



*Journey*  
IN THE SPIRIT

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

AN INVITATION TO A *Holy Lent*  
by Nancy Coon

Lent is a season of reflection, a time to shine the light of Christ into our lives and to consider those things that have kept us from being one with God and one another. This season of 40 days is a tithe of a year of days and provides us with a way of giving ourselves back to God. Lent is an invitation to tithe each day and follow the ancient spiritual practices of framing each day with established times of prayer, entering into traditions that have illumined and guided the paths of Christians for two thousand years. These disciplines of prayer and contemplation of Holy Scripture in the morning, noonday, evening and the end of the day invite the Holy Spirit to penetrate deeply into our lives, opening our eyes to the very presence of God both with and within us.

The Readings and the Collects for this devotional guide are based on the Sunday Eucharistic Readings for the Holy Days and Sundays in Lent, Year C. As you read, reflect and pray each day, may you be brought closer to the heart of God and know the love of Jesus Christ as reflected in this ancient Celtic prayer.

Christ, as a light, illumine and guide me.  
Christ, as a shield, overshadow me.  
Christ under me, Christ over me,  
Christ beside me, on my left and my right.  
Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ within and without me.  
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak  
In the heart of each who speaks unto me.  
Christ, as a light, illumine and guide me.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
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SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES:  
8:30 a.m. *Holy Eucharist (Rite II)*  
10:45 a.m. *Holy Eucharist (Rite II) with choir*

[www.dsholyspirit.org](http://www.dsholyspirit.org)

## Calendar of Events

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16**

Shrove Tuesday  
Pancake Dinner  
5:30-7:30 pm  
Senior Citizens Center

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

Ash Wednesday Liturgy  
Noon and 6:30 pm

**SUNDAY, MARCH 28**

Palm Sunday  
8:30 and 10:45 am

**THURSDAY, APRIL 1**

Maundy Thursday Liturgy  
7:00 pm

**FRIDAY, APRIL 2**

Good Friday Liturgy  
Noon-3:00 pm

**SATURDAY, APRIL 3**

Community  
Easter Egg Hunt  
Noon

**SUNDAY, APRIL 4**

Easter Sunday  
VIGIL: 6:30 am  
HOLY EUCHARIST: 8:30 & 10:45 am

**WEDNESDAYS FEB. 24-MAR. 24**

**Lenten Evening Program**

*for all ages*

WORSHIP: 5:30-6:00 pm  
MEAL: 6:00-6:30 pm  
PROGRAM: 6:30-7:30 pm

## ASH WEDNESDAY *by Dan Morehead*

Psalms 103; Isaiah 38:1-12; 2 Corinthians 4:20-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21

Ash Wednesday probably looks a bit anachronistic to most non-Christians. Smearing a cross of black ashes on our foreheads, with talk of “lamenting our sins” and “acknowledging our wretchedness,” (BCP page 264) probably strikes most outsiders as positively medieval. Nowadays, people laugh (or sneer) at sermons like Jonathan Edwards’ “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” All this talk of sin, ashes, sackcloth and penance (Joel 2) is most people’s idea of what is *wrong* with religion. Why not just dispense with it? After all, God is love (Psa 103), not a punishing, angry taskmaster. Haven’t we moved beyond this primitive view of God as a vengeful Victorian father? Let’s quit putting people on a guilt trip, right?

The problem, of course, is not an angry God. The problem of sin is not on God’s side, it is on our side. God is not holding sin against us. Rather, we are the ones who hold back from God because of our sin. We are the ones who carry the deep sense of shame over who we really are inside. We are the ones who deep down believe that no one would love us if anyone really knew us. We are the ones who think hateful thoughts in the line at the grocery store, should anyone dare cut in front of us. We are the ones who are hardest on those closest to us, who would be ashamed for anyone but family to see us whining, yelling or cursing the way we do at home or in the car. We are the ones who pass by suffering people every day and do not help. We don’t like to talk about sin because it makes us feel bad about ourselves. And we don’t like to feel bad about ourselves because we start remembering that we are sinners, sinners who are too embarrassed, too angry, too hurt, too resentful and (yes) too guilty to let any human being truly love us, much less Almighty God.

And so the ashes do not put some arbitrary label of “sinner” upon us. They do not paint a picture of human beings as miserable, horrible, worthless creatures. They simply display the darkness that resides within each of us, a darkness so deep and painful that we rarely look it in the face. And it displays that darkness in the sign of the cross, a sign that our darkness, our shame, our guilt is indeed loved by God and forgiven by God and redeemed by God. The cross is a sign that God is with us, even in the midst of our sin, even in the midst of our deepest darkness (2 Cor 5). The sign of the cross is the sign that God, in Jesus Christ, willingly joins us in our worst pain and suffering and guilt. And it is a sign that the darkness does not have the last word. In the end, the cross shall redeem our sin, even as the light overcomes the darkness.

### COLLECT:

*Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

# FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT *by Patricia Hall*

Psalms 91; Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Romans 10:5-13; Luke 4:1-13

*“Those who love me, I will deliver;  
I will protect those who know my name.”*

We have witnessed and experienced Ash Wednesday and have begun our Lenten journey through the wilderness. Today’s readings contain the messages of offering our first fruits to God, St. Paul’s letter on the gift of justification by faith through grace, and the temptation of Jesus after his forty days of fasting. Psalm 91 reads more like a comforting homily than a prayer and addresses the listener rather than God until the last three verses. The tone is serene and calm and the message promises escape from fear. It is known as one of the Wisdom psalms, which is a literary genre in which the goal is to argue for the superiority of God and his ways.

We know the Apostles read the Psalms along with all the Hebrew scriptures. They read them, they were fed by them, and they carried the words in their hearts. We, too, read a Psalm every Sunday and in fact every day one is included in the Lectionary. How beautiful Psalm 91 must have sounded when it was sung! How calming and promising are its assurances. St. Benedict insisted that his followers read the full complement of 150 Psalms each week in the knowledge that they were a valuable tool in living the Benedictine spiritual life. How timely this Psalm is at the beginning of Lent when we know what is coming in the life of Christ and his disciples.

Have you ever entertained the notion of writing a psalm yourself? They are paeans of adoration, trust, love, despair, confession and misery. They are the voices, the pleas, the exaltation, the wailing of the human condition speaking to our God with humility and in need. In their humanness, we are able to identify with the Psalmists and connect with their messages. Psalms extol the Lord and his followers. They plea for relief from their sorrows and illnesses. They comfort the weary and hold up those in despair.

Psalms are our balm when we find ourselves in the wilderness.



## COLLECT:

*Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT by Andrea Moynihan

Psalm 27; Genesis 15:1-12; 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:22-35

*“And though war should rise up against me,  
yet will I put my trust in him.”*

The forty days of Lent symbolize Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness, his war with temptation and the devil. Jesus was driven by the Spirit, but in our own lives, many things can drive us to wars in the wilderness. Personally, the loss of a pregnancy, the near-fatal illness of another child and betrayal by a trusted loved one have all sent me deep into the desolate desert.

For you, perhaps it was crushing grief, or a crippling illness. Maybe financial hardship or overwhelming responsibilities pushed you to the brink. Whatever caused the war inside, we all recognize the bleak place that it takes us – the empty wilderness and all its temptations.

Temptation for Jesus came in the form of the devil and his various torments, both physical and emotional. In our own battles, devilish temptations also await: substance abuse, inappropriate relationships or a hardening of heart – anything to make the pain of the fight go away. And for many of us, the war lasts far longer than the biblical forty days.

But just as the angels finally appeared and waited on Jesus, so God is there to meet our needs in the wilderness. It may be comfort through the Scriptures, a hand extended by a friend or the random kindness of a stranger in a timely moment. No matter what war rises up against us, or what wilderness we find ourselves in, God knows when we are struggling, just as Jesus struggled. And just as He did not abandon Jesus, God will not abandon us. Though our personal “forty days” may seem like an eternity, steadfast faith, trust and patience will win our war, just as they helped Jesus win his.

*“O tarry and await the Lord’s pleasure;  
be strong and he shall comfort your heart;  
wait patiently for the Lord.”* Psalm 27:18



### COLLECT:

*O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT by Joyce Gray

Psalm 103; Genesis 15:1-12; 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13: 22-35

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul.”*

This psalm, credited to David, begins and ends with the same pronouncement: “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” The body of the text declares many reasons for praising God by responding to this invitation. We are to praise the God who created us, knows us, forgives us, heals us, frees us and provides for us: the God of limitless love and tender compassion.

Psalm 103, in reviewing God’s constant care, calls me to trust, to rely more fully on the Creator. When I’m feeling weak, saddened by the pain and suffering I see around me, listening to this thanksgiving prayer lifts my spirits and lightens the load I sometimes think I must carry alone. When do you need a boost? What causes you to doubt? To fear?



### COLLECT:

*Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

God does not force this Love on us. Our part is to receive it, to consent to being loved. That may seem simple, yet I sometimes find it difficult to do. How could God love me when I’ve turned away, refused to listen, believed “I can do it myself?” That’s when I need to contemplate verses 11 and 12: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God’s steadfast love towards those who revere him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins from us!” Think about it: If we travel south far enough, we’ll eventually come to a point where we are headed north. But from nowhere on earth can we travel east until we are going west! God has completely, irrevocably removed our sin. Praise God! Yes! Accept God’s unconditional Love. It’s there for the taking.

Although any day is a good day to listen to the Psalmist, Lent seems like an especially appropriate time to ponder and pray through this Psalm. Let it touch your heart. Let it sing through your whole being. Perhaps you will join me in a chorus of gratitude. This is my prayer.

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT by John Williamson

Psalm 34; Joshua 4:19-24; 4:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:11-32

*“The young lions suffer want and hunger,  
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”*

We all have things that we want. Sometimes we would even define them as needs. But the journey of Christianity is one that takes us on a counter-cultural ride to re-define what it is that our hearts actually long for. The world offers many ‘shiny things’ to get our attention and affection, and offers the promise that they will satisfy our deep wants and needs. But they don’t. They won’t. They can’t. They never have.

The restlessness of the “young lions” is the condition of our hearts as we constantly seek more, or different things that will ultimately, finally, satisfy. But there is no such satisfaction. There is only an endless prowl of “want and hunger” for more.

The only place to find ultimate solace and rest is to “seek the Lord” as the psalmist instructs. This is a letting go of the desire for the things of this world and a humble opening to the satisfaction of God’s promise that we will “lack no good thing.” Our concrete minds jump to thinking that God’s promise is physical, material and will be what *we* would define as good, which typically just means comfortable, if not prosperous. But God is not a genie in a bottle, out only to provide our often self-serving wishes. He has more in store for us. He is more interested in the condition of our hearts and how He can draw us closer to Him.

So what is the “good thing” that God promises? God’s promise has always been to be with us *through* the circumstances of our life, which invariably are filled with both joy and heartache, from the cradle to the grave. And this is good news! This means that nothing more and nothing less than God walking with us is what we need. Our ultimate value cannot be taken from us when we have God as the ultimate “want” in our life. Anything else occupying that position will ultimately fade away, but by aiming our hearts at the eternal source of love itself, God, we can finally let our weary souls rest from “want and hunger.”

As the old hymn reminds us,  
*On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.*



### COLLECT:

*Gracious Father, whose blessed  
Son Jesus Christ came down  
from heaven to be the true  
bread which gives life to the  
world: Evermore give us this  
bread, that he may live in us,  
and we in him; who lives and  
reigns with you and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and for  
ever. Amen.*

## FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT by Rob & Wendy Schneider

Psalm 126; Isaiah 43:16-21; Philippians 3:8-14; Luke 20:9-19

*“Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

A FABLE:

The captain and crew made it to the life boat before the ship went down. As everyone settled in, the oarsman found his spot in the center of the small boat, picked up the oars and began the steady and rhythmic process of rowing.

The captain stood up in the back of the boat to address everyone. “I am still captain even though we are no longer on our ship. I will set a course and...” A wave hit the boat, the captain toppled overboard and sank out of sight immediately. The oarsman continued to row.

The first mate was in the front of the boat, he stood. “I am now in charge and will do my best to guide us to safety. First we will need to...” Another wave, he fell overboard and immediately sank out of sight. The oarsman continued to row.

There were two lieutenants in the back, both rushed to get up to address the boat. They immediately began to argue who had more authority. When the wave hit, both went overboard and sank out of sight. The oarsman continued to row.

Back and forth from the front of the boat to the back, as one would stand to take control, he would fall and another take his place, until only the oarsman remained. And he continued to row, and row, until he arrived at the nearby shore.

***He who rows the boat seldom has time to rock it.***

We often reflect on Paul’s message of perseverance and of how letting worldly concerns distract from what is most important in a personal context. Today we would like to take a different perspective. Over the past twenty years we have been in various leadership positions in the church, local and diocesan. We have seen lots of ups and downs, crisis and celebration. Through it all, we have become convinced that the quiet members who go about their ministries are the source of the perseverance and steadfastness that will allow all to “arrive at the shore”: those who generally utilize their gifts without fanfare, those who prepare the church and grounds for worship, those who minister to the needs of family and neighbors, those who teach and nurture our children, those who tend the sick and elderly. When we focus our time and energies on being good stewards of our gifts, spending our time rowing, we are truly making progress toward the goal of our heavenly prize.

COLLECT:

*Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

# SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY by Kristi Greene

Psalm 118:19-29; Isaiah 45:21-25; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 19:29-40

In recent years, my father has picked up the habit of forwarding me emails, similar to the way that one would receive clippings from the newspaper before the birth of the internet. My dad's emails never arrive with a note or comment or any indication of why he sent it, just a direct forward. At first I found this habit frustrating – and a bit irritating, especially on one of those days when one more email to read felt like one more dish to wash or one more load of laundry to fold. Slowly, though, I began to realize that those forwarded emails were a way of daily communication, and for that, I am grateful. They remind me that he is thinking about me.

One of the emails was a slide presentation of underwater photography – I'm sure you've all seen something similar – but I have to say that I was astonished by the photos. The colors, the plants and the creatures were beautiful beyond belief and as I marveled at each one, I thought about my Heavenly Father having created such indescribable beauty deep in the ocean where very few of his “chosen” will ever see.

From another “father-forward” I received, I learned that the Sun around which Earth orbits is one of 400 billion stars in the Milky Way, which, when compared to others, is a piddling galaxy. There are perhaps 140 billion galaxies in the still-unfolding universe, and if all the stars in the universe were only the size of the head of a pin, they still would fill a collegiate-size football stadium to overflowing more than *3 billion times!* Mind boggling and another aspect of our Heavenly Father's creation that we, as believers, will never really be able to comprehend or truly see.

And all of these things have existed since the time that Jesus, the human manifestation of God, walked on the Earth. So why would God, who created so much more than we can see, choose to have the savior of the world, *the Messiah*, in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, fulfill prophecy by humbly and quietly riding a young donkey and carrying an olive branch of peace in his hands as the people threw their coats on the road before him? Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead and was at the peak of his influence. The people shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” But by the end of the week, they were demanding his death. In fear, most of his followers abandoned him. Their praise ended and Jesus' life was taken because people did not understand who he was and what he meant. The true meaning of Palm Sunday would not be fully “seen” or understood until God brought Jesus back to his followers through his resurrection. The people expected an earthly king who would forever change the world; God gave them a heavenly Kingdom that would never end.

## COLLECT:

*Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

# MAUNDY THURSDAY *by Don Stephenson*

Psalm 78:14-20;23-24; Exodus 12:1-14; I Corinthians 11:23-32; John 13:1-15

The disciples must have been anxious that first Maundy Thursday as they prepared for the Passover meal later that evening. Exodus 12:1-14 records the first Passover meal and outlines the details of the preparation for this important event. Every year Jews would celebrate the Passover by observing the Passover meal, which recalls their bondage in Egypt and their deliverance by God. So the disciples had much to do that day preparing for the event and were probably full of excitement as they gathered for the meal. Later that evening, their world would spin into chaos, but for now excitement was high.

Imagine for a moment the wonder in the minds of the disciples that evening when Jesus tied a towel around himself and started washing the feet of every person present. Imagine the further astonishment when, during the meal, Jesus announced he would soon be sacrificed, and handing the bread and wine to the disciples, proclaimed that these were his body and blood. How could such a special evening get so confused?

On Maundy Thursday we gather as a community of believers to remember. The disciples couldn't grasp the events of that evening, but in I Corinthians 11:23-26, Saint Paul, speaking from hindsight, reminds us that when we take the bread and the wine, we do this in remembrance of the risen Lord. And the Passover meal takes on a whole new meaning for us, because we remember that as we take the bread, Christ is present among us. Moreover, when our feet are washed, we are reminded that we are called to service, and when we serve others we are actually serving God. So on Maundy Thursday, let us remember that God delivers us, let us remember that Christ was sacrificed for us, and let us remember that in service to the least of society, we serve God.

## COLLECT:

*Almighty Father,  
whose dear Son, on  
the night before he  
suffered, instituted  
the Sacrament of his  
Body and Blood:  
Mercifully grant that  
we may receive it  
thankfully in remem-  
brance of Jesus  
Christ our Lord, who  
in these holy myster-  
ies gives us a pledge  
of eternal life; and  
who now lives and  
reigns with you and  
the Holy Spirit, one  
God, for ever and  
ever. Amen.*



## GOOD FRIDAY/HOLY SATURDAY by Elizabeth Williams

Job 14:1-14; Psalm 40:1-14; Hebrews 10:1-25; Matthew 27:57-66

*“Do not, O Lord, withhold your mercy from me. Let your steadfast love and your faithfulness keep me safe forever.”*

Psalms are praise for the journey. The writers of the Psalms heaped words of praise on God as they went about their lives with sureness that their petitions would be heard and answered. The tiny island nation of Haiti is digging out from a 7.0 earthquake that hit the capital of the country – Port Au Prince. There are thousands dead and wounded, many still buried so that it will be some time before we know the final toll. As the people of Haiti wait for the light of day to gather the pieces of their lives together, I wonder at their resiliency, their fortitude and their determination in the face of such devastation.

This is a community that is used to hardship. They are impoverished, largely illiterate with an unemployment rate of 50 percent. And yet, God is evident in their community. On the news, a victim is being treated by a doctor. He was trapped for 14 hours under an apartment building that collapsed. Concrete slabs had fallen on his both his feet. He had minor injuries but his bandages were dirty and needed changing. No antibiotics are available and infection is certain. In spite of his situation, his pain, being buried, being hungry and thirsty, dirty and having no shelter, he says to the doctor “May God bless you.”

In the chaos, God is there. In the silence, God is there. In the overwhelming pain and suffering, God is there. When we hear of someone in need, that a loved one is ill, that someone is in the hospital or even when we hear of a friend dying, there is a call amongst us to help. We come together as a community to bring food, walk dogs, check on houses, bring in mail, call friends and family or simply to hold a hand. That call is the in-dwelling of God answering the many prayers and petitions.

On this darkest of days in the life of the church, know that God is with you. His love and His mercy are with you forever.



### COLLECT:

*Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

# EASTER VIGIL/EASTER DAY by Carol Morehead

Psalm 46 or 118; Isaiah 55:1-11; Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 28:1-10

*“Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples...”*

There was a song that was popular when I was in college that is based on this scripture. It started in almost a hush – ‘Hear the bells ringing, they’re singing that we can be born again. Hear the bells ringing they’re singing Christ is risen from the dead.’ Then it tells the story, of how the angel told them he was alive and to go tell the disciples.

The song then crescendos to a full chorus: Joy to the world! He is risen, Hallelujah!<sup>1</sup>

And isn’t that the amazing story of Easter? That despite death, despite pain, despite suffering or loneliness or anger, there is joy in the knowledge that Christ came and faced death, once, for all. Do we feel overwhelming joy at this news?

Sometimes it can grow stale, this amazing message of hope and love. Because really, as Christians, every day we awaken, resurrected again, washed clean from the days that came before, ready to start new and fresh, again. And yet... too often we awaken with dread of the day to come or of the days that have passed. Somehow we’ve lost the joy of being made new, again and again, through and by the amazing love of Christ on the cross – our daily resurrection from death to life.

Another favorite song sings of Peter’s denial of Christ, and I’m reminded of the daily newness, the wonder of Easter morning: “I’m like Peter crying, crowing burning my ears. Still You come near. You take my hand and place it upon an eternal chance.”<sup>2</sup>

On all the days to come this year, remember this Easter day. Remember your Baptism vows. Remember God’s Spirit living in you. Remember that God, through Christ, is taking your hand, my hand, and placing it upon an eternal chance, yet again, with each dawn of a new day.



## COLLECT:

*O God, who made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord’s resurrection: Stir up in your Church that Spirit of adoption which is given to us in Baptism, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

<sup>1</sup>The Easter Song by 2nd Chapter of Acts

<sup>2</sup>Dizzy by Sixpence None The Richer