

years ago, mankind stood still while you shed your blood. We recognize the sacrifice that you made. Today we are reminded of your tremendous power Lord, and your death upon the cross.

The world will never be the same because of your sacrificial gift. May we never lose sight of the victory of Good Friday. May we always be reminded of your eternal love and the gift that you gave to the universe of forgiveness and everlasting life. Amen.

Holy Saturday, April 23

Patti Hamilton

“Feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving”

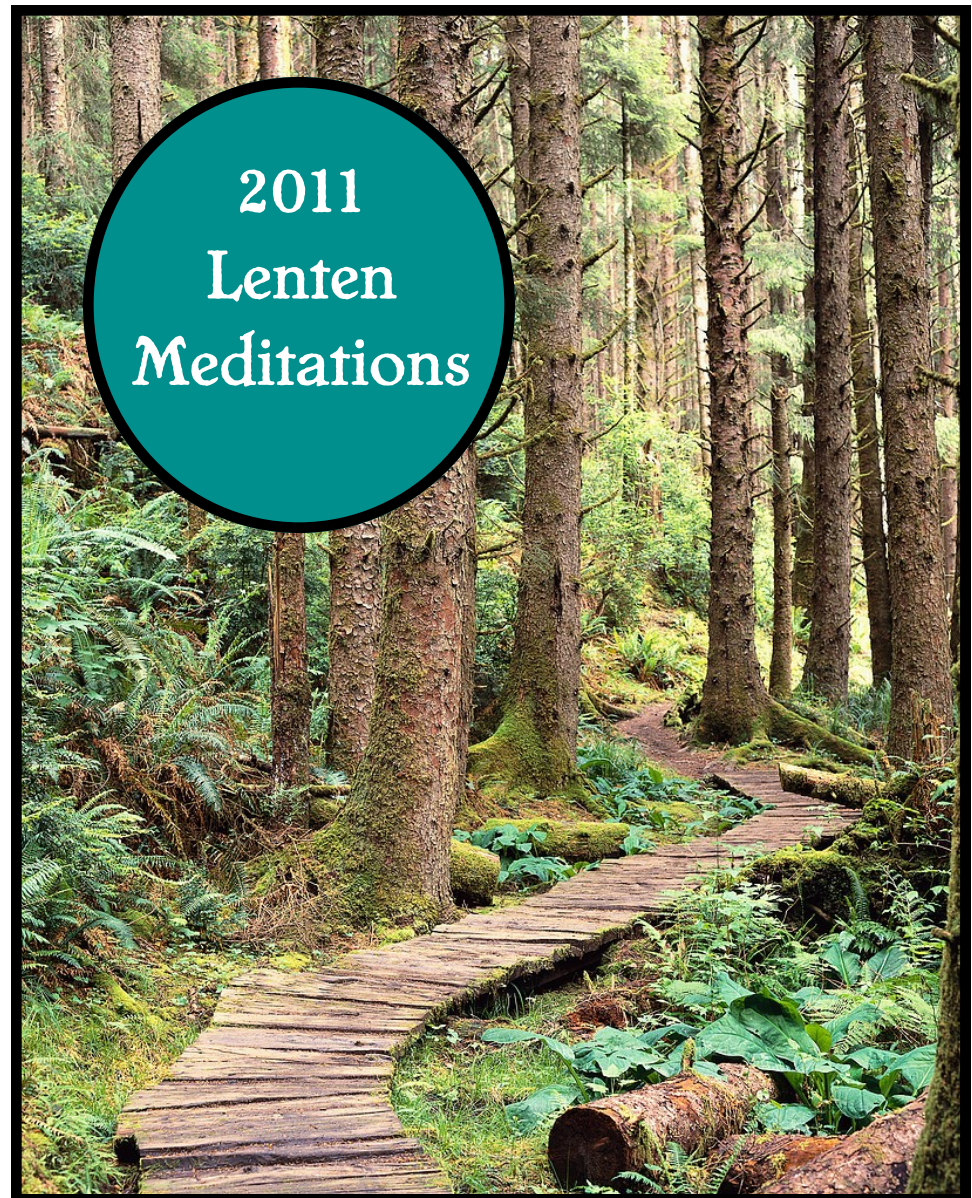
“The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.”

The word “Eucharist” comes from the Greek word “to give thanks”. Giving thanks to me is at the core of the service. When we take the bread and drink the wine we are giving thanks for the sacrifice that Jesus made for all of us. We know and understand that through his word.

We are literally feeding on the word of Jesus and in doing so his life and purpose in our lives becomes clear. We ultimately seek his Kingdom because of His Word. God gives and we receive. He gave his only son for us. When his word is captured in our hearts, it is our responsibility as Christians to carry that word away from the altar and take it outside of the walls of the church and share it with others.

Easter Day, April 24

The Day of Resurrection



2011 Lenten Meditations

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The Rev. Robert S. Taylor, Rector

The Rev. Mimi Howard, Deacon

Dear friends,

Good Shepherd's *2011 Lenten Meditations* consists of meditations written by members of our parish for each of the forty days in Lent. They are designed to enhance the spiritual journey of the reader during this holy season.

The meditations have been inspired by some of the most powerful writings and prayers of our faith tradition. From Ash Wednesday through March 25, phrases from the 23rd Psalm serve as the starting point for each meditation. The most well-known of all the psalms, the 23rd reminds us of God's abiding presence and love as we journey through the challenges of life.

Phrases from The Collect for Purity are the focus from March 26 through April 5. This collect, which reminds us of our vulnerability before God, calls us to a deeper, more honest relationship with the Almighty during this season.

The Lord's Prayer was given to us by Jesus himself and, if we were to pray it and no other prayer, it would be sufficient. In praying it, we are led into a more complete and perfect relationship with God. It is the inspiration for the meditations for April 6 through April 20.

On the final three days of Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, phrases from the Holy Eucharist are used to invite us into a consideration of Christ's final act of love for us and its reflections in the most central act of our worship. Those final meditations of Lent will leave us at the door of our great celebration of the Day of Resurrection.

You will notice that there are no meditations for the Sundays of the season. Not counted among the forty days of Lent, the Sundays are entitled Days of Celebration and Worship. See you in church!

On behalf of our parish, I offer heartfelt gratitude to the writers for their willingness to take a step into vulnerability in sharing of themselves and their faith. Their creations are thoughtful and inspiring.

I also trust that the writers themselves were blessed in creating their meditations. We were given some insight into that when Peggy Tibke included the following note with her meditation when she emailed it to the church office: *"Talk about 'purification!' I thought this would be easy, but when I sat down to write it, it really was a purification process of sorts because it required that I weed out my genuine truth about it from throwing some nice sounding words that just do meaningless 'lip service.' So I'm grateful for the assignment; grateful in the way difficult lessons are always worth the work, but we'd like them to be not so difficult!"*

May God bless you in spending time with the treasure herein.

In God's love,



Bob Taylor

from the phrase.

"A new commandment I give to you. That ye love one another as I have loved you."

Jesus spoke these words as he washed his disciples' feet during the Last Supper. Today, the same ritual of the washing of feet is practiced by many worshippers to demonstrate their humility and love for others in the presence of Christ. Indeed English Monarchs up until James II used to wash their subjects' feet on this day - although nowadays they prefer to hand out 'alms' to deserving senior citizens!

The impact of this one day in the lives of Christians is immense. After all, each week at Eucharist we are invited to "Keep the Feast" with our Christian friends and families - remembering through the vessels of bread and wine the day's significance in light of the supreme sacrifice that Jesus made to save our sins as well as the sins of the world.

But for me, this particular Eucharist is different.

Lent is typically a time when we are encouraged to give up all sorts of excesses such as the over indulgence of food and drink - but also our unhelpful behaviors which may be a natural consequence of our selfish ways. We are asked to discard the old 'leaven' and observe our fast with unleavened bread, in order that we may appreciate the feast all the more.

For me, Lent is not so much about giving up the things we 'ought not to have done' but more about doing the things we 'ought to have done', but haven't. Re-establishing contacts with friends. Telling your family you love them. Writing that letter you've been procrastinating on for ever.

And by *giving*, rather than *giving up*, I feel I am more faithfully reflecting the commandment of Jesus on that fateful night when he asked his disciples to 'Love one another as I have loved you'.

After all the difference between a FAST and a FEAST is only one letter!

Good Friday, April 22

Marcia Pollard

"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

Lord, on this Good Friday we humbly thank you for making the most generous sacrifice of giving your life for us. You did it in full obedience to God. Teach us to be obedient in your will and to live in your ways.

Father in heaven we turn our hearts to you on this Passover. There was no greater sacrifice than to give your life so that others might live. God be gracious to us on this Passover. Bless us and equip us with everything we need to do your will.

We are mindful of the suffering that you endured. On this day 2000

God's power and glory with others in everything we do, through every principle we hold, and with every thought we express. St. Paul challenges us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and Lent reminds us that prayers can be expressed in more than words alone. In this time of introspection, penance, and deeper understanding, may we begin to pray unceasingly by reflecting the brilliance of God's power and glory to everyone in our lives and in our world who may need a welcome beacon in their own dark night.

Wednesday in Holy Week, April 20

Terri McFarland

"...for ever and ever. Amen."

Trying to understand the idea of eternity has always made me dizzy. I remember being a child, lying on my bed on a summer afternoon, daydreaming about eternity. I was trying hard to grasp the concept that there always *was* a God, and that there always *would be* a God. No beginning, no end. I can still hear the birds singing outside my window, smell the cut grass, and feel the warm sunlight pouring through my window. I was thinking about how all this creation would end one day, but God would still somehow be. And, supposedly, somehow, so would I! I started to feel like I was in the middle of a spinning vortex, being sucked into eternity, and it was scary.

I think my problem has been with trying to see time, and eternity, as linear. Time is now; eternity stretches out behind it and in front of it. "Time marches on" and somehow becomes eternity. I've begun to change my image of time as my image of God has changed. God, the Sacred, *is* eternity. *In* God we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28). God, the Sacred, the eternal, the Alpha and the Omega, is right here, surrounding me and infusing me.

Every once in a while I experience a "thin place," where I can feel the flow of the Sacred, of God, and realize that I don't have to wait for eternity to come – to get to the end of time and somehow step out of it and into eternity. I don't have to wait for the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom, with all its power and glory, is here. I just have to open myself, find those thin places, and let eternity fill me and hold me. It's no longer a spinning vortex, but a warm sea in which I float...forever and ever. Amen

Maundy Thursday, April 21

Dillon Wood

"Let us keep the feast."

Maundy Thursday is the holy day that commemorates the Last Supper with Jesus and the Apostles. The word Maundy is believed to originate from the Latin "Mandatum", meaning commandment and was taken

March 9—Ash Wednesday

Norma Egginson

"The Lord is my shepherd"

I shall not be in want
As my shepherd I will put my needs in his hands.
He will lead me to the place of peace.
Where I can give my needs to him
And he will see that I receive what I need.
I just have to make myself receptive
Open my heart and my soul
So that He has access to my mind
My mind will receive him
And through the Holy Spirit
The pathway to God is for me to follow
Once the Spirit of the world encumbers us, fills us with peace,
It will have shown us the pathway
To a place of rest where we will be treated as a guest of the Holy Spirit
My mind will be filled with the "life" of eternity
I will "live" in the house of the Lord forever

Thursday, March 10

Lori Zenobia

"I shall not want"

This Psalm from David is thought to be written during the more peaceful and settled years of his later life. So familiar to us, heard most often during periods of great difficulty or grief; it is meant to bring comfort and reassurance.

This psalm was, when written, addressed to those who were pilgrims, travelers, those going on a journey. It speaks of God as the guide and provider. I shall not want. I shall never be in need. My life is complete. I have enough.

We read these words and yet we find it hard to trust; that there will be enough. What if we run out of food and when gone, we go hungry, unloved and unsatisfied? What if we haven't learned everything and someone asks for prayer, one that we do not know by heart? What if we forget something that matters? We become filled with self doubt, the underlying feeling is that perhaps somehow we lack, that we are not enough. Can we tell the difference between want and need?

We listen to David, who writes this for the sojourner, for all of us are travelers through life, and he speaks God's promise.

His promise to us is that his manna never runs out, that the wellspring never runs dry. That, by his hand he, guides us. It is – only for us to trust. We have what we need; we eat, we bless and are satisfied. We

trust that we can handle whatever is coming. We do not lack. We have enough. We have exactly what we need for our journey exactly the way we should.

We are enough because he says we are.

Friday, March 11

Althea Lewis

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”

Who has seen or smelled a green pasture and not wanted to lie down? It conjures up feelings of a resting place. Take time, read these words again. Ponder them. The Lord is our Shepherd. We have just experienced the Holy days of Advent, the birth of Jesus – a very hectic time. Some of us have enjoyed while others have worked too hard, while still others have experienced sadness. Now we attempt to walk with Jesus as he experiences a dynamic, albeit short, ministry. Then he is called into the desert. Will we enter there with him? Jesus prayed, fasted, was tempted by the devil but declined all the evil one’s offers. What will we do for our Shepherd? He invites us to lie down in green pastures but first we too have ministries to attend to. We should be praying, studying and, hopefully, fasting. Most importantly, will we resist the devil and walk to the cross? I suspect many times we are invited to lie in abundant green pastures. Salvation is Jesus’ gift to us. Amen.

Saturday, March 12

Margaret Dunstan

“He leadeth me beside the still waters”

In our busy world we sometimes tend to rush through life without stopping to realize God's desire to care for us as His children. We run “to and fro” thinking we know what is best for ourselves and how to carry that out. When things get tough or don’t turn out as planned, we wonder what happened!

In the 23rd Psalm, portraying God as a shepherd, the psalmist reminds us that God is profoundly reliable and powerful and that our Father already has the best in store for us. In the line “He leadeth me beside the still waters” the psalmist also reveals to us that God always leads us to a place of peace, to a pool of restoring water when we become willing to follow Him and turn our will over to His Will. The vision of the still water invokes in me a calm healing restfulness that replenishes my soul. The still water also creates a feeling of the depth of God’s serenity and love for me when I follow and trust in him.

Choosing to surrendering to God’s Will is not a passive act, but a call to action; the action of following God wherever He may lead me. That tells me I must get up and move in order to come to this place of peaceful

“Evelyne, listen to me!” Sitting up in bed I saw an image clearly standing in my bedroom doorway. It was He! It was Jesus with His arms outstretched towards me saying, “Dylan is in my hands and he is going to be alright.” His words comforted me so much that I lay back and sleep took over.

When I woke and looked through the doorway, that image was gone and I felt a comforting peace. The next morning my daughter called and said, “The hospital just called and they have taken Dylan off the respirator and he is going to be OK.” I said, “I know.” We brought Dylan home a few days later and he has grown up to be an exceptional Child of God. The Cross of Christ points out that suffering accepted with love and faith can contribute to overcome Evil. AMEN.

Palm Sunday—April 17

Day of Celebration and Worship

Monday in Holy Week, April 18

Gene Paasch

“For thine is the kingdom...”

To obtain the kingdom, you must have faith as a mustard seed in Jesus Christ. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, you will be saved and inherit the kingdom.

Karl Barth summed up his theology in the words "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so". If you follow Jesus' love for you right to the kingdom, he has a place reserved for those who love him back. Our hope is to obtain God's kingdom.

If we obtain the kingdom, Christ is there. Jesus Christ is our leader to the kingdom of God, to life where there is perfect freedom, where you are equal to the angels. The children of God are the children of the resurrection. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living and all live unto him into his eternal kingdom.

Tuesday in Holy Week, April 19

Jeff Buller

“...and the power and the glory...”

The moon’s brilliance is only a reflected light, and yet that radiance serves many as a welcome beacon on the darkest night. So, too, do we share the power and the glory of today’s familiar words because of a reflected brilliance. We cannot contemplate this phrase apart from the context of yesterday’s preface — For “**Thine** is the kingdom ...” — and thus recalling that the most glorious forms of power and glory don’t originate with us; they are God’s. But even if such radiant majesty never really begins with us, it doesn’t have to end with us either. Like the moon in its phases, we can reflect a greater light to the universe outside of us. We can share

actions of others offend me, God calls me to pray that I would have a better understanding of the effects of how I respond and how I might turn what offends me into an object lesson for myself.

Michelangelo said that his job was to chip away at the marble until the masterpiece within was revealed. A master creation of God lies somewhere within each of us. We must keep chipping away at our imperfections. In my failure to do the “right things,” to do those things I know I should do, I am trespassing against myself. When I pray for the ability and courage to forgive others, I pray for God’s help and guidance for myself. “The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong,” said Mahatma Gandhi.

God forgives others -- and he also forgives and strengthens me. Desmond Tutu puts it this way: “without forgiveness, there’s no future.”

Friday, April 15

Connie Haas

“And lead us not into temptation...”

The very first step into mastering temptation is to identify it as temptation! That is the human weakness that can lead us into sin. Your first step in sin is cutting God out of the picture along with all the promises you made! Next cut out the patterns of thought that stand in opposition to love: ego, anger, envy, complacency, greed, indulgences, lust.

How to cut through all of this? Have a regular prayer practice to prevent spiritual illness! Send arrow prayers throughout the day as: Thank-you! Help, Lord! Show me!

Let God be your companion and guide throughout the day. You will be free from worry and you will be able to count your blessings! Take it one day at a time. Find a huge satisfaction in doing the Lord’s will.

Saturday, April. 16

Evelyne Bates

“...but deliver us from evil.”

Evil is a mystery. We meet it daily in various forms. Morally, as in sin! Physically as in suffering, worry, doubt and despair. My worst encounter with evil was physical. In November 1988 my grandson, Dylan, was born with the same grave infection that took the life of his infant sister four years earlier – an overwhelming death to our family. Instantly I feared this baby, too, would not survive.

This could not happen again! While Dylan lay gravely ill for the next twenty-five days in Good Samaritan Hospital I suffered mentally from pain of doubt. Were these evil thoughts pulling my faith from God? Was this a test to adhere me more fully to God? One night my deliverance from this evil despair was lifted when I was awakened by a voice calling,

water. In that movement I walk through whatever the world throws in my way, but God leads me with His strength and power though life’s joy and strife to a place where His peace passes all understanding.

Sunday, Lent 1

Day of Celebration and Worship

Monday, March 14

Marj Johnson

“He restoreth my soul”

To please God we need only to be. We are his creation and if we are open to his will He will find a need for us. What greater purpose is there to life than this? Understanding God’s will is secondary to trusting that it is being carried out. Like healing, the answer to our prayer is not always what we request. He tells us we are forgiven daily in so many ways: the beauty we see in nature around us, the joy we feel from people we encounter, hearing about the fulfillment of scripture we have read. This restores my soul, brings me peace and lets me begin again.

“Oh, Lord, help me always to look to you, knowing whatever my need you will provide for it.”

Tuesday, March 15

Cynthia Courtney

“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Name’s sake”

As I meditated on this line, three things struck me. First, the verb tense used in *leadeth* or *leads* me, which is present tense and differs somewhat from some of the other verbs in this famous psalm. Hebrew scholars report this is done for particular emphasis. Why? God gave us the scriptures with all of its laws and wisdom of the Old Testament, as our guide for life until those scriptures were fulfilled in the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ in the New Testament. We have a blueprint for our lives laid out for us and yet He leads us even now, today. Day by day, hour by hour, and sometimes, even, minute by minute, He is ever present with us, leading us in our journeys even though we may not recognize His presence. What a comforting thought!

The second thing that caught my attention was “paths of righteousness”. “Paths” is plural here and perhaps for two reasons. As Christian people, we all have our own paths to walk and they are as different from one another as we are as individuals. We bring our own gifts or “talents” to the journey and I cannot walk your path nor you, mine. Yet the common thread is that our collective paths are righteous in God’s sight. Also, as individuals who are given “free will” by our Creator, and even though we have the tools, we often veer off that straight path through the

choices we make and must readjust our steps. From God's view, I often wonder if my journey appears more like a series of disjointed but eventually, interconnected "paths" as I sometimes stumble along my life's journey.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, my journey is for "His Name's sake". My life's journey is not for my own pleasure or self-glory, or even about "getting to heaven". We were created by our *God for His Glory*. At the righteous journey's end, we will all rejoice in His presence, to the glory of His Name. *Amen.*

Wednesday, March 16

Sue Drinkwater

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"

I walk in strength and hope. I am a child of God. My life is filled with Grace. I fought the shadow of breast cancer years ago and I won. I live in sunshine.

No. It can't be back. Breast cancer has returned. It was hidden and spreading and is much more deadly this time. I can't do this again. I fall from the warmth of the sunshine. I tumble into the depths of a cold and dank valley. The shadow of death crashes on me with bolts of lightening and pounding rain.

I fall to the ground and lie there for seconds, hours, maybe days. I can't go on. Not another step. I try to crawl, but sink deeper into the swamp of this valley. I am alone, terrified, hopeless. There is no way out. The shadows of darkness are closing in on me. I cry out in a voice I barely recognize "Help me Jesus. I can't go on without you. I have nothing left." A warm breeze touches my face. I am cradled in arms of love....carried for awhile until I can stand. I hear soothing words of nurturance, encouragement and laughter. I hear the songs of birds and the lullabies of mothers. I hear the voice of God. I am so weak and my body aches with fatigue and cold. My hands touch my head and I have no hair. So much has changed. I stumble but I am supported by the strength of the army of angels that God has sent to me. I am not alone.

I walk in strength and hope. I am a child of God. My life is filled with Grace. I live in sunshine. I fought the shadow of breast cancer and WE won.

Thursday, March 17

Senior High Youth Group

"I will fear no evil"

Good Shepherd's Youth Group brainstormed, discussed and ultimately looked inward for the meaning of "I Fear no Evil", their Lenten Meditation prompt. In Group they identified their tangible fears of weapons, drugs, money and the intangibles of the unknown, rejection, loss of

Wednesday, April 13

Doug Barrett

"...and forgive us our trespasses..."

"Forgive us our trespasses" from the Lord's Prayer that we repeat so many times every week and maybe sometimes without giving much thought as to what it means, is a compelling prayer. Even though we are good Christians ... all of us from time to time step out of the boundaries God has set in place for us to follow. As we say "forgive us our trespasses" we are asking God to forgive us for those sins we have committed ... little ones or big ones.

And we know that God made the ultimate sacrifice ... "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son". To me the astonishing word is "so" ... God so loved the world. Jesus was crucified so that each one of us is forgiven for our sins. However, we really should move forward and realize that God has accepted and taken those sins from us and forgives us ... "forgive us our trespasses."

Forgiveness and reconciliation with ourselves is not an easy task by any means; however, we must do it if we intend to lead a life in Christ's image. The Lenten season of six weeks presents us each year with a wonderful opportunity to pray repeatedly and let God "forgive us our trespasses" and rededicate ourselves to Christ and his teachings.

By doing so, this will enable us to renew the grace of God. Let us strive to practice our faith with gratitude and compassion to assure that we will treat every human being with dignity and respect. During this Lenten period let us rededicate ourselves to our Christian goals and readjust our moral compass.

"Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

Thursday, April 14

Bob Olson

"...as we forgive those who trespass against us"

We've all heard the alternate translation of this prayer that asks God to forgive "debts" and our "debtors." The Gospel of Luke broadens the language to mean forgiveness of sins. I believe the full meaning of this phrase -- whatever the wording -- extends not only to our treatment of others but also to our feelings for ourselves.

I believe our trespasses, or debts, also refer to our failures to do the things we know we should -- our trespassing against our opportunities to help others -- to "do the right things." By falling short in measuring up to the Golden Rule of helping others as we would like to be helped, we trespass against ourselves and we trespass against God.

I can only be responsible for my own actions or inactions. If the

Monday, April 11

Bob Taylor

“...on Earth as it is in heaven”

When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven he described it in ways that might lead people to wonder whether he was referring to some far off time and place or to the present moment in this world. John the Baptist called them to baptism with the words, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Just before Jesus described the end of the age, as recorded in Luke 17, he said, “The kingdom of God is among you.”

When Jesus referred to the kingdom of heaven as a mustard seed or yeast one was left to wonder if he was talking about present or future. In fact, how much separation did Jesus see between life in the world as we now live it and life in some future paradise? It seems that, when he got around to describing the kingdom of heaven, the line between present and future became quite indistinct. One gets the impression that heaven is both something to be lived and something to be aspired.

So when we pray, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” we recognize the close connection between what we do in life now and what we will find in the future, that what God has planned for us in a future paradise is meant to be tasted by us in life now. And, as we grow into God’s will, becoming ever closer to God, the step into the kingdom of heaven as it is beyond this world will be a very short and comfortable step.

Tuesday, April 12

Steve Pollard

“Give us this day our daily bread...”

In this Lenten season, Lord we ask that you feed us daily with the spiritual food of your body and blood. We ask for bread, but what we need most in this Lenten period, is your spiritual bread, the bread of life, the gift of the Holy Spirit. As Christ countered to Satan, man does not live by bread alone but by every word from the mouth of God. We ask you to give us words of prayer for our loved ones, for those sick and suffering in our congregation and in the world. We ask you that you breathe life into our spirits so that we may deepen our relationship with you, so you can have a stronger presence in our life.

Lord, with your daily spiritual bread, lift us up and bless us. Help us to see the needs of others. Help to respond to others. Help us to strengthen our faith. We realize that we have a long way to go in this spiritual journey but we thank you that you have brought us this far. We dedicate this Lenten time to seeking you and to forbearing from all distractions and feed on your bread of life alone so we can be filled with your spirit. Amen.



stability in their lives and death.

In their own words: “Fear of not being loved, not being accepted....Intolerance because it sparks misunderstanding and leads to bad things....I will be alone and everyone else will be gone, and I will have to figure out how to live life on my own.... Fear being judged by those I care about....Fear not knowing the final outcome...Fear not being able to protect or help those I care about....Loneliness is dark and frightening to think about. Dying alone is sad to imagine. Friends, family and just people in general are needed in life.”

The Youth perceive evil in greed, bigotry, war, materialism and more: “Evil is something that tests your faith....Technology can be evil because it changes people; makes life impersonal; changes death from tragedy to statistic...Ignorance is the root of evil. If people were informed then there would be no injustice because when people understand each other they do not fight and they try to help each other....Pure intangible evil is created in the mind, but it is a reality that we have to face.... Desperation can be a dangerous human emotion, driving people to do vicious and inhumane things, but it also drives some few to do their best....Genocide seems the darkest deed to fulfill...Mass murder just using a stereotype and prejudice? Dark, Unfair, True Evil.”

“Evil and Fear are completely different when by themselves, but they fuel each other.”

Their personal soul searchings are equally thoughtful and thought provoking.

Friday, March 18

Ryan Nuquist

“For thou art with me”

We live in a society that rewards ingenuity and hard work with money. The more money you have, the more successful you’re presumed to be. Success is advertised in every media known to man to the point that anyone who is a member of society is directed to believe what messages are being sent. We believe, if you work hard, the longer you work the easier and more rewarding it gets. In today’s uncertain economic situation this belief is being attacked. People are dealing with a vast array of challenges in terms of rewards for work. Lost job, reduced incomes...what else can we endure and maintain the status quo our society expects from us? I wrote this prayer to help calm nerves when I was dealing with stress of lost wages and employment uncertainty.

Father in heaven, may the word of my mouth create a connection to your divine grace. We do not understand what is happening to us, so we ask for your help. Help us to handle our challenges in a way that brings us closer to you. We ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and protect us from falling from thee. We ask for strength to carry forward and to adjust to a different way from what we know. We know you are in control of all things that happen and we know that you are with us forever. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

Saturday, March 19

Bea Class

“Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”

In today's troubled times it is difficult to feel comfort. Life also hands us bumps and bruises. Some we bring on ourselves and some just happen. The shepherd watches over his flock and each sheep is precious to him. Never wanting one of them to stray and leave the fold, our shepherd, Jesus, holds each one of us precious. He is always there, never leaving us unattended – and only a prayer away. Knowing this I am comforted. My shepherd watches over me. I am never alone. As the shepherds protected their fold with their staff, Jesus protects us with His abiding love. We are in His fold and He is the staff. Thank you, Jesus, for your comfort and your love.

Sunday, Lent 2

Day of Celebration and Worship

Monday, March 21

David Green

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies”

We are the sheep of our Lord. The table being set for us is the preparation for us to go forward in life. As the shepherd prepares for his flock to flourish he makes expeditions to the land that they will graze from. He inspects the land, he determines what areas are best to be grazed upon, where his flock can safely go. Sheep will stray and eat anything that catches their attention, they need the protection and guidance of the shepherd. As Christians do we feel that we have to try everything? Why do we tempt fate when the preparation has already been done for us? There is only one sure place of safety – when we wander or roam we are allowing ourselves to be picked off by a predator.

In our Christian life, Christ is our Shepherd. He has already gone before us into every situation that we may encounter – He has seen the enemy. What tremendous cost has it been to Christ to prepare this table for us? Why can't we walk closer to Christ – this is the place of safety!

This is how our table will be prepared.

Friday, April 8

Barbara McGrath

“...thy kingdom come...”

In God's kingdom, there is a perfect unfolding of everything....a time for every purpose under heaven. If we reflect on the sacred nature of each thing that happens in our lives, we begin to trust that there is a reason for even the difficult times. We can only know joy if we have experienced sadness – restfulness if we have felt exhaustion – safety if we have felt vulnerability. This is all part of the perfect unfolding of God's kingdom and we have only to LET IT BE. Peace will be found in learning to accept whatever is happening in **this** moment. If we put aside anger, judgment and fear, there will soon be a time for comfort, love and joy.

Perhaps our most important task is to open our hearts and allow God's kingdom to be our center. The peace which passes all understanding may be ours if we can remember to take a deep breath, live only in this moment and hear the words “Be still and know that I am God.”

Saturday, April. 9

Christine West

“...thy will be done...”

“Why me, Lord?” “Why not what I want?” I remember exactly when I used those words for the last time in my life - December, 1977. After five years, Gus and I were back in Apartheid South Africa. I had a teaching job, and was told that I had to join a white teachers union. When I refused, they said that I had no option as they would deduct my dues from my salary. I resigned. Gus was back at school, I had no job and we had no income. It was two days before Christmas and I sat on the stoep and cried. A tall, black gentleman came around the corner and asked if I was Mrs. Vanderwesthuizen. He was the head of a local colored school and said they needed an English teacher and he had heard I was available. I accepted the position. I was the only white there for many years and God used me during a very tumultuous time in South African history. God was with me when my 8th Grader died because he was asthmatic and the riot police had shot us with tear gas. He was with me when I was in the hospital with my mother and found out where children were being kept by the security police and I could let their parents know where they were. Now when it does not go the way I want it to go, I do say, “Thy will be done” and God always knows what is best for me.

Sunday, Lent 5

Day of Celebration and Worship

Another image of my father is as a protector. When I was scared of something or someone, it was to my dad whom I would turn. I saw him as all powerful and could ease my fears with a few simple words or hug. Now as a father, I turn to my heavenly Father in prayer for comfort and strength so that I can protect and comfort my own children. Unique to our God is that I, and we, need to seek Him for that comfort and strength – He will not go where He is not sought.

Finally, my dad was the one that made the rules and was the disciplinarian in our house. His rules were derived from God's rules and my dad made them real to me as a child. Now, I am working to make them real for my children. My dad ruled our house from his big cozy chair, but absolutely anchored with love. Like my dad, I get a lot of help from my wife, but I have "the chair". I can picture God in his big comfy chair being our Father and filled with love while admiring His "family" and always at the ready to help. Being in the big comfy chair is not always easy and I am glad that I can always turn to Him for a greater guidance.

And while our Father is in heaven, He is undoubtedly here with you and me as well.

Thursday, April 7

Tony Bishop

"...hallowed be thy Name"

Some time ago I was playing a round of golf at one of my favorite golf courses, Pebble Beach. Pebble Beach has some of the most majestic and picturesque scenes anywhere and it is easy to become inspired by the creator's handiwork. In fact, I always seem to play better golf at places like Pebble Beach because it inspires me so.

I was playing with two strangers when another golfer caught up and joined us on the third tee. From that guy's first tee shot, I began to become uninspired. It seemed that on every wayward shot he made (and there were many), he yelled out some extremely derogatory words in reference to Jesus Christ. The guy became so obnoxious and infectious that he rubbed off on the other two players. It was so bad that I literally quit after nine holes.

Scenery at places such as Pebble Beach and the many, many blessings in my life cause me to want to honor and have reverence for my Savior and Lord. If only people had an inkling of all that He has done and continues to do for me.

I am convinced that anyone who would trust their lives to the creator and have a truly born-again experience too, would continually utter the phrase, "Hallowed be thy Name." For He, and only He, is worthy to be honored, revered and praised. Therefore, I say again, "Hallowed be thy Name."

Tuesday, March 22

Ellen Goodeve

"Thou anointest my head with oil"

You may wonder what David was thinking when he wrote this. In David's time, kings were anointed with oil at the time of their coronation, priests at the time of their consecration, and sheep were anointed by shepherds to cure and prevent disease. Oil was routinely used to cleanse one's eyes, care for the skin, and sanctify the instruments of worship - to make all things clean and holy. And in the end, oil was used to prepare the body for its final rest. Treasured guests were welcomed and their heads anointed with oil in Jesus' day. And Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, recognizing and sanctifying him. Jesus charged the disciples to go out into the community and heal the sick in his place, and they did so anointing the afflicted with healing oil. And so, what might we think about as we read this phrase? At our baptism, we are anointed with oil marking us forever as Christ's own. We are welcomed into the family and sanctified. And we too are anointed on occasion with oil for healing.

During this season of Lent, may you feel the healing offered by our great Good Shepherd, who knows each of us, welcomes us, cleanses us, sanctifies us, and treasures us as we work in our world in his name.

Wednesday, March 23

Dave Downing

"My cup runneth over"

"I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly", John 10:10. This is not in relation to eternal life but life here and now. In thinking about the problems you may have this seems like a nice thought, but after all we're dealing with real solutions and want answers right now! Well one answer is in Rev: 3:20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him...". Pray and meditate on this. Patience is required, "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him what he needs", Luke 11:8. When meditating, distractions may occur. Accept them and continue, they will fade into the background. The evidence this works is in, get involved with the people of Good Shepherd and find out. Your cup will surely "Runneth Over".

Thursday, March. 24

Diane Spero

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”

Even when I was at my bottom with addiction, God's mercy was there. No matter how far I strayed he was merciful. In his goodness he protected me. He will protect and be merciful to me for the rest of my life. I have many testimonies of his mercy.

Jesus, help to remind me that no matter what situation I am in you are merciful; that your goodness is always there. Please help to keep my focus on you no matter what my circumstances are.

I pray to see your goodness in all situations. Help me to remember that even when I abandon you your mercy and goodness is still with me and will always be with me. Jesus I pray that I will remember your mercy and know that it will be with me all the days of my life. Amen.

Friday, March 25

Vickie Urban

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”

When thinking about the house of the Lord, the first thought that comes to my mind is the actual church building. We often refer to it as “the Lord’s house” and we feel God’s presence when we are in it. We are careful to respect the sanctity of the building itself as well as all that takes place within it. It is the place where we worship and it is also the place where important events in our lives occur.

Further thought, however, makes me think that the house of the Lord is really so much more than just a physical building – it is the earth and the whole universe that surrounds us. Just as viewing a beautiful church can take our breath away and make us feel God’s presence, viewing the millions of stars in the sky on a clear night or watching a beautiful sunrise or sunset can produce those same feelings. We can see and feel His presence everywhere and we truly dwell in His house wherever we are.

Finally, when we exchange this life for our everlasting life, we will find our final “home” with God. So we really do “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Saturday, March 26

Gayle Landen

Collect for Purity: “Almighty God...”

Almighty God and Father, please help me as I attempt to describe the feelings of my heart about what You mean to me.

When asked what is important, I answer that loving You is the most important aspect of my life. Then why, Almighty God, is this effort such a challenge?

As You know, I spend much time and effort to achieve my goals.

I may forget a thousand times a day,
but need only turn and be aware
of that which never leaves me.

Awaken me from my sleepy trance

Help me to remember

So how then, does a ray of light magnify the holiness of the Sun?

by shining

by shining

Tuesday, April 5

Lindsey Wood

Collect for Purity: “...through Christ our Lord.”

As you may or may not be aware, The Collect for Purity was originally drafted in Latin for the Sarum Missal, which priests used to prepare themselves for every mass. However it is now one of the main prayers in every Anglican prayer book in the world. These books can be found in every part of Christianity worldwide; the phrase “through Christ our lord” is said to be one of the most spiritual phrases in the entire collect.

There have been many interpretations of this line: some see it as an ending to a prayer and those words enable us to talk to God, others see it as purely an ending to a prayer, but for me it is as simple as living through Christ our Lord. As is tradition and rite, each Sunday at communion we take his blood and his body into our bodies, this is Christ sustaining our lives. The taking of the living bread and living wine into our bodies is Christ living through us, our existence is through Christ our Lord, without him, we cannot be, our everyday actions and words are done and made possible through Christ.

The story of Christ’s death and resurrection on the third day has been told many times; this is another way we live through Christ our Lord. Christ sacrificed himself for us, had he not done so, we would not be living the lives we are now. In a way, Christians living their lives *is* Christ’s resurrection. He is resurrected within us, and we in turn are part of Christ, living through Christ our Lord.

Wednesday, April 6

Mike & Teresa Grashof

“Our Father, who art in heaven...”

When I think about “Our Father” many different images come to mind that relate my own dad to my Heavenly Father.

One is my dad as the provider or one that made sure we had food, clothes, and a place to call home. This easily can be related to God, as He is the provider of all to His family – you, me, as individuals, as a family – all of us.

perfectly does not mean to have a highly excited set of feelings about God. If anything that gets in the way of an open receptivity. This love is that kind of openness, that kind of transparency toward God, that, because it recognizes who God is and recognizes God as the one who knows us, is ready to receive from God that which God has to give us.

So that's what perfect love is talking about. It is saying, O.K. you are getting ready to worship God, and in your worship of God the important thing is not to understand God correctly, but love and worship Him openly, purely and receptively. What is really needed is an openness and receptivity to that which might come to you, to change you, to help you deal with your past, present and future, by means of what happens in this service of worship and in this community.

Receptivity defines not only what it means for us to love God, but also what it means for God to love us. God is thoroughly receptive to what his creation offers him. For God to be perfect he has to be not only the perfect initiator, but also the perfect listener. That which tends toward perfection in human relationships tends toward a perfection of hearing, of listening, of awareness of what the other is and is offering. True creativity can only be expressed within the context of receiving and using that which is given.

Are we ready for the Purity of God's perfect love for us and ours for Him? I pray that we are. AMEN

Sunday, Lent 4

Day of Celebration and Worship

Monday, April 4

Peggy Tibke

Collect for Purity: "and worthily magnify your holy Name.."

"God", "Creator", "Source" - any name I might use can only ever be

a substitute for, a pointer to,

the Unnameable One

Pure Love

Pure Light

as close as my own breath, yet great beyond measure

with no beginning and no end.

Since I am reminded This Peace passes the understanding of my mind,

I realize it's not possible to grasp the magnitude of God.

Yet, as I go within

to the inner realms

to the Sacred Silence,

Grace is ever there.

But, when it comes to articulating your essence, I take the path of least resistance.

On Sundays, I go to Church and let the clergy do the heavy lifting by challenging me to consider different aspects of my faith and life. During the week, I try to carry out the great commandment of loving You with my whole heart, soul and mind and loving my neighbor as myself.

My unwavering faith in an all forgiving, loving and comforting God has blinded me to the necessity of taking the extra steps to discover how best to articulate what You mean to me.

You live within me and bless my life on a daily basis. You show me the way to live and provide understanding and context for my life and its contradictions and complexities

Almighty God, through your benevolence You give me the opportunity to express my free will and learn about You, myself and the world.

My ability to describe You, Almighty God, is limited. My love for You is not limited.

Thank you Almighty God for loving me and please guide my efforts to develop a deeper relationship with You.

Sunday, Lent 3

Day of Celebration and Worship

Monday, March 28

Walter Beaman

Collect for Purity: "...to you all hearts are open..."

ALMIGHTIE God, unto whom all hartes bee open, and all desyres knowen, and from whom no secretes are hid: clense the thoughtes of our hartes, by the inspiracion of thy holy spirite: that we may perfectly love thee, and worthely magnifie thy holy name: through Christ our Lorde. Amen.

These are the words of the Collect for Purity from the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, said to have been derived from a private preparation of priests at the foot of the altar.

Today we say, "to you all hearts are open". Think about it: the thoughts of our hearts are our most closely guarded secrets. Some are so secret that we would not disclose them to anyone. Yet we are acknowledging here that to our God, "all hearts are open". What a startling truth! From him, nothing is concealed. The secrets of our heart, our innermost self, are to him open and naked.

What does he see there? Naturally, he sees whatever is there. The sublime and the shameful. The good and the ugly. The lifegiving and the deadening.

So we continue with the prayer, toward the central word "Cleanse".

Tuesday, March 29

Wendy Williams

Collect for Purity: "...all desires known..."

This ancient prayer of the church, which begins every eucharist, sets the tone of our worship, and sets out the state of our being. It invites us to sink deeply into this time we have set aside to gather with others in the presence of God. In this time of worship we are asked to let go of all the masks we wear, the roles we play, and acknowledge that God sees through them all. God sees into the depths of our hearts and souls, knows our deepest desires, even the ones we may perhaps try to hide or disguise.

What then is it like to stand or kneel before the One to whom all desires are known? Does it feel like a relief, no need for dissembling or keeping up appearances? Does it make us feel like we want to cringe and hide the nakedness of our wanting and desiring?

Does it stop us in our tracks and make us ask ourselves what truly are the deepest desires of our hearts? Because it is only there, in that kind of radical awareness and openness, that the work-- of transforming our desires into what God desires for us-- can begin.

Wednesday, March 30

Liz Bardin

Collect for Purity: "...and from you no secrets are hid"

These words strike to the heart of our relationship with God. We spend time keeping little secrets i.e. how much we weigh, how old we are, how much money we have and so on. But there are no secrets hid from God – thank God. Understanding keeps us focused on the realities of our human condition. Only the grace of God brings peace and happiness.

Thursday, March 31

Robin Hansel

Collect for Purity: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts..."

This *Collect for Purity's* phrase prompted me to look up one of my favorite lines from "The Magnificat". In her song, Mary passionately shares her love for God by citing His mighty works including Luke 1:51 in which she proclaims "he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts (NRSV)." When I investigate additional references throughout scripture to this phrase, it feels like God is helping me to understand that the distraction I frequently sense in my mind during worship may be directly related to my own selfish human pride and ego. The negative voices which so often pop into my head when I am trying to simply "Be Still" and open to God's presence, may be valuable opportunities for me to grow closer to Christ if I humbly ask for the Holy Spirit's assistance. Whenever I immediately stop and pray for pure spiritual cleansing during these troubling moments, I can almost always successfully refocus my attention to worship. If I give into

these "thoughts of my heart" and choose not to ask for God's help, I am left feeling frustrated and isolated. This process of asking the Holy Spirit's help is ongoing, however, as the slightest little thing can likely distract me yet again just moments later...

Friday, April 1

Julie Bird Winchester

Collect for Purity: "..by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.."

The Collect for Purity first shows up around the year 800. Sometime after this it became a part of what's called the Sarum Rite. This is the medieval collection of services to which our current Book of Common Prayer is most closely related. In early years this prayer was part of the priest's private preparation before the Eucharist. The prayer was a short service for the priest which he said by himself before entering into the church to begin leading worship. After the Protestant Reformation, when Thomas Cranmer revised the medieval services to create the first Book of Common Prayer; he said, "Well, all this stuff that the priest used to say privately, the congregation, who, after all, are all God's priests, will now say publicly."

All that is left of the medieval priest's preparatory services is this one prayer. This is amazing to think about how long this prayer has existed in our services and how it has been a part of preparing us, God's priests, for the Eucharist. We hear it every Sunday.

...by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit.

The word "inspire" literally means "to breathe in", we ask the Holy Spirit to enter into us at every Eucharist. We ask God to send the Holy Spirit to remake our hearts. Trusting in God can be difficult with all the distractions in our lives which can shape who we are – work, cell phones, media, e-mails, busy schedules and even peers; but turning to Him with an open heart can make us all whole. Listen closely to these words ... breathe in deeply... feel the Holy Spirit cleansing your heart and renewing your spirit saying "make me whole."

Saturday, Apr. 2

Marilyn Hall

Collect for Purity: "...that we may perfectly love you.."

Perfect love refers not to what we give to the love, but to what we are willing to receive from it. To love God perfectly means to be perfectly open and receptive to what is being given to us. Think about human love for an instant and you will get the point. There is nothing quite as irritating in human love as a person who insists that what it means to love someone is always to give to them and never to receive from them. To love God