

# LENTEN DEVOTIONS

2019 – 2020

A gift of prayer, prose and poems  
written by the Luther Memorial community



Luther Memorial Church

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THE LENTEN PRAYER OF  
ST. EPHREM THE SYRIAN

*Of all Lenten hymns and prayers, one short prayer can be termed the Lenten prayer. Tradition ascribes it to one of the great teachers of spiritual life, St. Ephrem the Syrian. Here is its text:*

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant. Yea O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

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Remember to save this copy to use  
again during Lent in 2020.

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# Introduction

*Pastors Brad Pohlman and John Worzala Dumke*

*“Let us ever walk with Jesus, follow his example pure,  
Through a world that will deceive us and to sin our spirits lure.  
Onward in his footsteps treading, travelers here, our home above,  
Full of faith and hope and love, let us do our saviors bidding.”*

*Hymn #802 “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”*

During this season of Lent, we will re-hear the story of Jesus and the name of those who in baptism are called to follow him, who walk the path of discipleship.

These daily devotions were written by you—friends and members of Luther Memorial. We encourage you to read them daily, at home, with family, while attending events and meetings at church. Be nurtured by the words of scripture and the thoughts, poems and prayers of your fellow sisters and brothers in Christ here at LM. It is one of the marks of discipleship that we do not walk alone; in fact cannot walk this path alone, but only with the help and assistance of those fellow saints in whom we are bound in Baptism.

For some extra nourishment on the journey, we’ve included a soup and a bread recipe after each Wednesday’s devotion, in honor of the many Lenten soup suppers held at LM over the years. These recipes are from our 2011 church cookbook.

So as you ponder these devotions, please remember those who have gone before us; those who helped us this far in our walk; and those who continue to walk with us in this place; a place of bold proclamation of the life, death and resurrection of

Jesus Christ. It is this story we are called to proclaim; a story begun at creation and will be brought to its final and ultimate conclusion on the last day. Until then, let us walk together.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 | Wednesday, February 26, 2020

## Living Discipleship

*Lynn Washington*

**John 1:38–39** *“When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him, ‘Rebbe’ (which translated means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.”*

The thing I find most interesting about this reading is the emphasis on the time of day. Why was this important to John? How does the time of day tie into discipleship?

Maybe the time of day doesn’t really matter. Maybe we should be practicing discipleship 24 hours a day.

Maybe, just maybe, the concept of discipleship should be so ingrained in our characters that it isn’t something that we practice—that it becomes something that we live.

And by living it, we also live our faith.

## Curried Lentil Soup

Helen Hartman

1 Tbsp olive oil	2 ½ c organic vegetable broth
1 c chopped onion	1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into ¼" cubes
4 large garlic cloves, minced	4 c baby spinach (3 oz)
2 Tbsp sweet curry powder	salt
1 Tbsp minced fresh ginger	1 c plain yogurt
2 tsp ground cumin	½ c raw almonds, chopped
1 c red lentils, rinsed	

Heat olive oil in medium pot. Add onion and garlic and saute until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in curry powder, ginger and cumin. Cook for 1 minute. Stir in lentils and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer covered for 10 minutes. Add sweet potatoes, cover and cook for 10 minutes longer, until water is absorbed and sweet potatoes are just tender. Stir in baby spinach and cook for 1 minute longer, until spinach is just wilted. Add salt and adjust seasonings to taste. Transfer to 4 serving bowls and top each with ¼ cup yogurt and 2 Tbsp almonds.

## Naan

Cindy Cameron-Fix

2 tsp dried yeast	2 tsp canola oil
1 tsp sugar	2 tsp salt
1 ⅓ c warm water	½ c butter, melted
4 c flour	

Dissolve sugar and yeast in warm water. Proof 5–10 minutes. Add flour, oil and salt to yeast. Mix to form dough. Knead. Let dough rise in warm place until double in bulk, about 80 minutes. Knead again, then divide into 8 pieces. Roll or form with hands into teardrop shapes about 6 inches long. Place on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 425° for 6–8 minutes per side, turning twice to brush with melted butter. Serve immediately.

Thursday, March 7, 2019 | Thursday, February 27, 2020

## Follow Me

*Anne Hunnex*

**John 1:43** *“The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’”*

Follow me.

What simple words, yet how difficult it is to follow.

- To follow means to come after
- To follow means to step in another’s footprints
- To follow means to be curious for what comes next
- To follow takes energy and persistence
- To follow means to trust
- To follow requires faith

How hard it must have been for the disciples to follow.

- To give up family
- To give up possessions
- To give up profession
- To give up security

The call is still there for us to follow.

- Discover in the footprints
- Pattern our lives after Jesus
- Focus on what is important
- Love God more than our possessions and successes
- Love others as He has loved us

Even though we aren’t asked to leave family, possessions, and security, we are asked to leave behind our selfish human nature and expand our world to include the work and love of God.

Throughout the days of Lent, take time to search for the footprints of Christ and follow.

Friday, March 8, 2019 | Friday, February 28, 2020

## Flipping Tables

*Claire Embil*

**John 2:17** *“His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’”*

After Jesus clears the temple of the corruption and sin, the disciples remember an Old Testament verse from Psalms which John quotes almost directly here. They have a realization that the zeal, the love, which Jesus had just displayed for God’s house means he is the Messiah that fulfills the prophecy in Psalm 69:9.

It’s somewhat ironic that such an aggressive act from Jesus is what helps his followers to realize that he is the Lord. They watch him flip over the tables of the money changers and pour their money out onto the ground. Yet, the disciples see this fierce display of justice as an act of love for God. They see Jesus fulfilling what he was called to do.

This begs the question: where is God calling us to flip tables in our own lives? When we see sin and corruption, God calls us to act with righteous justice and cleanse our lives like Jesus cleansed the temple. We are called to flip the tables of the oppressor and fight for the oppressed. To act with justice is to act with a powerful love for God’s people who have been harmed by the sinful injustices of the world.

Just and Merciful Creator, open our eyes to see the sufferings of our neighbors and fill our hearts with the courage to act in the ways of your heavenly justice. Amen.

Saturday, March 9, 2019 | Saturday, February 29, 2020

## God's Love

*Bill Braham*

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”*

John 3:16 is one of the most well-known passages in the Bible. When I was a kid, I remember my mother and her Lutheran Women's Missionary League friends running off hundreds of copies of this verse on the ditto machine in the school office, cutting the sheets into strips so one verse was on each strip and stuffing the strips into empty walnut shells. They handed out these “Gospels in a Nutshell” from the Lutheran booth at the State Fair in West Allis.

I remember feeling that this verse is the “get out of hell free” card that we could play on judgment day. I believed in Jesus, whatever that might mean, so I was all set.

These days, I think the point is not in the “not perish” part, but in the first part: “God so loved the world.” God still loves the world and everyone in it. We know that, so the last part isn't really as important as is used to seem. Whatever God may have in store for us after this life is done, we will have God's love. And we will not perish.

Sunday, March 10, 2019 | Sunday, March 1, 2020

## Who Will Drink?

*Peter Sherven*

**John 4:14** *“...those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”*

In a long ago time water carriers would walk along the streets in cities of the Far East selling water at so much a drink. “The gift of God,” they would cry, “who will buy? Who will buy?” A writer tells of a time when a wealthy man bought the entire supply and then asked the carrier to give it all away. Now the water carrier went through the streets with a different cry: “The gift of God, who will take? Who will drink?”

The setting of today’s verse is that time when a woman of Samaria went to the well in her village to draw water. Jesus was there and spoke to her about “living water.” It sounded so refreshing, so life-giving, that the woman asked: “Sir, give me this water!”

I remember sitting one afternoon with a dear parishioner, a devout Christian woman, now heartbroken because her husband had just died. At one point she said, “I am thirsty for what God gives.”

The person has not been born who does not need what God gives. What God gives is an overwhelming love that has been made known best in Jesus Christ.

God is bound and determined to give himself to us—to be with us in our dark and lonely moments, to restore us to our place as children of God, to show us a more abundant life. No one loves the way God loves.

How about it? The gift of God, who will take? Who will drink?

Monday, March 11, 2019 | Monday, March 2, 2020

## **New Ways**

*David Berggren*

**Luke 3:19–20** *“But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison.”*

The case of the missing lectionary parts. When our Sunday lectionary reaches the Baptism of Our Lord, it omits these verses. They stand right in the middle of the story of Jesus’ baptism and complicate it by seemingly taking John the Baptist out of the moment when our Lord receives the Holy Spirit and hears the voice of the Father. Herod has jailed John. (This is not the murderous Herod related to the Nativity and Epiphany stories. However, this lecherous, Roman puppet king was just as nasty.) Luke, I think, wants us to see clearly God’s new relationship with humanity. This new thing doesn’t need a connection with the old way. In Christ all things are new. New everyday. New every moment. What old guilt, old doubt, old customs get in the way of you living fully into your baptism? Herod and John belong to the old. Jesus and his followers belong to the new. Lord, help me let go of the old and embrace the new.

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 | Tuesday, March 3, 2020

## Sharing Good News

*Bethany Hotzel*

**Mark 1:15** *“...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”*

This verse is inviting all of us to come and hear the good news and to become disciples. Lent is my all time favorite part of the church year, other than Christmas, because this part of the year invites people. I feel like it is really hard on a daily basis to talk about God. This is really sad. We have so many social media avenues to reach out to people but we have forgotten how to simply talk and invite people to church. Some say it was easier back in Jesus' time because people would gather around to hear the good news and they could see the actual miracles. They could feel the healing and see the Healer. Seeing was believing. Yet, how about now, do we really need to see in order to believe?

This time of the year reminds us that it is okay to have God in our everyday speech. “The time is fulfilled” means that with God in our lives, we have everything we could possibly need. The next part is saying that God is near no matter what, and it is time to give God what he deserves. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” Invite. Repent. Forgive. Believe. The good news is meant to be shared. Thanks be to God.

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 | Wednesday, March 4, 2020

## Small Acts of Discipleship

*Caitlin Xavier*

**Luke 5:10–11** *“...and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.”*

“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” That is all it took. James, John and Simon stopped fishing and gave their lives to following Jesus. Can you imagine not going to work tomorrow and instead preaching the good news to everyone?

Being a disciple isn't easy. It isn't for everyone. I don't think it is entirely practical for every Christian to quit their job and become a disciple full time. But how can we incorporate discipleship into our lives? What are some ways we can share the good news? Volunteering, feeding people, making music, conversations, and extending grace to everyone in our lives are some ways to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

One can throw down one's old life and pick up a new one with Jesus in many ways. Finding small acts of discipleship to start with makes bold acts of discipleship less outside of our individual comfort zones. Sometimes showing love and extending grace to the least and the lost is hard, but if we have practice doing so every day with friends and family it becomes much easier to share that love with others.

“For I was a stranger and you invited me in.” (Matthew 25:35)

## Winter Squash Soup

Joy Drummond

¼ c butter	1 clove garlic, minced
1 onion, chopped	2 lbs winter squash, peeled, seeded and cut into ½"
1 tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped, or 8 oz can of tomato sauce	cubes (I use butternut)
1–2 fresh hot red peppers, peeled, seeded and chopped, or use dried red or cayenne pepper	4 c beef broth
	¼ tsp sugar
	Parmesan cheese

In large saucepan, saute onion, tomato, peppers and garlic about 5 minutes. Add squash and beef broth. Bring to a boil, then simmer covered for 20 minutes. Season with sugar, salt and pepper to taste. Puree in blender. Garnish with 1 Tbsp parmesan per bowl, if desired.

## Easy French Bread

Amy Grunewald Mattison

2 pkgs dry yeast	2 c boiling water
½ c warm water	7–8 c flour
½ tsp sugar	1 egg, beaten (opt.)
2 Tbsp sugar	2 Tbsp milk (opt.)
2 Tbsp canola oil	poppy or sesame seeds (opt.)
2 tsp salt	

Dissolve sugar and yeast in warm water. Combine the sugar, oil, salt and boiling water. Cool mixture to lukewarm, then add the yeast mixture (\*this takes some time, so plan ahead\*). Stir in the flour.

Knead 10 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Place in greased bowl, turning once. Let rise until doubled. Punch down and let rest 15 minutes. Divide dough in half. On floured surface, roll each half to a 12" x 15" rectangle. Roll up, starting at 15" edge. Place loaves on greased cookie sheets and make 4 slashes diagonally across the tops. Let rise until doubled. Optional: mix the egg and milk and brush on top of bread. Sprinkle with seeds. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes. Makes 2 loaves.

Thursday, March 14, 2019 | Thursday, March 5, 2020

## You Will Live

*Lewis Bosworth*

**John 4:50** *“Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your son will live.’ The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way.”*

Belief is a tenuous and scary thing.  
Words make up the belief systems  
We share with each other, so it’s  
Even more of a faith-like thing.

Consider some of the words we use each  
Sunday: confess, captive, communion.  
These are heavy-duty words, laden  
With meanings we swear to uphold.

All of this is written down in the  
RED BOOK – the companion to  
The BIBLE, our pages of truth  
And joy and happiness.

We all spend precious time in  
Prayer or in hopeful songs,  
Each one contemplating his or  
Her own life’s accomplishments.

If we listen closely, we might hear  
The voice of a sweet yellow daisy  
Being carried by a gurgling stream,  
Or the click-clack of cobble stones.

These are gifts, the promises given  
To us that remain in place from cradle  
To grave, when laughter replaces tears,  
And life is at the top of the mountain.

The story has neither a sad nor a  
Happy ending, it is free-standing  
And true, the words themselves  
In a myriad of colors.

On Sunday mornings, we get the gist  
Of this promise, we are then ready  
To take our journey, to start again  
On the way to glory.

Some of the heavy words are  
Now lighter, their dreams ready  
To be digested, their stories' ends  
A personal picture book.

We must be careful, though,  
Since the promises are no  
Classified ad campaign, with  
Fake circus clowns as sponsors.

As the service ends, the call of  
The organ sends us away with  
Joy, yet at the same time beckons  
Us back for more.

We recite our own liturgy of  
Saving grace: "Go, you will  
Live; come back, you belong  
To me!"

Friday, March 15, 2019 | Friday, March 6, 2020

## Choosing to Heal

*Caroline Oldershaw*

**Matthew 8:2–3** *“And there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying ‘Lord, if you chose, you can make me clean.’ He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”*

Leprosy today is called Hansen’s Disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describe it as “an infection caused by slow-growing bacteria [that can] affect the nerves, skin, eyes, and lining of the nose. With early diagnosis and treatment, the disease can be cured.”

But not in the time of Jesus. Prior to a cure, leprosy was once “feared as a highly contagious and devastating disease, but now we know it doesn’t spread easily and treatment is very effective. However, if left untreated, the nerve damage can result in crippling of hands and feet, paralysis, and blindness.”

In this story fragment, the healer is Jesus. Yet each of us has a unique capacity to heal others. All of us carry a burden of wound. Many, but not all, are hidden from view. During the AIDS epidemic, young men bore lesions of Kaposi’s sarcoma and other markers of opportunistic diseases. Like the leper, a person with AIDS was feared and reviled.

Where then, did Jim, a physician, find the courage to diagnose and treat with limited options the many AIDS patients he saw? His physician colleague, Mike, was a patient who died blind at age 42.

Where in my life can I, like Jesus, stretch out my hand, move closer, and say “I choose?”

Saturday, March 16, 2019 | Saturday, March 7, 2020

## Facing Fear

*Caroline Oldershaw*

**Mark 4:39–40** *“He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’”*

Twenty-four years ago my best friend got married. It was a grey and rainy day in October. As I approached the small church, I stepped around puddles of cold water with yellow, red, and orange leaves shining through.

For their wedding service the pastor read and preached on today’s scripture passage. Beginning at verse 35, this vivid story opens amidst an intense windstorm on open water. Waves threaten to swamp the boats of the disciples. As their terror mounts, Jesus sleeps. When they can take it no longer, they jolt him awake.

My dear friend and her husband are, to this day, some of the most creative people I know. So why did their choice of scripture surprise me?

How courageous of my friends to acknowledge the fear that accompanies momentous journeys and decisions. We step into the unknown at the marriage altar; when we decide to become parents, or not; and when we commit to a course of study that calls us, though we cannot see where it will end.

There is every human reason to be afraid. Yet the divine spirit of God reminds us that faith will always pull us forward and in safety while external conditions may look otherwise.

Sunday, March 17, 2019 | Sunday, March 8, 2020

## **Cost of Discipleship**

*Bill Hunnex*

**Mark 5:15** *“They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid.”*

The man was plagued by a multitude of demons. He lived in a cemetery, howled constantly and beat himself with stones. No one was strong enough to restrain him, even with chains. When Jesus came, the demons recognized him and begged to be allowed to enter the herd of pigs. Jesus allowed this and over 1,000 pigs were tormented and ran into the sea.

When the people found out, they were afraid. Is this awe at Jesus’ power over the demons or apprehension because Jesus’ had allowed the demons to destroy all their pigs? Most of the time, crowds flocked to Jesus so they could be healed or witness Jesus’ healing power. But these people begged Jesus to leave. Jesus’ power over the demonic forces threatened their prosperity and comfort.

Jesus can free us from the demons that torment us. We each have our own anxieties, fears, guilt, obsessions, desperations. For the most part, we can manage well enough. Accepting Jesus’ healing power may upset our efforts to control these demons. It may upset our comfortable life. Are we afraid to pay that price—the cost of discipleship?

Monday, March 18, 2019 | Monday, March 9, 2020

## **Love, Peace, Faith**

*Lewis Bosworth*

**Mark 5:34** *“He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’”*

A peaceful going out and coming in – that’s what we wish for.

So following Him makes sense – let’s be sensible.

In the future we want to be remembered with smiles and laughter,

So let’s speak up loud and clear now – no mumbling!

Disciples are family members – devoted and loving.

Like John-Boy and Jim-Bob on Walton’s Mountain

Or your puppy when she comes in out of the rain.

We all need partisans to keep us faithful –

Just like Marx and Gandhi and the Packers.

Doctrine is nothing without adherents to

Spread it and be faithful to the end of time.

Diseases can be fatal – but only if ignored

As they progress with devilish speed and charm.

Love is the way to spread our faith – let’s try to love and be loved!

Peace is another way to spread our faith – let’s try to avoid war!

Faith is the ultimate way to keep our hearts pumping with joy –

Never fear wearing love, peace and faith on your sleeves!

Remember – following Him makes sense, so be sensible.

Tuesday, March 19, 2019 | Tuesday, March 10, 2020

## Who Was Jesus?

*Paul Brammeier*

**Luke 5:20** “When he saw their faith, he said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven you.’”

The man who lay on his pallet after being lowered through a roof had done Jesus no wrong, had not hit him, cursed him, or spoken ill of him. Yet this Jewish man, Jesus, looks him in the eye and declares, “your sins are forgiven you.”

Then comes the real shock. Among the Jews, here was a man who went about talking as though he was God. He claims to be eternal. He claims that he will rise from the dead. He claims that he will come again to judge the world at the end of time. Who was this man... Really!!!

C.S. Lewis said it best in his book *Mere Christianity*, regarding the claims of this man Jesus. “I’m trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Jesus: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher; he would either be a lunatic... or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him, and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not let that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 | Wednesday, March 11, 2020

## Stand Up

*Judy Braham*

**John 5:8** *“Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’”*

Jesus spoke directly to the man. The invalid man. We do not know if he was blind, lame, or paralyzed, but we do know he had been ill for 38 years, with no one to put him into the pool when the water was stirred up. We do know he tried to get to the pool by himself, but others got there before him.

Jesus is present. Many invalids are present. Water is present. We are very near to the Sheep Gate.

This man did not cry out to Jesus, rather Jesus saw him, this silent suffering man, one out of many.

Jesus looked directly at him. Jesus asked him if he wanted to be made well. The invalid's answer is filled with anguish: “Sir, I have no one.”

Stand up, take your mat and walk!

The man did not know Jesus. Jesus disappeared into the crowds.

And so I pray. Jesus, I am baptized in your waters, I am one of many, with my own anguish, desperate to be very near to Jesus the Shepherd who will lead me by the still waters. May I listen, may I hear, your words: Stand up, take your mat and walk.

Amen.

## **Split Pea Soup**

Mrs. Wm. Schuler

1 c split peas, dried	1 medium onion
3 c water	1 medium potato
3 slices bacon	salt & pepper

Soak peas in cold water overnight. In the morning, wash peas and bring to boil. Cook slowly 2 hours.

Cut bacon into small pieces and fry bacon with onion to medium brown. Add to peas. Add potato, salt and pepper.

If soup is too thick, cream or milk may be added instead of water. Ham shank may be used instead of bacon (omit salt).

Serves 4.

## **Wild Rice Bread**

Gary Brown

4 c bread flour	½ Tbsp salt
1 c onion, diced	½ c cooked wild rice
¼ c brown sugar	½ c buttermilk
3 ½ tsp instant yeast	

Mix all ingredients and knead until elastic. Let rise to double in volume, punch down and form into loaf. Use loaf pan or small pie plate for a round loaf. Let rise again, then bake at 350° for about 30 minutes, or until golden brown.

Thursday, March 21, 2019 | Thursday, March 12, 2020

## **Called to Be Disciples**

*Jay Suthers*

**Luke 6:13** *“And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles.”*

The verse goes on to name the twelve apostles. The question is, why twelve? There are several references to the number twelve in the Bible. This number represents completeness in that it is equal in number to all the tribes of Israel. It also represents God’s power and authority as the number twelve and multiples of twelve are a part of his direction throughout the Old Testament.

In Luke 10:1, we learn that Jesus appointed seventy others who seem to be apostles as well. A disciple is a student or follower. An apostle goes beyond discipleship and is a messenger or ambassador. Jesus sent these seventy out in pairs to help him perform his works.

These were not perfect people. Indeed, Judas would betray Jesus, Simon Peter would cut off Malchus’s ear, and Thomas would doubt the resurrection.

Indeed, we are all called to be disciples. We have been chosen despite our faults and imperfections. There is no perfect way to be a disciple. We can attend church regularly, assist in Sunday services, sing in the choir, or teach Sunday School. It doesn’t really matter as long as our faith in God is behind our intention to serve his church.

Friday, March 22, 2019 | Friday, March 13, 2020

## Healing Grace

*Carl Anderson*

**Luke 7:21–22** *“Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them.’”*

Both Christmas and Easter are the liturgical miracles of the year. The long-expected birth of Jesus, including the rebirth of Jesus, unfolds in front of our eyes. Yet we are reminded by the words of one amazing song: “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.”

Let us pray. We are always blessed when you find us, Lord. Even in our weakest of hours. Our prayers will always be heard. Yet you always come to save and heal us. Amen.

Saturday, March 23, 2019 | Saturday, March 14, 2020

## Attitude Adjustment

*Peter Elling Johnson*

**Luke 8:1–2** *“Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities.”*

Discipleship necessitates an attitude adjustment for me, and possibly others.

Before attitude adjustment: It is all about me!

Baptized, I was fortunately gifted with a forever family—and unfortunately share their prejudices: ageism, sexism, racism, etc.—fortunately not forever. Good news!

If I label people as I first experience them—old, male, disabled, opinionated, Norwegian, a tenor, whatever—I fail to perceive that unique, immeasurable bit of the Creator’s image intrinsic in each of them.

Within the group traveling with Jesus and the Twelve, healing had occurred and was still occurring: a forever family of healers, not just Jesus. Some of them had had infirmities and demons themselves.

The Almighty Creator has likewise empowered each of us with healing ability as we come together as a sacramental family—telling and hearing the good news—being the kingdom of God.

After attitude adjustment: It is still all about me, but about *you*, too—*us!* Together we’re a part of the forever family exercising collectively our individualized bits of the Creator’s power to heal, little by little—each other, our extended families, strangers—and singing hallelujah boldly. Tenors welcome and appreciated.

Sunday, March 24, 2019 | Sunday, March 15, 2020

## **Sacrifice Everything**

*Michael Moscicke*

**Matthew 13:45–46** *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”*

The kingdom of heaven is sacrifice and Christ sacrificed everything for us. To God, we are each a unique pearl, formed in our own oysters of toil and strife, but worth everything to the kingdom of heaven. When I find myself struggling to help others who are combative or rude, which happens every so often in my job as a legislative aide at the State Capitol, I remind myself that Jesus sacrificed everything for the person in front of me, and the least I can do is to recognize the priceless value of every soul, so valuable that the kingdom of heaven can be explained as someone willing to do everything for it.

Monday, March 25, 2019 | Monday, March 16, 2020

## **Packing Instructions**

*David Berggren*

**Luke 9:2–3** *“and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, ‘Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic.’”*

Not too long ago, my wife and I drove to Minnesota to visit for the weekend. The weekend, mind you. Not a week. Not a month. Just a couple of nights. Yet, the car seemed ready to burst. Bags, cases, food, drinks, extra emergency clothes, emergency cold weather items. Felt like the Beverly Hillbillies moving to California. Contrast that to the packing instructions Jesus laid on his disciples. No cell phone and no debit card either, you can bet. And their journey had no comfortable destination or designated timeline. A good reminder today, I suppose, that our discipleship journey that began with water and continues with the fuel of the Holy Spirit does not require stuff. All we need for the task of proclaiming God’s kingdom is trust, love and faith.

Tuesday, March 26, 2019 | Tuesday, March 17, 2020

## **Powers of New Life**

*Carl Anderson*

**Mark 6:14** *“King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known. Some were saying, ‘John the Baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.’”*

Every now and then, we are also reminded that another had experienced this. As we sing, “Christ being raised from the dead, will die no more. Death has no more dominion over him. Hallelujah.”

When King Herod heard of Jesus’ name, which had become known, he thought Jesus was John the Baptizer raised. Did John “have the same experience” as Jesus? How can this be that John the Baptizer was raised from the dead? Especially since the powers which give new life come from Jesus.

These powers, which are at work through Jesus, amaze me more than they amazed King Herod. That life through Jesus will always find a way. Thanks be to God.

Let us pray. Oh Jesus, I too have come to know your name as all life is created through you. Which makes me more excited to know more about you. Amen.

Wednesday, March 27, 2019 | Wednesday, March 18, 2020

## Abundance

*Caroline Oldershaw*

**John 6:11** *“Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.”*

As I write this, a snowfall of ten inches is predicted tonight. Like many other people, I rushed to the grocery store to prepare. For what? I didn't need anything. My cupboards were already full.

A friend told me that she too went for groceries and that the parking lot was so jammed that one vehicle, a monster truck, had taken to parking atop a snow drift. Because carts were in short supply, she resorted to carrying her three bags of provisions in her arms. I felt like a pack animal, she said.

There's nothing like a dire weather report to flip us out of the present. On sunnier days we can count on advertising and social media to do the same: to remind us that what we have, who we are, and what we do in this moment is not enough.

And yet, simple abundance is all around, especially in the kitchen. I desire to make an authentic baguette though I've not yet succeeded. All the ingredients are here: yeast, flour, water, salt, heat, time. What better way than baking bread and breaking bread to honor God. In the sharing at the table we are all filled.

*“Enough is a feast.” (Buddhist proverb)*

## Minestrone Soup

Cheryl Porter

28 oz. beef broth	1 lb. ground beef, browned
1 can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregan	1 carrot, sliced
1 can kidney beans, drained	1 stalk celery, sliced
	½ tsp basil

Simmer all ingredients for 15–20 minutes.

## Refrigerator Rolls

Sue Bangert

6 ¼–6 ¾ c flour	½ c sugar
½ c warm (not hot) water	1 Tbsp salt
2 pkg dry yeast	⅓ c shortening (Crisco)
1 ½ c lukewarm milk	2 eggs

Combine milk, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Stir to dissolve.

Soak yeast in ½ c warm water for 5 minutes (should see tiny bubbles). Beat shortening, eggs, yeast and 1 c flour into the milk mixture with a rotary beater until smooth. Add remaining flour. Mix until the dough leaves the sides of bowl.

Either turn dough out onto a lightly floured board and knead until dough is smooth and elastic and no longer sticky (5–10 minutes) OR knead using the kneading hook on a mixer for 10 minutes. Place dough in lightly greased bowl. Cover with wax paper and a damp cloth. Place in refrigerator immediately and let rise overnight until double in size OR leave in a warm spot and let rise (rolls will be done sooner).

Punch down, pinch off enough dough to make rolls. They will fill two 9" x 13" pans. Let rise in pans. Bake at 375° for 15–20 minutes. Remove from oven, butter tops, and cool in pan.

Makes 2 dozen.

Thursday, March 28, 2019 | Thursday, March 19, 2020

## Do Not Be Afraid

*Bill Braham*

**John 6:19–20** *“When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, ‘It is I, do not be afraid.’”*

Most of the time, the first thing that an angel says when appearing to a person in the Bible is “Fear not.” But that is not the first thing that Jesus says to his disciples when he surprises them while walking on the sea. Rather, he first says, “It is I.” Does this mean that if the disciples would have recognized him, they wouldn’t be fearful and would not need to be told “do not be afraid?”

I generally am not afraid of seeing ghosts or people walking on Lake Mendota. Those sorts of fears are pretty well under control these days. But there are things I fear. What kind of world will our grandsons inherit? Will their home near Seattle be underwater in thirty years?

I doubt that God wants us to continue our thoughtless practices, such as those that warm the environment. But it could be that I wouldn’t be so fearful of some things if only I could stop and recognize what is going on and who is in charge. I need to remember “Do not be afraid” and who said it.

Friday, March 29, 2019 | Friday, March 20, 2020

## **Welcomes the Needy**

*Luther Hotzel*

**Mark 6:54–55** *“When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.”*

Jesus had just fed a large crowd with only two fish and five loaves of bread. He calmed a dangerous storm at sea and walked on the water. Even without telephones or today’s social media platforms, the word of these miracles spread quickly through the area.

In today’s reading, people come to Jesus to cure their illness. Matthew 14:35–36 adds that everyone who touched Jesus’ cloak was healed.

Were they there for selfish reasons (to eat or be healed)? Possibly, but our Lord did not send them away. He welcomed the hungry and the sick and tended to their earthly needs.

Today we still are to bring the sick to Jesus. He nourishes us, helps our needs, and calms the storms in life.

Not only here on earth, but also in heaven.

## Vision

*Lewis Bosworth*

**John 9:3** *“Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.’”*

The little house on the prairie  
Was full of love, yet not immune  
To sudden, devilish ploys.

Mary Ingalls’ heart was joyful,  
Yet she was suddenly blind-sided  
At the age of fourteen.

Her blond hair made her  
A favorite of the boys at school,  
But now she could not see.

After a while Mary asked  
Her sister: “See out loud  
For me, please!”

Mary went to a school for  
The blind and later became  
A writer herself.

As her Ma began to age,  
And had trouble walking,  
Mary became her feet.

Nearing her own death, Mary  
Wrote: “Let us fold away our  
Fears and just be glad!”

\*\*\*\*\*

Miles away from the prairie,  
Yet kindred spirits were Helen  
Keller and Annie Sullivan.

Helen was first curious, then  
Defiant as she groped her way  
Through Annie's instruction.

In a dramatic struggle, Annie  
Taught Helen the word "water,"  
Spelling it on Helen's hand.

Helen later stated that the only  
Thing worse than being blind  
Is having sight but no vision.

Paulo Coelho said that each day  
Is a matter of paying attention  
To its miracles.

Mark Twain stated that kindness  
Is the language which the deaf  
Can hear and the blind can see.

God's works were revealed in  
Mary and Helen – Thanks be  
To them.

Sunday, March 31, 2019 | Sunday, March 22, 2020

## God is Pleased

*Carl Anderson*

**Matthew 16:13** *“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’”*

My first thought was, could this be turned around? Is the “Son of Man” who you think he is? Simon Peter said in return, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” What do we say?

Who are we in the eyes of God? Every one of us can be lost in many ways. Only God himself has the ability to transform us in his own way. “You are my beloved son (and daughter) with whom I am well pleased.”

Let us pray. Gracious and living God, accept all for who they are in life: a mother, father, sister, brother, straight, gay, lesbian. Even you said it best, “With whom I am well pleased.” Thanks be to God. Amen.

Monday, April 1, 2019 | Monday, March 23, 2020

## Suffering

*Michele Hotzel*

**Luke 9:22** *“The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”*

Great suffering as part of the plan? How could this be so? I must say I often have quite the honey-do list prepared for my husband, but suffering is not on the list. I would never ask this or expect this from someone who loves me or who I love.

Yet God loves me and all of us so much that he sent his Son; blameless and yet rejected—convicted for all of our sins. A crown of thorns and nailed to the cross—undergoing great suffering and killed.

I swoon at the sight of blood, so his pain and suffering makes any emotional or physical pain that I have ever faced or must face in the future pale in comparison.

On the third day he rose from the dead. Such a triumph over our sins!

Thanks be to God.

Tuesday, April 2, 2019 | Tuesday, March 24, 2020

# Welcoming

*Jon Dahl*

**Luke 9:48** *“...Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.”*

In discipleship we are called by Christ to open our hearts not only to God but to those unknown to us. For when we welcome others into our lives through Jesus we welcome God’s abundant love and blessings to grow deeper in us.

Jesus proclaims to his disciples that whoever welcomes him in turn welcomes God. For when we open our lives up to those least among us we are given a great and overwhelming Joy from God.

We are given the opportunity to know we ourselves are not the masterpiece of greatness on this earth, but rather through Jesus we are reminded that God is that masterpiece.

God’s eternal peace and love is not only found in those we surround ourselves with on a daily basis, but rather it is the stranger sitting next to you in the pew, or the stranger in our daily lives we encounter. God is asking us to open the closed doors in our lives to the stranger, and proclaim his blessing of eternal life and steadfast love. For those who are stranger to us once, as Jesus was to many, now can see the love and welcoming spirit of God.

Amen.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 | Wednesday, March 25, 2020

## The Little Ones

*Anne Hunnex*

**Matthew 18:14** *“So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.”*

Who are the little ones?

Have you ever thought of size and scale from God’s perspective? The universe is a big place. If God knows all and sees all he is very busy. It is beyond human comprehension.

Have you ever studied an ant hill? There are thousands of ants scurrying in and out. They are all going about their business of maintaining life and even dealing with the dead. That is what we must look like to God. The earth is a very busy ant hill. We can only observe the ants and imagine what their life is like. God is more powerful than we are and can discern the thoughts and actions of all his little ones. God knows and God cares.

Who are the little ones? We are the little ones. All of us. All of humanity. There are no exclusions and there are no elites. God embraces us no matter what we have achieved. The artificial measures we use to gauge success and value are of no consequence. Even though we are little, we have value to God, and he does not abandon us. In return we need to value each other.

## **Bulgarian Mushroom Soup**

Marsha Swenson

1 large onion, diced	1 ½ c yogurt (Greek is best)
4 Tbsp butter	1 Tbsp cornstarch
1 Tbsp paprika	¼ tsp thyme
salt & pepper, to taste	1 lb mushrooms, washed and sliced thin
2 cloves garlic, crushed	
6 c chicken broth	

Saute onion in butter, add paprika and stir. Add mushrooms and stir well to coat the onions. Add salt, pepper, garlic and thyme. Cook 2–3 minutes. Add broth and cook 10 minutes.

In medium bowl, mix yogurt, cornstarch and 1 c of soup. Beat until smooth. Add to soup, a little at a time, mixing well with each addition. Cook 3–4 minutes or until slightly thickened. Serve hot with Balkan music if you have it! Serves 6.

## **Dark Bread**

Mona Scott

¼ c warm water	2 eggs
2 Tbsp dry yeast	½ c soya powder
½ tsp sugar	1 c instant milk
2 Tbsp salt	3 c whole wheat or graham flour
½ c sugar	1 c rye flour or oatmeal or cornmeal
½ c corn oil	
½ c dark molasses	7 ½–8 c white flour
3 ½ c warm water	

Dissolve yeast and ¼ c warm water together.

Mix remaining ingredients, except for rye and white flour, together in large bowl. Stir in rye flour and yeast mixture. Knead white flour into mixture for 5 minutes.

Let dough rise twice. Let rise at least 2 hours after putting into either 6 small or 4 large (5 ½" x 9 ⅝" x 2 ¾") loaf pans. Bake at 325° for 15 minutes, then at 300° for 45 minutes.

Thursday, April 4, 2019 | Thursday, March 26, 2020

## Heading Off to Die

*Bruce Curtis*

**Luke 9:51** *“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, He set his face to go to Jerusalem.”*

“Set your face.” It’s an idiom that takes me back to my childhood and was often used by my mother. Initially, I thought it was a unique phrase. But after some referencing, it can be found repeatedly in scripture—in Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ephesians, for example. In our household, it could involve the impending visit to or from unpopular relatives. Mom would say something like, “In life, we have to do things we don’t want to do. But it’s the right thing, so let’s get to it.”

Jesus was about to do something he did not want to do. In a way, it was like a soldier going off to an imminent battle. Civil War Major Sullivan Ballou’s poignant letter to his wife, days before his death, is one that comes to mind. (Google it). But unlike Ballou who hoped he would not meet death, Jesus knew he would. Jesus knew he had to set his face to be humiliated, flogged, spat upon, cursed, nailed to a cross, to die.

This wasn’t about duty to country, or honor. This wasn’t about life’s insignificant matters with kin. This was about his dying on the cross for our sins and his love for us all. Love unconditional. Love for eternity.

Friday, April 5, 2019 | Friday, March 27, 2020

## The Happiest of Endings... and Beginnings

*Nancy V. Lee*

**Luke 19:9–10** “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.’”

An amazing number of the stories of the actions of Jesus have happy endings, though not without disbelief. Take Zacchaeus, the despised rich little chief tax collector, who clambered up a tree to see Jesus.

Spotting him among the leaves, Jesus called, “Zacchaeus,” (how did Jesus know his name?), “hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.”

Around the two men, people grumbled. How could Jesus think of visiting a *sinner*?

Zacchaeus, his eyes only on Jesus, offers an amazing confession and promise. Not ten percent of his annual income, but *half of what he owned* would go to the poor, and if he had cheated anyone, that person would receive *four times the amount*! What had changed him so drastically? Was it not Jesus’ total acceptance?

It would take a sermon to plumb the depths of Jesus’ response to Zacchaeus—and the critics. Clearly, to Jesus, Zacchaeus had, like Abraham, become a person of faith and action. He had understood how to become a disciple of Jesus.

Saturday, April 6, 2019 | Saturday, March 28, 2020

## Hosanna

*Judy Braham*

**Mark 11:9** *“Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, Hosanna!! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

Hosanna, from the Hebrew *hosia na*, save, deliver us, as in Psalm 118:25, “Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!”

Hosanna! Palms waving, a warm breeze billowing our garments of white or the bright colors of spring; Hosanna, our voices filled with joy, following the cross, preparing for the Eucharist, our liturgy now expresses joy and praise.

Yet inherent within those jubilant hosannas we know, acutely rooted within our souls, our hearts still murmur an anguished cry of save us, deliver us. Hosanna, we beseech you, O Lord.

The words of Jesus often confuse us, often perplex us, often offer paradoxical truths, but do we not whole heartedly sing hosanna when our king rides into Jerusalem and within a very few days, know the agony of save us, deliver us, we are hopelessly lost, confused, broken.

Hosanna is a good word to tuck within the recesses of our sinful yet saved lives. It is Jesus who reaches deep within our humanity and enables us to say, both “all glory laud and honor to you redeemer king, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring,” and “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”

Sunday, April 7, 2019 | Sunday, March 29, 2020

# Unexpected Hour

*Bonnie Gruber*

**Matthew 24:44** *“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”*

We’ve heard this many times. The world could end, or your own life on earth could end, before sunset today. Be sure to have on clean underwear, wash all the dishes, and confess all your sins *now*.

But if the second coming is at an unexpected hour, it might not happen until many years from now. In this case, God has a lot more things for us to do. We also have to keep our air and water clean, educate our grandchildren, heal the sick and injured (and, better yet, prevent illness and injury), and work for peace and justice in our communities and the world. We need to maintain our health and strength so we can help others for a long time.

Prayer: God, grant us flexibility. Whether your Son is coming today, next year, or 2,000 years from now, help us to be ready. Teach us to use our time and possessions wisely. Then, whenever the time comes, may we live with you in eternity. Amen.

Monday, April 8, 2019 | Monday, March 30, 2020

## Unity Amid Divisions

*Jan Moore*

**John 17:21** *“...that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

Picture the Last Supper, the holy meal that Jesus shares with his disciples. He breaks bread with them knowing his fate. Jesus’ ministry will soon be continued by them.

This verse is part of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples. Jesus believes that if his disciples show unity, the world will believe God the Father sent him to save mankind from sin.

Does this order apply to his disciples, all of us, in the 21st century? How can we all be one when we are segmented and divided in so many ways? Can you think of examples in today’s society of how we are divided?

Regardless of our divisions, perhaps this is a call for unity around the core Christian values Jesus taught us during his short time on earth. How would you describe Jesus’ core values to our society today?

Tuesday, April 9, 2019 | Tuesday, March 31, 2020

## Gambler

*Peter Sherven*

**Mark 15:24** *“And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to see what each should take.”*

Crucifixion was nothing new for the Roman soldiers who had been assigned to keep watch. They had seen it many times before and “if you’ve seen one you’ve seen them all.” To help the time go by they cast lots, or threw dice, or whatever, to see who would get Jesus’ clothes—his sandals, his belt, his tunic.

The Contemporary English Version of the Bible describes it in an interesting way: “They gambled to see who would get his clothes.” They were gambling at the crucifixion!

The 20th century British poet Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy described it in the powerful verse:

And sitting down they watched him there,  
The soldiers did;  
There, while they played with dice,  
He made his sacrifice,  
And died upon the cross to rid  
God’s world of sin.  
He was a gambler, too, my Christ,  
He took his life and threw it  
For a world redeemed...

Please give the poet’s words some patient thought: “He was a gambler, too, my Christ...” At Calvary Jesus tossed his life into the ring for the life of the world! He wagered it all so that

you and I might see the loving and forgiving heart of God. He risked his life for a world redeemed—trusting that we would imitate his love by loving our neighbors and caring for one another.

He staked his life on the idea that the best of human nature comes to the surface as we die to ourselves and rise to a more abundant life.

“He was a gambler, too, my Christ,  
He took his life and threw it  
For a world redeemed...”

## God's Mercy

*Phyllis Pleuss*

**Luke 23:42–43** *“Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’”*

This has long been my favorite Bible story. It distills the good news, the Gospel, of God’s amazing grace down to its pure essence. Most of us want to know—what is required of us? The answers are many—or so we think: to care for each other and those in need; to lead good, moral lives; to worship God; to believe in God. We get the right knowledge in Sunday School, Confirmation, Bible Study. Then we hope for the best. At least I do.

But the thief on the cross had none of that going for him. He was described as a criminal so we can probably assume his behavior was not exemplary. We don’t know what his knowledge of God was or if he believed the “right” things. The wonderful message in this story is that none of that mattered. *None* of it. All he did was to throw himself on the mercy of God at the very last minute. He had no time to repent and make up for past sins, no time to learn about God, no time left. Yet he gained unlimited time with God in eternity. He did all that was necessary and God did the rest. God’s amazing grace saved him. And it saves us, too. It’s the only thing that does.

## Chunky Vegetable Chili

Suelyn Swiggum

1 medium zucchini, cut into ½" pieces	½ tsp ground cumin
1 medium sweet pepper, coarsely chopped	2 14.5-oz cans Mexican-style stewed tomatoes (any type of canned tomatoes work)
½ c onion, coarsely chopped	17 oz can whole kernel corn
½ c celery, coarsely chopped	15 oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
2 cloves garlic, minced	8 oz jar salsa
2–3 tsp chili powder	
1 tsp dried oregano, crushed	

In a 3 ½–4 qt slow cooker, combine squash, pepper, onion, celery, garlic and spices. Stir in undrained tomatoes, undrained corn, beans and salsa. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 8–10 hours or on high-heat setting for 4–5 hours.

To serve, ladle chili into bowls and top with a dollop of sour cream, if desired.

## Communion Bread

Cameron Scarlett

⅔ c water	⅔ tsp salt
2 ½ Tbsp butter	2 c bread flour
2 egg whites	2 ½ Tbsp nonfat dry milk
1 ⅓ Tbsp sugar	1 ½ tsp yeast

Put dry ingredients in a bowl and gradually add wet ingredients. Mix until a dough forms and knead for about 10 minutes. Let rise in a warm place for about 90 minutes. Punch down, form into a loaf, put into a greased pan. Let rise for another 20 minutes. Bake at 365° for 30–35 minutes.

You can also add all the ingredients to a breadmaker set on “dough make.” Once dough has risen, take out of breadmaker, form into a loaf, then let rise 20 minutes before baking.

Thursday, April 11, 2019 | Thursday, April 2, 2020

## **No More Veil**

*Judy Bush*

**Luke 23:45** *“...while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.”*

Astounding! How? Who? This veil, separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place in Jerusalem’s temple, torn in two? It was 60 feet long, 30 feet wide and 4 inches thick. The Holy of Holies (where the Ark of the Covenant was placed) was entered only on the Day of Atonement by the high priest to sprinkle blood upon the altar for expiation of the sins of the Israelites.

Dare I say that God tore this veil? This woven piece, symbolic of the separation between God and God’s people, was instantly rent by the shed blood and death of our Christ. That symbol of separation was obsolete. God is forever present with, and bound to all, by Christ’s sacrifice.

So not only is there no more separation from God, but we have the blessed gift of being able to ask for forgiveness directly from God. The added blessing bestowed upon us through the rending of the veil, is the free flow of God’s grace.

Because of that added blessing, we are free to live and move in that grace. Free to be “little Christs,” as Luther termed God’s people. Free to respect and love all people as God’s children, and in the name of Christ, to serve where needed.

Friday, April 12, 2019 | Friday, April 3, 2020

## Good Returns

*Alana Allette*

**Luke 23:46** *“Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last.”*

I’ve been known to quote this passage in my fifth grade classroom from time to time. The low moments come when my students take their tests or test my patience, but the worst is when they leave my room for the last time, graduating into middle school. All my anxiety and fear for them as they enter a new stage of their lives can be crippling, until they return, renewed and reborn with stories of how I helped them prepare for unexpected challenges. We all know that Jesus returned after commending his spirit to God, all too often we temporarily forget that the good we do in the world returns as well.

Saturday, April 13, 2019 | Saturday, April 4, 2020

## Thirst

*Lewis Bosworth*

**John 19:38** *“After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), ‘I am thirsty.’”*

The story of the Son of Man is true.  
Our scripture paints His wondrous gift of love  
Which gives us daily gifts the whole year through  
Outlining the mercy of God above.

We hear the voice of Jesus plainly tell  
Of His great distress, His holy passion  
And burden, doubt and sorrow us compel  
To cry and moan until we think it’s done.

We know we’re children of your blessed light  
Which shines to soothe our anguish, fear and pain,  
And lead us by your beauteous cloud forthright  
To pastures green and bright where we remain.

Christ our savior, quench now our burning thirst,  
Help us all to put our faith in you first.

[A Sonnet]

Sunday, April 14, 2019 | Sunday, April 5, 2020

## Innocence

*Amy Grunewald Mattison*

**Luke 23:47** *“When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’”*

This verse just after Jesus’ death gives us the posture of our Lenten practice. Lent is a time of the year, a marker of before and after, but it is also a verb. It is something we practice so that we take part more fully in what is before and what is after the cross.

We take a step back from what we believe to be true and remember that we are first outsiders to the story of God’s unfolding grace through Jesus Christ, and we are all but dust. Like the centurion, we have no claim on God’s grace without Jesus. And yet we praise God for what we witness in Jesus: his innocence on the cross.

In his life of welcoming the outsider, embracing the untouchable and speaking to the voiceless, Jesus is condemned by his own. But in his death on the cross and God’s raising him from the dead, he brings together not only those whom he healed during his ministry, but those who condemned him, those who never knew him, those who knew him but never chose to follow him. And those of us who worship God through Jesus Christ, gathering together throughout Lent, into Easter, and awaiting the great Pentecost while learning to love and serve others as Jesus did for all.

Monday, April 15, 2019 | Monday, April 6, 2020

## Our Curtain Torn

*Phyllis Pleuss*

**Mark 15:37–38** *“Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.”*

The tearing of the temple curtain has great significance. No longer was it only the high priest who had access to God behind the curtain—and then only once a year. No longer did people need to offer sacrifice after sacrifice endlessly. Christ was the ultimate offering, the final sacrifice for us, for all time. What a clear indication that God has come to us, to be present with us, and to save us from ourselves, from sin, from death.

Most people, especially those who don't know me well, think I'm a nice person. They don't know about the petty judgments I make of others in my head; or the good things I don't do, or do reluctantly; or how I love my comfortable life and don't want to risk losing it; or the doubts and questions I have about God that won't go away. This humanness, this sinfulness, is the curtain I put up that separates myself from God. But just as God tore the temple curtain, God also tears through my curtain with amazing grace and unconditional love. God calls me, such as I am, to serve—not to be perfect or successful, but only to be faithful. Thanks be to God!

Tuesday, April 16, 2019 | Tuesday, April 7, 2020

## Water and Blood

*Emily Tveite*

**John 19:33–34** *“But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and at once blood and water came out.”*

In John’s Gospel, the crucifixion happens on God’s own terms. Willingly, Jesus goes to the cross to be executed, or perhaps rather to die of his own accord.

It was the practice of soldiers to break the legs of those crucified in order to hasten their death, but when the soldiers come to Jesus, they find that he has already died. The water and blood that pour forth from his side are proof of his death, physical signs that his life has ended.

But for the author of John, water is never just water, and blood is never just blood. We, as God’s people find these things, blood and water, as signs not of death but always of life.

In the water, we find the salvation of God, a cleansing from our sin. And in the wine, we find abundant life, given through the death of Jesus. Thanks be to God for these signs, which prove for us Christ’s mercy.

By the mystery of this water in wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Amen. (*Eucharistic prayer of St. Athanasius*)

Wednesday, April 17, 2019 | Wednesday, April 8, 2020

## Light

*Joyce Bisbee*

**Mark 15:46** *“Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in the tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.”*

And so the story of Jesus’ last days, known as Lent, comes to an end. The stone rolled against the door makes it final. We feel sadness and grief that such a wonderful man, as we know him, was treated so badly. But *no*, this is not the end! We know the story continues. The end of Lent means that the resurrection is about to happen and we will once again celebrate Easter—the most wonderful holiday of the Christian faith. Out of darkness will come light. Not just any light. Easter is the brightest light of all. We must remember this as we live our lives in this troubled world. No matter how dark things appear, light will come, just like Jesus’ resurrection! May the celebration of Easter strengthen our faith and bring hope and happiness to all.

## Broccoli and Cheese Soup

Lynda Southwick

1 cup onion, chopped	2 ½ c 2% milk
2 garlic cloves, minced	⅓ c all purpose flour
3 c fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth	¼ tsp black pepper
16 oz. pkg broccoli florets or fresh broccoli crowns, cut small	8 oz light processed cheese (such as Velveeta light), cubed

Spray a large nonstick saucepan with cooking spray and place over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and saute 3 minutes or until tender. (I use an iron pot, so I use 1–2 Tbsp olive oil to do the sauteing.) Add broth and broccoli. Bring to a boil over medium high heat; reduce heat to medium. Cook 10 minutes or until broccoli is tender. Microwave milk until warm, but not boiling. Whisk the flour into the warm milk. Add to broccoli mixture and cook about 5 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in pepper and cubed cheese, stirring until cheese is melted.

Place ⅓ of the soup in a blender or food processor and process until smooth. Return pureed soup mixture to pot. If you want a smoother soup, you can puree ½ or ⅔ of the soup. Serves up to six.

## Quick Italian Bread

The Rev. Franklin Wilson

2 Tbsp butter	2 Tbsp or 2 pkgs yeast
2 tsp salt	5 c bread flour
2 Tbsp sugar	egg white (opt.)
1 ¾ c warm water	

In a large bowl, mix butter, salt, sugar and warm water. Stir, then add yeast. Wire whip all ingredients except flour. Add 5 c bread flour. Switch to wooden spoon to stir about halfway through. Add more flour if needed. Turn out on floured surface and knead for 10 minutes. Roll out with rolling pin and then divide dough in half. Roll up like a jelly roll and pinch the crease. Put seam side down on greased pan. Cover and let sit for 20 minutes. Brush with oil and bake at 350° for 25 minutes. Glaze with egg white, if desired—beat one egg white into froth and brush on top of loaves with a pastry brush.







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## Thank you

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