

2023 Lenten Daily Devotional



St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church • St. Gregory's Episcopal Church
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church • Trinity Episcopal Church



AN INVITATION TO LENT



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**"How good it is when
congregations
join together
in Lent devotions."
—generous paraphrase
of Psalm 133:1**

This devotional is a collaborative effort with meditations, art, and music contributed by parishioners and staff from St. Elisabeth, St. Gregory's, St. Lawrence, and Trinity.

Each page offers a rhythm of reflection, quiet, and prayer for this Lenten season. Whether you spend a few minutes with the printed scripture and reflection on the art for each day, or find more time to read the additional scriptures and listen to the musical selections, we hope this is a helpful resource for you.



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Reflection from Sean Hansen, St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:

God calls us to repentance this season, and this text reminds me of the Christian need for repentance and reconciliation with our Jewish brothers and sisters. Too often, Lenten readings have functioned as cudgels in our relationship with Judaism – as here in Luke, where it is too easy to assume a simplistic message that “we, followers of Christ, ought not to be like Pharisees.” Good Friday has long been the occasion of brutal violence against Jews at the hands of Christians, and while we may have no literal blood on our own hands, the way we think and speak can inform how we treat others. Recall today that Jesus Himself was Jewish; He differed far less from Pharisaical thought than is commonly portrayed, and Pharisees of yore are the ancestors of contemporary rabbinic Judaism. Let us pray for healing and peace between our faiths today and always. Amen.

MUSIC

“Avinu Malkeinu”
sung by Barbra Streisand

“Avinu Malkeinu” (trans: our Father, our King) is one of the oldest and most moving liturgies of the Jewish year, sung during the Ten Days of Repentance.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
- Isaiah 58:1-12
- Psalm 51:1-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
- Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

An excerpt from Luke 18:10-14

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.’



Photograph of Chapel Altar at St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church

Ash Wednesday Services

8am: Online only with StGs

12 noon: St. Lawrence will do “ashes to go” on

12 noon: Service at Trinity

7pm: Service at St. Elisabeth

7pm: Onsite and online service at StGs



THURSDAY – Take up your cross daily

February 23, 2023

MUSIC

"O Jesus I Have Promised"

arr. Timothy Shaw

And Jesus I have promised to serve you to the end; now give me grace to follow my master and my friend.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 51
- Jonah 3:1-10
- Romans 1:1-7



An excerpt from Luke 9:23-25

Then he said to them all, "If any wish to come after me, 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. For what does it profit them if they gain the whole world but lose or forfeit themselves?"

Reflection from Kate Todd, St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

My prison pen pal wrote something that really brought home to me what it means to take up your cross and follow Jesus. He said that he'd been having some issues with his cellmate, who said something that really bothered him. He was about to just stop talking at all to his cellmate. But then he took a moment to ask the question "what would Jesus want me to do?" And he decided to keep talking with his cellmate and subsequently they had some positive interactions. It seems like a small thing, but it wasn't — he had to stop himself from doing the easy thing and do the hard thing instead.

This is very difficult in our society – with its focus on ego, including success, approval and money. But Jesus is asking us to do the harder thing instead – to pick up the cross and follow him.

*Photograph by Mateus Campos Felipe
on Unsplash*



**Reflection from Sarah Snyder,
St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church:**

Titus may not be one of the more commonly referenced books (or saints), however, Paul’s message to him is clear: God’s sacrifice of his only Son gave us the opportunity to lead better lives and do good. Paul left Titus on Crete to teach the Cretans (not cretins) how to do that.

The Ten Commandments mainly tell us what not to do. The book of Titus gives specific instructions how to behave: “For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives...”

Living as faithful and good servants of God seems a small “price” to pay for eternal salvation.

As an aside, St. Titus is both the patron saint of Crete (its first bishop) and the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps whose motto, *Pro Deo et Patria*, means For God and Country.

MUSIC

“Beautiful City”

from Godspell, sung by Hunter Parrish

We can build a beautiful city - not a city of angels, but we can build a city of man.

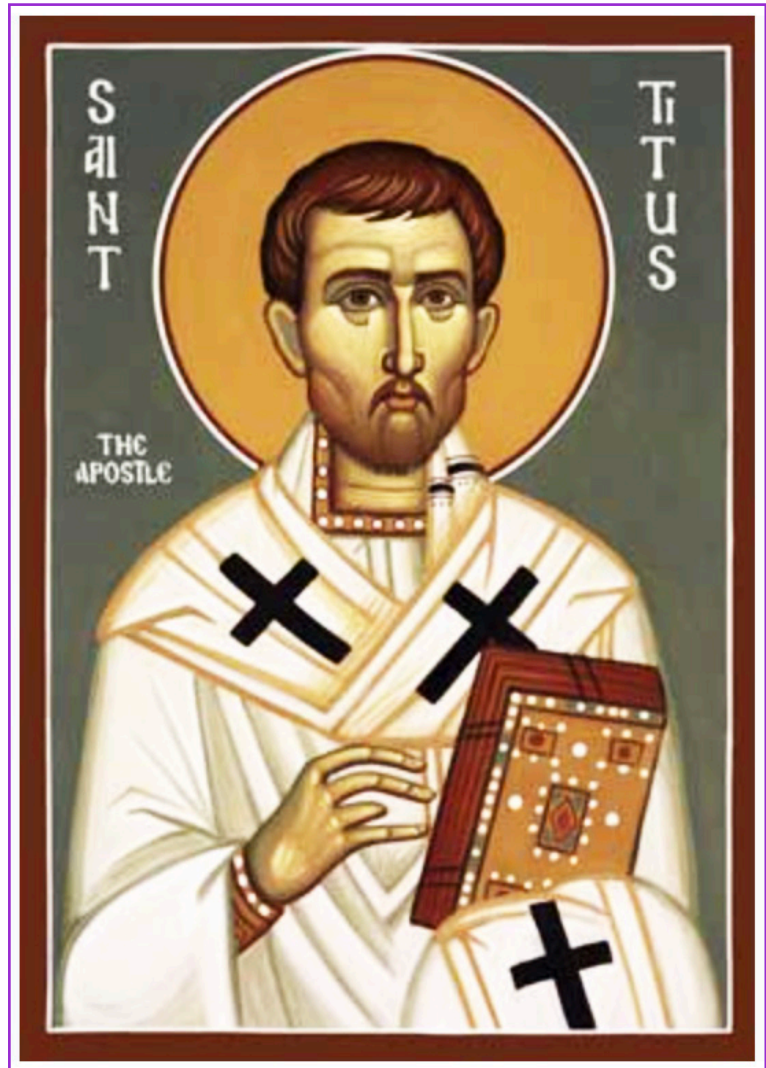
ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 51
- Jonah 4:1-11
- Romans 1:8-17

An excerpt from Titus 2:11-15

He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.



St. Titus of Crete

This year, we will offer two options to observe Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent (except March 24, see page 30 for details:)

Onsite 7pm: a walking devotional led by parishioners that will travel around the sanctuary at StGs

Online 7pm on Zoom: a PowerPoint-based service with music and different devotions each week



SATURDAY – Clothed in joy

February 25, 2023

An excerpt from Psalm 30:12

You have turned my wailing into dancing;
you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me
with joy.

MUSIC

“Woman, Why Weepest Thou?”

by Rob Gardner

Woman, why weepest thou? Why seekest thou
the living among the dead? He is not here, for
he is risen!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 51
- Isaiah 58:1-12
- Matthew 18:1-7

Reflection from Victor Przysiezny, Trinity Episcopal Church:

Facing dark times can drive us to tears,
to wail, to be stuck in a dark place where
hygiene, clothes, and food are not attended
to and where we feel unworthy of anything
better. We feel alone. And we want to hide
until we can get back to our better selves.
I know I do! But the wisdom in the Psalms,
these amazing poems, challenges us to see
that putting on a stiff upper lip or forcing a
smile is not the answer. And the person who
wrote the Psalm knows it. “YOU have turned
my wailing into dancing. YOU have put off
my sack-cloth and clothed me with JOY!”
The sun breaks through the clouds and the
darkness ends. It’s YOU who did it. We are
called to that YOU – God, our spouse, our
family, our Church, our friends. Together in
love, we will find ourselves putting on our
finest clothes that sing out and proclaim joy
as we rise and break into dance.

*Photograph by
Victor Przysiezny,
Trinity Episcopal
Church*





The kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God of all, to you be praise and glory for ever. In your tender compassion the dawn from on high is breaking upon us to dispel the lingering shadows of night.

As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

**THE READING FOR
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
MATTHEW 4:1-13**

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms

of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

■ **Prayers**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

■ **LORD'S PRAYER**

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

■ Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

READINGS FOR ALL SUNDAYS IN LENT:

The Second Sunday – March 5
John 3:1-17

The Third Sunday – March 12
John 4:5-42

The Fourth Sunday – March 19
John 9:1-41

The Fifth Sunday – March 26
John 11:1-45



MONDAY – Siblings in Christ

February 27, 2023– First week of Lent

An excerpt from Hebrews 2:11-12

For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying,

‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.’



Stained glass in
St. Elisabeth's Chapel

Reflection from Larry Handwerk, St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:

Written to a Jewish-Christian community who was looking for an Exodus to the land of promise from ages past, the author tells them a new story, one which is led by Jesus. His life, death and resurrection lead to a new realm dreamed by God from the beginning. As ones made in the image and likeness of God, we are declared sisters and brothers – siblings of Jesus. As Jesus' siblings, we are invited to walk with him to the cross and resurrection to that new world that goes beyond all of this world's powers and empires. This world of Jesus' siblings invites us to join the dream beyond our dreams; a world where healing, forgiveness, justice and peace are the foundations. Because Jesus is with us, this world is here and now and we are invited to make that world a reality, here and now.

Blessings on your journey in that Realm with your siblings – one of whom is Jesus!

MUSIC

"Down in the River to Pray"
sung by Allison Kraus and Union Station

O sisters, let's go down...
down in the river to pray.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 32
- 1 Kings 19:1-8
- Hebrews 2:10-18



**Reflection from Chuck Chadd,
St. Elisabeth’s Episcopal Church:**

Matthew 6 is a continuation of Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount and begins with a warning against showy and false piety in both prayer and acts of charity. Jesus then tells us “to pray like this” and recites what we call “The Lord’s Prayer.” We humbly recite this prayer to God in every church service. When we use the Revised Standard Version, as we are wont to do, we ask God to refrain from leading us into temptation. But how can God lead us into temptation? We often lead ourselves into Temptation. Humans tempt other humans. But God? No!

James makes this clear: “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one, but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire” (James 1: 13-14). As Paul told the converts at Corinth: “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful and ... will not let you be tempted beyond your strength ... and will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

MUSIC

“The Lord’s Prayer”
by Scott Perkins

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 32
- Genesis 4:1-16
- Hebrews 4:14-5:10

An excerpt from Matthew 6:9-13

‘Pray then in this way:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.



Stained glass in St. Elisabeth’s Chapel



WEDNESDAY – A clean heart

March 1, 2023 – First week of Lent

An excerpt from Psalm 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.



*Photograph by Debbie Kinjo,
St. Gregory's Episcopal Church*

Reflection from Elizabeth Clemmitt, St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:

This verse is a favorite of mine to remember as a prayer because it is short and powerful. In one sentence, I am asking God to help me change, and I am stating my belief that God can and will change me for the better. I like to use this verse as an affirmation and deep breathing exercise. When I catch my mind wandering into judgment about myself or anyone or anything, I remember this verse and breathe in slowly, thinking, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," and then breathe out slowly, "and renew a right spirit within me." I repeat this prayerful exercise several times to help me focus, relax, and reset my mind, body, and spirit. For me, to "renew a right spirit within me" means to release all thoughts that get in the way of my fully accepting the love of God and letting it flow through me and guide me.

MUSIC

"Create in Me" by Dan Locklair
sung by the Vocal Arts Ensemble of Durham
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 32
- Exodus 34:1-9, 27-28
- Matthew 18:10-14



An excerpt from John 3:17, 20-21

For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.

MUSIC

“O Nata Lux”

by Tallis, sung by the Tallis Scholars

Translation: O light from light begotten, Jesus, redeemer of the world, in your mercy deign to hear the praise and prayers of the supplicants.

Reflection from Hall Healy,

St. Elisabeth’s Episcopal Church:

Some of the early English language uses of the word “light”, as “radiant energy”, come to us through Genesis and Exodus. A similar word existed in older cultures like the Hittites and Frisians. Many in the animal kingdom, such as insects, come towards the light and sometimes get burned. Numerous mammals, like raccoons, evolved at night during the Eocene era to avoid dinosaurs in the light. Much of our crime today occurs at night to keep from being exposed. My Russian relative, whose family migrated to Russia during the Depression, said that Stalin’s actions didn’t come to light to the citizens of that country until after the dictator’s death. On the other hand, newspapers in our democracy serve to bring wrongdoing to light. And God’s light through his Son brings us nourishment, strength, and peace.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 121
- Isaiah 51:1-3
- 2 Timothy 1:3-7



Stained glass in St. Elisabeth’s Chapel



FRIDAY – Reconciliation

March 3, 2023 – First week of Lent



*Peace Wall, Northern Ireland.
Photo by Max Smith,
St. Gregory's Episcopal Church*

This year, we will offer two options to observe Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent (except March 24, see page 30 for details:)

Onsite 7pm: a walking devotional led by parishioners that will travel around the sanctuary at StGs

Online 7pm on Zoom: a PowerPoint-based service with music and different devotions each week

An excerpt from Matthew 5:23-24

So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

Reflection from Joyce Newcomb, St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:

There is an urgency to Matthew's directive. Stop! A gift is only as worthy as the giver. First reconcile your differences. No easy task. Reconciliation takes time. You have to listen to your adversary. You have to consider his point of view and you need to be willing to change your mind. Reading this passage, I am reminded of Robert Frost's poem, "Mending Wall." He writes, "Something there is that hates a wall." Walls, he suggests, are self-imposed, and before building a one, we need to know what we are walling out and walling in. What walls restrict me? What thoughts or preconceived ideas keep me from becoming a good neighbor? What walls do I need to tear down before I am worthy?

MUSIC

"No One is Alone"

from the Broadway musical *Into the Woods*

Hard to see the light now, just don't let it go.
Things will come out right now,
we can make it so.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 121
- Micah 7:18-20
- Romans 3:21-31



**Reflection from Kay Rossiter,
St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:**

My grandfather Edward O'Brien had a sense of humor. Before he died, he asked to be buried next to a drinking fountain so he could always get a drink of water. This passage is about needing a drink of water and finding something entirely different.

Jesus asks an outsider, the Samaritan woman at the well for a drink of water. When she says "Why are you asking me", Jesus says "I am the Messiah who will give you the water of eternal life. You will never be thirsty again." She hurries to tell the good news to her Samaritan friends.

John's story tells us everything about our faith. Jesus offers all of us the water of eternal life and like the Samaritan woman, we go forth to share the good news.

I'm glad my grandfather got his spot by the drinking fountain. I pray he found the living water. So may we all find a place by the fountain of life.

An excerpt from John 4:13-15

Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

MUSIC

"Springs in the Desert"

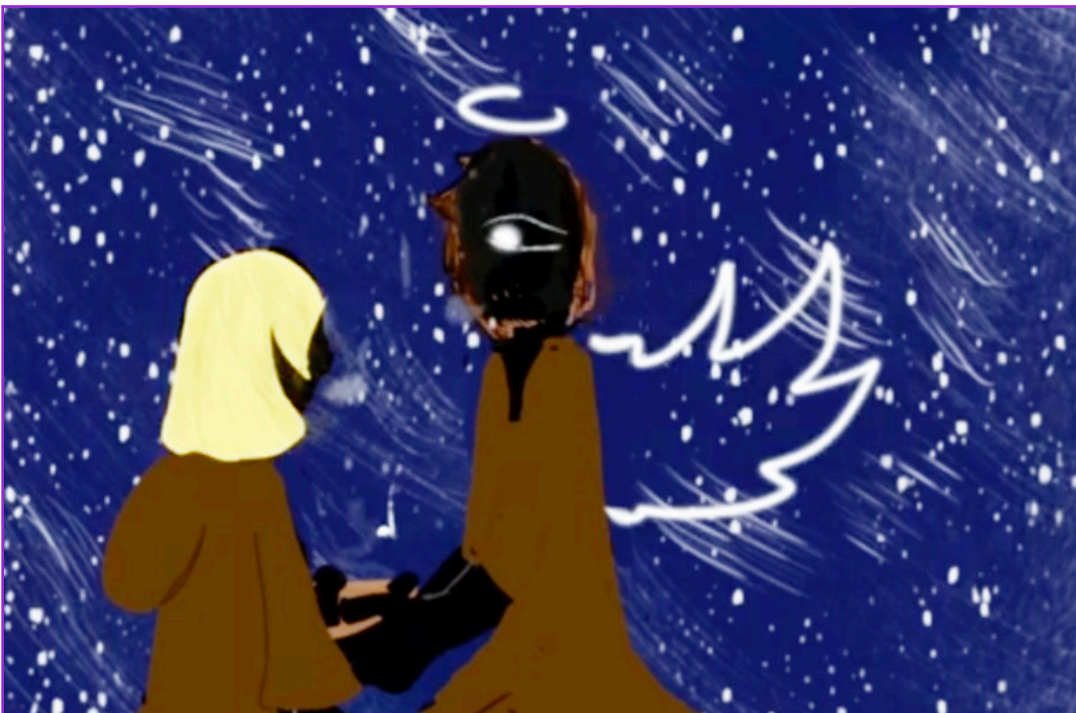
by Arthur Jennings, sung by the StGs quartet;
feat. Kirstie Felland, organ

For in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams flow in the desert.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 121
- Isaiah 51:4-8
- Luke 7:1-10



*Artwork by
Nessa Doniger,
St Gregory's
Episcopal Church*



MONDAY – Mercy and judgement

March 6, 2023 – Second week of Lent



Photograph by Jess Zoerb on Unsplash

MUSIC

“Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis”
by Vaughan Williams

This tune is most commonly associated with the hymn “I heard the voice of Jesus say.” Imagine those words as you listen to this masterwork.

“I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad; I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.”

An excerpt from Luke 6:36-38

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you.

Reflection from Elise Womack, St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

I’ve always been fascinated about understanding my relationship to the godhead in terms of my relationship to our children. When I think about how I show mercy as a parent, I see that we’re presented with a tall order.

If God is our parent, doesn’t that make other people our siblings? Seems to me siblings are sometimes not as “merciful” to each other as parents are to their children. Being merciful is sometimes a tall order – especially if we have judged that one of our “siblings” just doesn’t deserve mercy. I guess that’s why we’re asked not to judge either. And if we are unmerciful and we do judge, we need to forgive and to be forgiven. But we get the mercy to practice it over and over. It’s just that simple.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 128
- Numbers 21:4-9
- Hebrews 3:1-6



An excerpt from Psalm 62:1-2

For God alone my soul in silence waits;
from him comes my salvation.

He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall not be greatly
shaken.

Reflection from Cindy Rigali Lund,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

It is hard to sit in silence. Even though stillness gifts me with a much deeper connection to God, I often feel resistance to finding and creating the time for those quiet moments. In this Lenten season, instead of getting down on myself about what I “should be” doing, perhaps I lean into the resistance, and give myself some grace. That kindness and love toward myself can have a ripple effect on those around me: When I am loving and patient toward myself, I am more loving and patient toward others. And, isn’t that ultimately what God desires for us? God is my rock, salvation and stronghold—in the busyness of life and in the silence. My soul can reach toward God at any time and in any place because the invitation to be in relationship with God is open-ended. We are God’s beloved for always and everywhere.

Local Libertyville artist, Cindi Sartain, created a mixed-media piece “...to create chaos underneath (upside down car ads) and then try to use just enough paint strokes...to bring the church into view...” A creative piece that highlights how tricky it is to be in touch with the sacred throughout the busyness of life. And, even so...God’s presence shines through.

Artwork by Cindi Sartain

MUSIC

“How Firm a Foundation”
sung by Twila Paris

Fear not, I am with thee,
O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God,
and will still give thee aid.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 128
- Isaiah 65:17-2
- Romans 4:6-13





WEDNESDAY – Heart of flesh

March 8, 2023 – Second week of Lent

An excerpt from Ezekiel 36:26

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.



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*Photograph by Deborah DeManno,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church*

Reflection from Deborah DeManno, St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

When do our hearts turn from stone to flesh? In the gospels, Jesus models compassion, healing strangers in the crowd who appealed to him and had nowhere else to turn.

Reflecting on Ezekiel, I recalled sitting as a spiritual director with someone with whom I had only met with a few times, not much history between us. They were sharing their painful experience of being unwelcome in their lifelong evangelical church after their divorce and coming out as LGBTQ+. They were in a process of deconstruction, differentiating God from any one church, and seeking to rebuild their faith. Listening to their pain, their longing to feel closer to God, I felt a physical shift within me, literally a breaking open of my heart. I was not there to fix or solve, only to be present and help them see that they already surrounded with God's unconditional love.

MUSIC

"The Human Heart"
from the Broadway musical
Once On This Island

This is the gift I give:
through your love you'll live forever.
You are part of the human heart.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 128
- Ezekiel 36:22-32
- John 7:53-8:11



**Reflection from Demi VanderWerff,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:**

As a practitioner of mindfulness, usually my interpretation of scripture leans heavily towards embodiment. I am interested in how a particular passage can influence our life on a daily basis and act as a guide, leading us toward a more divine physicality.

For me, this passage in Jeremiah immediately calls to mind the Jewish prayer, Shehecheyanu:

“Praised are You, Spirit of the Universe, who keeps us alive, sustains us, and brings us to this moment. Amen.”

How can we let our Creator keep us alive, sustain us, and bring us to this very moment without trust? Both of these prayers for the soul require the trust that the divine works not only around us but also within us. And it is only with this understanding, that collectively we may start to inch our roots out by the stream of wholeness.

MUSIC

“Shehecheyanu”
arr. Rachele Nelson

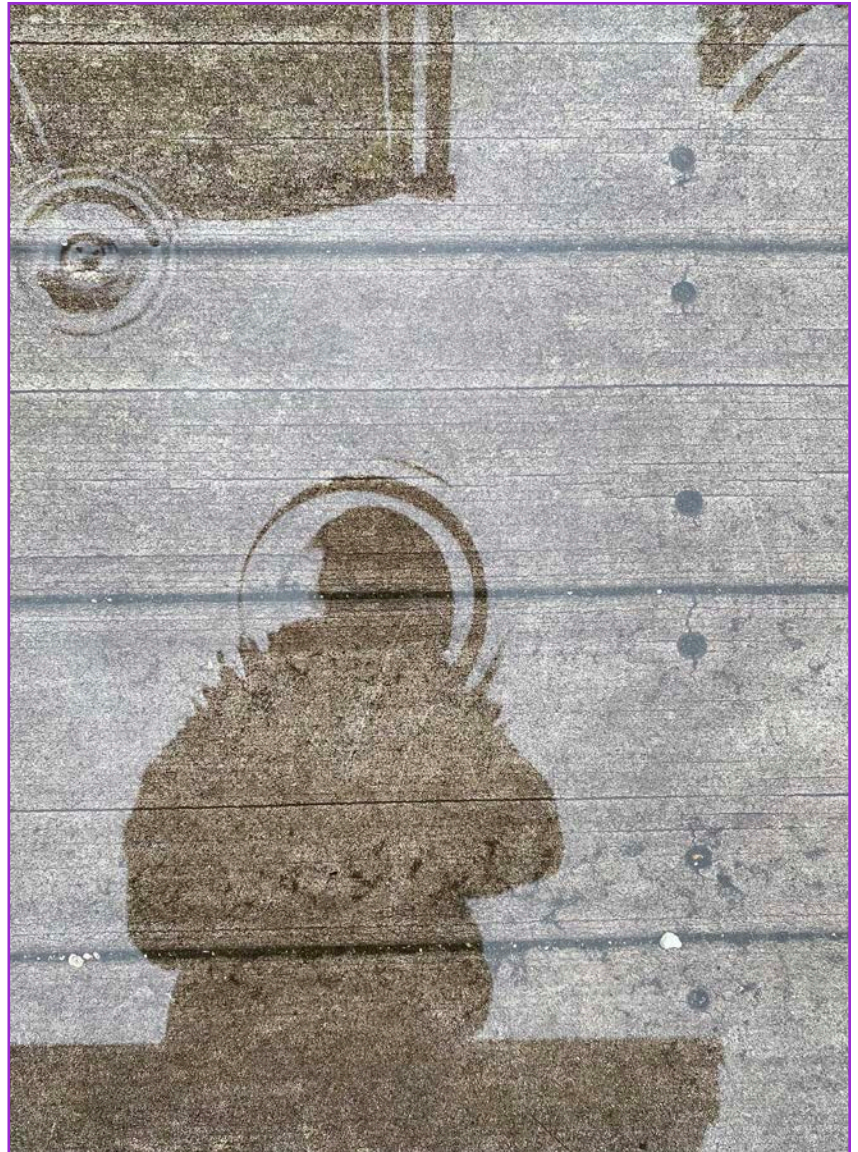
ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 128
- Ezekiel 36:22-32
- John 7:53-8:11

An excerpt from Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.
They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.



Photograph by Sarah Regalado, St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church, for the youth photo contest.



FRIDAY – Sing for joy

March 10, 2023 – Second week of Lent

An excerpt from Psalm 95:1-2

Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.



Photograph by Patrick Fore on Unsplash

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Reflection from Scott Gauthier, St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

A call to sing and raise many loud shouts in thanksgiving to God is something at first thought I'm uncomfortable with; it doesn't feel natural to me. If I were to try this it would feel forced. I've been in church settings where shouting was acceptable and normal during a worship service and I felt out of place.

One form of shouting I have the extreme pleasure of experiencing at this stage in life is the shouting I hear on the other side of our front door as I come home from a tiring day of work. "Daddy! Daddy is here, Mommy! Yay! Yay! Yay!" my son and daughter shout while jumping up and down with the grand finale of my son launching himself off several steps straight toward me as I put my things down. So far the timing has worked out and I haven't lost my balance while catching him.

I probably am uncomfortable with loud shouts of joy in thanksgiving to God because I was not brought up in an outwardly expressive Christian tradition. I hope my children continue to broaden my understanding of what can be joyful.

MUSIC

"Clap Your Hands"

sung by the StGs quartet

Clap your hands, all you nations shout to God!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 95
- Exodus 16:9-21
- Ephesians 2:11-22



Reflection from Clarence Langdon, St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

Have you ever known two young people who grew up in the same family and turned into two dramatically different adults? I wonder if people who knew the prodigal and the elder brother asked that question. How did these young men, raised by the same parents in the same community, turn out so differently?

The younger son, experiencing the abundance of his family's provisions, wanted more and more and he was soon out of control. He returned in shame, yet his father welcomed him with open arms. The older brother, a picture of discipline and virtue, when faced with the prospect of welcoming the rebel brother home, would not accept the father's invitation to the welcome home party. Perhaps the older brother also lost his balance and fell out of relationship with the father and the family. His rigid morality caused him to reduce life to being righteous. He ended up right, but out of relationship with those who loved him.

The love of life and its riches can be wonderful to behold. A disciplined and productive life can also claim our admiration. Either choice, like many other choices, can be a blessing, but also a curse, a gift or an idol. Mae West is purported to have said, "Too much of a good thing is wonderful." Most of us have proved her wrong.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 95
- Exodus 16:27-35
- John 4:1-6

An excerpt from Luke 15:31-32

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."

MUSIC

"Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd"
sung by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Off to the rescue he'll hasten,
bringing them back to the fold.



*Photograph by Clarence Langdon,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church*



MONDAY – Walk in love

March 13, 2023 – Third week of Lent

An excerpt from 2 John 1:5-6

And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning – you must walk in it.



*Photograph by Bev Laurell,
St. Gregory's Episcopal Church*

Reflection from Bev Laurell, St Gregory's Episcopal Church:

I guess I'm pretty literal, and as such, 'walk in love,' takes me to the word "walk." That's something we almost all did during the pandemic, solitary walks. Time to let our thoughts wander, to observe nature, to nod a human connection to the people we pass, to speak with God, to pray, to praise. Those walks where we are in harmony with God.

The other "walk" is the putting one foot in front of the other, walking or stumbling along, lost in our worry, sorrow, or guilt, but nonetheless still receiving God's love. God's grace helps us to make those steps, although we don't know it at the time. God carries us through the hurts, the overwhelming problems, the worries, when our eyes are downcast and we walk through dark places in our life, or deserted hospital hallways late at night. We are still walking in love through God's grace, and soon we will represent His love to others. We are always walking in love.

MUSIC

"Seasons of Love"

from the Broadway musical Rent

Measure your life in love.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 81
- Genesis 24:1-27
- 2 John 1:1-13



Reflection from Sarah and Abby Kettlewell, St Gregory’s Episcopal Church:

It’s like the age range on a Lego box, there is no limit to what age you can enjoy Legos or how many times you can forgive. However, it’s not the number of times one can forgive that catches me in these words. It’s “against me” and “should I forgive”. Forgiveness is not an act that requires another person, there is no apology or admission of wrongdoing mentioned. Forgiveness is an action we are in control of. We have full agency on forgiveness. It’s a skill we can utilize over and over and over - no limit.

An excerpt from Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 81
- Genesis 29:1-14
- 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

MUSIC

“For Good”

from the Broadway musical *Wicked*

But then, I guess we know there’s blame to share – and none of it seems to matter anymore.





WEDNESDAY – Forsaking the Lord

March 15, 2023 – Third week in Lent

An excerpt from Jeremiah 2:12-13

Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the
Lord, for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me, the fountain of
living water, and dug out cisterns for
themselves, cracked cisterns that can
hold no water.

MUSIC

“Living Water”
by Tom Trenney

Fill me love for Jesus, my Lord;
come fill me with living water.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 81
- Jeremiah 2:4-13
- John 7:14-31, 37-39

Reflection from Jon Dutcher, St Gregory’s Episcopal Church:

Water is essential for human life. Our bodies
are over 50% water, and we can only survive
a matter of days without it. The lack of water
will also burn up crops and kill livestock.

Jeremiah says the people have committed
two evils: they have forsaken God, who
provides their life-giving water. And they
have, in their arrogance, attempted to
manage by building cisterns to store water for
themselves. But the cisterns are cracked and
cannot hold water.

Jeremiah implies that unless the people come
back to God, they are destined to a desolate,
thirsty existence in a barren landscape. We
need God as much as we need water.

“Rio Grande Gorge (limited palette)”
Painting by Jon Dutcher





An excerpt from John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

**Reflection from Mary Rodgers,
St Gregory's Episcopal Church:**

Uncertainty is nervewracking, and I think that's why I find peace in truth, even if its not what I was expecting. Ultimately, knowing the truth gives me the certainty I need to choose what I will do next. The most important truths I can anchor my life around are God's love and message embodied by Jesus Christ, and I love how this passage acknowledges the freedom those truths deliver. It is liberating to know that these are the constant truths that I can always use as an anchor to guide my choices in life.

MUSIC

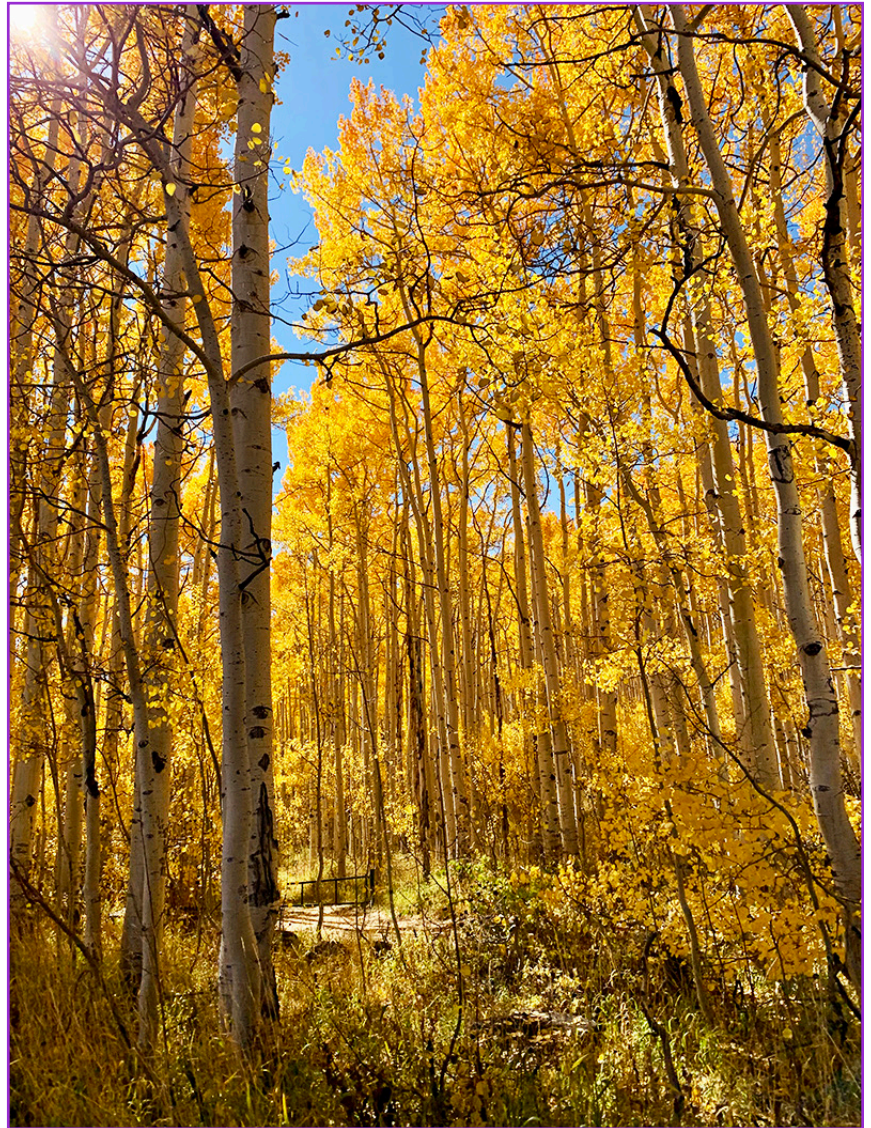
"We Shall Be Free"
by Garth Brooks

When there's only one race,
and that's mankind:
then we shall be free!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 23
- 1 Samuel 15:10-21
- Ephesians 4:25-32



*Photograph by Debbie Kinjo,
St. Gregory's Episcopal Church*



Friday – Love your neighbor

March 17, 2023 – Third week in Lent

An excerpt from Mark 12:28-31

'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."



Stained glass from the south wall of the Sanctuary in St. Gregory's Episcopal Church

This year, we will offer two options to observe Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent (except March 24, see page 30 for details:)

Onsite 7pm: a walking devotional led by parishioners that will travel around the sanctuary at StGs

Online 7pm on Zoom: a PowerPoint-based service with music and different devotions each week

Reflection from Nana Agyeman, St Gregory's Episcopal Church:

What comes to mind when I read this passage is to be a Christian is to love God. And to love God is to love thy neighbor as we were made in God's image. We cannot truly love God without also loving his creation, thy neighbors, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

I believe the commandments to love God and neighbor are first because it is from the heart that we must live our lives.

MUSIC

"You Will Be Found"

from the Broadway musical
Dear Evan Hansen

When you're broken on the ground –
you will be found!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 23
- 1 Samuel 15:22-31
- Ephesians 5:1-9



An excerpt from Psalm 90:12

Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

**Reflection from Val Evans,
St Gregory’s Episcopal Church:**

Time never stops it keeps ticking away, maybe we would be wise to ask for God’s help to focus on what is most important.

I sometimes find myself worrying about the future, but dwelling on our problems and worries can be a burden, in the same way mourning over the past, when we were younger and fitter can be depressing, is this what God wants for us, I don’t think so. Would we be wiser to live more in the present and concentrate on what God wants us to do today. Should we have more faith that God’s help will come when we need it. Life is short let’s make the most of it and concentrate on what God’s plan might be for us today?



*Photograph by Val Evans,
St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church*

MUSIC

“Death Came a-Knockin”

by Ruthie Foster arr. Paul Rardin

I’m gonna stoop right down,
buckle up my shoes,
and I’ll move on down to the Jordan stream.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 23
- 1 Samuel 15:32-34
- John 1:1-9



MONDAY – The armor of God

March 20, 2023 – Fourth week in Lent

An excerpt from Isaiah 59:17

He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in fury as in a
mantle.



Reflection from Jack Alix, Trinity Episcopal Church:

What comes to mind is that Jesus is God representing what is righteous, the truth and a defender. He is pictured as a warrior willing to defend the faithful and His followers. In my opinion, the breastplate of righteousness means protecting ourselves from falling into sin by following God's commandment and live in a way that is honorable to Him. By not protecting ourselves with what is right, the truth and love, we become vulnerable or open to attacks of the enemy and falling, if not tempted into sin. This passage represents the defense we must take in our spiritual lives. If we fall weak or forget to avoid sinful thoughts, succumb to temptation of the world, and understand what is good and true, we become susceptible to thoughts that harm our walk with Christ.

MUSIC

"The Armor of God"

by John Ness Beck

...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 146
- Isaiah 59:9-19
- Acts 9:1-20

Stained glass in the Sanctuary of Trinity Episcopal Church



**Reflection from Jennifer Ould,
Trinity Episcopal Church:**

“... We have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. ...may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.”

So often when I (and I don’t think I’m the only one) think about my works bearing fruit, it’s all about outcomes. Will my donation provide enough meals? Will my commitment to my kids ensure they will be good people? Will my work to be kind to this unlikable person make them be kinder in return?

But I’m not so sure those kinds of outcomes are what we should be paying so much attention to when we are looking to bear fruit in our good works works. I think the fruit we need to be looking for is the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And the place we should be looking for that fruit is first and foremost in ourselves. Because if our “good works” are not producing those things in our own lives, I don’t know how much they will be producing them in the world, regardless of any other outcomes.

An excerpt from Colossians 1:9-12

... so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

MUSIC

“Jesus Christ the Apple Tree”
sung by the Choir of St. John’s College,
Cambridge

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit and always green...
the trees of nature fruitless be,
compared with Christ the apple tree.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 146
- Isaiah 42:14-21
- Colossians 1:9-14



*Photograph by Jennifer Ould,
Trinity Episcopal Church*



WEDNESDAY – God will not forget you

March 22, 2023 – Fourth week in Lent

An excerpt from Isaiah 49:14-15

But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me,
my Lord has forgotten me.”
Can a woman forget her nursing-child,
or show no compassion for the child
of her womb?
Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

MUSIC

“Abide With Me”

arr. Keith and Kristyn Getty

When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 146
- Isaiah 60:17-22
- Matthew 9:27-34

Reflection from Hilary Junkin, Trinity Episcopal Church:

It’s easy to think God has forgotten us. Difficult times arise and perhaps raise the question, “Where is God?” Our God is always with us. In each and every moment of our lives God is present. He has a plan for us and His way is best. In struggles we are surrounded by family and friends. That is God remembering us. Perhaps a medical crisis presents itself. We are given professionals to assist us in healing. That is God remembering us.

Psalm 138:7 tells us, “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me.”

Perhaps today we can ponder all the ways God remembers us.



*Photograph by
Brian Loshbough
Trinity Episcopal Church*



An excerpt from Psalm 130:5-6

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning.

**Reflection from Annette Johnston,
Trinity Episcopal Church:**

We have all heard the saying “it is darkest before the dawn”. We feel the most lost, the least resourceful, and just plain weak. We are expected, even in this difficult state, to trust in Jesus. That is more than a mental thought like, “I probably should trust in Jesus” – it should be a feeling of trust. Often, the silent and dark times are the best times to find that trust in Him, rather than ourselves.

That waiting and hoping is always rewarded with a sunrise of happiness and resolution, usually when we least expect it.



*Winter Solstice 2021, Highland Park
Photograph by Brian Loshbough,
Trinity Episcopal Church*

MUSIC

“My Song in the Night”
Traditional American folk hymn,
arr. Elaine Hagenberg

Unto thee, O Lord, in affliction I call: my
comfort by day, and my song in the night.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 130
- Ezekiel 1:1-3, 2:8-3:3
- Revelation 10:1-11



FRIDAY – Made in God's image

March 24, 2023 – Fourth week in Lent

An excerpt from Wisdom 2:23-24

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, and those who belong to his company experience it.



<https://www.orthodoxchristianed.org/oncreation>

Reflection from Bryan Cones, Trinity Episcopal Church:

It can be tempting (get it?) to dwell on our sinfulness during this Lenten season. That can be important, but it is also promising to spend some time with the fundamental goodness of our creation. The "devil's envy" may get in the way, but our deep grounding, our truest identity, is the image God has formed within us. Dwelling too much on our failures might actually sidetrack our conversion toward that divine gift by focusing on the negative. Reflecting on God's goodness at work in us, on the other hand, can encourage us to recognize how grace is alive in us. How might we allow the "the image of God's own eternity" to shape our spirits in these 40 days?

MUSIC

"In the Beginning"

by Kyle Pederson,

sung by the StGs quartet

... and good were the creatures
made in God's image.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 130
- Ezekiel 33:10-16
- Revelation 11:15-19

Stations of the Cross and Fish Fry

We will be joining with our Better Together partners at 6 pm for Stations of the Cross at Trinity (425 Laurel Ave in Highland Park), followed by a fish fry at 7pm!



**Reflection from Claire Esker,
Trinity Episcopal Church:**

Moses’ heroic sister, Miriam, is believed to be the namesake of the Blessed Virgin. Miriam was gifted with unshakeable faith, authority to teach righteousness, and the ability to prophesy. Her name means “rebellion.”

Like Miriam and Mary, we live in a time of uncertainty, and much can feel fraught. But faith can sustain us, and, in turn, propel us to action. This action, motivated by a response to God’s grace, will inevitably build the Kingdom of God for all people. We must be prepared, though, for our actions to be rebellious, facing down the injustice that oppresses so many of God’s children.

Such rebellion, though, is at the prophetic heart of Jesus’ message. It is God’s dream dreamt for us – his people of the past, present, and future, to bring into eternal fruition.

MUSIC

Shirat HaYam (The Song of Moses and Miriam or Song of the Sea)

sung by Cantor Andrea Rae Markowicz.

The Hebrew hymn that is believed to have inspired the Magnificat

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Isaiah 7:10-14
- Psalm 45
- Psalm 40:5-10
- Hebrews 10:4-10
- Luke 1:26-38

An excerpt from Luke 1:46-55

‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

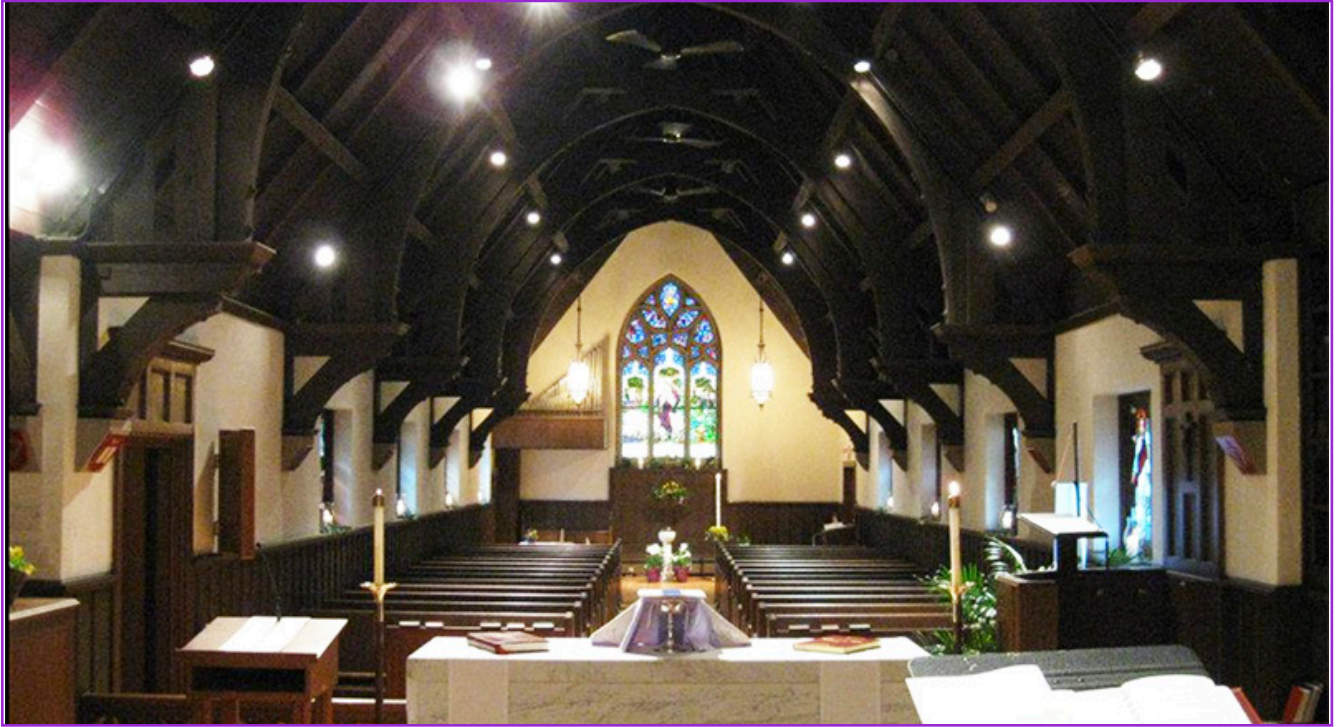


Maria schreibt das Magnificat (Mary Writing the Magnificat) by Marie Ellenreider. Oil on canvas, 1833, in the collection of the Staatliche Kusthalle Karlsruhe. CC 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.



MONDAY – Neither do I condemn you

March 27, 20223– Fifth week in Lent



Reflection from Mark Tilton, St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:

This is a painful but rewarding passage to read. On my first time through, I identified with the woman who was accused of adultery and brought before a crowd to be shamed and stoned to death. The story is powerful because Jesus' forgiveness of the woman contrasts to the scribes' and Pharisees' call for her blood. In reading how Jesus forgave the adulterer, I felt the catharsis, the cleansing nature, of Jesus forgiving me as well. Then I asked myself, what is God calling me to do through this passage? On reflection, I had to admit that, like the scribes and Pharisees, I can also be judgmental and scolding. The story made me see myself both in the scorned woman and in her accusers.

The Sanctuary of St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church.

An excerpt from John 8:7-11

'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

MUSIC

"You Do Not Walk Alone"
by Elaine Hagenberg

May you always remember
when the shadows fall:
you do not walk alone.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 143
- 1 Kings 17:17-24
- Acts 20:7-12



An excerpt from Ephesians 2:10

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

**Reflection from Cindy Smith,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:**

This passage reminds me that I have been blessed and prepared by Jesus to graciously give my energy to care for others and lead them on a path in good faith and hope.

This is not always easy. In fact, it's seemingly impossible at times – and it has looked very different for me in various life stages. As a parent, the work God created me to do is evident each day as I care for my three young daughters and actively raise them to willfully do their good work in the world. When I feel down, hopeless and stressed, remembering that God has a plan and purpose for me each day brings me peace. It also gives me the will to continue the good work he created for me to live out in his name.

MUSIC

*“Prayer” by Rene Clausen,
sung by the StGs quartet*

Possess my whole being so utterly that my life may be only a radiance of yours.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 143
- 2 Kings 4:18-37
- Ephesians 2:1-10



*Photograph by Cindy Smith,
St. Lawrence Episcopal
Church*



WEDNESDAY – The works of God’s hands

March 29, 2023 – Fifth week in Lent

An excerpt from Psalm 143:5-6

I remember the days of old; I think about all
your deeds;
I meditate on the works of your hands.
I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched
land.

On particularly rough
days, when I’m sure
I can’t possibly endure,
I like to remind myself
that my track record for
getting through bad days
so far is 100% and that’s
pretty good

*Image from Leigh Stewart,
St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church*

Reflection from Leigh Stewart, St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church:

As I was preparing to write this reflection, I came across an article from 2015 in my “Spiritual” folder. There I read about the ‘end-of-history illusion’ which is what psychologists call the belief we all have that, while we have experienced significant growth and change during our life to date, we will not substantially grow or change in the future. A reason posited for this irrational belief may be “fear of the unknown.” Then I read this psalm. It occurs to me that when I remember days of old, meditate on all God has done, and ponder the work of God’s hands, I need to see the very many significant changes that God has made. And while the unknown future will hold very many more changes (because how could it not, given the available data?), if my soul keeps thirsting for God and I keep stretching out my hands toward God, “all shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well (Julian of Norwich.)”

MUSIC

“The Sun Goeth Down”
from Elgar’s *The Kingdom*

The sun goeth down; thou makest darkness,
and it is night: I commune with mine own heart,
and meditate on Thee in the night watches.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings
assigned for today are:

- Psalm 143
- Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41
- Matthew 22:23-33



**Reflection from Whit Shepard,
Trinity Episcopal Church:**

Lent is a curious season: we are preparing for something that has already happened. Using Paul’s words to the Philippians, we are already producing a “harvest of righteousness” even though we have yet to experience the climactic events of Holy Week ahead of us.

We think of Lent, rightly, as a period of prayer, fasting and penitence. It is about cutting away the distractions in our lives that are keeping us from holding fast to “what really matters”. But instead of experiencing Lent as some sort of punishment for our sins, Paul’s wish for us is that our Lenten experience will be a time when our love of our Lord and for each other will “overflow”. This is Paul cheering us on. He points to what awaits us, in the “day of Christ” when we will be found perfect, pure and “totally blameless” if we just keep at it.

An excerpt from Philippians 1:9-11

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

MUSIC

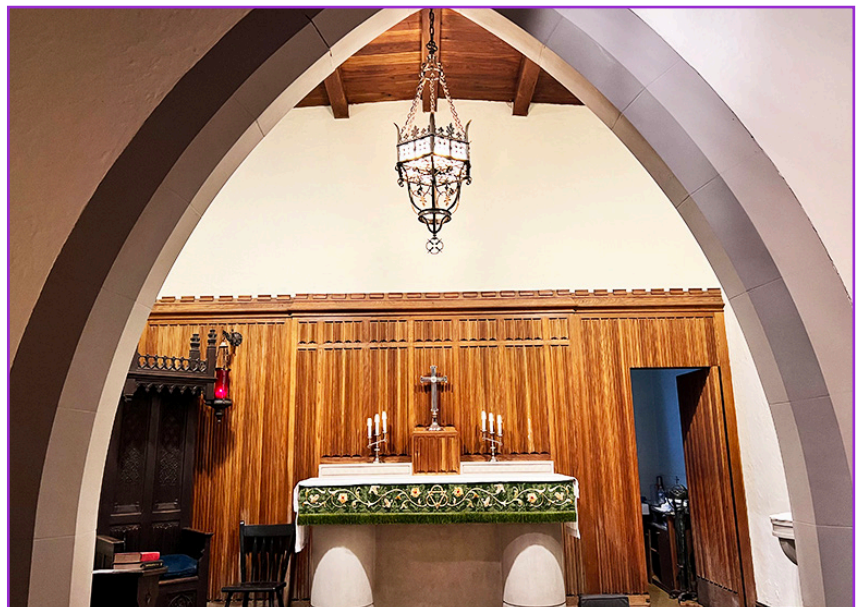
“Lord, Who Throughout These 40 Days”
by Zebulon Highben

Abide with us, that when this life of suffering is past, an Easter of unending joy we may attain at last.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 31:9-16
- 1 Samuel 16:11-13
- Philippians 1:1-11



The Chapel for Trinity Episcopal Church.



FRIDAY – Praising God

March 31, 2023 – Fifth week in Lent

An excerpt from Jeremiah 20:9

If I say, "I will not mention him
or speak any more in his name,"
then within me there is something like
a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.

Reflection from Anne Tuohy, St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:

The full devotion to be included in daily devotional email.

In the verses from chapter 20, we hear Jeremiah reaching the end of his rope. He's exhausted and angry at God. He lashes out with hate and accuses God of not telling him how hard it will be to hold up truth to power. He feels used and abused by God, abandoned and alone. He's afraid that he will succumb to the cries of his friends to give it all up and take the easy path. And then come the oft-quoted words in verse 9, "within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones." Jeremiah knows that, however much he tries, God is with him, in his very bones – not his stomach where he could regurgitate God, not nearby where Jeremiah could ignore God – but deep within him, a part of his being. With God, Jeremiah can persevere, knowing that his enemies will not prevail. "To. You (God) I have committed my cause."

Jeremiah's laments don't stop. He is human after all. Yet, this marks a turning point, a recognition of his vulnerability and his strength in his total

commitment to God's Truth. He doesn't turn back. He persists in his truth telling. Time after time, Jeremiah is banned from the Temple, thrown into jail, publicly humiliated, but Jeremiah keeps finding a way to get his message out. He sends his message in writing, has a friend read out a proclamation. Resends the message when the original is ripped apart. He doesn't stop. He persists in proclaiming God's commandments, God's love, God's promises, and God's hope.

We too must persist. We also live in a time that calls us to be courageous and persistent in proclaiming God's Truth. We live in a time that too often seems dominated by fear, hate, greed, violence, frustration, eagerness to divide rather than cooperate, willingness to disconnect rather than build community. It is easy to feel hopeless and depressed and to fall into the trap of thinking what can one person do to disrupt the status quo.

The good news is that we are not alone. We are a community of faith in God and in God's Love. Together we can make a difference. We can acknowledge and name the truths we see. We can listen to each other and reach out to hear the voices of the vulnerable, the isolated, the ignored. We can reinforce our understanding of God's covenant with us. We can recommit to live out our baptismal promises and seek together to understand more deeply what God is calling us to be.

MUSIC

"Jeremiah" by Sara Groves

Jeremiah tell me about the fire that burns up in your bones -I want to know.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 31:9-16
- Job 13:13-19
- Philippians 1:21-30

This year, we will offer two options to observe Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent (except March 24, see page 30 for details:)

Onsite 7pm: a walking devotional led by parishioners that will travel around the sanctuary at StGs

Online 7pm on Zoom: a PowerPoint-based service with music and different devotions each week



An excerpt from Ezekiel 37:26-27

My dwelling place shall be over them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Reflection from Kristin Saylor, St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:

One of my favorite prayers for times of trouble comes from the Jewish Sabbath liturgy. In Hebrew, it is called Hashkiveinu and, in English, paraphrased, it reads: “Spread over us the shelter of Your peace...shield and shelter us beneath the shadow of Your wings.” The prayer draws on a rich well of Biblical imagery of God as sheltering presence, exemplified in this verse from Ezekiel. We so often forget that God’s dwelling place is not far off and inaccessible, but intimately near to us. Even and especially when we are in pain and panic, we are nestled under God’s wings, safe and sheltered from the storms of life. We dwell in God and God in us. No power in this world or the next can ever change that truth.

MUSIC

“Hashkiveinu”

arr. Danny Maseng,
sung by Cantor Lizzie Weiss



Photograph by Zac Ong on Unsplash

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Psalm 31:9-16
- Lamentations 3:55-66
- Mark 10:32-34



MONDAY – Anointing Jesus’ feet

April 3, 2023 – Holy Week

An excerpt from John 12:3

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’s feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.



**Stained glass on the south wall
of the Sanctuary in St. Gregory’s
Episcopal Church**

Reflection from Tina Calub, St Gregory’s Episcopal Church:

When I read this passage, I have so many questions. What was Jesus’ mood? Was Mary’s act simply to honor Jesus or to comfort him because he was tense about his fate? Maybe the reason isn’t important. Rather, the lesson is simply to be kind. We bring out the “good dishes” for special occasions and we try to help our friends when they need us. Later in the scripture, Jesus tells Judas, “You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” Essentially, he is embracing Mary’s special act of kindness because he knows what is about to happen to him. And in my opinion, this is the next lesson: we must cherish our time together. It is precious and time delimited. So, when there is an opportunity to extend kindness, do it. And, when kindness is bestowed on you, accept it, and appreciate it.

MUSIC

“Said Judas to Mary”

arr. David Sims

Tomorrow I’ll think of the poor, not today, for dearer than all of the poor of the world is my love, who is going away.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Isaiah 42:1-9
- Psalm 36:5-11
- Hebrews 9:11-15
- John 12:1-11



An excerpt from John 12:35-36

Jesus said to them, "The light is in you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

Reflection from Brian Loshbough, Trinity Episcopal Church:

Jesus was going to celebrate Passover -- with other folks, including Greeks; lots of folks were gathering. AND some folks wanted to see this guy who raised Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus knew he was going to die, and said, "...if I be lifted up from this earth, I will draw all people to myself..." He knew he was from God and He was that Light which would lead others to God....but he wasn't going to remain on the earth much longer. He knew his time had come, that he would depart out of this world, to the Father...

He wanted them to see the way, while he was still with them, so --

"Jesus said to them, "The light is in you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

May we BELIEVE in the Light...and may we carry some of that radiance in this world.

MUSIC

"O Nata Lux"

by Morton Lauridsen

O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Isaiah 49:1-7
- Psalm 71:1-14
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- John 12:20-36



Photograph by Brian Loshbough, Trinity Episcopal Church



An excerpt from Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, 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.



The Altar Cross from St. Elisabeth's Chapel

**Reflection from Adam Spencer,
St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church:**

We don't run the race of faith alone. We run surrounded by the memory of all those runners who have gone ahead of us. They run alongside us, urging us forward, telling us we can do it, showing us how. The lives of the saints – both famous and canonized saints and the ones known to us alone – they show us, in dazzling diversity, different approaches and styles of following Jesus. In various historical and cultural contexts, with different gifts and talents, bestowing on us a wide range of theological and spiritual lessons...the saints are like a multifaceted gemstone reflecting and refracting the Light of God for us. Today: choose a saint at random, or a favorite saint, or some holy person in your own life...how do they show you what it means to live, to love God and to follow Jesus? How do they encourage you to run the race?

MUSIC

"He'll Make a Way"

by Byron J. Smith

I know the Lord will make a way –
if you trust and never doubt,
he will bring you out!

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Isaiah 50:4-9a
- Psalm 70
- Hebrews 12:1-3
- John 13:21-32



An excerpt from 1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

**Reflection from Kristin Saylor,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church:**

There is something especially compelling about celebrating the Eucharist together on Maundy Thursday. Without taking anything away from the dozens of other times we “eat this bread and drink this cup” together in a given year, something about Maundy Thursday feels like we are participating in the Eucharist in its purest form. For us, as Christians, time matters. Our faith is anchored in events that happened to a specific community, at a particular time, in a particular place. And these three days of the Paschal Triduum, which begins today, help to anchor us in the holiness of God’s time, a time that builds bridges and defies human logic. Tonight, and in the days to come, may we experience the Lord’s nearness in the bread and wine made holy.



**Photograph by Kristin Saylor,
St. Lawrence Episcopal Church**

MUSIC

“The Whisper”

by Craig Courtney

As I wander, hungry, thirsty, lost, alone,
I hear God’s call;
I hear the whisper of my name,
“Come to the table.”

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14
- Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Maundy Thursday Services

7pm: Better Together service at St. Lawrence for a worship service followed by an agape dinner

7pm: Service at St. Elisabeth



GOOD FRIDAY – Help in time of need

April 7, 2023 – Holy Week

An excerpt from Hebrews 4:15-16

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



The stained glass panels from the back of the Sanctuary of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church.

Reflection from Max Smith, St. Gregory's Episcopal Church:

Temptation- Grace-Mercy are the 3 words that resound with me as I consider this passage.

And to be honest I am most tempted today to righteous indignation, anger, which leads inexorably to hopelessness and despair, which I imagine Jesus was tempted by too.

I am relieved then when I read grace is right there – mine for the taking.

Yet sometimes even to reach out and take it seems too hard.

But then, I can ask our merciful Holy God to make me willing to draw near to the throne of grace.

At that throne, I will be given all I need to be restored: to be enabled to choose forbearance instead of indignation; hope instead of fear, mercy instead of intolerance.

MUSIC

"And Can It Be" by Dan Forrest

Bold, I approach the eternal throne and claim the crown through Christ, my own.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Isaiah 52:13-53:12
- Psalm 22
- Hebrews 10:16-25
- Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
- John 18:1-19:42

Good Friday Services

12 noon: Worship service at St. Lawrence

7pm: Better Together worship service at Trinity

7pm: Service at St. Elisabeth



An excerpt from 1 Peter 4:8

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

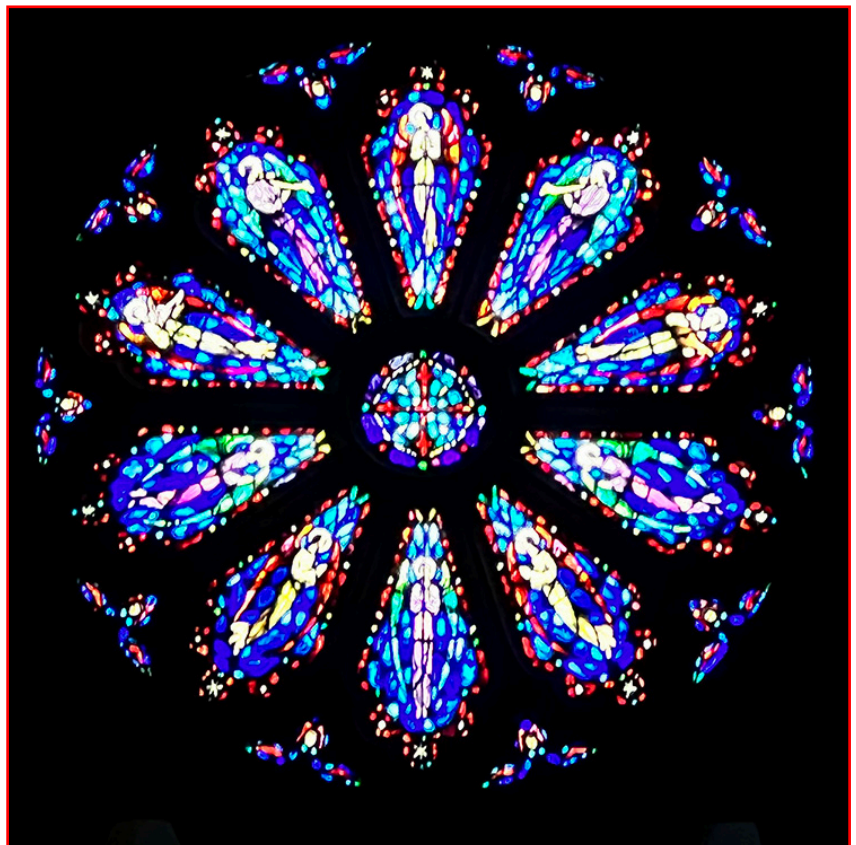
**Reflection from Jack Alix,
Trinity Episcopal Church:**

To “cover” sin is to forgive it, and forgiveness is associated with love. The best example of a love that covers sin is Jesus’ sacrificial death on our behalf. Jesus’ prayer from the cross, Father forgive them, says it all. When we love each other, we are willing to forgive each other. Love covers sin in that it is willing to forgive. Love protects. Love does not cover a multitude of sins by sweeping matters under the rug. Some have appealed to the forgiving nature of love in their attempt to hide indiscretions. For example, rather than report child abuse, a church might cover it up. This is not what true love does. Love protects by helping both the victim and the offender, and it also strives to prevent further offenses. Love covering sin also does not mean we disregard our own emotions or ignore our personal boundaries. We cannot “cover” sin by denying that it hurt us. We cover sin by acknowledging it and then extending the forgiveness God has given us to others. Another way that love covers over a multitude of sins is by choosing not to take offense at everything. Some sins against us are not worth confronting. Personal slights, snide or ignorant remarks and minor annoyances can be easily forgiven for the sake of love.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

For further study and prayer, the readings assigned for today are:

- Job 14:1-14
- Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24
- Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
- 1 Peter 4:1-8
- Matthew 27:57-66
- John 19:38-42



The Rose Window above the choir loft in Trinity Episcopal Church

MUSIC

*“Miserere mei” by Allegri,
sung by King’s College, Cambridge*

This is perhaps the most famous Latin setting of Psalm 51, partially due to the alleged secrecy surrounding its publication by the Vatican.

Easter Vigil

7 pm: Better Together worship service at St. Gregory's

Better Together Partnership



St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church

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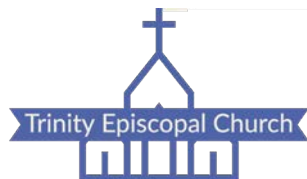
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