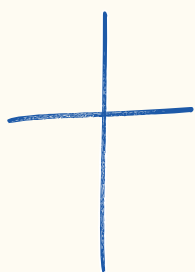


Lent Bible reading & prayer plan

A collection of Lent scriptures and prayers
to remind us that when we seek God, we
will find him. All Scripture taken from the
New International Version.

First Sunday in Lent



Personal Reflection

What has been a wilderness experience for you?

God knows and shares the wilderness experience of being tested as a human.

Bring to Jesus your own times of wilderness and those of others.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, ² take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name ³ and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come to the land the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us." ⁴ The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God. ⁵ Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. ⁶ But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labour. ⁷ Then we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. ⁸ So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; ¹⁰ and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, Lord, have given me." Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before him. ¹¹ Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

Psalms 91:1-2 and 9-16

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

⁹ ... If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, ¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; ¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. ¹³ You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. ¹⁴ "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect

Prayer

God of the covenant, in the glory of the cross your Son embraced the power of death and broke its hold over your people.

In this time of repentance, draw all people to yourself, that we who confess Jesus as Lord may put aside the deeds of death and accept the life of your kingdom.

Amen.

Prayer

Beloved friends, in this season of repentance and healing, we accept God's invitation to be ever-mindful of the needs of others, offering our prayers on behalf of God's community in the church and the world.

Fill us with your strength to resist the seductions of our foolish desires and the tempter's vain delights, that we may walk in obedience and righteousness, rejoicing in you with an upright heart.

Amen.

him, for he acknowledges my name. ¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

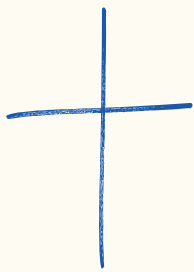
Romans 10:8b-13

"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'" ⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" ⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; ¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" ¹² Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Second Sunday in Lent



Personal Reflection

God made promises to Abram – of land, and people and blessing.

God wants to bless you with love, peace, joy and hope.

Open your heart and mind to receive the blessing of God in your life – and the lives of those around you.

Genesis 15:1-12 and 17-18

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” ² But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” ⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. ⁷ He also said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.” ⁸ But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?” ⁹ So the Lord said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. ¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. ¹² As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.

¹⁷ ... When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates ...”

Psalms 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? ² When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. ³ Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. ⁴ One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. ⁵ For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and

Prayer

God of wilderness and water,
your Son was baptised and
tempted as we are.
Guide us through this season,
that we may not avoid struggle,
but open ourselves to blessing,
through the cleansing depths of
repentance and the Heaven-rending
words of the Spirit.

Amen.

set me high upon a rock. ⁶ Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord. ⁷ Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. ⁸ My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. ⁹ Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Saviour. ¹⁰ Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. ¹¹ Teach me your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. ¹² Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. ¹³ I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. ¹⁴ Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

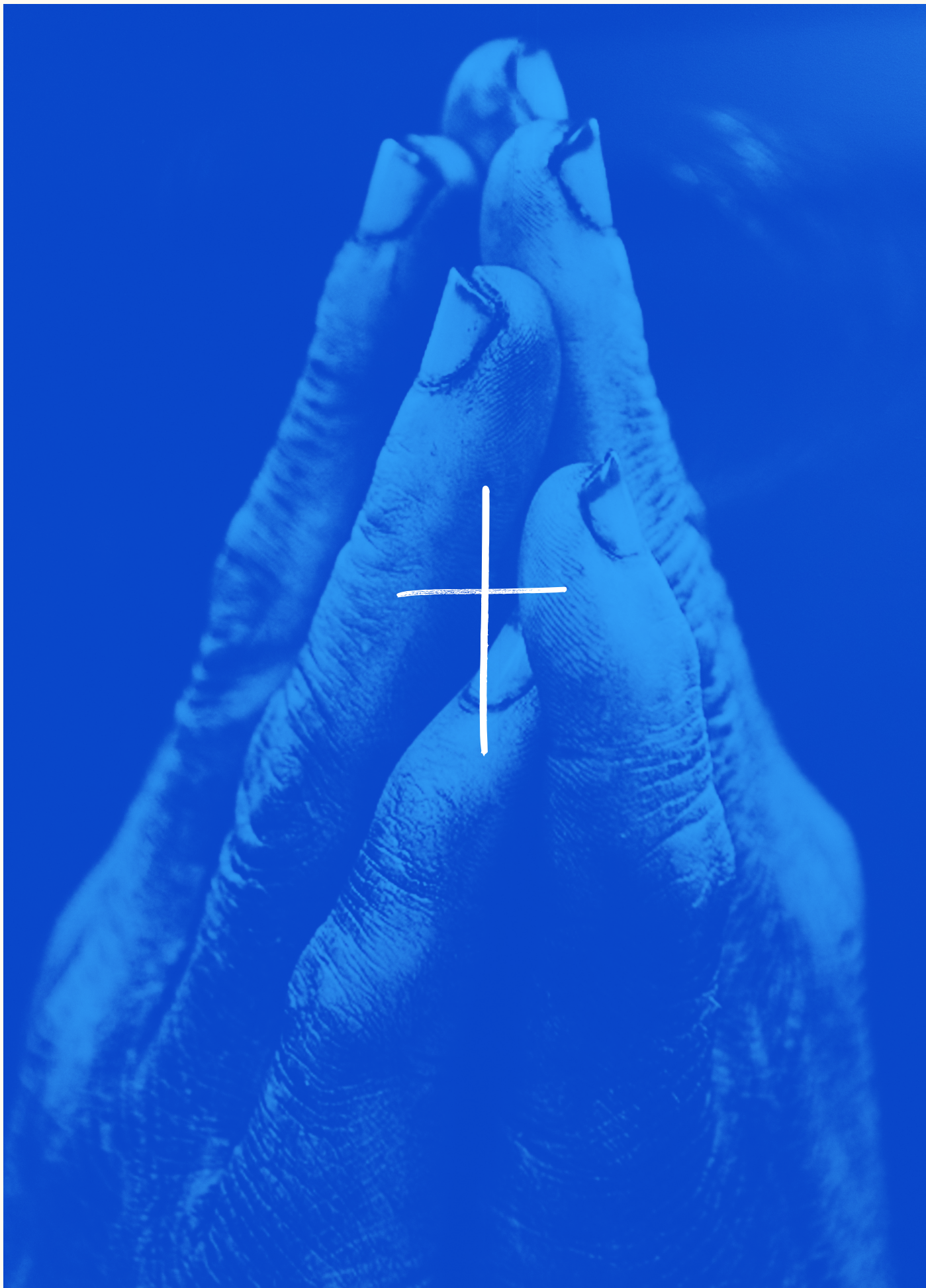
Philippians 3:17-4:1

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in hHeaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

^{4:1} Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

Luke 13:31-35

At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." ³² He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' ³³ In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! ³⁴ "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her



Second Sunday Lent (continued)

Prayer

Faithful God of love, you blessed us with your servant Son so that we might know how to serve your people with justice and with mercy. We gather the needs of ourselves and others, and offer them to you in faith and love, seeking to be strengthened to meet them. Shape us and transform us by your grace, that we may grow in wisdom and in confidence, never faltering until we have done all that you desire to bring your realm of shalom to fulfillment.

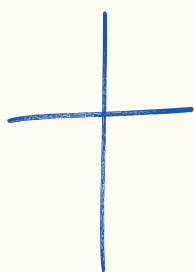
Amen.

wings, and you were not willing. ³⁵ Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Luke 9:28-43a

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. ³¹ They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – —one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) ³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen. ³⁷ The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸ A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. ⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not." ⁴¹ "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." ⁴² Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

Third Sunday in Lent



Personal Reflection

This girl is thirsty and drinking
freely of the water.

Are you thirsty?

Are you longing for God?

Jesus is the life-giving water.

"If anyone is thirsty, let him
come to me and drink.

Isaiah 55:1-9

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

² Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

⁴ See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples. ⁵ Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour." ⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. ⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Psalms 63:1-8

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. ² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. ³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. ⁵ I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. ⁶ On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. ⁷ Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. ⁸ I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the

Prayer

Artist of souls, you sculpted a people for yourself out of the rocks of wilderness and fasting.

Help us as we take up your invitation to prayer and simplicity, that the discipline of these 40 days may sharpen our hunger for the feast of your holy friendship, and whet our thirst for the living water you offer through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prayer

My brothers and sisters: reconciled to God by the mercy of Christ, we pray with confidence for the needs of the church and the world.

Through Christ you make us a new creation, O God, for with him we pass from sin to the new life of grace. Accept our prayers in the warm embrace of your compassion, and welcome all people to the festive banquet of your table, where we may rejoice in your love and celebrate the inheritance you have given to us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

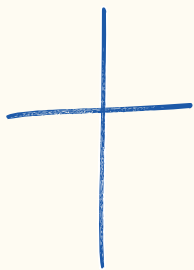
Amen.

sea. ² They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did— and in one day 23,000 of them died. ⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did— and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did— and were killed by the destroying angel. ¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Luke 13:1-9

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ² Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those 18 who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them— do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." ⁶ Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' ⁸ "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilise it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

Fourth Sunday in Lent



Personal Reflection

This Lent, do you identify with the prodigal son or the older brother?

Have you wandered away and rejoice in the loving embrace of God?

Or have you grown tired and feel more like a servant than a much-loved child of God?

Joshua 65:9-12

Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰ On the evening of the 14th day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. ¹¹ The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. ¹² The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

Psalms 32

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

² Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

⁶ Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. ⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.

¹¹ Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Prayer

God of the living, through baptism we pass from the shadow of death to the light of the resurrection.

Remain with us and give us hope that, rejoicing in the gift of the Spirit who gives life to our mortal flesh, we may be clothed with the garment of immortality, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Luke 15:1-3 and 11b-32

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." ³ Then Jesus told them this parable:

¹¹ ... "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against

Prayer

My brothers and sisters: reconciled to God by the mercy of Christ, we pray with confidence for the needs of the church and the world.

Through Christ you make us a new creation, O God, for with him we pass from sin to the new life of grace. Accept our prayers in the warm embrace of your compassion, and welcome all people to the festive banquet of your table, where we may rejoice in your love and celebrate the inheritance you have given to us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against hHeaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

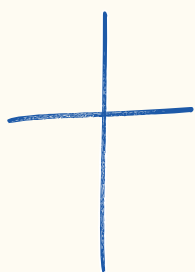
²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"



Fifth Sunday in Lent



Personal Reflection

What was the most extravagant gift you have given to someone?

How was the gift received?

What is the most extravagant gift you have received?

What does the gift tell you about your relationship with that person?

How do you show your love and devotion to Jesus?

Isaiah 43: 16-21

This is what the Lord says — he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, ¹⁷ who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: ¹⁸ “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. ¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

²⁰ The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, ²¹ the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Psalms 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.

² Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

³ The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. ⁴ Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

Philippians 3:4b-14

... If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. ⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness

Prayer

Sisters and brothers, as Jesus, in the days before his passion, offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, let us pray for those who suffer, those who are in need, and those who seek reconciliation.

God of compassion, you know our faults and yet you promised to forgive.

Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom. Open our hearts to gladness, call dry bones to dance, and restore to us the joy of your salvation.

Amen.

Prayer

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness and your grace waters the desert.

Help us to recognise your hand working miracles beyond our imagining. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, so that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love for all, and its presence in Jesus Christ.

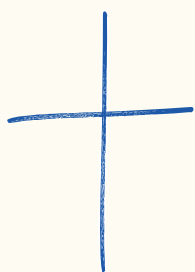
Amen.

of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ — yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Sixth Sunday in Lent



Personal Reflection

In love, Jesus humbled himself and entered into death for us – in our place.

“For God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Take some time. What do you want to say to this Jesus?

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. ⁵ The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away. ⁶ I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. ⁷ Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. ⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ⁹ It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me. Who will condemn me?

Psalms 31:9-16

Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. ¹⁰ My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. ¹¹ Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours and an object of dread to my closest friends — those who see me on the street flee from me. ¹² I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. ¹³ For I hear many whispering, “Terror on every side!” They conspire against me and plot to take my life. ¹⁴ But I trust in you, Lord; I say, “You are my God.” ¹⁵ My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. ¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.

Philippians 2:5-11

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee

Prayer

Sisters and brothers, as Jesus, in the days before his passion, offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, let us pray for those who suffer, those who are in need, and those who seek reconciliation.

God of compassion, you know our faults and yet you promised to forgive.

Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom. Open our hearts to gladness, call dry bones to dance, and restore to us the joy of your salvation.

Amen.

should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Luke 23:1-49

Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”

³ So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

⁴ Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

⁵ But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. ⁹ He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That day Herod and Pilate became friends — before this they had been enemies.

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.” ¹⁸ But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” ¹⁹ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. **21** But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. **24** So Pilate decided to grant their demand. **25** He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

26 As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. **27** A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. **28** Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. **29** For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ **30** Then “they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”

31 For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” **32** Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.

33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals — one on his right, the other on his left. **34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar **37** and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

38 There was a written notice above him, which read: This is the king of the Jews.

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

Prayer

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness and your grace waters the desert.

Help us to recognise your hand working miracles beyond our imagining. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, so that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love for all, and its presence in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? **41** We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, **45** for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. **46** Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” **48** When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. **49** But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

