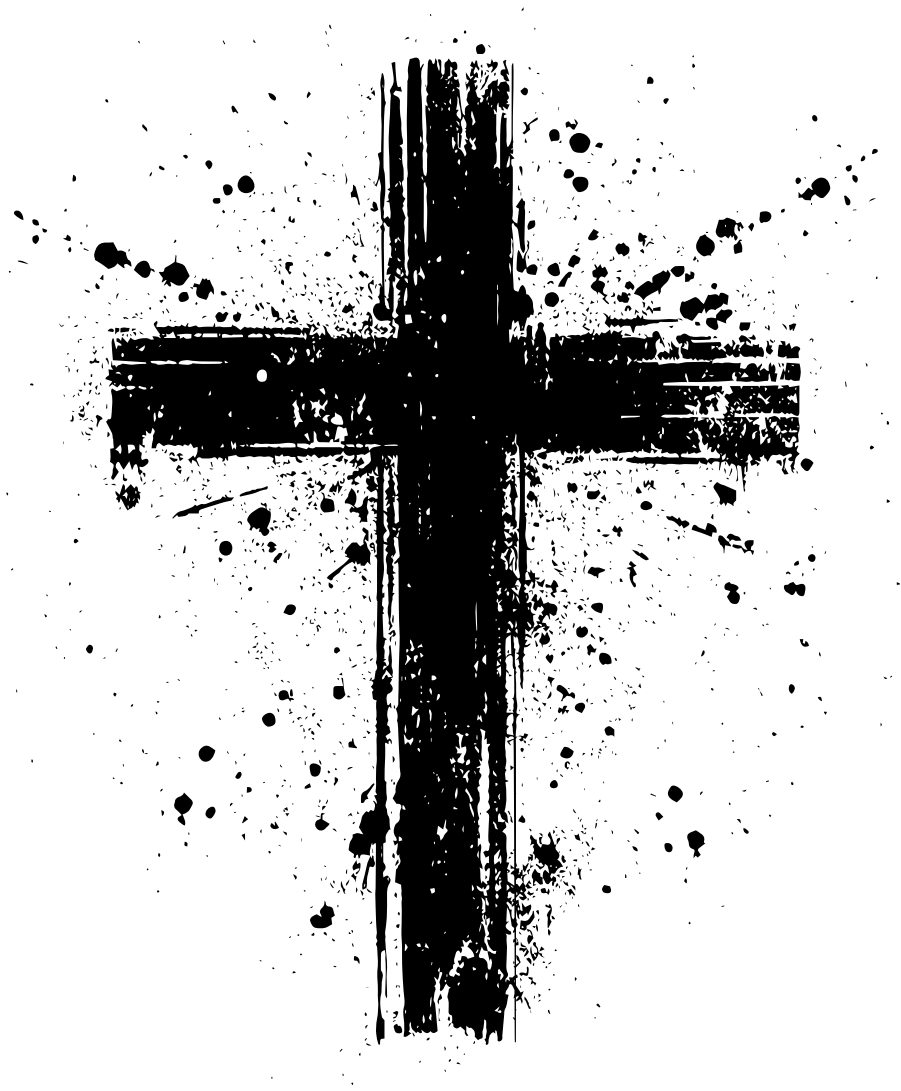


# Seeking Creation

*Lent 2025 Devotional*



**CREATION  
JUSTICE  
MINISTRIES**

Care for God's Planet and People.

# Introduction

On one hand, this is a simple Lenten devotional. Each day contains a Scripture, a very brief reflection, and a short prayer. If you just read it through, it shouldn't take you more than a few minutes. There are, however, some more complicated things happening under the surface. This devotional shares the question that we use in our Green Lectionary podcast conversation: "Where is Creation in this passage?" But it follows up with questions of how can Creation be a companion on our Lenten journey? **How is Creation modeling sacrifice, suffering, and death?** How is Creation holding the promise of redemption? What is Creation's role in the New Creation? These questions, we hope, will cause you to look at even well worn texts with fresh eyes.

We also recognize that we've written this devotional in this particular Lenten season, Lent of 2025. You'll notice that we come back to themes of empire and resistance. That's intentional! **Creation both needs our resistance in this moment and can be a part of it.** We've written this devotional in light of our annual resource, "The Power of God: From Extractive Theology to Transformative Faith" and we think that they complement each other well thematically.

We've chosen texts from the Episcopal Church's daily lectionary. We've attempted a good balance of Hebrew Scripture and New Testament texts. We chose some texts that are well known and some with which the average churchgoer may be less familiar. We hope that we've chosen texts that can be excellent companions on your Lenten journey.

Thank you for reading with us! Thank you for praying with us! Thank you for walking with us! Thank you for resisting with us!

With Gratitude,

Caroline Hiler, Creation Justice Ministries Intern

Derrick Weston, Director of Theological Education and Formation

# March 5, 2025

## Ash Wednesday

*Isaiah 58:1-12*

**58:3** *"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. 58:6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*

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“From dust you come, and from dust you will return.” In the ashes we meet our own frailty, recognizing that any riches, achievements, or power we think we have is fleeting. The ashes connect us to the earth and its suffering. They evoke images of forests reduced to cinders, homes consumed by flames, and lives upended by disaster. These fires are fueled by rising global temperatures and human negligence, reminding us that our actions, or inactions, contribute to the destruction of creation. The ashes call us to lament and repent for the harm we’ve caused to the land from which we were formed.

But repentance is not just personal; it is communal and structural. What good is fasting from screen time or luxuries if we ignore the systems of oppression harming the planet and our fellow image-bearers? We cannot fast on one hand and exploit workers or creation on the other. Those who suffer the most from environmental devastation are often the world’s poorest, bearing the weight of a crisis they did not create.

Lent is not about being weighed down by guilt but stepping into the freedom that comes with repentance and action. When we care for creation, we care for the vulnerable, and when we care for the vulnerable, we encounter Christ. As we reflect on the ashes, may we be moved by the power of the Holy Spirit toward repentance that restores.

***LORD, we pray you will guide us continually and satisfy our needs in parched places and make our bones strong, and we shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail (Isa 58:11).***

# March 6, 2025

## Thursday After Ash Wednesday

*Deuteronomy 30:15–20*

**15** See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. **16** For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. **17** But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, **18** I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed.

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Becoming “eco-minded” is not about checking off a list for starting a recycling program or a church garden and assuming your work is done. While these are good practices, justice for creation is fueled by practices that we should already be aspiring to do as Christians: prayer, fasting, self-disciplines, thoughtfulness, meditation, and caring for the poor.

Traditionally, Lent has been a time to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Self-discipline and love of others are part of God’s commandment to us to love God and neighbor. When we follow these commandments, we bring life not only to the people around us but also the land and all that exists on it. When we choose to focus on greed, pride, and slothfulness, we produce death and destruction. The choice is ours, if today is today, we have the opportunity to walk in obedience.

***Creator God who’s commandments of love bring life, we pray that you expose our dark places, that we may walk in light and bring life to the world through your power.***

# March 7, 2025

## Friday After Ash Wednesday

*Matthew 9:10–17*

**10** While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. **11** When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **12** On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13** But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

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Who are the tax collectors and sinners in your eyes? Are they the CEOs of major polluting corporations and those who work for them? The wardens of prisons or government officials? Are they those in the Church who hold different views than you, or your neighbor with a different political sign?

One of Jesus' most challenging commandments, to love your enemies, is on full display in today's passage. Even those most knowledgeable in the law are shocked by Jesus' actions. Why would he sit and eat with those who exploit the poor, abuse their power, and disregard God's commandments of life? Yet Jesus makes it clear: these are precisely the people he came to call.

May we resist the pull of hatred and instead open our hearts to God's mercy, which extends to all. Let us strive to see others as Jesus does, never compromising the truth, and being present in the lives of all people.

***God, the Great Doctor, teach us what it means that you desire mercy, not sacrifice.***

# March 8, 2025

## Saturday After Ash Wednesday

*Psalm 86:1–11*

*1 Hear me, Lord, and answer me,  
for I am poor and needy.*

*2 Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;  
save your servant who trusts in you.*

*You are my God; 3 have mercy on me, Lord,  
for I call to you all day long.*

*4 Bring joy to your servant, Lord,  
for I put my trust in you.*

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The words of the Psalmist are written in a way that allows the reader to step into the prayer, no matter the time or place. This Psalm echoes through history, carrying the voices of countless oppressed peoples, and now, it joins a chorus of lament rising from creation itself. From ecosystems collapsing, to species disappearing, from a world groaning under the weight of destruction—How long, O Lord?

Imagine the coral reef, once bursting with color and life, a testament to God's creativity and abundance. Now, oil pollution, warming oceans, and overfishing bleach its brilliance, leaving behind a barren graveyard. Creatures lose their homes, entire ecosystems fall out of balance, and creation cries out for mercy. God is close to their cry too, the God who formed the cosmos out of love and said it was good. The God who sent his Son to redeem all of creation, not just humanity, has his ear close to all who mourn.

**I invite you to reread this Psalm with this perspective in mind, or through the lens of whatever part of creation is on your heart. Where is God moving you in love?**

# March 9, 2025

*Deuteronomy 26:1-3, 6-11*

*When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.".... When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me." You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.*

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Giving back “first fruits” was a way of expressing gratitude for the land. The Israelites had the experience of working the land under harsh conditions for rewards that they would not get to enjoy themselves. This was an experience that could have broken the people’s relationship with the land. We see it today in the descendants of people who were forced to work the land through enslavement or under harsh immigration conditions. God knew the importance of repairing the people’s relationship to land and this happened by a practice of gratitude for what the land offers. How might we begin to repair relationships to Creation in those parts of our society where past traumas remain a barrier?

**Loving God, help us to heal our relationship with the land and to embrace Creation with gratitude. Amen!**

# March 10, 2025

## Monday in the First Week of Lent

*Deuteronomy 26:1-3, 6-11*

*Matthew 25:31-46*

*35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

*37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

*40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

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During Lent we are invited to spend more time with God. Jesus gives us clear advice, if we want to spend time with him, we need to visit the stranger, the poor, the sick, and the prisoner. Jesus, the all powerful, chooses to identify with the powerless.

Due to the rising temperatures, famine, drought, and war, there have been millions more refugees each year, and it seems the numbers will continue to rise. As people who fight for creation justice, we must also fight to bring peace to those most affected by environmental devastation. Refugees and immigrants live in all 50 states, as well as hospitals, prisons, and the homeless. If these people are hard for you to find, then it may be hard for you to find Jesus.

Engaging with those affected by the climate crisis is not about wielding power to play the savior, or to seek personal gain. Instead we must approach with humility, listening first and giving out of joy and genuine love.

Jesus, our King who identifies with the stranger, the poor, the sick, and the prisoner, guide us to the places where we will meet you. Surround us with people who encourage us in the work of creation justice, and keep us mindful of the ways we misuse our own power. Amen.



# March 11, 2025

## Tuesday in the First Week of Lent

Once you have read through this devotional, we invite you to pray through the Lord's prayer with these additional prompts at least three times today.

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Matthew 6:7–15

**9 “This, then, is how you should pray:**

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, Remind us that we do not need to look up to heaven to find you, but that you exist in all that is around us. Let us see your glory in the songs of birds, the creeks that sustain life, and the faces of those around us.**

**10 your kingdom come,  
your will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.** May we see your kingdom as something we are called to embody now. Align our hearts with your justice, embolden us to act today.

**11 Give us today our daily bread.** Help us remember that our sustenance does not come from our own striving but from your provision. Teach us gratitude for the soil, the rain, the hands that have labored to bring food to our tables, and the creatures that have given their lives. May we seek ways to ensure that all your children are fed.

**12 And forgive us our debts,**

as we also have forgiven our debtors. God forgive us for the systems that we exist in that exploit the vulnerable parts of society, including creation. Have mercy on our complacency.

**13 And lead us not into temptation,**

but deliver us from the evil one. Teach our hearts to love creation as you do, and actively work to protect it. Save our hearts from apathy, thinking we are unable to bring change.

# March 12, 2025

## Wednesday in the first week of Lent

*Jonah 3:1–10*

*The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.... Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.*

*When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish."*

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When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed God's mind about the calamity that had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Being in community with Creation is a recognition of our interconnectedness. As evil as the city of Nineveh may have been, the king recognized this fact. It was not enough for him that the human citizens of the city should fast and grieve their injustices. He brought the animals into the act of repentance.

We often include Creation in our acts of injustice. Our non-human kin are often unwitting accessories to the crimes we commit against each other and God. There was wisdom in what the King of Nineveh did. It wasn't that the animals needed to repent, it was that the community needed to be made right and that included the non-human parts of it. As we seek to repair the brokenness in our relationship with God, it may be wise to think of how we invite Creation into that process.

**God in community, remind us that we are kin to every tree, bird, fish, and animal on this planet and that what we do affects them. Help us to care for the whole of our community! Amen.**

# March 13, 2025

## Thursday in the first week of Lent

*Matthew 7:7–12*

*Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

*“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”*

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We instinctively know how to take care of the things that we love. We protect them. We nurture them. We honor them. We do this with people that we love as well as possessions that mean something to us. Even though it seems our very nature is selfish, once something finds a place in our hearts, we can't help ourselves but to let that affection spill over into our actions. This is, in part, what it means to be created in God's image. In the same way that God gives to us from the overflow of God's love, we give to others from the overflow of ours.

Yet when we say that we have love for Creation while ignoring the impacts of our energy use then we might as well be serving our children rocks for dinner. The thing is we know what our planet needs. More often than not, what is missing is the will to do it and the collective action to do it en masse.

The so-called “Golden Rule” need not only be a principle that applies to our human relationships. We can put it into practice with all of Creation. We know how we ourselves want to be loved and we know how to both give a good gift to our loved ones and how to be a good gift for them. Conversely, the planet generously offers us its good gifts daily. The challenge for us going forward is to do for Creation what Creation does for us so freely.

**Giver of all good gifts, we give thanks that you so generously provide for our needs. Now open our hearts to give back with the same level of generosity that we have received. Amen.**

# March 14, 2025

## Friday in the first week of Lent

*Ezekiel 18:21–28*

*If the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all my statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die. None of the transgressions that they have committed shall be remembered against them; for the righteousness that they have done they shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live? But when the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity and do the same abominable things that the wicked do, shall they live? None of the righteous deeds that they have done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which they are guilty and the sin they have committed, they shall die.*

*Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die.*

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God’s desire isn’t for the wicked to suffer. God’s desire is that the wicked change their ways. Sometimes in the moments of seemingly righteous anger, our sole focus becomes hoping that “they” might get what they deserve. But God’s mercy is such that the time is never too late for those who have committed injustice to change direction and start down a path of reconciliation. This is good news. It’s the good news!

Appealing to the shared humanity of those we see contributing to our many environmental crises is a far better posture to take than denying their humanity. It’s also helpful for us to remember the times when we are the wicked and that the mercy that we’d wish extended to us should be the same mercy that we extend to others. The flourishing that we seek is a flourishing for all of Creation, and that includes other humans, even those whose goals seem to be to watch the world burn.

**Merciful God, it is not our job to condemn nor is condemnation your desire. Help us to agents of grace so that all of us who miss the mark might turn from evil and live. Amen.**

# March 15, 2025

## Saturday in the first week of Lent

*Matthew 5:43–48*

*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; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

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It’s often been said that Jesus divides the world into two kinds of people: our neighbors, who we are called to love, and our enemies, who we are called to love. It is ultimately the hardest part of following Christ, that we’re called to see the image of Christ in the faces of those we despise the most. And yet if anything is clear in the Bible, it is this.

The sun shines on the evil and the good and the rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous. We all share in the good gifts of Creation. It’s that common humanity, that common creatureliness that we are called to love. We all hunger, we all thirst, we all feel the breeze on our skin. We walk on the same grass, breathe the same air, and depend on the same water. Jesus reminds his disciples of the shared experience of Creation that we have as humans and that that shared experience should call us to empathy and compassion.

It’s hard right now to pray for certain lawmakers who seem content with rolling back environmental protections. It’s difficult to pray for the CEO’s pocketing billions of dollars at the expense of clean air and water. It feels almost impossible to pray for those who see that the degradation of the environment as the only way to keep the economy going. And yet this is the task ahead of us. It’s not just to move forward with love for Creation. It’s to recognize those we oppose as a part of the Creation that we love.

**Gracious God, teach us how to love, even when it is hard. Teach us to love those who make our blood boil and our fists clench. Remind us of our shared humanity and may your love overcome our hate. Amen.**

# March 16, 2025

*Luke 13:31-35*

*Some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

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Jesus often employed imagery from Creation for his parables, and yet there is something striking about the picture that he paints here. On one hand is rebuking the city of Jerusalem and the “fox” Herod. On the other hand, he compares himself and his love for the city (including those threatening his life) as the protective love of a mother hen gathering her chicks. Jesus is using Creation to contrast two opposing views of power.

Foxes have power, but it isn't the overwhelming force of a lion. It is conniving, stealthy... almost cowardly. The maternal power of a hen, by contrast, is courageous, protective, and self sacrificial. Jesus is aware of the damage the “fox” can do to him, but is far more concerned by what the fox can do to his “brood” in the city. More could be said about the decidedly masculine image of the fox versus the decidedly feminine image of the hen, but suffice to say that Jesus' power is one that neither victimizes nor cowers.

Following Jesus into Jerusalem or wherever he may lead us, means adopting his image of power. It means avoiding wiles and trickery and standing on the side of the vulnerable with integrity. That includes the vulnerable members of Creation's community.

**Protecting God, give us the fierce, defending love that Jesus had for all of Creation that is being victimized by liars and thieves. Amen.**

# March 17, 2025

*Psalm 79: 5-13*

*How long, O Lord? Will you be angry for ever?*

*Will your jealous wrath burn like fire?*

*Pour out your anger on the nations*

*that do not know you,*

*and on the kingdoms*

*that do not call on your name.*

*For they have devoured Jacob*

*and laid waste his habitation.*

*Do not remember against us the iniquities of our ancestors;*

*let your compassion come speedily to meet us,*

*for we are brought very low.*

*Help us, O God of our salvation,*

*for the glory of your name;*

*deliver us, and forgive our sins,*

*for your name's sake.*

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There is a place for lament in our lives. There is a time for asking God “how long will this last?” It may feel like we’re questioning God’s faithfulness and sovereignty. But God can handle our questions and, more importantly, it does us good to ask them.

While it is important that there is hope in our work, it is just as important that we take an honest assessment of where we are and to allow the realities to get into our souls. Our children will never know the relatively stable weather patterns that we knew. Wildfires like those that have recently ravaged Los Angeles are becoming more frequent and more deadly. Many of our leaders seem unwilling to even acknowledge that we have a problem.

How long, O lord???

There is nothing wrong with the grief, anger, and loss that we feel. Our Scripture makes room for all of it. God makes room for all of it.

**God... how long? Will it always be this way? We long to see Your will done on this earth. We long to see your justice. Please, come to our aid! Amen.**

# March 18, 2025

*Isaiah 1:16–20*

*Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove the evil of your doings  
from before my eyes;  
cease to do evil,  
learn to do good;  
seek justice,  
rescue the oppressed,  
defend the orphan,  
plead for the widow.  
Come now, let us argue it out,  
says the Lord:  
though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be like snow;  
though they are red like crimson,  
they shall become like wool.  
If you are willing and obedient,  
you shall eat the good of the land;  
but if you refuse and rebel,  
you shall be devoured by the sword;  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

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If... “if” is an important word here. The prophet tells the people that they are at a decisive moment. They stand between a future where the land is restored and they get to enjoy its bounty and a time of destruction. There’s still a chance for them, but the evil, injustice, and oppression have to stop now!

We too are at a pivotal moment in human history. We can’t go on as we have. We have to protect those who are most vulnerable to climate disaster, now! We have to turn away from greed and convenience and make sure this world’s abundance is shared equitably now! Yes, we’ve made mistakes. And yet God is ready to make a deal with us; turn from the ways of our past and the goodness of the land will be ours to enjoy. The choice is ours.

***Loving God, we have rebelled against you. Time after time we have ignored the cries of the vulnerable and turned instead to our own comfort. Help us to turn back to you, for our own good and for the good of the land. Amen.***



# March 19, 2025

## Wednesday in the Second Week of Lent, St Joseph Day

*Luke 2:41-52*

*46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." 49 He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.*

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Although just a boy, Jesus was always fully God and fully human. He had the power to calm seas, perform miracles, and create life, yet he chose to be born of a woman and sustained by an earthly family. In this passage, Jesus lingers in his heavenly Father's house, displaying a deep intimacy and knowledge of God. But by the end, he chooses to submit to his earthly parents.

Jesus lived in obedience to both his heavenly Father and his earthly family. This dual allegiance did not create disunity, but it did create tension, seen here and later in the Gospels, when Jesus redefines family as those who do the will of God. We, too, are children of God, navigating the tension between divine authority and earthly structures. This struggle is especially clear in creation justice work, as we seek to serve God while often encountering systems that resist God's will of care and restoration of creation. Like Jesus, we are called to discern when to submit and when to challenge, when to wait and when to act.

**After three days they found him... like the disciples after Jesus' death, Mary and Joseph experienced what it was like to lose the Messiah. Calm our anxieties, Lord, and help us to understand your example set forth in Jesus.**

# March 20, 2025

## Thursday in the Second Week of Lent

### *Psalm 1*

*3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;  
everything they do shall prosper.*

*4 It is not so with the wicked;  
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.*

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The Psalms teach us how to pray. The editors of the Psalms understood the importance of preparing the heart for prayer, which is why Psalm 1 and 2 serve as an introduction. They lay the foundation for approaching God, calling us to turn away from wickedness and meditate on the law of the Lord. And then, the Psalmist takes us outside.

How do we grasp what it means to delight in God's law? By looking at the trees planted by streams of water deeply rooted, bearing fruit, full of life and endurance. And what happens when we stray from righteousness? We become like the husk of a seed carried away by the wind, detached, fruitless, never able to take root or grow.

In this season of prayer, let us meditate on God's law and turn away from sin. Not all prayer is good; it can be tainted by our own greed, pride, or jealousy. Instead, let us center ourselves in God's love and law, allowing creation to be our teacher in what it truly means to flourish.

**Open our hearts to you God, reveal to us our sin that we may be healed and pray with your heart, help us learn these truths from your creation.**

# March 21, 2025

## Friday in the Second week of Lent

*Psalm 105:16–22*

*16 Then he called for a famine in the land  
and destroyed the supply of bread.*

*17 He sent a man before them,  
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.*

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Passages like these lead me down a path of "why" questions. God, why would you call for a famine and allow people to suffer? Why would you choose to save through Joseph's pain? Why do natural disasters still happen, and why do people go hungry? Why did you call this to be?

**When a passage stirs this many questions, we invite you to linger with it, don't rush past the discomfort.** What is clear is that God is the active mover. God calls the famine, God sends Joseph ahead to preserve life, and God holds power over the land, creation, and time itself. This means God is not distant from creation but deeply involved. God did not create and then let nature run its course; rather, all creatures look to God to give them their food at the proper time (Psalm 104:27).

At the same time, creation is drawn into God's plan of salvation. The land moves from barrenness to abundance, and Joseph becomes an instrument of restoration and goodness. The story is complex, so is creation, and so is God. Let us sit with that mystery and admire the power of God.

# March 22, 2025

## Saturday in the Second week of Lent

*Luke 15:11-32*

*25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.*

---

Revival preachers boldly proclaim the story of the lost son and the father's open-armed embrace at his return. And rightly so, it's a powerful story of restoration for those who have wandered and fear they may no longer have a home with God. But many of us, if we're honest, relate more to the older brother.

Many of us have been aware of the climate crisis for years, tirelessly working for the sake of creation and for God. Then, suddenly, new voices enter the conversation, people who once dismissed or even opposed the movement. And yet, they are welcomed with open arms, their voices amplified.

What about all the work I have done? Where is my recognition? How can I make my voice louder? Don't they realize they were harming the movement just last year?

These are hard emotions to wrestle with. But listen, God has come outside to you, pleading with you to join the celebration. The invitation is for you, too. Rejoice in new ideas and new allies. All that God has is already yours, and there is a place, and a warm embrace, waiting for you as well.

# March 23, 2025

*Luke 13:3-9*

*Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"*

---

The long history of biblical interpretation has mostly looked at parables like this and seen the fault in the fruitless tree. Clearly a tree that has produced no fruit is a tree that is not living up to its purpose and is disposable. The inference then becomes that humans who do not live up to their purpose are disposable as well.

But both Jesus' original audience would have known something about tending to fig trees and the questions that would have come up for them likely would not have been "what's wrong with the tree", but "what's wrong with the owner?". Even today, any competent gardener will tell you that whether or not a plant produces has far more to do with the conditions than the plant itself.

There is a rebuke here, not of the people not producing fruit, but of the leaders, specifically the religious leaders, who aren't helping people to be all that God created them to be. Are we giving people what they need to thrive? Are we giving Creation what it needs to thrive?

**Merciful God, forgive us for neglecting our role as tenders of your garden. Help us to provide for those the world might consider fruitless and retake our place as keepers of the garden. Amen.**

# March 24, 2025

## Monday in the Third Week of Lent

*2 Kings 5:1–15b*

*11 But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.*

*13 Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’!” 14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.*

---

"Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the ones in Israel?" Naaman, a powerful Syrian commander, expected a grand task to heal his leprosy. But Elisha told him to do something simple: dip in the murky, unimpressive waters of the Jordan, waters that looked incapable of making him clean.

We often expect that healing creation requires something grand. But more often than not, we are called to the small, faithful acts of buying local, consuming less, tending a garden, planting trees, advocating for the vulnerable, or teaching our communities. The work of restoration isn't always installing solar panels, divesting corporations, or establishing protected lands. Would we be more eager if we were called to the great thing?

Yet, we must listen to Naaman's servant and trust in the "insignificant" tasks. A life of ordinary faithfulness, entrusted to God, makes way for the extraordinary.

**God, encourage us in the small things. Help us see their cleansing power. And when we are called to the great things, give us strength. Amen.**

# March 25, 2025

## Tuesday in the Third Week of Lent, the Annunciation

*Luke 1:26-38*

*26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.*

---

Celebrating the Annunciation in the middle of Lent might feel out of place... yet in exactly nine months we will celebrate Christmas. This moment of joyful news seems to stand in tension with the solemnity of Lent. But looking closer, we see the connections. Jesus' coming was deeply tied to sin, arriving to cleanse and restore. Mary's pregnancy, a season of waiting, mirrors our own Lenten waiting for Jesus' resurrection.

Mary's body began to groan with the pains of bringing life into the world physically, socially, and spiritually. In the same way, creation groans for renewal, longing for Christ's return. Lent invites us to wait and groan alongside the world's suffering, anticipating resurrection and new life.

Mary was outcast and looked down upon for her pregnancy outside of marriage, yet she remained faithful as new life formed within her. When we are misunderstood, rejected, or burdened by the brokenness around us, we can cling to the miraculous gift of Christ's life within us. He is making all things new, and in our waiting, we hold fast to the promise of new creation.

**Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

# March 26, 2025

## *Psalm 78*

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

*I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings from of old,  
things that we have heard and known,  
that our ancestors have told us.*

*We will not hide them from their children;  
we will tell to the coming generation  
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,  
and the wonders that he has done.*

*He established a decree in Jacob,  
and appointed a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach to their children;  
that the next generation might know them,  
the children yet unborn,  
and rise up and tell them to their children,*

---

What are our children learning from us about how to care for God's Creation? Are they learning that it is disposable? Are they learning that it is just a bunch of resources for our consumption? Are they trusting that technology will fix it?

The answer for most of us is that our children are learning all about the crisis that our planet is in. The problem is, they're not hearing about it from the church. They are not hearing that caring for Creation is a part of what it means to be a part of the people of God. The Psalmist knew that imparting the values and concerns of the community onto the next generation was a crucial component in making sure that the community continued to move faithfully into the future.

**God, give us the words to teach the generations that come after us a deep love for your Creation, so that they may be its defenders and advocates for years to come Amen.**



# March 27, 2025

*Jeremiah 7:23–28*

*But this command I gave them, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you, so that it may be well with you.’ Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but, in the stubbornness of their evil will, they walked in their own counsels, and looked backwards rather than forwards. From the day that your ancestors came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day; yet they did not listen to me, or pay attention, but they stiffened their necks. They did worse than their ancestors did. So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. You shall say to them: This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.*

---

“They looked backwards and not forwards”. Certainly there was a time in our history where we thought that fossil fuels would usher in a bright new future. Certainly there was a time when we assumed that plastics would create a world of convenience and ease. But knowing what we know now, why would we want to go back to those times.

The warnings about where we’ve been and where it might take us are all around us. More importantly, it is within our power to change course. Yet it often feels like we’re too stubborn, too stuck in our ways, and too convinced of our own greatness to change direction. It would be harsh to hear God say about us that we “did not accept discipline” and that “truth has perished”, yet it seems we may not be too far off from the words of the prophet.

**God, forgive our stubbornness. Help us to look to the future that you have in store for us instead of the one that we create with our hands. Help us to be people who hear the truth and change our ways accordingly. Amen.**

# March 28, 2025

*Mark 12:28–34*

*One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, ‘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 neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’ Then the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that “he is one, and besides him there is no other”; and “to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength”, and “to love one’s neighbour as oneself”,—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.’ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ After that no one dared to ask him any question.*

---

Loving God and loving neighbor are ultimately two sides of the same coin. It’s more important than how we worship, how much money we donate, or any other of our religious practices. In Jesus ministry, he was always pushing his listeners to a more expansive vision of the word “neighbor”. It’s more than our families and friends. Our neighbor is the foreigner, the outcast, or anyone in need of compassion.

In our day, it feels just as important to expand our definitions of neighbor to include both our non-human neighbor and our future neighbor. What does it look like for us to extend loving care to our kin with fur, feathers, scales, and leaves? What does it look like to extend love, as some of our indigenous siblings do down to the seventh generation. It seems that if there is any endeavor worthwhile in these times, it is extending our neighborhood across both space and time.

**Loving God, you made us from love and for love. May we seek to widen the circles of care and compassion to all of your Creation and to those to whom we will leave this world in the future. Amen.**

# March 29, 2025

## *Hosea 6:1–6*

*Come, let us return to the Lord;  
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;  
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.*

*After two days he will revive us;  
on the third day he will raise us up,  
that we may live before him.*

*Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;  
his appearing is as sure as the dawn;  
he will come to us like the showers,  
like the spring rains that water the earth.'*

*What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?*

*What shall I do with you, O Judah?*

*Your love is like a morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes away early.*

*Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,  
I have killed them by the words of my mouth,  
and my judgement goes forth as the light.*

*For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.*

---

When do the prophets appear? In times when the people's "love is like a morning cloud, like dew that goes away early". The prophets' job is always to point us back to God which in turn means turning back to love. It's not about having the commandments posted on buildings or mandating a certain manner of prayer. It doesn't matter what our worship looks like if our hearts have grown cold to what is around us.

God uses Creation to teach us. While our love may be like dew or a cloud, God's love is the rain that soaks into the earth and brings forth new life. Perhaps then an indicator of if we're loving as God would have us to love is whether or not the life around us is flourishing.

**Teach us to love as you do, merciful God. Teach us to love in ways that create, nurture, and restore life. Amen.**

# March 30, 2025

## *Joshua 5:9-12*

*The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.*

*While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.*

---

What was the disgrace of Egypt? There are many disgraces that come from being an enslaved people living in a foreign land; loss of language and culture, loss of power and self determination, loss of identity. Among all of those other losses, the writer includes the inability to work the land for themselves. In Egypt, the Israelites toiled on the land, but what they produced went to the Egyptians while they got whatever scraps were leftover. In the wilderness, they wandered as nomads, dependent on the hand of God to provide for them. But now, in a land they can call home, the disgrace of displacement is behind them and their relationship to the land can be restored.

Most of us have lost the joy of being rooted in a place and having that place provide for our needs. In that, we've forgotten how dependent we are on the land and we've lost sight of the fact that the land's health is our own health. The historian would call that a disgrace. The nature of empire is to either separate us from land altogether or to reduce our relationship to land to toil for a commodity we can't enjoy. How might we begin to free ourselves from the shackles of empire and find joy and gratitude in the land once more?

**God, restore our relationship to the land so that through the land, our relationship to you and our neighbor might be restored as well. Amen.**

# March 31, 2025

## *Isaiah 65:17, 20–25*

*I am about to create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered  
or come to mind.*

*They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*

*They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

*They shall not labor in vain,  
or bear children for calamity;  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord--  
and their descendants as well.*

*Before they call I will answer,  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;*

*but the serpent-- its food shall be dust!*

*They shall not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.*

---

Often in environmental spaces, you will hear people express visions of a future for Creation that does not include humans. The prophet though, imagines humans living in a world where people live out the fullness of their years, enjoy the work of their own hands, and resist the urge to dominate one another. Humanity's resistance to misusing its power has a ripple effect for Creation. In a world where the ultimate predator learns self control, the other predators learn another way to be.

**Just God, may your vision for your Creation become our reality.  
May there be peace on earth and let it begin with us. Amen.**

# April 1, 2025

## *Psalm 46*

*God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.*

*God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.*

*The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.*

*The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

---

“We will not fear though the earth should change”. This is a bold statement, one that may not always be easy to confidently make. The changes that we see in our world - warming temperatures, unstable weather patterns, increasing climate disasters - inspire a great deal of fear about the world that is being left to future generations. Add to that the uncertainties we see in our nation and others around the world and slipping into outright terror feels like a reasonable response to where we are. God being our refuge is most relevant in those times when we are in need of one. It's not a guarantee that all will be well in the immediate future, but it is a promise that God will be with us as the oceans rise and the nations crumble. It's a reminder that we still need to care for one another in tangible ways as all around us feels like chaos.

**Faithful God, we know that you will be our help when the morning dawns. Be with us through these dark nights and tumultuous times. Amen.**

# April 2, 2025

## Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

***Isaiah 49:8–15***

*13 Shout for joy, you heavens;*

*rejoice, you earth;*

*burst into song, you mountains!*

*For the Lord comforts his people*

*and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.*

*14 But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me,*

*the Lord has forgotten me.”*

*15 “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast*

*and have no compassion on the child she has borne?*

*Though she may forget,*

*I will not forget you!”*

---

In the brokenness of the world, even a mother can forget the child she nursed. But God our mother will never forget us, rather God will have compassion on those who are afflicted and comfort them.

This deep love moves the heavens, earth, and mountains to burst into song! God is committed to God’s people. We rejoice with the rest of creation. Our destiny is tied with all the heavens and the earth, we were all created out of nothing together, and we are all moving toward the same end.

So many people in the church are so deeply rooted in the “all will burn” theology or the belief that we are bringing the kingdom of God. But it is neither of these extremes, the world is going to be transformed in love. We are invited to join in the song of praise.

**The Lord is good to all; God has compassion on all God has made.  
All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you.  
(Psalm 145:3-6) Amen!**

# April 3, 2025

## Thursday in the Fourth Week of Lent

***Exodus 32:7–14***

*7 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8 They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 9 “I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”*

---

As humans we like things we can control, things that we can use when we need it and then put away when we don't. We prefer what we can see and touch, and what is predictable. We like to have assurance and accessibility.

Here we encounter one of the many famous downfalls of God's people. They have been saved from slavery and freed through the mighty Exodus, but instead of waiting on God, they decided to make a god they could see, touch, and control. The interesting part is that they did not start worshipping cows, trees, or the sun, but rather they made a golden image of a calf. Nature, like God, is not easy to control.

This agrarian community knew that the land could bring drought or abundance, that to thrive alongside it, one had to nurture and work with it. A golden idol, however, is static, neat, predictable, and lifeless.

Waiting on God is unpredictable. At times it feels like a drought, and sometimes feels like we are flourishing with an abundant harvest, we have to care for the relationship, and work with it. It is not neat and tidy, but full of life and beauty.

**God, show us where we have made idols instead of waiting on you.  
Teach us through the seasons of creation about your own character.**



# April 4, 2025

## Friday in the Fourth Week of Lent

*Psalm 34:15–22*

*15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their cry.*

*16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil,  
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.*

*17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them  
and delivers them from all their troubles.*

*18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted  
and will save those whose spirits are crushed.*

---

One of the most challenging spiritual practices I've encountered is reading the Psalms from the perspective opposite of the Psalmist. While we often relate to the Psalmist's cries for justice, what happens when we place ourselves in the position of the one who has caused harm?

This practice requires humility and the guidance of the Spirit. First, read the Psalm as you normally would, bringing your own pain and longing for justice before God. What burdens do you need to lay down? Where do you desperately want the Lord to intervene?

Then, read it again, this time imagining yourself as the one against whom these words are spoken. Who might see you as the wicked one? Could it be the poor, the oppressed, a coworker, or even creation itself? Where is God inviting you to repentance and to the work of healing?

**Take time to pray through these questions. Then write a prayer in response as the wicked. What does repentance look like?**

# April 5, 2025

## Saturday in the Fourth Week of Lent

*John 7:37–52*

*On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*

*By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

---

Many of us have come across a stagnant pond pinching our noses at the stench, watching algae creep across the surface, shivering at the thought of touching something so unclean. It’s hard to imagine that, for many, this is their only source of water. How do we reconcile the reality that more people die from unclean water than from war?

Jesus and his audience understood this reality. They dug wells, built aqueducts, and knew that survival depended on access to flowing, clean water. With this knowledge, Jesus stood on the last and greatest day of the festival and proclaimed, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.” He offered more than physical refreshment, he promised the Spirit, a never-ending source of life.

Yet Jesus’ words do not stop at personal renewal. Whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from within them. This is both an invitation and a responsibility. We are not only called to drink but to become sources of life, justice, and renewal in a parched world.

**O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.** (Book of Common Prayer 1979, p 259)

# April 6, 2025

## *Isaiah 43:16-21*

*Thus says the Lord,  
who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters,  
who brings out chariot and horse,  
army and warrior;  
they lie down, they cannot rise,  
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:  
Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.  
The wild animals will honor me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,  
the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.*

---

The old thing God did was use the destructive power of Creation to sweep away the army of the Egyptians. The new thing God is doing is creating rivers in the desert. The old thing destroyed life, the new thing restores life. The old thing used the waters to drown the horses and their riders. The new thing is so miraculous that the jackal and ostrich join in praise. God's desire is for all of Creation to experience the renewal that is to come. God is doing a new thing and the question is "do we not perceive it?"

**God, give us the eyes to see the new thing you are doing. Give us the ears to hear your proclamation of new life. May we perceive it and live into it. Amen!**

# April 7, 2025

## Monday in the Fifth Week of Lent

*John 8:3–11*

*The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, “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.”*

---

Why was only the woman brought forward to be condemned when the law demands both parties be stoned? Like the religious leaders in this passage, we often choose who to condemn and who to ignore, including ourselves. This same distortion plays out in how we treat creation justice. When environmental destruction is exposed, blame is often placed selectively, falling on the most vulnerable while the powerful escape accountability. We criticize individuals who work in mining or farming when they see no other possible jobs. We shame low-income communities for their carbon footprint while they suffer the worst effects of climate change.

Jesus offers us a different way. Instead of responding with condemnation, he kneels down, touches the earth, and writes in the dust. He calls out hypocrisy, not to destroy, but to invite repentance. *Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone.* No one remains.

**Jesus, reveal to us the sin in our own lives that we may walk in love and newness of life. Amen.**

# April 8, 2025

## Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

### *Numbers 21:4–9*

*They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.*

---

This is another example of an uncomfortable passage. I invite you to sit with it in any way you need, and when you're ready, ponder the words below.

The creation justice activism road can feel like perpetual Lent, like wandering in the desert for 40 years. “Why have you brought us up to this task to die in the wilderness? There is no fruit! There is no water! And we detest the changes that are coming!” The Israelites' frustration in the wilderness mirrors our own impatience when we work tirelessly for renewal and justice but see little change. Let this be the snake bite reminder that God is providing you manna daily and that God, too, desires for you to enter the promised land. Even when we cannot yet see the place where milk and honey flow for all, it exists. When we feel overwhelmed by devastation and oppression, we can lift our eyes to Jesus on the cross. He knows the pain of fighting for justice so that all may enter the land.

**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)**

# April 9, 2025

## *Daniel 3:14–20,24–28*

*Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?”*

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”*

*Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire.*

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We know how this story ends. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endure the flames, God’s presence appears alongside them, and Nebuchadnezzar praises the God of these brave young men. Let’s not miss the radical nature of what is happening: the Hebrew men defy an imperial edict. They refuse to acknowledge any authority as higher than that of the Creator. They know death is a possibility yet they stand firm.

Standing on the side of Creation may put us in direct opposition with the powers that be. We can learn from Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego that it’s important that we not stand alone. And in the worst of circumstances, we must trust that God is right there with us.

**God, stand with us as we stand together against the injustices happening against your world.**

# April 10, 2025

## **John 8:51–59**

*Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?” Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’ though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.” Then the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

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“Before Abraham was, I am”. In this moment, as he does several times in John’s Gospel, Jesus makes it known that his identity is one and the same as the “I am” who confronted Moses in the burning bush. He is the Creating Word that spoke Creation into existence. And for him, physical death is not the end.

Jesus understands that there is something far worse than the decaying of our bodies. In fact, he knew that death in Creation often sets the stage for new life. But there is a death where we turn our backs on God, neighbor and Creation and then fool ourselves into thinking we are something better than we are. He tried to caution us against that death. The answer is to turn back to love. We won’t always get it perfect, but when we make love the rule of our lives, we defy the death that comes from selfishness and greed. Like Abraham, we live beyond our years.

**God of the living, help us to keep your word so that we might avoid the death that corrodes our soul and turns us against our neighbor. Amen.**

# April 11, 2025

## *Psalm 18:1-7*

*I love you, O Lord, my strength.  
The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.  
I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;  
so I shall be saved from my enemies.*

*The cords of death encompassed me;  
the torrents of perdition assailed me;  
the cords of Sheol entangled me;  
the snares of death confronted me.*

*In my distress I called upon the Lord;  
to my God I cried for help.  
From God's temple God heard my voice,  
and my cry to God reached God's ears.*

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Tradition holds that this psalm was sung by David when he was delivered from the hands of Saul. Imagine a day when Creation will be able to sing this song. Imagine a day when the trees can say that they have been saved from their enemies. Imagine a day when the waters can say once they were surrounded by death, but God drew near to them. Imagine when the rocks can say God was their rock.

Where will we be on that day? Will we be praising along with the community of Creation or will we be the enemy from which Creation was delivered? Will we take refuge with our non-human kin or will they be celebrating having refuge from us? We will have to decide which side that we're going to be on.

**God, may we be a part of Creation's salvation and not her enemy. Allow us to see how our salvation is interwoven with hers. Amen.**



# April 12, 2025

## ***Ezekiel 37:21–28***

*Say, Thus says the Lord God: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions.. .Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

*My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes... I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them forevermore.*

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God's goal is not to abandon the Creation that God has made. It is to live with us among that Creation. A theology that suggests that God's good Creation was made solely for us to deplete it and hoard resources from one another ignores the long line of biblical witness that cast a vision of a united humanity where the Creator lives among the creatures, us included.

That God would want to live among Creation should tell us something of Creation's worth to God. It is not disposable. It is not replaceable. It is not profane. The dream of a Holy God is to live among Holy people within the holiness of Creation. May it be so.

**Loving God, make your home with us, not just within our hearts but within our world, the world you made and loved. Amen.**

# April 13, 2025

## *Luke 19:28-40*

*After telling a parable to the crowd at Jericho, Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,*

*"Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!"*

*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."*

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The stones shouting out would be a marvelous trick, but it would also mean that the disciples had abdicated their responsibility. The stones would have cried if everyone's response to Christ had been that of the Pharisees. At times it feels like Creation is crying because we're unwilling to recognize Christ coming into our lives in the form of others, whether human or non-human. Because we can't see the Divine all around us, the oceans and the temperatures rise, while fires and winds howl.

**Creating God, forgive our silence. Forgive our unwillingness to recognize you in all your many forms and to love you no matter how you may appear to us. Amen!**

# April 14, 2025

*Psalm 36:5-11*

*Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the clouds.*

*Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,  
your judgements are like the great deep;  
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.*

*How precious is your steadfast love, O God!  
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
They feast on the abundance of your house,  
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.  
For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light we see light.*

*O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,  
and your salvation to the upright of heart!  
Do not let the foot of the arrogant tread on me,  
or the hand of the wicked drive me away.*

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The psalmist makes a special point of noting that God's salvation includes animals as well as humans. In fact, God's love extends as high as the heavens and to the depths of the seas and encompasses the inhabitants of both. This means that all living things should experience liberation and healing.

It also means that they should experience protection. We can imagine the cry to not be tread on by "foot of the arrogant" or to be driven away by the "hand of the wicked" as emanating from our fellow creatures, As we proclaim the saving work that God is doing in the world this week, let us be sure to include the creatures of land, sky, and sea, and do our part in their salvation.

**How precious is your steadfast love, O God, for us and for all that you have made! May we declare and work for the salvation of the entire community of Creation. Amen.**

# April 15, 2025

## *John 12:20-26*

*Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.'*

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In our scientific world, we don't think of seeds as "dying" when they go into the ground. The germination process is the beginning of life being created. Yet, with all of our knowledge, we can't ignore the fact that a seed breaks open and gives up its "seedness" to become something else. Everything that made it a seed passes away once a seedling begins to form.

Jesus states clearly that this is what the road of discipleship looks like. The things that we were... our ego, pride, and identity... are all shed for the sake of following in the way of love.

Creation often teaches us that something must die for something else to live. But creation also teaches that the self-giving a seed does leads to the abundance of life that we find in fruit and flowers. The pieces of ourselves that we let go make way for the communities of love that we build with God, our fellow humans, and our fellow creatures. To "hate" our lives is to simply remember that the seed is not the goal.

**God of abundance, give us the courage to lay down what we think our lives ought to be for the community of love, justice, peace that you've imagined for all of your Creation. Amen.**

# April 16, 2025

## ***Hebrews 12:1-3***

*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, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.*

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Doing the work of seeking justice for God's Creation can feel lonely at times. We may feel like we're the only ones in our church that's connecting the dots between our faith and our planet. We may feel like the culture we're in has stopped caring and given over to apathy. We may feel like a lone voice crying in the wilderness.

In those times when we feel we are all alone, we are often encouraged to consider the cloud of witnesses that goes before us. We encourage you to think about those who may have planted the seed of love for Creation in your own soul. But consider as well the trees that have grown around you for centuries, the rivers that feed into your watershed, the native species that have endured the onslaught of invasives. They too stand as witnesses to the power of perseverance.

**Loving God, hold us when we grow weary. Remind us of our ancestors on this Earth who have endured storms, wars, and droughts, so that we might be encouraged to endure what lies ahead. Amen.**

# April 17, 2025

## Maundy Thursday

### *Psalm 116: 1, 10-17*

*12 What shall I return to the Lord  
for all his goodness to me?*

*13 I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the Lord.*

*14 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord  
in the presence of all his people.*

*15 Precious in the sight of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful servants.*

*16 Truly I am your servant, Lord;  
I serve you just as my mother did;  
you have freed me from my chains.*

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# April 18, 2025

## *Psalm 22:1-2*

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?  
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.*

*Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.  
To you they cried, and were saved;  
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.*

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There is a tradition that believes that when Matthew and Mark quoted the first verse of Psalm 22 in their accounts of the Gospel, they were using shorthand to suggest that Jesus quoted the entirety of the Psalm from the cross. It's easy to imagine that at this, his lowest moment, Jesus would quote the first verse, but it's harder to imagine that he would go beyond.

The Psalmist tells a full story, from feeling abandoned by God and being surrounded by adversaries, to crying out to God for help, to praising God's faithfulness to him and to future generations. Could it be that even in his most agonizing moment, Jesus was able to take a long view of history and know that God's work was not done? Do we have the faith to believe that even as we watch the planet being sacrificed for profit and convenience that God's work is not done? It's okay at times to feel that this world is God-abandoned... or more pointedly, has abandoned God. But can we rest in the knowledge that the story is not yet over?

**God, we simultaneously ask why have you forsaken us while acknowledging that you will never forsake us. Sustain us through the darkest hours and give us the faith to believe in bright new days. Amen.**

# April 19, 2025

## ***John 19:38-42***

*Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.*

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There are times when the only right thing to do is to grieve. We take an honest look at what we've lost, remember what it meant to us and wonder if it could have gone any other way. Jesus' disciples did what they knew to do; they took his broken body, cleaned and prepared it as best they could, and put him in the tomb. This wasn't the day for miracles. This was the day to feel the weight of loss and let their hearts be broken open.

Before we jump into our resurrection celebrations, take time to feel the weight of species that have gone extinct, ecosystems lost, and glaciers melted. Reflect on what we as a planet have lost that we can not recover. Ask yourself the question "did it have to be like this?"

**Gracious God, you've told us "blessed are those who mourn, for they be comforted". We know that comfort will come. Be with us as we grieve.. Amen.**



# April 20, 2025

## Easter Sunday

*1 Corinthians 15:19-26*

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

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But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

The heart of the Gospel is a story that asks us to suspend our disbelief when it comes to the laws of Creation. We are challenged to believe that someone who had died, came back in the same form. Nothing in Creation does this. The disciples knew this, the Gospel writers knew this, Paul knew this. And yet they all boldly proclaimed that which goes against the laws of Creation even at the risk of death.

At the end of the day, all of these people had an experience that made them believe that life can be made new. They had an experience that made them believe that the powers of the day were bound to fail and that God's will would, in due time, be done on the earth. The power of that experience was such that it became their lives' singular focus until their own deaths.

Paul refers to Jesus as the "first fruits" from the dead. First fruits were a celebration that life had come from the ground and that more life was going to come. We have the privilege to be a part of that more life to come. We get to continue to declare that our world can be made new and that the powers that seek domination will ultimately fail until death itself has no power over us. And when death has no power, life will be our only pursuit. **Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed!**