

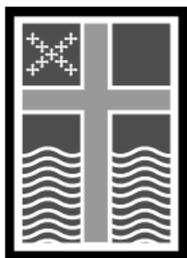
A lit candle in a dark, ornate candlestick on a purple cloth. The candle is lit, with a bright flame at the top. The candlestick is dark and has a textured, possibly cast-iron or bronze, appearance with several decorative, bulbous sections. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown. The entire scene is set on a purple, textured cloth.

**St. Andrew's Lenten
Meditation Guide
2018**

Sponsored by the Adult Formation Committee

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ST. ANDREW'S
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Editor's Note

Dear members of St. Andrew's,

THE BOOK YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS contains reflections from forty-seven different parishioners, one for every day of Lent and Holy Week. Each contributor worked independently, without benefit of workshops or study groups to assist in the writing process. Alone, they prayed over the Scripture texts for their assigned dates and explored how the words of the Bible might guide us through the season of Lent.

Because the writing of each meditation was such a solitary endeavor, I was surprised, upon reading through the whole collection, to notice the emergence of certain common themes. If this guide is any indication, the Holy Spirit is giving St. Andrew's a Lenten nudge in some very specific directions: We are called to practice trusting more deeply in Christ, to welcome strangers in our midst, to seek meaning in loss, and to notice God's glory in the natural world.

Lenten disciplines remind us of what we knew all along: Being a Christian is hard work. I hope this book will remind you of the immense rewards of faith, inspire you to rededicate your efforts each day, and help you remember that you never journey alone.

Yours,
Cat

The Rev. Catherine Healy

Assistant Rector, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2018

Jesus said, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven." (Matthew 6:1)

CHARCOAL ASHES HAVE ADORNED MY FOREHEAD on Ash Wednesday many times, and St. Andrew's "Ashes to Go" ministry is very appealing—which made the first verse from the Gospel for Ash Wednesday extremely troubling. And, in fact, it made me question the whole Lenten tradition of sharing our intent to take on something worthy or give up something we hold dear. I pondered this for days, until the key phrase "in order to be seen" jumped off the page at me.

Receiving human acclaim does not necessarily preclude a heavenly reward. Christians throughout many generations who have sought only to serve God are acclaimed through posterity for their selfless service (Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa . . . the potential list is way beyond the spatial limits of this page!). The problem is not in receiving human acclaim, but in seeking it. Today's outward mark of ashes is a sign to me that my heart is also marked as the Lord's, and that the treasures he has bestowed on me are his to share, not mine to selfishly hoard—during Lent and forever.

Joanna Horobin is happiest welcoming family and friends to share good food and fellowship around the table. A physician, she works as a drug developer in the biotech industry. A 10am regular at St. Andrew's for 15 years, Joanna participates in a number of outreach ministries, has served as vestryperson for outreach, and currently serves as a lay Eucharistic minister. She loves getting to know other members of the congregation through Coventry suppers.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday February 15, 2018

Jesus said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?"
(Luke 9:23-25)

IN TODAY'S GOSPEL READING, Jesus instructs his disciples: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." The word that resonates with me here is *daily*. It is worth noting that he does not add a convenient qualifier of ". . . for the next forty days, and then after that, you can have chocolate again."

Each year, Lent gives us the opportunity to practice daily sacrifice and devotion in a somewhat manageable way. Forty days of minor denials (chocolate again this year)—but, more importantly, forty chances to try to spend some time each day "taking up the cross," whether it be through helping those in need in our community, or just showing more patience and kindness to those we come across in our everyday life.

And maybe, with this practice in hand, we can keep it going on a daily basis after Easter . . . although I may need some chocolate!

Jon Barry is a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries and recently began a new role as the director of retirement strategy at MFS in Boston. He and his family, Wendy, Emma and Jackson, live in Millis and have been attending St. Andrew's since 2004. Jon has been a church school teacher for over 10 years.

Friday after Ash Wednesday February 16, 2018

As Jesus sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:10-13)

I DON'T LIKE CHANGE. Maybe it's especially difficult for me because I experienced so little of it growing up in a small farming community in Nebraska. One particularly difficult change in my life occurred when I graduated from the University of Nebraska and got my first job. Although I put on a good face and told my family and friends that I was excited to move to Houston, the truth was that I was terrified. I was moving to a huge city where I knew no one. A life-changing moment was about to take place, and a part of me just wanted to stay in my comfort zone.

I imagine that's how the Pharisees in today's Gospel reading must have felt. They also wanted to stay in their comfort zone. They didn't like the fact that Jesus was eating a meal with social pariahs and ignoring the Jewish laws. They didn't want to change, but Jesus was pushing them toward a new life, challenging them to see the truth in him. Jesus continues to challenge me to change, to find the courage to step out of my comfort zone, and to trust in his life-changing mission.

Heidi Harper is a wife, mother and nurse who continues to cringe at change. She is active in the St. Andrew's altar guild and is the vestryperson for outreach.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday February 17, 2018

In the time of my trouble, I will call upon you, for you will answer me. (Psalm 86:7)

WHO IS GOD? For most of my adult life, I have been seeking the answer to this question. I am still moved by the words of the hymn “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,” from singing them in an outdoor chapel as a 11-year-old camper in North Carolina. Is that feeling simply nostalgia for the memory, or an inkling of God’s presence?

This passage from Psalm 86 reminded me of a revelation that God may have spoken to me during a worship service last fall, as we read from another psalm: “I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me out of all my terror.” I heard these words at a time of great struggle with a personal issue that had been plaguing me for some time. The psalm inspired me, finally, to come to terms with it.

I am becoming more comfortable with the idea that I may never know who God is. As one who will never be a strict Trinitarian, my operative notion is that God is love. Did God show his love to me through the psalms of Scripture? I think so—and that love permitted me to address my personal struggle. Thanks be to God.

Jim Blackwell suspects that, since he joined the church 34 years ago, St. Andrew’s has been making him into a believer. He is retired after a career in urban renewal and as a housing consultant, and now enjoys being a grandfather, fishing, and volunteering at Charles River School, where he is involved with his third major building project. Since he married Margaret in the transept chapel in 1984, all his other participation at St. Andrew’s (usher, reader, nominating committee chair, vestryperson for property, and project manager for sanctuary renovations and the replacement of the heating system) has been icing on the cake.

First Sunday in Lent

February 18, 2018

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. (Genesis 9:16)

I THINK PROMISES ARE SO SPECIAL. It breaks my heart to imagine breaking a promise I've made, and it pains me to think about how little we sometimes value promises. When I read about God's promises in the Bible, I am always blown away; his promises are so BIG, and I know in my heart that he, unlike many of us, will never break them.

The rainbow, God's promise to Noah, is one of the most beautiful of them all. It is a promise of peace—a promise that such a terrible flood will never again ravage the earth. A rainbow is God's way of telling us that the worst is over.

For many, rainbows are nothing special. They are simply the sun's light shining through some mist, after all. However, I think the simplicity of rainbows is part of what makes them special. These naturally occurring wonders decorate our skies right after a gloomy spell of rain, gently reminding us of God's everlasting covenant. The next time you see a rainbow, I hope it puts a smile on your face as you remember how loved you are, and I pray it reminds you that God's promises are forever.

Lia P. James is in her first year at Wellesley College, a very big contrast to her hot and sunny island home in Jamaica; she feels so blessed to call St. Andrew's her church home away from home. In the upcoming semester, Lia plans to join the acolytes in serving at St. Andrew's.

Monday in the First Week of Lent

February 19, 2018

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19:18)

THE MORE I ADVANCE IN YEARS and try to make sense of my life and the world, the more I come to understand how deeply rooted tribalism is within us. This constitutional affliction of the human state, one that compels us to view differences as threatening and even evil, drives much of our thinking, our beliefs, and, consequently, our actions—indeed, our often sordid history is marked by tribalism more than anything else.

Many recent events have plainly shown us for who we really are. In many ways, we are not much different from our hunter-gatherer ancestors. We feed off tribalism; we expect, command, and even coerce each other to fear and separate from those who are not like us.

But God's command is not just different, it's radically different. And it is a command. Read the verse again: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This dictum turns tribalism on its head. Everyone, wherever they come from, whatever they believe, whatever they think, whatever they do, is our brother and sister. We are all one; there is no separation. Go forth, therefore, and love your neighbor. It's transcendent, it's liberating . . . it's radical.

Giles Boland is an immigrant to the United States who works in Boston and has lived in Wellesley with his wife and four children for 25 years. He is a parishioner and usher.

Tuesday in the First Week of Lent February 20, 2018

*Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.
(Isaiah 55:6)*

I WAS SITTING IN THE SUN at my present place of residence when, after much reflection and then being interrupted by a telephone call, I found I needed to go no further than the first words of today's Scripture readings: "Seek the Lord where he may be found . . ."

For that telephone call had brought my answer in the wonderful news of the birth of my sixth great-grandchild, just two hours earlier. That little girl, who decided to arrive three days before her due date, brought to fruition the prayers we had offered up on her behalf as several generations of relations gathered in thanksgiving.

So, as I heeded the words of Isaiah and took his counsel to heart, I marveled again at God's providence: "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout . . . so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose" (Isaiah 55:10-11). All I needed to do was ask for direction, and God provided.

Mimi West is a longtime member of St. Andrew's. She is an active participant in Bible Circle.

Wednesday in the First Week of Lent February 21, 2018

*When the crowds were increasing, Jesus began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation."
(Luke 11:29-32)*

LIKE SO MANY OTHERS, I found 2017 to be a challenging and upsetting year. The news was unrelentingly awful, harsh, and despairing. Decency, humility, truth, and dignity vanished from the podium. Have I thought of this generation as evil? You bet. When Jonah, belched onto the beach by a whale, warned his enemies, the people of Nineveh, that God's wrath was coming, they fasted and repented.

While it's unlikely that our king will rise from his throne, remove his robe, cover himself with a sackcloth, and sit in ashes, I am comforted by the sign of the Son of Man, which is everywhere and eternal. Indeed, I am grateful that Jesus offers the world the good news of his light, peace, truth, freedom, and love. Even when the world appears to be on the brink of despair, the Lord, the giver of life, offers hope.

Tim Phillips has lived in the College Heights neighborhood of Wellesley since 1993, is happily married to Nora, has two wonderful children, Jonathan (25), and Susannah (21), and is the proud papa of two orange tabby cats, Artemis and his sister Apollo. He is on the second-Sunday usher crew, enjoys men's Bible study meetings, is active in outreach, and is the coordinator for St. Andrew's ministry with the Salvation Army Miracle Kitchen.

Thursday in the First Week of Lent February 22, 2018

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened . . . In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you. (Matthew 7:7-8, 12)

TODAY'S READINGS HELP US TO THINK about ways to have a holy and meaningful Lent, and thereby deepen our relationship with God. Like Queen Esther, who "utterly humbled her body," some people may seek to simplify their lives during Lent through fasting, slowing down, or sacrificing something. Others may take on something new: more time in contemplative prayer, or praise and thanksgiving for all that we have. Lent can also involve being more fully present in our daily routines and relationships.

Matthew reminds us that whether we seek to rekindle our connection to God through prayer, fasting, or singing praises, this mindful commitment will lead us to a deeper understanding of God, ourselves, and, ultimately, the world around us. God reminds us to be persistent—to ask, seek, and knock. God discourages complacency in our faith; there is always room to strengthen it. It is through this introspection that we are changed and made able to reach out to others.

This Gospel passage concludes with the Golden Rule: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you." What a powerful and positive message, one that the world desperately needs to hear. So let that be our charge!

Heather Schaefer, a lifelong Episcopalian, is the proud mother of Norah and Coley, wife of Sam, and an avid reader, animal lover, and sports enthusiast. She serves on the church school committee at St. Andrew's.

Friday in the First Week of Lent February 23, 2018

But if the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all my statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die. None of the transgressions that they have committed shall be remembered against them; for the righteousness that they have done, they shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live? (Ezekiel 18:21-23)

WHEN I THINK ABOUT PASSAGES like this one from Ezekiel and several similar passages in Isaiah and John, I always feel that I am being told, “Just stay on the straight path.” When I inevitably stray, God commands that I repent, that is, turn back—not unlike a distracted butterfly that must heed the signs and redirect its path to find a food source. So I am likewise called to heed the signs of Scripture and of nature, correct my course, and return to the way of redemption and salvation.

These words to Ezekiel reassure me that even the worst of my sins cannot separate me from the love of God. If my intent is good, even though my performance is often lacking, then all will be well. I need to cultivate a repentant heart and be attentive to the song of God’s universe, and I will be redeemed.

Toby Kell is a retired neuroradiologist, husband, and father of one. He is a longtime member of St. Andrew’s.

Feast of St. Matthias

February 24, 2018

This one thing I do: Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

LAST SUMMER, I spent a little over three weeks hiking the final two hundred miles of the Appalachian Trail. Each foot-step I took led me closer to completing the trip, while I also remembered every mountain I had already climbed. Even when I set out on a thirteen-mile hike and knew that the day ahead would be challenging, I continued to press toward the eventual goal.

Jesus calls his followers to live their lives with the goal of spreading his gospel and making decisions based on his holy word. Much like climbing mountains, even when we come upon a challenge that seems overwhelming, we must continue to strive forward, knowing that the end result will fulfill us. As I follow my Lenten discipline through this season of Lent, I must remember that even when I feel tempted or challenged, it is moving forward and getting past temptations that shows commitment to my goal—and, ultimately, my commitment to God.

Elizabeth Robbins-Cole is a junior at Wellesley High School. She is a coxswain at Community Rowing Incorporated and sings in A Capella Anonymous and the WHS Keynotes. Elizabeth is the daughter of Adrian Robbins-Cole, actively participates in the St. Andrew's youth group, and acolytes on Sundays.

Second Sunday in Lent February 25, 2018

No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

TODAY'S BIBLE PASSAGE concerns Abraham's belief regarding the promise of God, namely that Abraham would be the father of many nations, notwithstanding his and his wife Sarah's old age. The strength of Abraham's faith is inspiring. It reminds us to persevere even under difficult circumstances and to try and become the people Jesus wants us to be.

During my high school days, my two older sisters would often say that math was a difficult and tedious subject. Whereas I believed this at first, I distinctly recall that I decided one day that those beliefs did not apply to me and that, on the contrary, math was easy and fun. However, these God-given talents were challenged when it was time for me to complete my Ph.D. in a country far away from my family and in a language that was not native to me. Talent alone was not enough to help me, but my faith in God's help, along with perseverance, led me to the completion of my degree. I have discovered the power of believing in God and that, with God's help, much is possible. The reward of this journey is immeasurable.

Arnout Eikeboom works in the financial-services industry and lives in Wellesley with his wife, Bettina, and their three children, Christiaan, Clara, and Johannes. He is proud to be serving as treasurer for St. Andrew's.

Monday in the Second Week of Lent February 26, 2018

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-28, 35-36)

TODAY'S OLD TESTAMENT READING from Daniel admits that the chosen people have betrayed God's covenant relationship, and begs God to restore their favor. The psalmist calls upon God to pour wrath upon "the kingdoms that have not called upon your Name." In stark contrast, Luke's Gospel challenges us to consider every person one of the chosen people. If I give in to believing that I am more favored by God than others, I am apt to become prideful, arrogant, and selfish. Jesus' call to "do good even to those who hate you" is a call to practice radical love.

Jesus is certainly a revolutionary. He tells me to work not only for justice, but also for mercy, reminding me that God "is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked." My sense of righteousness can be seductive, allowing me to judge the value of others' beliefs, behavior, or circumstances. I need the Lenten season to help me face up to these temptations and cultivate a radical love. This requires such humility and vulnerability! I look to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus to find the courage to rise to the challenge he has set before me.

Mary Scanlon was recently received into the Episcopal Church and is spiritually nourished by the liturgy and the spirit of St. Andrew's. She is involved in outreach, adult formation, and lay ministry.

Tuesday in the Second Week of Lent February 27, 2018

I know every bird in the sky, and the creatures of the fields are in my sight. (Psalm 50:11)

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE IS WIDER and more inclusive than our own. He is omniscient—which seems an impossible concept, even a somewhat alarming one. Yet the thought of his being all-knowing and all-seeing can be a consolation. It suggests that every creature is viewed equally, and, in a way, even personally. For us, as situated beings with limited purview and imagination, such total understanding is beyond our ken.

At our house during the winter, when birds arrive at the bird feeder—brilliant cardinals, vivid bluejays, soft turtle doves, and sometimes swarms of pesky, dull-looking sparrows—I have increasingly found myself looking at the sparrows individually, and with less categorical judgment, for they too have lives, on a par with all other “creatures of the fields.”

Each sparrow, everywhere, is known and seen by other fellow creatures, in a vast network. This realization of relatedness—of the existence of a biosphere and noösphere—can be encompassed within the divine notion of omniscience, meaning individuation and unification, and a Being's consciousness thereof. There is peace in such an enlarging idea.

Alan Henrikson is a professor emeritus at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University. He is a member of the St. Andrew's senior choir.

Wednesday in the Second Week of Lent February 28, 2018

But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord. I have said, "You are my God." (Psalm 31:14)

TRUST IS THE ESSENCE of a successful relationship. When I can reveal my vulnerabilities to another person and still receive unconditional love, our bond is strengthened. This passage reminds me that relying upon God instills internal confidence.

Each time I pray, I validate my relationship with God. When the lists of things to do never ends, taking that moment and finding affirmation brings more pleasure and peace than I ever anticipate. I cherish Lent, because I carve out more time to focus on my faith by reading Scripture, attending services, and reflecting upon meditations.

Last year, I attended my first Maundy Thursday service. Prior, I shared my fear of not only baring my feet, but also allowing another to wash them. Initially, I sat a bit unfocused and unsettled; a bit later, I removed my socks and shoes; with exposed toes, I walked to the base of the altar, where I knelt washing my neighbor's feet; then, my feet were cleansed. In this vulnerable moment, I discovered a more sacred meaning to this Holy Week ritual. The experience deepened my faith through my practice of trusting in God and affirming, "You are my God."

Jennifer Appleyard Martin is a devoted wife to Ansley and mother of three daughters, Elizabeth, Caroline and Rebecca; in her free time, she practices law. She has been a St. Andrew's parishioner since 2001 and proudly serves as vestryperson for youth formation, as well as a lay Eucharistic minister.

Thursday in the Second Week of Lent

March 1, 2018

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. (Jeremiah 17:7-8)

AS A SURGEON as well as an Army medical officer, I quite often encounter people in need of help. Most want a sense of security, to know everything is going to be all right, whether they are in danger or suffering a medical crisis. I am no different—I want that also. I think that this passage from Jeremiah is particularly reassuring in these times of uncertainty, when fear may dominate our lives and we feel we need to make deals and compromises to assure our security.

The images of water, roots and blooming are excellent analogies for the nurturing relationship we must have with Christ, one rooted like a tree near water. It is this type of dependence that allows us to withstand heat and drought in difficult times and keep our balance. It clearly shows the ultimate uselessness of deals and contracts made with humans, which give only temporary succor. Having true roots nourished by God allows us to weather the storms of life through faith, instead of through arrangements with men.

Richard Ehrlichman is a plastic and reconstructive surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital and Shriners Hospital for Children, as well as a flight surgeon in the Massachusetts National Guard. Dr. Ehrlichman recently served on the parish discernment committee. His son, Luke, was a member of the St. Andrew's youth group.

Friday in the Second Week of Lent

March 2, 2018

Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.
(Genesis 37:19-20)

I REMEMBER BEING TAKEN to the musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* as a young child. I was wowed by the singing, Joseph's coat, and, most notably, the sheep that crossed the stage on a conveyor belt. I found a cassette tape of the soundtrack immediately, then transitioned to a CD, later to an iPod, and finally to my smartphone. I still have a good belt of the soundtrack once or twice a year.

The significance of Joseph's story didn't really occur to me until I started teaching high school English and discussing the notoriously elusive American Dream. In my teachings of *The Great Gatsby*, I have witnessed teenagers struggle with the idea that dreams may lead to demise, as Gatsby's does. I guide my students to reframe their outlook; the narrator says at the end of the novel that "we beat on, boats against the current," regardless of knowing that we might fail. Joseph and Jesus showed persistence in the face of adversity. Coupled with faith, our dreams, hopes, and aspirations give us a guiding light, a direction to follow. When have we read a good story in which a dreamer wasn't questioned, challenged, or tested?

Holly Anza is an English teacher, avid walker, gung-ho traveler, and decent baker. She has been coming to St. Andrew's since 1992 with her family, the Bolands, and now her husband, Travis.

Saturday in the Second Week of Lent

March 3, 2018

But the father said, "Let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" (Luke 15:22-24)

THE PRODIGAL SON STORY is a tale of God's unconditional love and acceptance of us—even when we can't see it. The older son, who has stayed the course and followed the lessons God has taught, loses sight of his father's love through his selfishness and pride. The younger son, who has strayed from God's guidance, believes that he has lost his father's love forever because of his past sins. In this parable, their father tries to help both of them understand that no matter their actions, his love will never fail them.

God loves us unconditionally, but always wants more for us: to learn to love each other as we want to be loved, treat others as we want to be treated, and accept others as we want to be accepted, in all our imperfections and all our potential. Like the father in the prodigal son story, he allows us each to find our own path, which always leads back to him. God is there with open arms whenever we are ready to receive his love. He accepts and loves us unconditionally.

Zebby and Al Dubé have three children. Zebby grew up at St. Andrew's, and the whole Dubé family has been part of the church since the 1990s. They love being a part of this wonderful community and have helped out with fellowship, outreach, choir, and church school. They would never miss a Coventry supper.

Third Sunday in Lent

March 4, 2018

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul. (Collect of the Day)

WHEN I FIRST READ THIS, I was taken aback at the thought that I had no power to help myself—and then I realized that, of course, our help comes from the Lord. As a resident of a retirement community, I am keenly aware of the need to “be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body,” but perhaps more challenging and disturbing are the “evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.” These thoughts are more insidious than physical dangers, because one is apt to be less conscious of their occurrence.

In the psalm for today, the psalmist asks: “Who can tell how often he offends? Cleanse me from my secret faults.” At the Eucharist, I find myself praying for more self-awareness in my thoughts, words and actions, lest I unknowingly cause hurt feelings or discomfort to others. Unfortunately, in today’s world, there seems to be an abundance of mean-spiritedness and self-centeredness. I pray for us all to develop greater understanding of one another and less combativeness in our positions, so that we might have more peace in our lives.

Karen Metcalf is a retiree, now living at Fox Hill Village in Westwood, after spending most of her career living and working in New York City as a financial executive. Because she is reluctant to drive at night (or in the snow), she is not able to participate in many activities at the church, but she is pleased to have introduced the Canterbury Scholars program to Adrian and Cat.

Monday in the Third Week of Lent

March 5, 2018

Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? and why are you so disquieted within me? Put your trust in God; for I will yet give thanks to him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God. (Psalm 42:6-7)

I FIND LIFE SO BUSY AT TIMES. Yes, it is frequently good, but I often feel that the world's clock-speed is increasing, and my ability to cope is rather more limited. Work is filled with daily tasks, large and small. Our four children lead lives of complexity beyond both my experience and imagination. Household management can seem like owning a (lousy) logistics business. At times, I feel a restlessness about simply not having the time to get everything done, or a worry over making wrong choices.

The psalmist reminds us that while we search for solutions to our struggles here on earth, God is here for us. Because he cares for us now and forever, we need not worry. We should take comfort in God, because he can still our disquiet and renew us.

For me, this comfort comes from cultivating a sense of gratitude. When I truly count my blessings, I realize that they far outweigh my immediate frustrations. By taking the longer view, I understand how small my concerns are in the plan God has made for me and for the world. As my gratefulness builds, the heaviness recedes . . . at least for a while. Gratitude is cultivated through routine: Lather, rinse, repeat!

Hugh MacArthur and his family—wife Lakey, sons Hunter (12), Tommy (11), Jed (9) and daughter Charlotte (5)—are very grateful to have found a welcoming spiritual home at St. Andrew's, where all four children were baptized. Hugh and Lakey look forward to deepening their ties to the parish through continuing work on the stewardship and membership committees.

Tuesday in the Third Week of Lent

March 6, 2018

For you are just in all you have done; all your works are true and your ways right, and all your judgments are true. (Song of the Three Young Men 1:4)

I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO BELIEVE that God has a plan for everyone who chooses to walk in his light, but this concept is hard to grasp when horrible things occur in the world. I never understood how it made sense to God for Christians to be killed because of their belief, but after reading *Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott*, I now believe that such people loved God so much that they wanted to give themselves to God.

In one excerpt from Rachel's journal, she writes: "Come to me, God, and make use of me," something I can only take to mean that she wanted God's plan for her to be realized, no matter the worldly consequences. While not apparent until years after Columbine, Rachel's story has impacted the spiritual lives of millions of people, including many who may not have had any spiritual identity without it. Therefore, I have to believe that because God had a plan for Rachel, God must have a plan for all of us, even if we are unable to see it in the moment. After all, if God shared his plan with us, then it wouldn't be called faith.

Katherine Roer, a junior at Dover Sherborn High School, is an active member in both the drama program and the mock trial team. Katherine teaches church school, assists with the children's music program, acolytes, and sings in the choir (when her busy schedule allows for it).

Wednesday in the Third Week of Lent

March 7, 2018

He established a law for Israel, which he commanded them to teach their children; that the generations to come might know, and the children yet unborn; that they in their turn might tell it to their children. (Psalm 78:5-6)

AS A PARENT, I have always felt that teaching my children to be loving, good individuals in the world is one of the most important jobs God has entrusted me with. My faith helps me keep my heart open, not only to God's love, but also to his lessons . . . because, yes, we are always learning.

Through my four children, now all young adults, I recognize that the commandments I was first taught in church school as a child and teenager are now an essential part of my faith. There is comfort for me in knowing that God has expectations of his children on earth, who they will be and who they will become. We as parents teach our children and grandchildren by example, simply through being who we are every day, out in the world. If my legacy on earth is my children, then I know God will be by my side, guiding me in my journey—just as the law of Israel, generations ago, provided the much-needed road map for mankind.

Debbie Osborn works in special education at Bigelow Middle School in Newton. With her husband David and their four adult children, she has been attending St. Andrew's for 18 years. Debbie recently completed her three-year term as vestryperson for outreach.

Thursday in the Third Week of Lent

March 8, 2018

Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but, in the stubbornness of their evil will, they walked in their own counsels, and looked backward rather than forward. (Jeremiah 7:24)

OVER THE COURSE OF MY LIFE, I have witnessed tremendous strides in the social consciousness of our great nation. For decades, the United States progressed towards tolerance and acceptance of differences and the embrace of the equality of all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, or sexuality. Our country looked to lead the world into a future when geographic boundaries began to disappear with the free flow of information, knowledge, and people—a time when diversity would be honored and celebrated.

Unfortunately, recent history has demonstrated a regression to a place where all of God's creations are not fully embraced and celebrated for their unique gifts. The current trajectory of this land seems to favor those that have over those that have not; it favors the homogeneity of the elite over the heterogeneity of the masses.

As someone who has been blessed by God's magnanimity, I know that by continuing to obey his voice, we can thwart the evil which seeks to return us to a period in which America was great for a few, and regain our ground on the path that leads to America being great for all.

Alan Montero-Williams is a husband, a father of three boys, and a grateful recipient of God's grace. He was recently confirmed at St. Andrew's.

Friday in the Third Week of Lent

March 9, 2018

Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. (Hosea 14:1)

IF YOU'VE EVER BROKEN A PROMISE despite your best efforts, then you are not alone. Surely this is true for all of us—even the people of Israel. Hosea highlights the broken promises of the Israelites—their lack of faith and trust in God. Does this sound familiar?

Fortunately, Hosea also reminds us that, despite our failings, God remains faithful. We know that God loves us so much that he sent his son as a sacrifice for the whole world's sins. In his compassion and mercy, God promises to love and forgive us, if only we repent and return to him.

Lent is a penitential season. With a goal of strengthening our faith and becoming closer to God, we often make promises during Lent. Sometimes, we find ourselves breaking those promises and feeling like failures. Reflection on today's Scripture reminds us that God doesn't expect us to be perfect. He knows that we are human. We are going to break promises and make mistakes. He only asks that we continue to try and to return to Him when we inevitably fail.

This Lent, let's rededicate ourselves to our Lenten promises each day and try again.

Terri Burnell lives in Newton with her partner, Jackie, and finds fulfillment in her job as an ICU nurse. Though shy, she enjoys meeting new people. Terri is a lifelong Episcopalian who is thankful to have found a warm and welcoming church home at St. Andrew's. She is thoroughly enjoying learning the duties of the altar guild, having recently become a member.

Saturday in the Third Week of Lent

March 10, 2018

I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 18:14)

LIKE OTHERS IN MY GENERATION, I spend an overabundance of time scrolling through social media. I log on and see a plethora of posts detailing the wonderful things people have been doing. Although this allows me to learn about new causes and initiatives in which my friends are involved, I find that it frequently feels like these posts were published boastfully to seek recognition from the author's followers.

I find myself revisiting today's reading when feeling irked by the slight sense of self-righteousness that exudes from posts publicized in an attempt to extol the author's virtue. I am reminded that, although compliments can give us a sense of accomplishment, the praise we should ultimately be seeking is that of God. God, who is aware of our transgressions, cannot be convinced that we are virtuous in the superficial manner in which we can persuade our peers and even ourselves. This notion is not only humbling, but also a reminder that true fulfillment comes from God, not through validation received from others.

Keileigh McReynolds is a recent graduate of Villanova University, currently working in public accounting at RSM. She can often be found running the streets of Wellesley as she trains for the Boston Marathon, or sitting in the third pew at St. Andrew's with her grandmother, Dot Reed.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 11, 2018

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

ONE OF MY FAVORITE DAYS of the year is the first of March, when I know that the harshest two winter months are now behind me. Although some challenging days undoubtedly remain, I am comforted by the hope of spring, the upcoming warmth of summer, and the beauty of fall—all just ahead.

As a Christian, I find comfort and warmth in Paul's words from Ephesians. Through God's gift of grace and our faith in him, we are saved. God is not keeping a tally of my good works. His grace is a gift of unconditional love. And although he expects me to follow his words and teachings as best as I am able, it is through my simple faith and devotion to him that I am valued and saved.

Sitting here in these early days of March, I await the hope, warmth and beauty of Christ's coming—and I am comforted by God's unconditional love and gift of grace.

Michael Mahlenkamp is married to Marie Dunell, and together they have four wonderful children: Marisa (25), Philip (21), Elise (19) and Andrew (17). They have been members of St. Andrew's since 1994. Michael is a former vestry member and a current church school teacher and member of the St. Andrew's human resources committee.

Monday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 12, 2018

Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness. (Psalm 30:4)

WHEN WE MOVED TO MASSACHUSETTS, our family went “church shopping” to find our new spiritual home. In each church we visited, the first thing I did was open up the hymnal. I leafed through to the Lenten section, as my favorite church hymns are sung during Lent and Easter. I often found that there was nothing there that felt familiar, nothing that hit home, nothing that made my heart sing for joy.

I realized that singing was an important part of my spiritual life. I needed those familiar Episcopal hymns to lift me up and help me give praise to the Lord. Each Sunday, I love belting out those hymns in church (often to the embarrassment of my children). Singing is a way for me to spread the love I have for God, remember what a gift every day is, and voice how very thankful I am for all the blessings that God has given to me and my family. It is my spiritual connection to God.

During this season of Lent, we should all ask ourselves, “What makes your heart sing?” and give thanks for the blessings of Christ.

Becky Hamlin and her husband David live in Dover, where they raised their two adult children, Margie and Tucker. Becky has been active at St. Andrew’s since 1998, and has served in a variety of ways on vestry, altar guild, and the senior choir.

Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 13, 2018

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." (John 5:6-7)

FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE, I have been given many opportunities to grow in my faith. My parents, godmother, friends, and those in my parish have all provided me with challenges and offers to develop spiritually. I have done my best to gratefully accept and use these opportunities. At times, however, I have chosen not to do so, like the sick man who answers Jesus' question not with a resounding "Yes!" but with excuses in the form of a list of obstacles preventing him from being made well. My own excuses sometimes take the form of doubt, and other times feelings that "I don't have time" or, when I was younger, "It's not worth it."

In fact, there is always time in our lives, and it is always worth it to accept opportunities to grow in faith. These are ways to become closer to God and to "be made well" spiritually, as the sick man is made well physically by Jesus in today's reading. Just as someone sick should never make an excuse in the face of an offer to be made well, we should embrace every chance to grow in our faith and relationship with God.

***Alex Cumming** is a freshman at Winchester High School. He loves learning, playing sports year-round, and spending time with his family and friends. Alex has been attending St. Andrew's for just over one year and was confirmed last October, along with many of his peers.*

Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 14, 2018

Thus says the Lord: In a time of favor I have answered you, saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves." (Isaiah 49:8-9)

WHEN A LIGHT IS SUDDENLY SHINED in my eyes and a voice says, "Come out," my first thought is not one of hope, but rather one of amorphous dread. I gather my cloak of fear, cover my head, and hunker down in the darkness. I can see a hand stretching toward me as I hear the gentle words, "Show yourself." But how do I stand up? How do I shrug off the despondency that I am clutching so tightly?

I look to Archbishop Rowan Williams' book, *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life*. One of his arguments is that the voice of faith must become part of public dialogue. I hear the commands of faith: Show yourself. Come out. Stand up. Speak out. Take risks. I am unable to do this on my own strength alone. I must remember that God stands with me.

Having nursed my own babies through the time of their weaning, it resonates with me that God will not abandon the dependent child, even when that child pulls away and declares, "I don't need you." It is with this thought that I grasp the outstretched hand and am pulled to a standing position.

Debbie (D.D.) Alexander is a retired teacher and former owner of Gardens 2 Go, a horticultural design and maintenance business. She serves on the church school committee, teaches church school, and is a member of the flower guild, altar guild, and lay weeders.

Thursday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 15, 2018

Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation. (Exodus 32:10)

IT'S AMAZING TO ME that God, in this exchange with Moses, is so angry at his people that it takes a mere human being to persuade him not to destroy the Israelites. Moses remains calm, while God is very upset. It seems it should be the other way around. But thinking about it, I know how I react to a little betrayal. When I feel betrayed, I'm upset, angry, and not thinking rationally. We've learned that we are created in God's image, but I guess God is a little like us too—and that's a good thing.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus gives us correction, guidance, and warning about what it takes to be a believer in him. He reminds us that we must first be followers of Moses in order to believe in him, and that we would do well to believe in his good works as testimony that he is the Holy One.

Surprisingly, Jesus tells us that he is not our accuser; rather, Moses is. Moses interceded with God on his people's behalf and brought us God's law through the Ten Commandments, which we would all do well to examine regularly—myself included.

Scott Jones is a longtime Wellesley resident and churchgoer. He works at Roche Bros. and can be seen walking about the town in his spare time. Scott is an usher and volunteer at St. Andrew's.

Friday in the Fourth Week of Lent March 16, 2018

He became to us a reproof of our thoughts; the very sight of him is a burden to us, because his manner of life is unlike that of others, and his ways are strange. (Wisdom 2:14-15)

AT A RECENT DINNER PARTY, I wasn't seated next to my husband. I didn't really know the other people at my table, and I felt an initial fear of the "strangers" who surrounded me. Fear often manifests itself as anger. I could have been annoyed with my friend over the seating chart, but I tamped down my nerves and ended up having several enjoyable conversations with the people around me. I found comfort in the things we shared, but was also intrigued by the ways in which we differed.

At this particular moment in time, we seem to find ourselves in a place where fear of people who are different from us has become rampant. We can see the strangeness of their beliefs and customs as a threat to our way of life. But if we take courage from the strength of our own beliefs, we may discover an opportunity to learn more about others and to have compassion for those who have had a different experience of life. Whether it's at a dinner party or on the street or in church, God wants us to learn from one another and to welcome each other with love.

Megan Burns is a wife, mother, animal lover, and active volunteer in the community. She serves on the church school committee, nominating committee, and as a church school teacher.

Saturday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 17, 2018

Let the one who believes in me drink. As the Scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38)

AS A CHILD, I was always puzzled by the term "living water." How could water be "living"? I grew up in the deserts of the Central Valley of California, where water was scarce, came from deep wells or giant canals, and certainly showed no signs of being "alive." It wasn't until I went whitewater rafting as a young man that I experienced how alive water could actually be. A raging river could be loud, majestic, awe-inspiring, and often unpredictable and dangerous. Living water could scour canyons, tear down mountains, and sweep decades of built-up debris away into the ocean.

Jesus offers those sacred waters to his believers: cool, refreshing, and thirst-quenching. But I also see the living rage of that river, with its continuous power to change and reshape the terrain of our lives: not just a one-time drink in the desert, but a moving, living force, always making something new inside each of us. May I always be ready for that river of living water!

Kenneth Graves lives in Wellesley with his wife, Dr. Jill Allen, and their two sons, Owen and Colin. The Graves family have been members of St. Andrew's since 2006.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 18, 2018

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. (John 12:24)

IT IS DIFFICULT TO WRAP MY MIND around this verse: It tells us that in order to bear fruit, a grain must die. We often think of death as the end of a relationship. It is why so many of us fear death—losing our physical, earthly connection with a friend or loved one seems unbearably painful. Over the past two decades of my life, I've experienced the loss of many close family members. I've often wondered what good could possibly come from so much sadness. How could death possibly bear fruit?

God has helped me to realize how much these painful experiences shape us. I watched my mother, always a reserved person, open up in ways I never could have imagined when she was faced with a terminal illness. She inspired me and so many others by facing the intolerable with dignity and grace. She did not hide from death, but rather showed us how to continue to live the life you want until the end comes.

Unless we are willing to break ourselves open and reveal ourselves to others, we will never truly be alive. From death comes much life for the living.

Karen Pekowitz spends much of her time mothering and teaching. She is the proud mother of two daughters, Julia and Alexa, and a teacher of English as a Second Language at the Hardy School in Wellesley. Karen has been active at St. Andrew's since 2012, singing in the choir, helping with B-SAFE, and serving on the church school, outreach, and music committees.

Feast of St. Joseph

March 19, 2018

When Jesus' parents found him in the temple, his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:48-51)

THE WRITTEN HISTORY OF JESUS' BOYHOOD and young adulthood is very incomplete, but I believe it is meaningful that we do have a snapshot of him in early adolescence. In this story from Luke, Jesus is the age of our Rite-13 students, and I am reminded of my time teaching this class, which I cherish. This is the age when children begin forming their own moral and spiritual characters. They want to question everything, and they want to know everything. Jesus' dual nature of humanity and divinity is on display here: He callously abandons his parents, but then amazes the temple scholars with his insights.

This story offers a number of lessons to parents. For a child to develop into an adult, parents have to loosen the comfortable control that they enjoyed up until the child's adolescence. Luke also illustrates one of the contradictions of the adolescent mind: one minute they are rebellious, and the next they are compliant. Finally, this Scripture reminds parents that they need to love their children through their adolescence, as when Mary "treasured all these things in her heart."

Rob Brandt is just trying to be helpful, or make you laugh . . . sometimes both. He has served St. Andrew's as a vestry member, Rite-13 teacher, photographer, computer support technician, website wrangler, and men's book clubber.

Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 20, 2018

Let this be written for a future generation, so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord. (Psalm 102:18)

AS I REFLECTED ON THIS PSALM, I recognized the importance of remaining unified under the shared principle of service. The author addresses “a future generation,” which will one day gather together in order to serve the Lord. The message of uniting Christians led me to think about a modern-day application of this idea. Often, I converse with people whose beliefs and values are quite different from my own. However, because I believe that everyone is entitled to their own opinions, I make the effort to respect and understand others’ perspectives.

The combination of my own fundamental principles and this psalm remind me that striving for unity and peace among all people is exceptionally important. This idea may seem naïve or unrealistic, but I believe that the practice of promoting unity, respect, and the truth of the Bible on a small scale can enable each of us to effect change within our own communities.

As a Christian, I believe it is my duty to contribute to the unity not only of Christians, but of all people. During the Lenten season, I am able to focus on this concept and explore both old and new connections with people around me and with God.

Elizabeth Martin is a sophomore at the Winsor School and enjoys playing a variety of sports and music. She serves as an acolyte and attends youth group at St. Andrew’s.

Wednesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 21, 2018

Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God." (Daniel 3:28)

LIKE MANY LEADERS TODAY, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was a person of authority and influence, and he was used to getting his way. After all, he was king; as such, he was the person who enjoyed the power of "giving and taking away." In his world, it was beyond his imagination that ordinary people would willingly put their lives in jeopardy by denying his wishes—but, to his astonishment, that is exactly what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did. They were three young Hebrew men who were prepared to die for their faith, rather than submit to worshiping a false god.

While this story comes to us from the Old Testament, King Nebuchadnezzar witnessed the power of faith and experienced, perhaps for the first time, his own version of self-denial in the Lenten tradition well before the birth of Christ. It was the unshakable faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that fostered the king's unanticipated self-denial, and not just the deliverance of the three men.

***Stephen Beach** understands that trying to be a person of faith means recognizing that you are part of something bigger than yourself. He has been part of St. Andrew's since his marriage to Christine Henderson Beach in January 1989. Both of their children, John and Tommy, were baptized and confirmed here. An usher and a veteran of cleanout projects, Bargain Haul, and the high school youth group, Stephen is a big fan of the 8am service.*

Thursday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 22, 2018

Arm us with such trust in Christ that we may ask no rest from his demands and have no fear in his service. (Collect of the Day)

SERVICE HAS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE and the lives of those who came before me in my family. In middle school, I regularly visited a nursing home, spending an hour or so each week with one of the women who lived there. The experience didn't make headlines in the newspaper or add sparkle to my resumé, but it instilled in me a lifelong commitment to serving others. No matter how big or small our capacity, God always expects us to serve in every way we can.

In my favorite Christmas hymn, "In the Bleak Midwinter," the narrator asks of Christ: "What can I give him, poor as I am?" and finally concludes, "I can . . . give my heart." In the moments when we worry that our gifts are not enough, we must realize that no gift is too small if it is given in love. If I allow myself to become consumed with doubt of my ability to handle life's challenges, what will I be able to offer to God or my neighbor? Instead, I try to work past my doubts and trust that God's will can be done in each small moment of service.

Ruth Hill Klinck was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. She is a graduate of Middlebury College and the Darden School of Business at UVA. Ruthie has lived in Wellesley for 11 years and is the mother of Jessie (22), Philip (20), and Mason (16). She is a volunteer in several organizations and is the 2017-2018 co-chair of Bargain Haul.

Friday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 23, 2018

But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. (Jeremiah 20:11)

WHEN JEREMIAH WROTE THESE WORDS, he was having a truly bad day. This is something, I'm sure, to which we all can relate as we face the daily challenges of an often difficult world. Sometimes, our bad days can join together to form bad times. Sometimes, events in our lives drive us to depression and despair. Sometimes, we're faced with the sadness of losing someone dear to us and the unthinkable prospect of continuing on in their absence.

In all of these times, the Lord is there as a dread warrior by our side, should we seek him out. We can find him in many places, be it from within ourselves, or in the love of our families, or in the caring of our friends, or in the kindness of strangers, or in the comfort and support of our church community. In all of these places, we may find a warrior who bears us up in difficult times, and gives us the strength and courage to battle on.

John Breedis is a husband, parent, and parishioner. He has been a member of St. Andrew's since 2003 and has served as a Rite-13 leader.

Saturday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 24, 2018

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

AS I CONTINUE MY WALK IN FAITH and learn more about Christ, I am constantly reminded of how much God loves us, and the many ways he gives his love. My mother often reminds me of a saying that describes the Lord's love and favor: "He does not give us what we deserve, but rather, he grants us the things we don't deserve." In other words, as children of God, we are blessed with seemingly undeserved favor. As a result, we have access to a never-ending fountain of his blessings.

I always imagine that praying is like asking for a vessel to carry the water of all these blessings from God. Oftentimes, when we pray, we ask God for a teacup or a glass, so that we can carry even a few of these blessings. But why don't we ask for buckets?

We know that we have redemption through Jesus, as Paul reminds us in his letter to the Ephesians. God has invited us to ask for barrels and tanks to fill with his blessings, as he showers us with his divine love.

Demilade Adeboye is a junior at Wellesley College and an international student from Lagos, Nigeria. She has loved becoming a part of the St. Andrew's family, and is especially grateful to be able to sing with the choir on Sundays.

Palm Sunday

March 25, 2018

Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Mark 11:9-10)

"BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!" This phrase, which we sing during the Eucharistic prayer, has always resonated with me, although not quite in the way it is presented in the Bible. This line from Psalm 118 is echoed in Mark's description of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, which we celebrate today as Palm Sunday. Christ's adoring crown of followers lines his path with their cloaks and palm fronds, shouting, "Hosanna!" and "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"—referring to Jesus, who comes in the name of God.

Yet when I sing these words before receiving Communion, I also feel that the phrase applies to all of us. Blessed are we, when we come in the name of the Lord! When we act in accordance with Jesus' words, when we love our neighbors, when we do good deeds, when we support God's work on earth, and when we spread the good news of God's love—in a sense, we are also "coming in the name of the Lord," and I feel that we are also blessed. This phrase moves me as an inspiration to grow personally closer to God.

Herb Manning grew up in a small town in North Carolina, and has worked in physics and in economic consulting. A member of St. Andrew's since 1995, he has served roles in stewardship and as an usher.

Monday in Holy Week

March 26, 2018

For with you is the well of life, and in your light we see light.
(Psalm 36:9)

THE READINGS FOR MONDAY in Holy Week offer rich sources for meditation, but I am most struck by the imagery of light and its counterpart, darkness. Light and darkness are symbols of our relationship with God, of our lives, and of Holy Week itself.

Psalm 36 suggests that light refers to knowledge, righteousness, justice, and joy. We are credited with these attributes as people who see the light of God. The psalmist praises God's love and faithfulness and promises God's protection and a life of abundance. But our lives are also marked with loss and sorrow, shadow and darkness. Psalm 139, one of my favorites, promises that God remains with us wherever we might be. Even in darkness, God will find us.

The joyous imagery in Psalm 36 presages only parts of Holy Week—the gift of the Eucharist and, ultimately, the Resurrection—but does not encompass the horror of Jesus' betrayal, persecution, and death on a cross. Together, these psalms promise that God is with us in light and darkness, just as Holy Week is filled with light and darkness. Ultimately, light will always triumph.

Ellen Staelin has raised a family of three children, now grown, and participated in various community activities, including Town Meeting and the Wellesley Garden Study group. At St. Andrew's, she completed and mentored the EfM (Education for Ministry) program and currently serves on altar guild and the pastoral care team.

Tuesday in Holy Week

March 27, 2018

Do not cast me off in my old age; forsake me not when my strength fails. (Psalm 71:9)

THIS PSALM WAS WRITTEN at a time in ancient Judaic thought when death was considered final. The shadow of existence that awaited humans in the underworld was cut off from the glory of the Lord. There was no redemption, there was no afterlife for soul or body. There was only death. When the psalmist asks the Lord not to forsake him, he is pleading to remain connected to God in his last days and into his death. This is exactly what we, the disciples of Christ, ask during Holy Week. We are pleading that the glorious Messiah will not leave us eternally.

The last few days of Holy Week answer this plea. They are the days in which Christ overturns the ancient order of the cosmos and overcomes death and the grave. They are the days when we are shown that absolutely nothing—not even the seemingly most final moment of our lives—will separate us from eternal life in the love and mercy of God.

Reading this passage at the beginning of Holy Week serves to remind us of the spiritual journey we are on during Lent, and the triumphant conclusion that is to come.

Katie Hodges is a sophomore at Wellesley College, majoring in English and Spanish. She is a member of the St. Andrew's senior choir.

Wednesday in Holy Week

March 28, 2018

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

MY FATHER DIED FROM AN ACCIDENTAL FALL in October 1998, at age 67. I remember that week as clearly as if it was yesterday. The last time I saw my dad was on a family walk around Lake Waban, on a spectacular Indian summer afternoon with my mom and my wife Elizabeth. We took turns carrying Will, our oldest son, who was a baby. Elizabeth was pregnant with Emily, who would be born the following May. We had great conversation and the peace that can only be found in family joy. I left that evening for a business trip, not knowing that I would never speak with my father again.

Losing him was a sudden, jarring, and life-changing experience for me. In my loss, I was shaken to my core, including my faith. In reflecting on this verse from Hebrews, I am reminded of the role that Christ played in leading me forward to “persevere in the race” as a husband, son, brother, parent, and provider. The pastoral work of St. Andrew’s figured centrally in my spiritual recovery, which was so necessary in enabling me to continue growing as a Christian person.

Stephen Clarke has been a member of St. Andrew’s since 1994 and lives in Wellesley with his wife, Elizabeth, and their three children: Will (20), Emily (18) and Ben (14). Stephen has served as warden, vestryperson for finance, and member of the finance committee.

Maundy Thursday

March 29, 2018

Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you . . . By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

AT THE LAST SUPPER, Jesus charges his disciples to love one another—no easy task! As a child, I often thought that being a good Christian was not in the cards for me, as I did not feel love for everyone. As I matured in my faith, I realized that love is not only a feeling, but more importantly an action, a way of living. Jesus taught us about love by the way he lived, caring for the needy, the sick, and the distressed; charging those with little compassion for others to do better; and addressing the spiritual needs of all people through his prayer life, teaching, and preaching.

Once again, with these words, Jesus challenges us to do better. Someday, as we gather around a table for our own last supper with family and friends, what will we want some of our final words to be? Words of regret—of “should haves” and “could haves”? Or words of thanksgiving and love? We all fall short of the glory of God, but may we be remembered as people of faith who tried to make the world a better place through our love for one another.

Rev. Karen Vickers Budney is the pastoral associate of St. Andrew's. She was sponsored for ordination by St. Andrew's and ordained a priest 26 years ago. She and her husband, Al, have two children: son Alex (with wife Sarah and five-year-old Finn) Budney, and daughter Caroline (with husband Gregg and three-year-old Neal) Zimmerman.

Good Friday

March 30, 2018

They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!"
(John 19:15)

LIKE MANY OTHERS, I find myself deeply challenged by the suffering of innocent people—whether it be through illness, natural disaster, the death of a child, unemployment, mental illness, poverty, oppression, or innocent civilians caught up in warfare. When confronted with these situations, whether personally or through the media, I am led to ask: “Where is our loving God?” For me, one of the most compelling elements of the Christian faith is the answer that Good Friday gives to that question. It’s not that Jesus’ death on the cross takes away our suffering, but it does address one of the worst elements of suffering.

In the limited suffering I have experienced in my life, one of the worst aspects of tragedy or loss seems to be the way it isolates one from other people—that sense of loneliness is almost the worst part of it. But Jesus, even in his death on the cross, places himself alongside us and shows us that he shares our pain, rather than isolating himself in divine splendor. In Christ, we are never alone. For me, this is a game-changer.

Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole has been married to Sarah for 24 years. Together, they have two children, William (20) and Elizabeth (17). Born in England, he was ordained in the Church of England on July 4, 1993. He is the rector of St. Andrew’s.

Holy Saturday

March 31, 2018

There is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. (Job 14:7)

IN THE LANDMARK TEXT *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas explains that hope is a theological virtue because “its principal object is God . . . whatever else hope expects to obtain, it hopes for as subordinate to God as its final end, or to God as its first efficient cause.” If we remember that all our best hopes lead us toward God and that their realization is dependent on God’s grace, then our hope will never warp into arrogance or evaporate into despair.

And yet, during the Holy Saturday moments of our lives, holding onto hope can feel impossible. In the passage quoted above, Job struggles to find a reason to be hopeful in the midst of suffering. He finds a glimmer of hope in the image of a tree that, while it appears dead, secretly has deep roots capable of producing new life.

So many different things can lead us back from the edge of hopelessness—the love of people around us, the comfort of music and books, and the peace we find in worship, all of which have God as their “first efficient cause.” With God’s help, we can become like trees with deep roots, sprouting tiny shoots of hope.

Rev. Catherine (Cat) Healy is the assistant rector at St. Andrew’s. She is a Chicago native, an AmeriCorps alum, and a lifelong Girl Scout. Cat shares life with her wife, Heather, and an indeterminate number of actual cats.

Easter Sunday

April 1, 2018

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away . . . (John 20:1)

WHAT MOVES ME IN JOHN'S STORY OF RESURRECTION is the way it begins in the dark. Our story of death-defying resurrection doesn't happen the way humans would want to tell it—in a trumpet-blaring, Disney-esque production. Instead, it begins in more than one kind of darkness: the dark sky, the dark sorrow in Mary's heart, the dark fears and betrayals of the apostles.

It happens in the dark, and the ramifications are still magnificent, world-changing, soul-transforming. God doesn't need us to pay attention to resurrection because it happens without us. We do not control God or God's story. Jesus Christ carves life, and hope, and love into ours.

God's cosmic love radiates so strongly that life catches fire all over again, and death is beaten back forever. In our lives, each of us will come to know that God can bring light to our darkness, too. Even when we fall to earth for the last time, dust to dust, love will be the last act as our unimaginable eternal life in Christ begins. God's creativity is always stronger than our imagination. One day, outside of time, each of us will understand even more fully: "The light came into the darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it."

Rev. Margaret Schwarzer is thankful to be the associate rector for adult formation and membership at St. Andrew's. She is passionate about hearing your insights and sharing your questions as we deepen our Christian practice together. On most Saturdays, you'll find Margaret and her son, Ben, on soccer fields.



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