

St. Andrew's Lenten Meditation Guide 2026

Sponsored by the Adult Formation Committee



Thanks to Katharine Clark, Caren Parker, Sandra Rigney, and Jonathan Vogel-Borne for their editorial assistance.

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ST. ANDREW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

Editor's Note

Dear member of St. Andrew's,

I went to an *A Far Cry* concert recently. Their guest musician was a 27-year-old cellist, Yi-Mei Templeman. She played beautiful classical music, but she also did something new; she turned her cello on its side and strummed it like a guitar when she played some of her original music. The result was a very new thing, something waiting in the wings for centuries, but never heard before she did it. It was so refreshing to hear both classical and indie folk music played at the same time. They didn't feel so far apart when Yi-Mei played.

In one of her pieces, she sang "What you say is what you are." If that is true, then the 47 contributors who read, reflected, prayed, and then wrote their meditations for this guide are soulful and complex. They see the uncertainty and brokenness in our world—hatred, envy, and anger are considered—but they also claim hope, faithfulness, and joy as part of our Christian heritage. They dare to be complex Christian people living in a complex world, and they count on God to be their grounding and support. They witness the tension between two seemingly opposite aspects of life, but they won't let go of one just because they perceive the other.

They are right. God supports and guides us in the midst of a complex, uncertain world. God weeps over the brokenness with us, but God is also the one who creates new things, brings grace, celebrates joy. "Behold," says the Christ, "I make all things new." (Revelations 21:5)

As we journey together this winter, I wish each of us the eyes to see new things, the faith to be sustained when we feel "dry" or the world feels cold, and the grace, goodness, and fellowship that we find in being church together, receiving the Eucharist, saying our prayers.

Godspeed in this year's Lenten journey,

The Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer

Associate Rector for Adult Formation and Membership

Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts. (Collect of the Day)

Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, abstinence, stations of the cross. For me, who is decidedly not a Biblical scholar, Lenten themes and practices can be daunting. But what I do know is that during this time Jesus spent 40 days in the desert building his faithfulness. The outcome: Jesus never gives up on us.

In Bible study, we recently read Luke's *Parable of the Lost Son*. Jesus tells of a man with two sons: one who demands his share of his father's estate and goes off and squanders it, and the other who stays and works hard for his father. The first son returns and repents, and instead of being rejected is celebrated, which angers the second son. But Jesus tells us the father recognizes his first son was lost and was found, was dead and was alive again. Jesus always welcomes us back.

On the 2023 parish pilgrimage to the UK, we celebrated Holy Eucharist at Canterbury Cathedral. I was chosen to deliver the wine to the altar. I had always believed in the power of the Holy Spirit, feeling I could call upon the Spirit. But during that procession, I actually felt the Holy Spirit enter me, and there it remains.

So let me suggest that during Lent this year we all look for, expect, and celebrate God-given transformations and God's welcomes in our spiritual lives—see what can happen!

Fred Wright joined St. Andrew's in 1954. Then came church school teaching, marriage, and a memorial service for his wife Sue in 2020. Fred has retired from a career in marketing management and teaching.

Thursday after Ash Wednesday February 19, 2026

What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves? (Luke 9:25)

Throughout most of my young life, I believed that my happiness as an adult would be directly proportional to my importance, the places I'd been, and the stuff I had.

But Jesus' teaching in this verse exposes a trade everyone must consider at some point. As I matured, I realized that my priorities directly dictate what kind of person I'll become. On the one hand, I can chase worldly possessions and constantly hunger for more of what won't make me happy. Alternatively, I can choose to live life selflessly, following the Lord's guide, a tried-and-true path to personal fulfillment over 2000 years old. Jesus tells us what we really want in Luke 9:25. Shallow goals get in the way of our understanding of who we are.

Think of yourself stripped away from your money, from your status, or from what you've achieved at work or school. How will Jesus remember your time on earth after you're gone?

George Raeke is a 17-year-old senior at Wellesley High School. He crucifers for St. Andrew's.

Friday after Ash Wednesday February 20, 2026

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am." (Isiah 58:9a)

This verse caught my attention because of the circumstances we are living in today. In our country and in our world, I see a great deal of injustice and oppression. There are people who do not have enough food to eat. It is easy to get caught up in these matters and get very anxious.

Then I realize that I can call on God for help; this verse from Isaiah lets me know that. It reminds me that God is with me on my daily walk through life.

God calls us to pray for and act on injustice. There are many ways to respond to the call. We can be strengthened with God's help.

Dear God, help me remember that you are always by my side. Give me the courage and strength to help others in need.

Cynthia Hunt and her husband Sam have called Wellesley home for more than 40 years. Singing in the choir at St. Andrew's is Cynthia's favorite way of worshipping God.

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

February 21, 2026

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.
(Luke 5:31)

It is part of the human experience to live with an afflicted soul. And like any illness, this affliction requires care, attention, and trust in the one who can heal.

But it is not that we are sick, but that we resist admitting it. We would rather be counted among “the righteous,” those who seem to have it all together. We prefer to believe that we are well enough to need no healing. We spend so much energy managing impressions—convincing others, and often ourselves, that we are fine, capable, and in control.

Jesus challenges us by saying those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Lent offers us the opportunity to reckon with the truth about our condition. It is a reminder that we are all in need of help. But often it is only when we are truly broken that we ask for help and for forgiveness. Lent offers us the opportunity to be vulnerable, to take inventory of ourselves, to acknowledge our weaknesses and our imperfections, and to ask for help before we are broken. As soon as we are honest about our brokenness, healing can begin.

Sam Schaefer serves on the vestry overseeing church property and serves as a lay Eucharist minister. Sam is married to Heather and is the proud father of Norah and Coley.

First Sunday in Lent February 22, 2026

Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away. (Psalm 32:1)

Psalm 32 leads me to consider the Jewish origins of Jesus and his teachings. We hear of sin coming through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and Jesus uses Old Testament texts to refuse the devil's enticements during his forty days in the wilderness.

I am drawn to the idea that Jesus used his knowledge of Jewish holy scripture to strengthen himself and to teach some of his most ethical and hopeful concepts, including forgiveness.

Psalm 32 speaks to the certainty that God can and will forgive our sins when we repent. This is a central promise given by Christ to all humankind. Along with Jesus' other teachings, he assures us that we can be, and are worthy to be, forgiven. He even asks God to forgive us from the cross. In turn, Jesus calls on us to forgive.

I believe that the act of forgiving both ourselves and others is one of the greatest gifts we can make both to ourselves and to our transgressors. It is, I think, central to human happiness. With forgiving and accepting forgiveness comes comfort, insight, the freedom to be our best selves, and love. Here in Psalm 32, an Old Testament sage reminds us that accepting forgiveness is a key to happiness.

Karen Melican, a lifelong member of St. Andrew's, was baptized in 1943, was confirmed, and happily married Tom here. She has two daughters and three grandchildren. Karen has led Education for Ministry, taught church school, and participated in book groups.

Monday in the First Week of Lent

February 23, 2026

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. (Psalm 19:7)

I often think that to do good—true good—I must do something big and profound for it to really matter. Reading Psalm 19 reminded me that goodness is often found in much smaller, everyday moments: bringing a meal to a sick friend, donating an old coat to a shelter, or welcoming a new neighbor into your home.

Most of the time, when we do these things, we don't think much of them. That may be why it can feel like we aren't really doing much good at all. But often, those small gestures are what people remember most—not because they were grand, but because someone noticed, took the time, and showed care.

To me, this Psalm reads as a reminder that living thoughtfully and with intention is enough. Good doesn't have to be impressive to be meaningful; it just has to come from the heart.

JoLynn Heuer was introduced to St. Andrew's by her husband, Tad Heuer, in 2021 and she is a member of the flower guild. The Heuers live in Wellesley with Tad's daughter and JoLynn's stepdaughter, Imogen.

Tuesday in the First Week of Lent

February 24, 2026

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 3:13b-14)

In keeping with the Lenten spirit of repentance, this verse speaks to me about the power of forgiveness. The ability to let go of the past is important in so many facets of life. As a professor, I commonly field end-of-semester questions about how hard a particular student needs to study to earn a particular grade. I'm always baffled, as it is impossible to change previous grades. My response inevitably is that you cannot change the past and instead should focus on what can be learned to prepare for the future. In a sense, this is an act of self-forgiveness that is not so obvious during a stressful time in the academic calendar. My hope is that I'm able to provide a sense of perspective to diminish the student's concern over uncontrollable factors.

Forgiveness allows us to mend relationships of all sorts: with ourselves, those we love, those around us, and God. Being able to repent on a regular basis provides a grounding point for starting over. Without this action, our relationship with God would continually be influenced by the actions and thoughts for which we seek forgiveness. With forgiveness comes the refreshing and powerful feeling that God knows we are flawed but are trying to follow God's word. Forgiveness is a critical element of our faith.

Caleb Farny is a professor of engineering at Boston University. He has attended St. Andrew's with his family (Natalie, Bennett, and Wesley) since 2011. He has taught in the church school program and hopes to have more time to sing in the choir.

Wednesday in the First Week of Lent

February 25, 2026

Surely, I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. (Psalm 51:5–6)

Psalm 51 reminds me that God understands human imperfection while still calling us toward honesty and wisdom. I believe God is merciful, patient, and transformative; he meets us where we are and has the power to change us from within.

These verses show that God values sincerity of heart over outward appearances. While I never believed that God only cared about visible religious actions, being in church sometimes made it easy to focus on what others could see rather than on inner faith. This passage challenges me to look inward instead.

For me, Lent is a season of honest self-reflection and growth in my relationship with God. It is a time to recognize where I have fallen short and to open myself to renewal. I feel particularly close to God during prayer, especially after a hard day, when I can surrender my worries and allow him to guide me. At times, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by sin, but this verse brings comfort by reminding me that all people are naturally imperfect. This truth is not an excuse for sin, but a reminder of our constant need for God's mercy and guidance.

Kara Eichelberger is a Needham High sophomore committed to growing in faith and sharing it with others. She serves at St. Andrew's through youth group, outreach, acolyting, and Godly Play teaching.

Thursday in the First Week of Lent February 26, 2026

*Search for the Lord and his strength; continually seek his face.
(Psalm 105:4)*

This is easier said than done.

“. . . be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.” (George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, written from prison, 1656.)

Over the last little while, I have kept myself from listening to or watching the news, trying to protect my soul. These are hard times . . . trying to maintain our love of God, our love of earth and other people, in the face of so much destruction. Some news does get through and I wonder: How do we go forward as people of God? How do we live in the love and grace of God in the face of what is happening around us?

Then I am looking in the faces of the people around me, in the room with me, the people whose names I know, people I spend time with, whom I can claim to have some degree of love for, looking for the face of God, the hands of God, realizing this is what I/we have to work with, right here, right now. God is all around me. Let's get to it!

Katharine Clark: daughter, sister, woman, lover, mother, crone.

Friday in the First Week of Lent

February 27, 2026

... leave your gifts there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gifts. (Matthew 5:24)

I have always been a fan of the gospel of Matthew. Some of the earliest Bible verses I was ever exposed to were the Beatitudes. Matthew 5:20-26 are important verses, and they have applicability in many ways today:

1. Anger and contempt are spiritually serious even without physical harm.
 - a. Take a breath and think before you send negative email or a negative response.
 - b. While I am not a user of social media for the most part, this has implications for social media; it is hard to “undo” comments there.
2. Don’t delay over repairing relationships.
 - a. Avoidance may seem easy, but the problem will fester.
 - b. Don’t avoid tough conversations. Hit the topic directly head-on yourself.
 - c. Small conflicts can grow into major issues if not addressed; they tend to snowball quickly!
3. Finally:
 - a. Address anger before it turns into contempt.
 - b. Apologize without qualifiers.
 - c. Move toward peace and be willing to talk through issues without becoming angry.

Allen Jones has been worshipping at St. Andrew’s with his wife Nancy and their children for many years. He has served on the vestry and finance committee. In his free time, he loves hiking and spending summer days at Lake Sunapee.

Saturday in the Second Week of Lent February 28, 2026

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5: 43)

Who is our neighbor? I imagine that most of us feel that we are doing reasonably well in loving our neighbors: We give to the poor; we pay our taxes to support the needs of others. The Quakers might call this conclusion "spiritual pride." What about the coastal cities in Bangladesh that will be buried by rising seas, which are threatening thousands of lives? What about the effects of our high standard of living that destroys the habitats of our fellow living creatures—the birds, the insects, the corals, the trees? God the Father makes us one great interdependent family. Is it not our obligation to care for all our neighbors—for the whole creation?

Janet Giele joined St. Andrew's in 1967 and has served as warden and choir member. A retired professor of sociology at Brandeis University, she continues her writing and scholarly work.

Second Sunday of Lent

March 1, 2026

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

The dictionary defines faith as: “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The most faithful person in the Bible I can think of was Father Abraham. He left everything behind to become the father of many nations.

Unfortunately, faith has been harder for me. In part, it has been easy for me to worry and brood over many things in my life. Some are work related, or money related, or mental health related, but all come down to faith. Scripture tells us that worrying and fretting are a waste of time. Fretting can even lead to evil.

In the last few years, my faith has been stronger and has grown; my prayer life is stronger, and I am happier. Recently, though, I found myself “dry” when it came to daily prayer. I’ve been told I’m stubborn; could this be a cause? Am I in a Mexican standoff with God?

Somehow, through God’s presence and my trying to see clearly amidst changing circumstances, my faith has strengthened again. God has brought me back to my knees, for which I’m grateful. Love, faith, and excellence are the attributes I want the most in my life. What do you want?

Scott Jones grew up in Wellesley and graduated from the University of Colorado. He has been serving as an usher for many years and participates in Bargain Haul and common cathedral.

Monday in the Second Week of Lent

March 2, 2026

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. (Luke 6:35)

My grandfather died this past December at the age of ninety-eight. I loved him deeply and admired the quiet sacrifices he made for others. For years, he devoted himself entirely to caring for my grandmother as her health declined. When she died during COVID, something in him seemed to die, too.

A couple of years later, after he was convinced to leave the home he had lived in for fifty years and move into a senior living facility, I noticed a change. On our regular phone calls, he sounded upbeat again. He had stories to tell. In a way I had not heard since my grandmother's death, he seemed renewed.

Freed from the singular role of caregiver, he turned his attention outward. He found purpose in helping others—many younger than he was—pushing people in their wheelchairs, running errands, and offering companionship. He gave not to be thanked or repaid, but because giving itself gave him life.

Near the end of his life, he fell while bringing a newspaper to the front desk attendant. Complications from that fall led to his death just days later. Afterward, I was told that staff members lined the hallway outside his modest room, hoping to take home a small item to remember him—a blanket, a picture frame.

Lent invites us to consider how freely we give. Jesus calls us to a generosity rooted not in return, but in love. My grandfather showed me what that kind of love can look like.

Trip Botsford lives in Wellesley and is grateful to be part of the St. Andrew's community. He and his wife Libby attend church with their children, Pippa (7) and Clay (4).

Tuesday in the Second Week of Lent

March 3, 2026

... learn to do good, seek justice, help the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17)

I love the strength and vision of this verse, but sometimes the wide sweep of these commands feels like too much for me. I want to do all these things, but I am only one person. I need to remember that moving forward, day-by-day, in the communities where I live and work, is enough.

The blessing I offer at the end of some of our Sunday services feels like it is aligned with Isaiah, but it speaks in a language that is right sized for my daily life:

“Life is short, and we have too little time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So be swift to love and make haste to be kind; and the blessings of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, be with you, and everyone you love, now and forevermore.”

This prayer/blessing was written by poet Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821-1881), but I heard it for the first time when our assistant rector, the Rev. Catherine “Cat” Healy, prayed it at our altar. When she left our church, we agreed I would continue to offer the blessing at St. Andrew’s. It brings me encouragement every time I speak it or hear it.

Margaret Schwarzer is our associate rector for adult formation and membership. This year, she took lots of Pilates classes and loved watching the fifth season of “Stranger Things” with her son, Ben.

Wednesday in the Second Week of Lent

March 4, 2026

I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am as useless as a broken pot. (Psalm 31:12)

Lent is a time for clear self-reflection. We must recognize and accept our broken and sinful nature before we can heal and be forgiven.

I find myself thinking about Japanese pottery during Lent:

“Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the cracks with lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum, creating visible, beautiful seams that celebrate imperfections, rather than hiding them. This practice finds beauty in flaws and serves as a metaphor for resilience, turning breakage and repair into part of an object’s unique, valued history. It symbolizes healing from adversity in life.” (Google AI overview)

During Lent, I acknowledge my own broken pieces, some which seem beyond repair. But I choose to have faith that God’s grace and love will be the golden lacquer that will bind me up again. God’s process will make me whole. Those scars, perhaps through vigilant and genuine repentance and humility, will radiate grace.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Ansley Martin is the proud father of three daughters. He and his wife Jen have been members of St. Andrew’s since 2001. He currently serves on the adult formation committee.

Thursday in the Second Week of Lent

March 5, 2026

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. (Jeremiah 17:5)

This verse hits on a human (and personal) tendency: relying on our own abilities, resources, or actions as our ultimate source of security. While personal accountability and insight are important and have value, Jeremiah reminds us that these are not infinite resources. When trust is placed primarily in what is temporary, disappointment and instability often follow.

The verse also speaks to the focus of the heart. Prioritizing human nature over his guidance is not just a practical mistake but also a spiritual one because it slowly turns the heart away from God. Sure, it can feel empowering to feel like you are in control, yet it distances us from the humility and dependence that faith requires. Jeremiah contrasts self-reliance with God-centered trust, calling believers to examine where their confidence truly lies.

This verse invites reflection on daily choices—where we seek reassurance, guidance, and hope. True stability comes not from denying human effort, but from grounding it in trust in the Lord. When God is our foundation, our strength is renewed, and our faith becomes resilient, even in uncertain times.

***Justin Wahls** lives in Wellesley with his wife (Anna Lee) and kids (Ellen and John). He serves on the St. Andrew's finance committee and usher team.*

Friday in the Second Week of Lent

March 6, 2026

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom." (Matthew 21:33–34)

"The fruits of the kingdom" surround us every day. They are the gifts God instilled in us—qualities to recognize, appreciate, and share. When we see these blessings as God's gifts, we can use them to enrich our lives and the lives of those around us, helping build a more loving "kingdom" on earth.

One gift I recognize in myself is empathy—a desire to make others feel welcomed and valued. Through St. Andrew's membership committee, I greet newcomers who may not know anyone at our church and are seeking connection. Offering that warmth fills my spirit and, I hope, brings comfort to theirs.

I also try to share God's gifts through the joy of our dog Luna. Her gentle nature is a blessing, and I believe God calls us to share it. Luna and I are a Caring Canine team, visiting elderly residents in assisted-living communities. Many are lonely or missing former pets. Bringing Luna to them feels like a small but meaningful way to brighten their days and make the world kinder.

Amanda Curtis has attended St. Andrew's for 28 years. She taught church school when her children were small and now serves on the vestry as membership chair.

Saturday in the Second Week of Lent

March 7, 2026

Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found." (Luke 15:32)

This passage reminded me of when we celebrate new members at St. Andrew's. Why do we not say, "but I have been here for years, and no one has celebrated me"? We recognize that our contribution to the church has helped to make it what it is today, an attractive church community.

Bringing new members to St. Andrew's enriches all of us and creates something even more special and durable. The father is saying to his son, of course you are already important to this family, but we should rejoice that the family is now whole and stronger with the addition of the brother who was missing.

Lacey Brandt has worshipped at St. Andrew's with her husband Rob for 40 years, raising both of their children in the church. She loves to cook and spend time near the ocean.

Third Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2026

The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life. (John 4:14)

In the passage from John's gospel, Jesus uses a request for water from a well to talk to a woman from Samaria about the difference between "surviving" and "thriving". Like the old "teach a man to fish" parable, he points out that giving someone water to drink will help them survive for the moment, but Jesus is offering spiritual sustenance that can last forever if we can see and accept it.

The Samaritan woman in the gospel is skeptical, as I often am myself, but Jesus convinces her that he is indeed the Messiah. Then, others were convinced by her testimony and came to believe in Jesus as well. Seeing the belief of others (as we do at St. Andrew's) helps solidify one's own beliefs.

I often feel I am too focused on day-to-day "survival" and don't make enough time to seek the spiritual nourishment I need. Much like healthy eating, Jesus' teachings are not hard to understand but can be hard to follow consistently. So, as I write this in early January, my New Year's resolution will be to balance physical and spiritual health better. I'm going to add a few minutes of reflection every day along with a few more vegetables in my diet.

Sam Burns runs an independent investment research firm. He has been at St. Andrew's for 16 years with his wife Megan and son Andrew. He currently serves as chair of the finance committee.

Monday in the Third Week of Lent

March 9, 2026

Look upon the heart-felt desires of your humble servants, Almighty God, and stretch forth the right hand of your majesty to be our defense against all our enemies. (Collect of the Day)

Reading the collect for today, I started thinking about my own desires and how God could help me with them. However, the mention of “enemies” stopped me cold. Do any of us really have enemies today? Sometimes we have rivals, and there are certainly people we don’t particularly care for, but enemies? It feels like something that should be confined to ancient times—Canaanites, Philistines, and other Old Testament villains.

However, it’s a word we do hear more lately. We’re told whom we should fear and whom we should hate. Frequently, those people aren’t enemies; they’re just strangers. How often do we dislike someone from a distance, and then realize once we get to know them that our perceptions were wrong?

I know I’ve been guilty of making snap judgments that don’t hold up to closer inspection. As I’m writing this piece at the start of the new year, I’m reminded that my goal should always be to learn more about people and things I don’t understand before passing judgment. Perhaps then I’ll find I don’t really have any enemies at all.

Megan Burns and her family have been parishioners at St. Andrew’s for over 15 years. A former warden, Megan now serves on the adult formation committee.

Tuesday in the Third Week of Lent

March 10, 2026

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom you have given a fervent desire to pray, may, by your mighty aid, be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ Our Lord. (Collect of the Day)

This short passage spoke loudly to me. Over the past several years, I have been challenged by health issues. I have been dealing with three spinal compression fractures that never healed properly and consequently have caused me severe pain over the past 10 years. I have received a great deal of support from family, clergy, and members of St. Andrew's for which I am extremely grateful. But as the passage says, "by your mighty aid, be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord". There is no substitute for prayer or God's grace.

Despite a considerable period of time and many treatments, including surgeries, the pain has not subsided. So, I give myself up to God and the belief that the next treatment called a "spinal nerve stimulator" will finally bring me some relief. This could be the last treatment available, so I pray to God that it is successful.

Michael Vanin and his wife Kris have been members for almost 30 years. He served as warden for four years, served on numerous other committees, and started the men's book club 18 years ago.

Wednesday in the Third Week of Lent

March 11, 2025

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. (Joel 2:12-13)

Joel writes of a call to repentance, with vivid descriptions of the “blackness spread upon the mountains” depicting a locust invasion and a mighty army—an overwhelming force that arrives suddenly and leaves little untouched. At this moment in our nation’s history, we may feel similarly for several reasons: political fracture, social instability, moral fatigue, and uncertainty about what lies ahead. The language of alarm and darkness resonates because it speaks honestly about fear and loss.

“Yet even now,” Joel reminds us, there remains an opening. We are called to stay in touch with our senses, to acknowledge what we are experiencing, and to process grief and trauma patiently and truthfully. In offering our hearts and not our clothes, we are asked to be sincere, resisting empty gestures or acts of spectacle that substitute appearance for substance. Repentance, in this sense, is not loud performance but inward alignment.

For the good of our communities, let us continue to “blow the trumpet in Zion”, as a summons to attention, responsibility, and shared resolve. Let us reflect and commit ourselves to the work before us.

James Scott is a lifelong parishioner of St. Andrew’s and a dedicated senior choir member. He appreciates the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of this Lenten season.

Thursday in the Third Week of Lent

March 12, 2026

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children. (Deuteronomy 4:9)

I worry that my attention span has shrunk with age. Is that a thing?

In the Bible verse above, the authors of Deuteronomy make it clear that I am not alone in this struggle. They ask us to “take care and watch . . . so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life . . .” This verse goes on to offer a very important reason for staying awake. Pay attention so we can “make them known to your children . . .” There’s a purpose to our taking care and watching and not forgetting (or getting distracted), and it’s not about us. Our attention is precious and vital for serving the next generation of believers. I’ve got some work to do.

Laura Brown MacKinnon has had the chance to serve at St. Andrew's in all sorts of ways—church school, altar guild, Bargain Haul, vestry, and adult formation. She loves sitting in the back of church on Sundays with her family.

Friday in the Third Week of Lent

March 13, 2026

Grant us, O Lord our Strength, a true love of your holy Name; so that, trusting in your grace, we may fear no earthly evil, nor fix our hearts on earthly goods, but may rejoice in your full salvation . . .
(Collect of the Day)

In a Sunday sermon, Adrian discussed the feelings of doubt people have about the presence of God in their lives. He reminded us that doubt is human and that it is normal to question; questioning is a part of our journey in our relationship with God. If we are being truthful with ourselves, everyone feels this doubt and experiences it at various times in our lives.

Adrian's sermon touched me and made me realize that I am not the only one who doubts. His words gave me a sense of relief; I am not alone in my doubting.

But how do I deal with this doubt? In the collect, we ask the Lord to grant us strength so we can trust in his grace. Trust comes with faith. I build my faith by being a part of the St. Andrew's community, and this faith helps me lessen my doubts.

Kris Vanin has been a member of St. Andrew's since 1997. She participates in Bargain Haul, Coventry Suppers, the fellowship committee, and the St. Andrew's Stitchers.

Saturday in the Third Week of Lent

March 14, 2026

God, I thank you that I am not like other people . . . (Luke 18:11)

Luke 18:9–14 summary:

Jesus contrasts a proud Pharisee who boasts in prayer with a humble tax collector who pleads for mercy. The tax collector, not the Pharisee, is justified, revealing that God humbles the self-righteous and raises those who come in genuine humility.

This reading struck me differently this year as I think about our tendency to cope with hardship by comparing ourselves to those who “have it worse.” It can seem virtuous, even grateful, yet it carries hidden pitfalls. Like the Pharisee, we may unintentionally make comparisons the measure of our worth or our pain.

While perspective can be helpful, it can also minimize what we are genuinely struggling with, as though our hurt must reach some threshold before it deserves compassion. It also risks turning someone else’s suffering into a tool for managing our own, rather than an invitation to solidarity. And it can quietly distance us from God, who meets us in truth, not in comparison.

The tax collector’s prayer reminds us that healing begins not with relativizing our pain, but with honest humility: “God, be merciful to me.” In that place, our wounds—large or small—become openings for grace.

Sarah Robbins-Cole loves discovering new things—whether golf, mahjong, or fly fishing—and finds joy in staying curious, trying challenges, and connecting with others through shared experiences and learning.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2026

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. (Samuel 16:1-13)

This excerpt relates God’s selection of David, the youngest and smallest of Jesse’s sons, to be king. We are told plainly the heart is what matters.

Think how often we are lured by earthly attractions in our daily lives, conferring favor and stature based upon human values—strength or beauty or wealth or social standing—rather than on what God requires to make us whole spiritually. We are constantly bombarded with, and receptive to, these pleas for attention. We must fend them off to focus on preparing our spiritual selves instead, to work toward fulfilling God’s will by developing integrity, devotion, and compassion, while increasing obedience and practicing repentance.

We all struggle to set aside the screens, media, and trappings of daily life to prepare our spiritual selves. We are aware that is how we will ultimately be judged. We know this truth and yet our free will takes our attention elsewhere, to worldly concerns.

In the end, God will judge us on the wealth in our hearts, not our pockets.

Peter B. Lull and his wife Linda have been members of St. Andrew’s for three decades. Peter ushers and has served on vestry.

Monday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 16, 2026

For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, his favor for a lifetime. (Psalm 30:5)

As I read the lessons assigned to this day, I was struck by the positivity in them. New creations, healing, and hopefulness are expressed over and over.

Although the words are familiar, reading them now, at this point in my life, I hear them differently. This verse from Psalm 30 stood out to me because it not only offered hope, but also the promise of forgiveness, and not just from God. It tells me I can forgive myself for moments of anger, mistakes I've made, times I've fallen short. It also allows for accepting the forgiveness of others and the ability to forgive them.

Each Lenten season is new and unique. Our lives change, our perspective changes. The constant is the "twinkling of an eye" that turns wrath into favor.

Hope Aldrich has taught, chaperoned mission trips, served on committees, and found friends at St. Andrew's since 1997. She currently devotes most of her time to her two grandchildren.

Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 17, 2026

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
(Psalm 46:1)*

The brief, yet powerful opening verse of Psalm 46 testifies to God's protective strength. These words are understood to be the inspiration for the opening stanza of Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," which describes God as an unfailing bulwark against evil and sin. Psalm 46 is believed to have been written to celebrate God's deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army in 701 BC, when disease or divine intervention reportedly destroyed 185,000 enemy soldiers overnight.

Throughout history, believers have turned to these words in times of need, drawing strength from the promise that God is a "mighty fortress" who is actively present in our lives. The image of God as a refuge evokes God's role as a protective shelter from the storms of life. The description of God as "a very present help" speaks to God's immediacy and availability, whose support is not reserved for the future or limited to the past, but accessible right now.

When facing life's challenges, Psalm 46:1 invites us to trust in a strength greater than our own, a strength grounded in faith and our individual relationships with God.

***Tom Faust** serves St. Andrew's as warden. He and his wife Winnie have been members of the St. Andrew's parish community since moving to Wellesley in 1987.*

Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 18, 2026

...the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. . . (John 5:19)

The Son reflects the love emanating from the Father. I think of my own father, my idol. Because his own father died when he was twelve, he was unable to finish seventh grade, but he had wisdom resulting from perseverance through hardship and faith. He taught me, "fear not, for I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

God's presence does not protect us from harm. We carry our brokenness, our vulnerability to the lies of the world and to the lies we tell ourselves; but despite our fragility, we can dare to offer our little bit of light to the world. I can be comfortable knowing that I don't know very much at all, but I do feel confident that God is with me, and he knows.

I am drawn to the marginalized, perhaps because being an outcast spares you the burden of pride, making it easier to accept the need for God's grace. These days, I work with incarcerated men, those born into violence, knowing nothing but trauma, rejection, and shame throughout childhood. I wonder how their lives would have been different if they had had loving fathers to cherish them and assure them of their goodness. Because the Father has loved me, I can pass along God's Love. Gently. Inconspicuously.

Mary Scanlon is a retired psychiatric nurse practitioner, mother to five, and grandmother to seven. She and her husband, Victor Calcaterra, have been parishioners for 10 years; Mary is involved in outreach, particularly prison ministry.

Thursday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 19, 2026

His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor. (Luke 2:52)

The longer passage before this follows Jesus as he travels with his larger family as a 12-year-old. He is lost from them for a day, as Mary and Joseph assume he is with others in the group. I love this passage as it makes me think about family.

I attended a wake and funeral after reading this passage. The older brother of my closest friend died recently. He was part of a big, outgoing Irish family: six siblings, a dozen nieces and nephews. Their family and mine have enjoyed time together, and my son George has been embraced as “one of their own.” He gets big bear hugs, even after long periods of absence, and he loves it. My friend’s brother worked for Northeastern University in the maintenance department. The university sponsored a bus to bring a huge group of his colleagues, both blue and white collar, from Boston to Quincy for the funeral. It was touching to see how much he had meant to his co-workers. They reminded me of a family.

How much better it could be if we all treated each other as we are: part of God’s family.

Tim Raeke and his family, Kerrie, Lucy, and George, have been St. Andrew’s parishioners for about 20 years. They all love Bargain Haul, and Tim has taught all levels of church school.

Friday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 20, 2026

For God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil's envy death entered the world . . . (Wisdom 2:23-24a)

I never thought of envy as an important sin. I was puzzled by the line “but through the devil’s envy death entered the world.” What? According to St. Augustine, the devil was envious of humanity’s connection to God and introduced sin and death to destroy that connection. Augustine points to Cain’s envy of the divine approval given Abel’s offering and Cain’s murdering Abel in consequence.

Mark contends it was “out of envy” that the chief priests handed Jesus over to Pontius Pilate. Envy begins as a seed of sadness when we perceive someone else having something we lack. It is a symptom of a self-referential outlook. Bertrand Russell claims it is one of the most potent causes of unhappiness. In Dante’s *Purgatorio*, the envious have their eyes wired shut so they cannot see the sun of goodness.

For this Lent, to combat feelings of envy, I will treat envy seriously and turn feelings of envy into statements of appreciation and praise. I will keep my eyes open to the beauty of God’s creation.

Debbie (D.D.) Alexander is a retired teacher and former business owner of Gardens 2 Go. She teaches church school and is a member of the church school committee and the flower guild.

Saturday in the Fourth Week of Lent

March 21, 2025

But I was like a lamb, led to slaughter. (Jeremiah 11:18-20)

I was going through a rough patch in my life. I felt scared and alone, and without any idea of how to move forward. I was as the lamb, living quietly in a small town across the street from an Episcopal church that had an Al-Anon meeting every Thursday evening. A friend suggested that I might find some peace and solace from this group and this philosophy. I gathered my courage and walked across the street to the meeting. As we sat in a large circle, I saw a group of strangers who welcomed me with smiles and open arms.

Next to me sat an older Portuguese gentleman. He started to speak, and all the words that came out of his mouth were my words, my thoughts, my fears, my anxieties. He spoke of acceptance and belief in a higher power. His words gave me strength to see I had a way forward.

I never saw this man again, but his words that day spoke to me as if God were speaking through them. They allowed me to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

God can speak to each of us in many ways. On that day, he spoke through a stranger and led me to the beginning of finding some peace in my heart.

Susan Schaefer is a new member of St. Andrew's; she says she has felt "so welcomed." She has joined the altar guild and the flower guild.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (Romans 8:6)

Paul says the direction of our minds determines the direction of our lives. If we think about things that distance ourselves from God and his teachings, we will suffer. If we think of things that bring us closer to God, we will live in peace.

I have a good idea of how to grow closer to God (through prayer, Bible study, right relationships, and good deeds, for example). I also know being away from God (through sin, selfishness, and material obsession, for example) is no way to live.

The most challenging part of this verse to me is the instruction “to set the mind.” I know I spend unproductive time worrying about things that matter to me—our children, my work, and national politics. These topics are important and require worthwhile thought and action, but when my mind spins in useless worry, I am not setting my thoughts toward God.

My goal is to be more aware of when my mind is spinning needlessly and, instead, “set my mind” to prayer and peace. Saying a short prayer or thinking of what I’m thankful for can redirect my thoughts to be closer to God’s direction for peace.

Lauren Murphy and her husband, Dave, raised their three grown children in Wellesley. At St. Andrew’s, she enjoys helping with receptions, and participating in Soul Sisters and adult Christian learning.

Monday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 23, 2026

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23)

As a child growing up on Long John Mountain in North Carolina, I often played for hours in the large woods behind my home. Exploring along the trails with a walking stick, I might hear strange things, be filled with momentary fear, or go so far into the wood to not know how I might find my way. But I always made it home.

In those days, I learned this psalm and whenever I hear it, it brings me back. Now, decades later, I am grown with children of my own and my path is not always sure. I still find comfort in these words as I journey into the unknown of life. I know God will always bring me home.

Lee Eichelberger and his wife Bianka are parents of Kara (16) and Luke (11). They have been part of the parish since 2017 and live in Needham across from the Mitchell Woods.

Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 24, 2026

You are from below; I am from above; you are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:25)

In John 8:21–30, Jesus speaks directly to a kind of faith that feels confident on the surface but resists true belief—a tension that sits right at the heart of the Lenten season. It is the kind of faith where belief has become familiar, but where surrender is still being avoided. He warns that those who refuse to believe in him will “die in your sins,” not because grace is unavailable, but because it is pushed away. Lent asks for honest self-examination.

In the gospel, Jesus contrasts being “from below” with being “from above,” gently exposing how easily we rely on our own effort and understanding. When he says, “unless you believe that I am he,” he’s pointing to his true identity and reminding us that faith is about whom we trust, not just what we know. Lent is a time to loosen our grip on certainty and choose trust instead.

When Jesus speaks of being “lifted up,” he’s pointing toward the cross—the moment of seeming failure that becomes the place of healing and revelation. Understanding doesn’t come first, faith does. The passage ends quietly, with many beginning to believe, reminding us that Lent isn’t only about repentance—it’s about learning, again, to look toward Christ and live.

Kate Farella and her three children (Scarlett, Logan, and Kieran) have been members of St. Andrew’s since 2021. In her spare time, Kate enjoys lifting weights and taking walks outside as much as possible.

Wednesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 25, 2026

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. (Luke 1:47-48a)

In this verse from the Magnificat, we hear Mary's response to the angel Gabriel's proclamation that she will bear the Son of God. While she finds this astonishing and feels unworthy, she does not cower from the call. She praises God, demonstrates her own humility even as she learns the blessed role she will play. She admits to her own flawed nature by praising God as her savior. Mary articulates true discipleship by recognizing God's grace and his fulfillment of the covenant with his people.

A spectrum of Christian belief about Mary exists. It ranges from the most orthodox elevation of Mary as an intercessor for prayers to God, worshipped alongside the Trinity, to the Episcopal tradition, which honors Mary as the God-bearer, the "Theotokos", but without giving Mary the same sacred status as Jesus. As Episcopalians, we admire Mary as a model of faith, courage, and service. Whatever you believe about her and however you choose to honor her, Mary provides a model of discipleship which we Christians aspire to live by.

Lisa DiMasi Howe has been a member of St. Andrew's for 15 years. She has served on the vestry and runs the ministry fair. She lives across the street from the church, so she has no excuse for being late for worship services.

Thursday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 26, 2026

*Search for the Lord and his strength: continually seek his face.
(Psalm 105:4)*

In Margaret's sermon on December 21, she invited us to consider what it means to be on a pilgrimage. I've always considered myself to be "on the path (or the way)" but I've never thought about being a pilgrim. It is so much more encompassing, intentional, enveloping. I've been thinking about a more intense, fulfilling engagement ever since, and each day I grow more into it.

In the gospel for this day, the writer of John says, "He is our God, though you do not know him." God is an extremely difficult concept for me (us) to grasp. But thankfully, in his book *Passions of the Soul*, which we were recently invited to read, Rowan Williams invites us to think of God as little children think of their "father": a source of all knowledge, wisdom, and power. In fact, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus has given us explicit permission to do so. This has lightened my load a little and I find comfort in it. I think now I am more confident that I am on the right path; even though I veer from side to side at times, I don't seem to be wobbling quite so much.

Toby Kell, a long-time parishioner, lives in Needham with his wife, Donna. He has one daughter, Rachel, and a son-in-law, Patrick. He's active in 9am Christian learning classes and Bible studies.

Friday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 27, 2027

If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works. (John 10: 37-38a)

A spiritual challenge that is always in the back of my mind is that question, "If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

I am fairly confident that as a clergyperson there is evidence that I fulfill the commands to worship God. But both the Old and the New Testaments tell us that God wants more than just ritual worship from us. God wants our lives to reflect the call to love our neighbors as ourselves, especially the poor and the needy, by putting our faith into action. I am aware that without this "work" of putting Christ's love into action, all the "work" I do in leading worship and preaching about Christ's love is rather hollow. But perhaps even more importantly, God has chosen us to make Christ's love real in the world. Without our efforts to bring the light of Christ's love into the world, the forces of darkness will prevail. Lent is a time for me to reflect on whether there is any evidence in my life that I put my faith into action.

Adrian Robbins-Cole is the rector of St. Andrew's. Adrian is married to Sarah and they have two adult children, William and Elizabeth, and two rescue dogs, Olivia and Quincy.

Saturday in the Fifth Week of Lent

March 28, 2026

O Lord, in your goodness you bestow abundant graces on your elect: look with favor, we entreat you, upon those who in these Lenten Days are being prepared for Holy Baptism, and grant them the help of your protection . . . (Collect of the Day)

I appreciate the phrase “the help of your protection.” As I get older, I find myself increasingly reflecting on what is important in life and what a “good life,” a “life well led,” means.

While the phrase “grant them the help of your protection” is tied to one’s rising above evil and temptation on the road to a commitment to Christian faith, a faith confirmed in baptism, I think of that phrase as a guard rail for all of life’s journey.

We also need to constantly question our actions and ask whether those actions are consistent with Christ’s teachings and values. Are our actions worthy? This vigilant questioning also serves as a guard rail helping protect me against me-ism and narrowness of thought. It challenges me to think more broadly about the people I impact, the greater good, and how I might better serve others.

My daily goal is to make a positive impact, raise up those around me, and somehow leave the world a bit better.

Bill McAvoy moved to the Boston area 35 years ago, and resides in Natick, where he and his wife Chris raised their children Hailey, Eric, and Rhys. Bill frequently attends the 9am Christian learning classes.

Palm Sunday

March 29, 2026

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" (Matthew 21:11)

Palm Sunday and the reading of the Passion of Christ has always been a challenge for me. Would I be there laying palms on the road or be chanting for the release of Barabbas? Am I the cynical prisoner or the one who recognizes Jesus is his salvation even though it does not spare him from the penalty for his crimes? I take comfort remembering that even the apostles fail when given the opportunity to stand up and be counted as followers of Christ.

The fickle nature of my faith and my struggles to be a true and faithful follower of Jesus hit home on this day more than any other. Jesus' cry of "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" drives home the stark difference between the triumphant ride into Jerusalem and Jesus's death on the cross. He willingly embraces suffering—not for his own glory, but for our salvation.

As we carry our palms and listen to the Passion, we are called to move beyond superficial enthusiasm and follow Jesus faithfully to the cross, trusting that his sacrifice for us leads to resurrection and eternal life.

May this Holy Week draw us closer to the mystery of redeeming love.

***Greg Hunter**, his wife Cathy and their children, Sophie and Michael, live in Wellesley. He loves spending time in hot climates, especially Puerto Rico and Florida.*

Monday of Holy Week

March 30, 2026

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

For more than forty years, I have sung in small choirs, church groups, men's groups both large and small, and a cappella ensembles. Across all those settings, I have learned something simple and enduring: God's light is consistent. I tend to notice it most clearly when voices gather. Singing slows me down. It aligns breath, attention, and intention, making space to recognize a light that is already present.

I experience it at St. Andrew's, where my family and I have worshiped since 2017. Since joining the senior choir in 2025, I have come to rely on the fellowship of singing as a steady way God meets me. Week after week, regardless of how I arrive—energized or weary—the light shows up in harmony, friendship, and the trust of people offering their voices together.

"In your light we see light" feels less like poetry and more like instruction. Keep showing up. Keep singing. God's light does not waver. Through our St. Andrew's community, it continues to reveal itself.

Greg Urban attends church with his wife Coryell and their children, Carolyn, Jane, and George. He appreciates being part of St. Andrew's senior choir.

Tuesday of Holy Week

March 31, 2026

I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength. My praise shall be always of you. (Psalm 71:6)

Jesus' journey through Holy Week can be viewed as a metaphor for anyone's personal journey. It's filled with suffering, jubilation, betrayal, forgiveness, physical challenges, and spiritual healing. But what do we have to do to receive God's assistance on this uncertain path?

Psalm 71 tells us we must only come into existence, be born and simply be ourselves, to take advantage of God's strength and support. We have been programmed to think that such support must somehow be earned or that there are strings attached. We have become cynical when we do receive help to get us through challenges. We believe that we must fight life's challenges alone and that seeking help could be viewed as a sign of weakness.

However, Psalm 71 puts none of these conditions on God's support and love. Our newborn innocence warrants God's love and support. It's simply there for us to call upon it, throughout our entire journey, whenever we need it. More importantly, when we are given freely this gift of support, we should acknowledge and praise it.

Having God's strength, power, and presence in our lives is an amazing gift. Knowing we've had it all along our personal journeys is comforting and praiseworthy.

Christine Henderson Beach is a wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, and grateful member of St. Andrew's. She enjoys our sense of community through Coventry Suppers, musical offerings, Christian learning classes, and weekly services.

Wednesday of Holy Week

April 1, 2026

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2a)

Hebrews reminds me that I have been and am surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses.”

One of those witnesses for me is the Rt. Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris, the first woman consecrated a bishop in the Anglican Communion. Smart and feisty, she was a no-nonsense woman whose life was spent helping to bring people to God through Jesus’ love. As the first woman bishop, Bishop Harris endured much ridicule, had her life threatened, and yet stayed focused on her ministry. She believed that “We are Easter people living in a Good Friday world.” She attempted to meet those Good Friday challenges with fortitude, forgiveness, hope, and love. She made a difference in so many lives, including mine. Most of all she understood that we are imperfect, sinful people who need each other and God in order to persevere in this most challenging race of life.

I am thankful for Jesus’ love and strength when facing temptations and I’m thankful for those who serve as witnesses. Who serves as a witness for you?

Karen Vickers Budney, pastoral associate, offers a listening presence to parishioners on their spiritual journey. She and husband Al enjoy time with family and friends.

Maundy Thursday

April 2, 2026

You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So, if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:13)

I invite you to picture the annual “Faculty Waits on You” dinner. As a professor, I participated just once and felt very uncomfortable during it. What was the reason for the dinner? Where did the idea even come from?

Could it be the story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples? Jesus told Simon Peter, who balked at having his feet washed by his Teacher, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” Do I understand now? It occurs to me that the key may be reciprocity as a manifestation of love. And, further, that love must be not only exchanged, but it must also be extended.

“Just as I have loved you,” Jesus explained, “you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Alan Henrikson is a professor emeritus at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a longtime member of the senior choir at St. Andrew's.

Good Friday

April 3, 2026

... let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, ... but encouraging one another (Hebrews 10:24)

Good Friday is the consummation of the New Covenant—without Golgotha, the cup at the Last Supper was empty. With the combination, we are saved by grace not by adherence to laws.

But as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, there are two parts of the New Covenant—acceptance and responsibility. Christ's sacrifice means that we are acceptable regardless of sin and shortcomings, but we are expected to practice both love of others and good deeds.

I recall a religious study group session from 50 years ago where the focus was on this dual aspect of grace. For the first time in my life, grace made sense. The leader talked about this duality being the bedrock of all religions that have stood the test of time—you can't have one without the other. That was a "grace" to which my doubting soul could be attached. The writer of Hebrews takes us one step further, however. We also need a community of faith to accomplish the expectations of grace. In this way, he foreshadows our Anglican pillars: scripture, tradition, reason. All three are critical.

Elmore Alexander is a retired business school dean and faculty member still involved in higher education both in the US and abroad. He and his wife Pam are avid participants in every study opportunity available at St. Andrew's.

Holy Saturday

April 4, 2026

"For 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)

The context of this verse has Job lamenting the short lives of humans and contrasting it with the regrowth of trees. He has only a glimmer of hope for humans having rebirth after death, but I find his statement a reminder of hope in general.

Upon reading this verse, I thought of the time my mother-in-law, a devout Episcopalian and wonderful gardener, visited with an ailing orchid after hearing me tell her about (no longer existing) DeRosa's Florist in Natick. Mr. DeRosa, an orchid specialist, yanked the plant from its pot, vigorously shook it and chopped its roots a couple of times, gladly showing us how resilient it was. And years later, I remember how delighted I was to finally have one of my orchids from a past year bloom again.

I'm reminded also of my so-called Christmas cactus, which could be called a Valentine or Easter cactus, given its unpredictable blooming schedule from year to year. No bloom this past Christmas, but I'm hoping for Easter!

These are, of course, very minor examples, but whenever a pleasant surprise in nature occurs, I find it a reason for hope.

Meg Harris and her husband Clint have been members of St. Andrew's since 1985. Meg's contributions to the church include having served as treasurer and warden.

Easter Sunday

April 5, 2026

... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

Paul, the author of Romans, converted to Christianity several years after Jesus' crucifixion when the resurrected Jesus appeared to him as a brilliant light on the road to Damascus. Paul then began his new life, spreading the gospel. This verse reminds me that "we too might walk in newness of life."

This Lent, I focused on deepening my understanding of the Resurrection. How did Christ's life, death, and resurrection create a new way of seeing the world? How might I embrace those profound cultural and spiritual shifts that, over 2000 years ago, reimagined what God promises for us and that, today, dare us to live our lives open to new possibilities? Jesus' death and resurrection offer the birth of a new reality, transforming how we see God, ourselves, and others: God's love is stronger than death; hope is stronger than despair. Easter is our chance to see life in a whole new light.

At Easter, my aim is to hear where God might be calling me, step by step, in the newness of life. As we proclaim, "Christ is risen!" let us view Christ's resurrection not as a distant event, but as a force that continues to renew us and restore us every day.

David Guydan and his wife Elizabeth are on spiritual journeys at St. Andrew's. He serves on the Christian formation advisory committee, as publisher of The Call, and as stewardship chair.



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