Topics Sunday school class on most Sundays. He also is member of the Session currently serving a second term and acting as the moderator for Property Committee. He spends a good deal of time working but can be found playing softball and golf in the time left available to him.

**Jane Bourne** is a founding member of Trinity Presbyterian church. She has served on the Deaconate, on the Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team, and the Trinity 50th Anniversary committee. She loves having the opportunity to work with children and young adults as a Sunday School teacher. Jane has two daughters, Karen and Kimberly; three grandchildren, Jacob, Jessica, and Keir; a great-grandson, Isaiah; a great-granddaughter, Lily; a son-in-law, PJ; and an almost son-in-law, Wayne. She is a technical writer/editor with a computer consulting firm.

**Bill Brennan** is an economist with the Surface Transportation Board. He and his wife Heather have been blessed with three children (Maura, Emilia, and Andrew). Bill has served on the Christian Education Committee and currently sings in the choir and taught 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday school for several years.

**Debbie Burgener** is a “native” Virginian by adoption having been born in Buffalo, NY. However, she grew up in the Northern Virginia area, attended Radford College, settled in Sterling, VA and now works for Freddie Mac. She started coming to Trinity Presbyterian Church almost 30 years ago with another church member to sing in the choir and has been singing in the Westminster choir ever since. Debbie has been passionately active in Presbyterian Women, serving as Moderator, Vice Moderator, Circle Leader, and other offices. As an active Deacon, she chaired the New Members & Visitors Committee during her term and continued afterward to serve on the Fellowship Committee for many years. Debbie has been a contributor to the fashioning of several sets of paraments that were commissioned by the Worship Committee. Most recently, she completed both the Discipleship and Jesus in the Gospel study courses.

**Chris Dancy**, is a Trinity Elder. His activities at Trinity include ringing with the Bell choir and teaching the Senior High Class.

**Les Dorland** has participated in the Disciples classes at Trinity, served as an Elder (Chairman of the Stewardship Committee and Youth Committee in separate terms), a member of an APNC, a member of the Vision Committee Task Force and was a long-time member of the TPC softball team. Currently he divides his time among family (wife Pam and two grown sons), church, golf and working at Fairfax Water. At Trinity, current activities include the Christ Care group, “The Guys Have It”, liturgist, usher and counter.

**Betty Eidemiller** still has that prized third-grade Bible given by the Homedale (ID) Presbyterian Church. Like several other Trinity folks, her path included St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Beaumont (TX) before she joined Trinity about eleven years ago. Among current involvements are assisting with the confirmation class, the LINK food pantry, and Jeannie Schmidt Free Clinic. One of the most meaningful times in Betty's faith journey was serving as a member of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee that called Becca, witnessing the promise that the Holy Spirit will guide those gathered in God's name.

**George Forner** has served as a missionary in Iran with his wife for five years and as an Associate Pastor in churches in New Jersey and Ohio and presently is Parish Associate here at Trinity. He visits many elderly members of Trinity and assists with the Senior Luncheon and serves on the Service and Mission committee and assists with worship when needed. He also spent thirty years as a Press and Cultural Officer in the Foreign Service, primarily in European communist countries.

**Mike Fudge** and his wife Holly have been members of Trinity since 2001. As of 2007, they are the proud parents of Daniel. Mike is a member of Trinity's inaugural class of Stephen Ministers, and has contributed to previous Lenten devotionals. He is an Aerospace Engineer, and his hobbies include flying low-speed radio-control aircraft (for Daniel's enjoyment, of course), science fiction, history, poetry, Baltimore Ravens and Virginia Tech football, and shoveling snow.

**Dave Gillard** and family have been members of Trinity since 1995. Joan is a Stephen Leader and helped start the Stephen Ministry at Trinity, and has served as a Deacon. Sons Nathan and Stephen are in graduate schools and were members of the Youth Group and attended Group Work Camps. Dave is involved in Stephen Ministry, ChristCare Groups, Men's Group, Sunday Morning LIVE adult Sunday school, and is blessed to be called in various ways. Dave retired from the US Navy in 2004 and now works for The Aerospace Corporation.

**Pat Howard** has been a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church since 2000 and sings with both the Westminster Choir and the Spirit Singers. She is now currently serving as a Deacon and chairs the Congregational Care Committee. Pat lives in Herndon with her husband, Jack, and they have two grown children – Liz Howard Hencke (NYC) and Jeff Howard (D.C.).

**Bill Huneke** is a relative newcomer to Trinity. He joined in 2003. His daughter and son-in-law were married by Pastor Stephen in August 2008. Bill has taught Sunday School and been a deacon. He now serves as an Elder.

**Sue Jelinski** is a long-time member of Trinity, where she and her husband, John can be found most Sundays in one of the adult Sunday school classes. She has been active in Presbyterian Women, was a member of the first Disciples class at Trinity, and was the "bead lady" at last year's Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper.

**Mary Ellen Jones** is a newly ordained elder at Trinity and new to the Christian Education and Preschool Committees. She has been involved with Presbyterian Women and Eve Circle for several years and has recently begun involvement with Lunch for the Soul. She also volunteers for the Homework Assistance Program at Vecinos Unidos/Neighbors United in Herndon. Mary Ellen is a retired nurse who

enjoys spending time with her family, especially her six grandchildren, and traveling with her husband, Tim

**Gene Lucas** The Writer has served as a Deacon and Elder at Trinity. He is currently the Co-Chairmen of the Service and Mission Committee and is a member of the Personnel Committee. He has enjoyed his involvement in a number of Trinity activities.

**Tom Mawson** and his wife Janice are longtime members of Trinity. Currently Tom serves on session.

**Renee Maxwell** is a wife and mother of two delightful daughters. Her activities at Trinity include serving as a Deacon, chairing the Congregational Care Committee, and assisting with Sunday School activities.

**P.J. Miller** has been a member of Trinity for 20 years. She serves on the Memorials, Worship and Personnel Committees, rings bells with the Trinity Ringers, is currently an elder and serves as Clerk of Session. PJ and her husband, Peter, live in Reston.

**Tom Pierson** has been a Trinity member, with his wife Terri and three children, since 1986. He participates in The Guys Have It men's group and sings in the choir. A grandfather of two with another on the way, Tom recently retired after 26 years with the federal government.

**Doug Reas** is a former Big Brother of the National Capital Area Big Brother Big Sister program. He sings in the Westminster choir. Doug is a Youth Advisor and an Elder. He enjoys working with youth and has helped with summer Work Camp. In addition, Doug has participated in Disciples training at Trinity. He is a very big fan of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books.

**Stephen Smith-Cobbs**, a native Texan, came to Trinity as Pastor in May, 1997 with his wife, Paula, and son, Philip. Stephen is a graduate of Austin College in Sherman, Texas and Princeton Theological Seminary. He serves on multiple boards such as the Herndon Free Clinic. In his free time he enjoys playing guitar, reading good novels, listening to all kinds of music (with a special love of folk music), and the arts in general.

**Charlotte Wales** currently serves on Session, having been elected Elder just last year. She is a long time member of the Westminster Choir and, even though she hasn't been active recently, of Presbyterian Women. She splits her time between church, family, and work as an information systems engineer.

**David Wilkinson** has a Master of Divinity, serving as a chaplain and missionary in the Sterling – Herndon area. He is active with the Lunch For the Soul mission of the church, and wants to lead a mission trip from Trinity to the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. He is married to Ginger, with two daughters (two sons-in-law), and five grandchildren.

**Ginger Wilkinson** and her husband, David, came to Trinity in September of 1985. Since then Ginger has been active in Presbyterian Women, both singing and ringing choirs, and the worship committee. She is also an elder, serving two terms on Session. She is the proud mama of Rachel and Marie and two sons-in-love, Paul and Sean. She is "Granny" to five amazing, "above average" grandchildren and proud wife

of David. She is a Public Health Nurse for Fairfax County and ministers to students and families in Herndon in her position as a School PHN.

**John Wilson** joined Trinity in 1975 and has served the church in many capacities. He taught adult Sunday School classes, served two terms on the Session, served on Worship, Memorials, and Property Committees, has been singing in the Westminster Choir and Spirit Singers for many years, and is currently an active Deacon. He is Chairperson of the Community Nurture and Communications Committee and a member of the Visitors and New Members Committee.

**Nancy Wilson** has been active in Trinity since joining with her family in 1975. Nancy has served in various capacities, including as Deacon, Elder, SS teacher, small group leader, and is currently a ChristCare Small Group Ministry Equipper. Nancy is also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice.