

2025 LENT DEVOTIONAL

Union Gospel Mission



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MISSION

Welcome! You're invited to join us on this 40-day journey through Lent. This is a season where we prepare our hearts and minds to accept the significance of Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the grave at Easter. Through practices like fasting, prayer, and meditation on the Word, we intentionally open our eyes to the reality of our need to rely on God for His perfect grace, hope, and love.

This year, we will be walking through the Revised Common Lectionary, a collection of readings from the Bible that follow the liturgical calendar year, including the lenten season. Each day of the lectionary outlines three or four scriptural passages. We invite you to read each of these passages for yourself, in the order they are written, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself to you through your devotion. We have also asked trusted friends and leaders in our community to expound and reflect on one of each day's passages, and to lead us in a prayer each day to deepen our understanding and reliance on God.

We pray that this will be a transformative season for you to embrace the restorative power of Christ in our lives, communities, and world. May the truth of Christ's wholly sufficient work at Easter gracefully wash over you. Be blessed.

*For His glory and our joy,
UGM's Church Relations Team*

(Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture references are in the NIV.)

The Lenten Season: Introduction

by Ray Aldred

We are journeying the circle of the earth. Indigenous wisdom of the Northern plains often talks about life as a journey, as does the New Testament. We are “walking by faith” (2 Cor 5:7). The blind beggar, Bartimaeus, sitting by the road, cries out to Jesus, comes to meet him on the road, then after being healed he follows Jesus on the road (Mark 10:46-52). Early Church faith is called “the way.” As an Indigenous person, walking in a good way is all about how we live in harmony with all our relatives. Our Elders' stories heard on the land, remind us of how we are connected to the earth and to all who journey upon the earth. We take in their stories, and the stories take us in and remind us of who we are.

The Church calendar year is about embracing the story of Jesus in the land. As part of the Church calendar, Lent is about joining Jesus on the journey. Taking in His story of His journey on the earth, and as we are taken into the story, we are changed.

Lent is about journeying with Jesus into the wilderness, as He was led by the Spirit to reveal who He is. Jesus goes into the wilderness and there He battles the enemy. Sometimes people think of the wilderness as the place religious people would go to escape the world and lead a life of contemplation. The wilderness, however, is not where you go to escape the world; the wilderness is where you go to battle the demons; it is where you go to fight for a better world.

Another Indigenous practice that helps me to understand this idea is the practice of seeking a vision of the way forward in life. It is about seeking a vision of our authentic, true self. For millennia, Indigenous people have gone alone into the bush; we set aside things like entertainment, food, and other things that we use to medicate ourselves so we can understand who we are and our relationship with all things. We set aside time to be on the land, to seek a vision for our lives. We seek an authentic picture of who we are so we can better take our places in the community and continue the journey to be who we are created to be. Lent is like this practice because you are following Jesus Christ into the wilderness, who is the true image of the Creator and the true image of humans.

When I first began to take seriously the journey of Lent, I noticed that as we read the passages about repentance, many of us look at our shoes and can seem to

feel uncomfortable. It seems like it would be easy to think that Lent is just forty days of feeling bad, but this misses the heart of the good news, the Gospel. Lent is about turning back to the things that bring real life, which is what the Bible calls repentance. Yes, repentance is turning from sin, but more importantly is turning away from all the things we use to medicate our pain and instead, turn to life. Turn back to life instead of pursuing the things the world says we need to make us happy. Turn back to life to pray for a better world and maybe get a vision for what it would be like if we could love with our whole heart. This is seeking a vision of our authentic self. This is journeying into the wilderness to do battle for the world by serving and loving and praying.

I encourage you to follow the readings for the Lenten devotion and join Jesus in the wilderness. Reflect on His story and as you take in His story, allow it to take you in. If we do, we will be changed as we continue to follow the way and be used by Jesus to transform our world. As we journey the earth, we walk in the path of the one who stepped into creation and is with us by the Spirit as we journey in a good way.



RAY ALDRED is the Director of Indigenous Studies Program and Associate Professor of Indigenous Theology at Vancouver School of Theology.

Day 1 / Wednesday, March 5

As a boy I used to watch my mother shine her silver cutlery. I came to understand that there is a difference between being silver-plated and sterling silver. Silver-plated items may look genuine on the outside, but underneath they lack the purity of sterling silver. Similarly, Christians are called to be "silver through and through" rather than just putting on a shiny exterior. If we wear a sign of Christianity just to get attention in church or out on the street, Jesus calls us hypocrites.

What is most important to God is what's happening in our hearts. If we claim to be Christians but showcase our giving, praying, and fasting with the motivation to be seen by others, without true fellowship with God in the secret place, we are no different from the Pharisees – acting pious but lacking true spiritual depth.

The best way to test if an item is sterling silver is with acid. If you scratch the surface and apply acid, the item turns red if it's genuine. God is looking for authentic believers who are the same inside and out. The world is also watching for authenticity in our faith. The genuineness of our faith is revealed when life scratches off the outer layers and, like acid, the trials of life reveal what is in our heart.

Being authentic as a Christian means our outward actions and words align with our inner convictions and faith. In contrast, hypocrisy is when our external behavior doesn't match our internal reality. Who we really are is determined by how we behave in the place where no one is watching. May we repent when our outward lives don't reflect how we live in the secret place, remembering that ultimately religious discipline is not for others to see, but for God alone.

Heavenly Father, as we reflect on this passage, we are reminded that You long for us to join You in the secret place and You desire to reward us openly. We repent of any hypocrisy and ask for Your grace and strength to live for You wholeheartedly today. Amen.



DAVID KOOP is the Senior Pastor of Coastal Church in Vancouver, BC.



Day 2 / Thursday, March 6

The psalmist declares of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Do you think you could make such a declaration? And how would such a proclamation of trust be demonstrated in your daily life?

If I was honest with you, I’m not sure how much actual “trust in God” is displayed in my daily life, or even for my daily bread. I live such a self-reliant and comfortable life. My fridge is stocked, and my stomach is full. The only rare hunger pangs I feel come from my own poor choices and lack of planning. I have forgotten what it is to truly hunger, or to truly put my trust in God. It would seem that I have so insulated myself with the luxuries of life that I have abandoned my need to rely on God.

So, what would it look like for me to intentionally increase my trust in God? What if something as simple as controlling my appetite could give God more control in my life?

The sacred spiritual discipline of fasting can be a powerful tool to jolt us out of our comfortable, self-reliant lives. Every time your stomach growls at you, you are reminded that God is your refuge and strength. That your cravings don’t control you, God does. Every time your body aches with withdrawal, you are prompted to rest in the shadow of the Almighty. By controlling your appetite, you are giving God control.

Would you be bold enough to intentionally fast a meal today, to allow God to speak to you through your growling stomach as you declare that you trust Him, and He alone is your source and sustenance?

Lord, I need you.

You are my source and sustenance for all living.

Sorry for the times that I relied on my own strength instead of Yours.

Sorry for the times that I chose my own comfort over Your discipline.

Lord, humble me. I give You control.

Amen.



SIMON GAU is the Executive Director of the CityReach Care Society and Associate Pastor at Broadway Church in Vancouver, BC.

Day 3 / Friday, March 7

In this powerful passage Moses does not question God's ability to free the Israelites or restore them to Canaan. Moses knows that all things are possible through God. Yet, in this key moment, Moses questions himself – his own power, his own gifts. It's a deeply human moment, a reminder that even the most faithful among us can be plagued by self-doubt.

I relate to this Moses. I believe wholeheartedly in a God of infinite possibilities, unlimited creativity, and countless miracles. I trust this God with all my heart, body, and mind. But when it comes to believing in my own Christ power – my spiritual gifts – it's a different story. Like Moses, I sometimes ask, "Who am I, Lord? How can I make a difference? What do I have to offer?" I seek comfort knowing that if we do indeed believe in a God who can constantly wow us with making the impossible possible, then it is also possible that God can work through ordinary saints and prophets like you and me. The story of Moses reminds us that God doesn't choose the most eloquent, the most qualified, or the most confident; God chooses the willing and the faithful. And through our willingness, God takes our humble gifts, multiplies them, and uses them to build the kingdom here and now.

Our gifts, no matter how insignificant they may seem to us are not accidental or inconsequential – they are intentional, and we are called to trust in them. When Moses finally trusted in God's plan for his life, despite his doubts and insecurities, he became a key instrument in leading God's people to freedom. God's power worked through Moses' willingness to step forward, even when he felt unworthy and the same is true for us.

When we trust that our gifts are from God, and we lean into them, we too can be vessels of change, liberation, healing, justice, love, mercy, and compassion in a world that is in so desperate need.

Gracious God, Liberator of Souls, time and time again You lead Your people to freedom, often through humble, reluctant, and unexpected prophets. Strengthen my heart, embolden my soul, that I too may be a source of freedom to others. Through Your beloved Son and freedom fighter, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



LINDSAY HILLS is the Rector of the Parish of St. Mary's Kerrisdale in Vancouver, BC.



Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; John 12:27-36

Day 4 / Saturday, March 8

Sometimes we ask questions about time: "What time is it?" "Do you have the time?" Years ago, I learned the difference between two different Greek understandings of time: "chronos" and "kairos." "Chronos" time tells us about years, months, hours, minutes, seconds, etc. Chronos time is "calendar time." "Kairos" time, on the other hand, tells us about "God's timing." According to God's plan, He does everything in the opportune, right and perfect "kairos" time. This double understanding of time helps me as I read today's passage, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. As we know from our lives "under the sun" (this phrase is used 27 times in the book to talk about our lives on planet Earth), there is a "chronos" (calendar) time for all kinds of things: a time to be born and a time to die, to time to tear down and a time to build, a time to be silent and a time to speak, and the list goes on and on. During this season of Lent we remember the perfect timing of God (both chronos and kairos!) to send His Son into the world. As we read: "But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship" (Galatians 4:4-5). In the perfect plan of God, Jesus the Messiah came at just the right "chronos" time and also the perfect "kairos" time. Jesus arrived at just the right time!

Father, thank You that You have loved the world so much that You sent Your Son, the Lord Jesus, into this dark world at the perfect time! You sent Him so that anyone who believes in Him should live life to the full. May I believe in Your Son afresh and anew during this season. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



JOHANNES SCHOUTEN is the Pastor of Nelson Ave Community Church in Burnaby, BC.

Day 5 / Monday, March 10

Wherever this devotional finds your soul today, God's invitation is simple: *Come rest in the shadow of my wings.*

In Psalm 17, David cries out to his God - seeking refuge, peace, stability, and vindication amid all his troubles. In his lifetime, we know King David had his fair number of enemies and giants to face. In a desperate and vulnerable situation, he earnestly prayed "Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings..." (v.8)

Our Father God - in His great mercy and faithfulness desires to make Himself known as *the* refuge and source of strength to all His children. Picture our Lord Jesus, in the middle of a bare and lonely dessert for 40 days and 40 nights, confiding under those same wings.

When life and all its complexity engulf you, or when an enemy is standing on your doorstep aiming to kill, steal, and destroy, who do you turn to? Where do you run to? David prayed, "As for me, *I will be vindicated and will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness.*" (v. 15)

In all our fragility and fear, God invites us into spaces where being seen and known by Him is enough. This type of dependency gives us a way to experience Him more as our heavenly Father, who always cares, loves, and protects. Part of our human condition is to want to rely on ourselves, isn't it? Whether it's our own strength, intelligence, resources, or status. We see this play out in 1 Chronicles 21:1-17 - when the same king David, chooses to rely on statistics and human metrics over trust in God. A sobering story, indeed.

Consider the open invitation to rest in the care and protection of our Heavenly Father. Can you locate in your heart where you are today in relation to His presence? Consider the things that keep you from resting in Him.

Father God, thank You for Your loving invitation into rest, peace, and life. Today, I acknowledge that You alone are my source of strength and comfort. Help me to trust You always and remain in the shadow of Your wings. Keep me as the apple of Your eye, always. Amen.



DEBORAH ARIYAN is the Coordinator of Men's Recovery at UGM.



Day 6 / Tuesday, March 11

The author of 2 Peter points out that false teachers arose in the early church, introduced destructive heresies and corrupted the church community. But God's judgment will come upon them in His time. So, the suffering of the godly is the mark given to the faithful.

I) Citing Old Testament examples of God's judgment (vv.4-9)

a. Judgment of the flood upon the ungodly, but preserving Noah and his family (v.5)

The author points out that God brought judgment upon the unrighteous by the flood. Yet, God preserved righteous Noah and his family. In biblical history, God brought judgment upon Israel and Judah who broke the covenant, such that they were destroyed by Assyria and Babylon; yet at the same time by the words of the prophet Jeremiah promised their return and the rebuilding of their nation. The gospel is not only judgment against sin, but also the hope of life for the repentant.

b. Judgment of fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, but rescuing Lot (v.6)

The last example is Sodom and Gomorrah being burnt to ashes because there were not even ten righteous persons in the city (Gen. 18:32). Yet God rescued righteous Lot. He refused to let the men of the city do vile acts to his visitors; even though he offered to give his daughters to the men instead. (Gen. 19:4-11).

II) The danger of false teachers (vv.10-21)

a. They blaspheme the apostles and leaders, and corrupt the holy community (vv.10-16)

The other example is the greedy prophet Balaam and the donkey that spoke to Balaam. Biblical scholar Gordon Wenham rightly points out that both Numbers and Deuteronomy agree that Balaam valued money and profit more than wholeheartedly serving God's people (Num. 31:8-16; Deut. 23:4-5). So, the false teachers are like Balaam. They serve the church for their own profit.

b. The ending of the false prophets (vv.17-21)

The author describes the false teachers as **"waterless springs and mists driven by a storm."** Worse still, although they knew Christ, they become entangled again in greed for profit, lust, and power. They are following their own wilful desires, and have fallen into the trap of their sins. They have lost real freedom in Christ, and their ending is deplorable.

Dear Lord, we ask You to judge according to Your holiness and righteousness, and to save Your servants who hold fast to your truth. Help us to persevere and bear witness to Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

首先，作者指出初期教會要面對假師傅冒起，他們引進陷害人的異端、敗壞教會羣體。然而，作者同時指出，上帝的審判也隨之而來，末後，惡者更將受大審判。這段防備假師傅的攻擊誘惑，和義人因見證公義而受苦的經文，是給信徒堅信和站穩的確據。

I) 援引舊約三個例子，上帝作出審判的行動(第4-9節)

a. 洪水審判不敬虔世代，卻拯救挪亞家共八人(第5節)

作者指出上帝沒有寬容這犯罪背叛上帝的世代，曾讓洪水審判不義的人。上帝保護了「傳義道的挪亞一家八口」。這是上帝在聖經歷史的作為，祂審判毀約的以色列、猶大國，使他們亡於外族亞述和巴比倫之手；卻同時讓先知耶利米預告上帝應許給他們回歸復國。福音不單是對罪的審判，也是給人悔罪得生的盼望。

b. 焚燒審判所多瑪、蛾摩拉，卻拯救義人羅得(第6節)

作者最後引用上帝焚燒審判所多瑪、蛾摩拉，因這兩個城連十個義人也沒有(創18:32)。然而上帝卻拯救義人羅得。當城內的人要取到訪的二位天使「任意而行」，羅得拒絕，甚至寧願以二位女兒作代替，但城內的人都不罷休(創19:4-11)。

II) 假師傅的可怕(第10-21節)

a. 毀謗使徒和領袖，敗壞聖潔羣體(第10-16節)

彼後嚴肅提出假師傅是來自教會內裏，所以，他們不單成為攻擊黨，更滿是淫色，喜愛宴樂，不斷敗壞軟弱的教會羣體，走上錯誤之路。作者引用舊約另一例子，那貪錢財的先知巴蘭和開口勸巴蘭的驢子。聖經學者Gordon Wenham有精闢的分析，指出民數記及申命記不約而同都同意巴蘭是看錢財利誘高於專心事奉上帝(民31:8-16; 申23:4-5)。作者因而指出假師傅像巴蘭，都是因私利為導引而服侍教會的。

b. 假師傅的結局(第17-21節)

作者以「無水的井，狂風催逼的霧氣」形容假師傅的形態。更甚者，他們原認識基督；但在信仰路上，偏行貪圖錢財、色慾，和權力奴駕他人，漸漸離開了聖靈。他們自以為得着自由，任己意而行，卻跌落在罪的網羅而不自知，失去了在基督裏的真自由。結局是可悲的。

主啊，求祢按着祢的聖潔公義，審判罪孽惡者，卻按着祢的慈愛應許，拯救持守真道的僕人。讓我們鍥而不捨，為主真道同作見證。奉主的名，阿們。



STEPHEN LEUNG is the Area Bishop for Asian and multicultural ministries in the Anglican Network in Canada. He is also the Rector of the Anglican Network Church of the Good Shepherd in Vancouver, BC. 梁永康主教是加拿大聖公會聯盟亞裔及多元文化分區主教，也是溫哥華聖公會牧愛堂堂主任。

Day 7 / Wednesday, March 12

It was a normal summer afternoon when I received the call that would change my family dramatically. When I arrived home, I saw that our house was on fire and my mother had suffered second degree burns. I resonate with the story of Job in his dealing with loss, suffering and pain. I still wrestle with questions around why God allows suffering in this world. I can only conclude that the ultimate solution to our suffering is that it points to our suffering Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ and His death and His resurrection.

The book of Job beautifully describes Job as righteous, then terribly details what happened to Job's family and possessions. But the way Job handles the situation is powerful, as his relationship with God gets stronger because of his suffering. Here lies the unexpected pattern of God's response to evil. Martin Luther once said, "The devil is God's devil" meaning even the devil is under God's sovereign control.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." (1:21)

This reminds me that when we finally got the chance to visit my mother after the house fire, she was filled with gratitude and praise that she was saved by the goodness of God. It was this faith in God that she spoke of often in the face of suffering. I learned that we worship God, not because of what we can get from God but because we trust in the goodness of the sovereign God.

Naked we enter this world, naked we will leave it. All we have is from God. The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. But still: we are blessed by the name of the Lord. The goodness of God is something that cannot be taken away from us.

Our sovereign God, we come to You with empty hands. All we have belongs to You. Our lives are in Your control. You only give us what we can handle. Grant us deeper faith to see Your purpose and to see Your name be praised! May we praise You all the days of our lives. Amen.



BILLY CHIEW is the English Pastor at Basal Hakka Lutheran Church in Vancouver, BC.



Psalm 27; Genesis 13:1-7, 14-18; Philippians 3:2-12

Day 8 / Thursday, March 13

Have you ever felt helpless while waiting for change? This is a common experience in the lives of countless people in our church community. Some are refugee claimants waiting for an employer who will take a chance on a foreigner's resume, a decision welcoming a permanent stay in Canada, a place to know and to be known. Many in our community are waiting for healing, safe and affordable housing, for a breakthrough amidst daily struggles.

David declares in Psalm 27, "be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." What does it look like to wait, trusting that help is on the way? How does one embrace this posture in the presence of daily moments that feel unbearable, insurmountable, and even impossible? What possible strength could be mustered amidst something as passive as waiting? The Psalm moves through a range of emotions: courage, confidence, assurance, desperation, earnestness, trust. What is clear is that strength is not manufactured by David, nor do the wicked, enemies, foes, or false witnesses disappear. The active character is God - He is my light, the stronghold of my life, He will keep me safe, He will hide me in the shelter, set me high upon a rock. In meditating on Psalm 27, I am reminded that a season of waiting has the potential to invite us to pause, to notice the emotions that arise within ourselves, and to seek Christ in the midst of the whirlwind. In doing so, my waiting becomes an opportunity to receive tender signs of light, beauty, shelter, joy, mercy, and goodness of the Lord.

Lord, would the hearts of all who look to You be open to the work of Your Spirit, as You make known the gifts that emerge in a season of waiting. As we journey to the Cross, help us to receive strength that is only found in You.



DEBBIE HAWKER is the Director of Missional Engagement at Tenth Church in Vancouver, BC.



Day 9 / Friday, March 14

Today's reading is pulled from the middle of Paul's letter to the beloved Philippian church - a group that included his first converts in Europe. Writing from prison or house arrest with a growing anticipation of death, Paul's letter is personally reflective and full of perspective. In what may be his final exhortation to this church, he calls them to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel" (1:27), and to "have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (2:5).

But, after sharing these exhortations, Paul offers a unique illustration: his own life story. With the solitude and stillness of imprisonment imposed on him, Paul takes a moment to look back on his life and view the bigger picture. Reflecting on his previous pursuits, he concludes that they were altogether worthless compared to the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ" (3:8). Having come to experience new life through faith in Christ, he came to see his old life of prideful, self-righteous religiosity as rubbish to be discarded.

Looking back, Paul had journeyed far as a follower of Jesus. So far, in fact, that he felt able to call this congregation to follow His example - to model their lives after him (3:17). Yet, looking forward, even as he neared the end of his earthly pilgrimage, Paul readily admits still that he has a long way to go. His life had taken on a new direction toward a new goal - one that he would single-mindedly pursue for the rest of his life (3:11-14).

Hinted at in those earlier verses, Paul's anticipated destiny becomes clear in 3:20-21. As a citizen of heaven, he was awaiting the return of His Saviour, who would come to make all things new. This included Paul's own body, which would be resurrected like Christ's. In contrast to the earthly-minded, whose trajectory was toward destruction, Paul's hope of glory buoyed him to pack lightly, and run the race with perseverance. With his future secure in Christ, he was set free to live his present life for one purpose.

Heavenly Father, as we journey through this reflective season of Lent, may Your Spirit always guide us to live in light of the hope of Easter. As we follow Jesus through the struggles of daily life, may we find joy in the knowledge of that glory that awaits us. We pray in Jesus's name, Amen.



TIM STEWART is the Pastor of Parkdale Evangelical Free Church in Victoria, BC.

Day 10 / Saturday, March 15

It's likely that at some point in life you have felt afraid or experienced the presence of fear. In those moments, who or what brings you comfort? For a young child who is convinced that there is a monster lurking around under their bed, the presence of a loving parent is incredibly comforting. For someone who's afraid of the dark driving down a road beneath a black sky, a sliver of moonlight can bring a huge sigh of relief. When I have felt fear or uncertainty, both my mother's prayers and my father's wisdom have brought assurance and peace. In the presence of great fear, what brings you peace? In other words, when circumstances and situations have told you that you are alone, what or whose presence have assured you otherwise?

In Psalm 27, the great soon-to-be king, David, was often alone as he fled for his life to caves and mountains from the threat of his jealous predecessor, king Saul. With his life in jeopardy, rather than being overwhelmed by fear, David chooses instead to be overwhelmed by the character of His God. David uses beautiful words like these throughout the Psalm to speak of God: light, salvation, a stronghold, merciful, saviour, good, and protector. David finally concludes with these confident words in verses 13-14, "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

I ask again: in moments of great fear, who or what brings you comfort? As He was for David, may the same God be your good protector in the face of your fears that you too may declare in confidence that you will witness the goodness of God in the land of the living!

Good and gracious God, in our fears, be our light. Merciful God, when we are overwhelmed and afraid, be our stronghold. As we wait upon You, Spirit of life, give us the confidence that we will see Your goodness in abundance here today in the land of the living! Amen.



संभव है कि जीवन के किसी न किसी मोड़ पर, आपने खुद को भयभीत पाया होगा। उन पलों में, वो कौन था या क्या था जिससे आप ने सांत्वना प्राप्त की? एक छोटे बच्चे के लिए, जो मानता है कि उसके बसिंदर के नीचे कोई राक्षस छुपा हुआ है, उसके परमपूर्ण माता-पिता की उपस्थिति-मातर से वो सुकून की अनुभूति करता है। या फिर किसी ऐसे व्यक्ति के लिए जो अंधेरे से डरता है और काले आकाश के नीचे सुनसान सड़क पर चल रहा है, एक पतली सी चाँदनी की करिण भी काफी है राहत की सांस लेने के लिए। और जब कभी भी मुझे डर या अनिश्चितता का सामना करना पड़ा, तब मेरी माँ की प्रार्थनाएं और मेरे पिता की बुद्धिमत्ता ने मुझे आश्वासन और शांति प्री की भेंट दी। विशाल डर के वरिद्ध, आप शांति के लिए किसकी और मुड़ते हैं? अन्य शब्दों में, जब-जब कठोर परिस्थितियों और हालात में आपने स्वयं को अकेला पाया, तब वो कौन था जिसकी और आप ने हाथ बढ़ाया?

साम २७ में वर्णन है उस किससे का जब होने-वाले राजा महान डेवडि को अपने ईरष्यालु पूर्ववर्ती राजा सॉल से जीवन का संकट था। स्वयं की रक्षा हेतु वे भाग के गुफाओं और पहाड़ों में छुपते, और तब वे अक्सर अकेले होते। इन मुसीबत की घड़ियों में, बजाय इसके के वे डर से अभिभूत हो जायें, डेवडि चुनते हैं कि वे अपने परमेश्वर के चरित्र से अभिभूत हों। साम में डेवडि परमेश्वर के लिए इन सुंदर शब्दों का चयन करते हैं: प्रकाश, मोक्ष, एक सुरक्षित गढ़, दयालु, उदधारकर्ता, अच्छा, और रक्षक। अंत में डेवडि इन आत्मवर्षाशी शब्दों के साथ यह नषिर्ष नकालते हैं, “मुझे इसमें पूर्ण विश्वास है: मैं जीवितों की भूमि में यहोवा की भलाई देखूंगा। यहोवा के लिए प्रतीक्षा करो; मजबूत बनो और हृदय को दृढ़ करो और यहोवा की प्रतीक्षा करो।”

मैं आप से एक और बार पूछती हूँ: जीवन के बड़े भय के पलों में, वो कौन है या क्या है जो आपको सांत्वना प्रदान करता है? जैसे वे डेवडि के लिए थे, मैं प्रार्थना करती हूँ कि वैसे ही आपके भय के सामने, वही परमेश्वर आपके लिए अच्छे रक्षक बनें, और आप

आत्मविश्वास के साथ कह सकें कि आप भी जीवितों की भूमि में परमेश्वर की भलाई देखेंगे!

हे अच्छे और कृपालु परमेश्वर, हमारे भय में, हमारी ज्योतिर्बिनें। हे दयालु परमेश्वर, जब हम अभिभूत और भयभीत होते हैं, तब हमारे गढ़ बनें। जब हम आपकी प्रतीक्षा करते हैं, हे जीवन की आत्मा, हमें आत्मविश्वास दें कि हम आज यहाँ जीवितों की भूमि में आपकी भलाई की प्रचुरता देखेंगे! आमीन।



SHARON DHAUALE is the Associate Pastor at Tenth Mount Pleasant in Vancouver, BC. शेरोन धावले वैकूवर, ब्रिटिश कोलंबिया के टेन्थ माउंट प्लेजेंट में एक सहायक पादरी हैं।



Psalm 105:1-42; Exodus 33:1-6; Romans 4:1-12

Day 11 / Monday, March 17

As a child I would often have to walk to my church on Wednesday evenings for catechism classes. During the winter, I knew that if I took the long way to church, it would be lit by streetlights. However, there was a short cut that went through a simple school field, where there were no ditches that I might fall into. The problem was that to my child's eyes it was very dark and scary to even contemplate taking the short cut. My rule was that if I took the shortcut through the field I must not look back and succumb to the inevitable sense that I was being followed. I made it each time I took the shortcut, however, I was always a bit embarrassed about my lack of faith that made me afraid.

I am struck that we live in a time when fear seems to dominate so much of our thinking in politics and life. I wonder how often we even recognize the fear that seems to drive some of our decisions about how we live our lives.

In Psalm 105, David reminds us through the retelling of the history of the Israelites, that God is continually present and remembers his people. Indeed, if you look at the other passages from today's lectionary (Exodus 33:1-6; Romans 4:1-12), you will see the reminders that the Lord is with His people. He goes with us in all things! Why do we fear? The Lord is with us! May the reality of these words live with us throughout this day. May we go forth in joy and not look back in fear.

Lord Jesus be present in our lives today. When we encounter situations or words that would incite fear in our hearts, may we be reminded that You are with us in all things. We need not fear. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



RON DONKERSLOOT is the retired Principal of Valley Christian School in Mission, BC.

Day 12 / Tuesday, March 18

When God called my husband and I into full time ministry, we both knew we were called to help build His Kingdom. It was God who opened the door, and He allowed us to step into His plan. Some years later I was ready to shut a door that wasn't mine to shut. Just when I was ready to let go of my position in ministry and move on, God strongly spoke to my heart and said, "do not forsake your calling." Looking back, I can see how pride and disobedience were in my heart, yet I would not have seen it that way.

In Numbers 14, Israel refuses to enter Canaan, the land God wanted to give them. In verse 11, God speaks to Moses with some weighty words. "How long will they refuse to believe in me". *First, He speaks about their sin of unbelief* (see 1 John 5:10, Hebrews 3:8, 12). *Secondly, their continuance in their sin: How long will they do so?*

We can learn from the past. 1 Corinthians 10:11 reminds us that "These are all warning markers...and we are just as capable of messing it up as they were." (The Message)

In John 15:5 Jesus said that "apart from me you can do nothing." Jesus is our greatest example of what it means to have faith in God. Even in the most difficult times, Jesus did not draw back. When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed to His Father, "*not my will, but Yours be done.*" He humbled himself, became vulnerable and was obedient.

So, quitting is not an option. In our marriages, with our families, in our communities, in our ministries, bring the love of Christ to our streets, in our homes, in our schools, in our prisons and anytime trouble arises. We can speak the words Jesus spoke, "*Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*"

During this time of Lent, let us become more aware of God's presence and His sacrificial love.

Father, I'm overwhelmed by Your love today. I thank You Lord Jesus for sacrificing Your life for me. Holy Spirit, I yield myself to You now and ask You to come and intercede for me and through me today. Amen.



JACQUIE MCGEE is the Community Reach Pastor at Relate Church in Surrey, BC.



Day 13 / Wednesday, March 19

Our passage in Luke 13:22-31 highlights how Jesus drew people from every town to Himself through His teaching, inviting them into His Kingdom. As Scripture tells us, faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). We deepen our knowledge of God and are sanctified by hearing, reading, reflecting on, and following Christ's teachings (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

My hope is that your faith in Christ strengthens you and that you are transformed as you meditate on God's Word during Lent. Jesus teaches that being familiar with Him (Luke 13:26-27) or merely knowing about Him is not enough for salvation. He encourages people to "make every effort" (verse 24) to access salvation and live a life that reflects that faith – not implying salvation is earned by human effort but highlighting the need for a sincere and diligent pursuit of faith. Those who hear and follow His words enter through the narrow door. As wise builders, they establish a solid foundation for their lives (Matthew 7:24-25).

Sinners are saved by faith alone, and their faith produces action and good works (James 2:17). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they live for God's glory. True believers do not merely call themselves Christians; they actively live out their faith rather than putting on a religious façade while living in habitual sin (Mark 7:6).

Today's passage reveals that the last will be first, and the first will be last. Those considered "first" in worldly terms may be humbled, while the "last" will be exalted. Jesus warns those who believe they are "first" due to their status or achievements to examine their hearts and not rely on self-righteousness. We enter a reconciled relationship with our Holy God only through faith in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, followed by a life of obedience.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for loving the world by sending Your only Son, Jesus, as the one and only narrow door that leads to Your Kingdom. Thank You, King Jesus, that through Your blood of the covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of our sins, we are saved and empowered by the Spirit to live for You.



FARI MAGHAMI is the Pastor at Coastal Church, leading Coastal Eden Ministries in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, BC.

Day 14 / Thursday, March 20

Sitting amongst this group of people struggling with addiction, I realized nobody knew anybody's real name. I scarcely remember the last time someone called me by my real name. We were nobly protecting our family names from embarrassment. More on that later.

Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were re-named by King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1:1,2,7) (see table). They were faced with a life and death choice: *"fall down and worship the image I made... But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace."* (Dan 3:15) Their response was resolute: *"the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and He will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."* (vs. 17, 18) This defiant response infuriated the king that he had the three men bound and thrown into the furnace raging seven times hotter.

Then, the king noticed an angelic figure in the furnace with the Hebrews, and all four were walking freely, unaffected by the flames (vs. 25). The king called the three men out and declared the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be the Most High God. He then promoted all three to higher offices (vs. 26, 30). What unwavering faith and courage expressed by the three when they chose to honour their Hebrew names and their faith in God!

Names are important as they stand for our beliefs, our individuality, and are our heritage. When someone in addiction uses a pseudonym, they claim to be



protecting their real identity. However, I have come to understand three things: First, pseudonyms are merely a placebo that keeps one in addiction. Second, if claiming that a pseudonym protects one’s identity, then one is claiming worth, and third, if one puts their faith in Jesus, no pseudonym is needed!

Identity	Hebrew Names	Captive Names	False Identity
God has favour	Hananiah	Shadrach	royal scribe
Who is what God is	Mishael	Meshach	guest of king
Jehovah has helped	Azariah	Abednego	servant of Nego

Dearest Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. You are a God of hope, healing and deliverance. In our darkest moments, there is hope. Our names remind us of who we are — the unique story of struggle and victory. So, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, help us to hold fast to our true identity in You, even when the flames threaten to consume us. For I know that You are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and by believing in You, and obeying the Holy Spirit, we will be delivered from any dark moment today as You did thousands of years ago in Nebuchadnezzar’s courts. In Your Name we give You thanks and all the Glory. Amen!



RALPH RUHS is a Community Chaplain at UGM.



Day 15 / Friday, March 21

In Psalm 63, David's cry for God in the wilderness is quite intense. A "dry and parched land" doesn't sound like a place we'd choose to be, right? But there he is, and even in the middle of it, David experiences God's grace and peace. He knows something we often forget: the wilderness doesn't get the final say. When we lean into God, it doesn't stop us from thriving.

Let's be honest – life throws all kinds of wilderness moments at us. Maybe for you, it's the stress of juggling responsibilities, dealing with anxiety, trauma, or just feeling disconnected. The wilderness comes in many forms, and none of them are fun. But what David reminds us of is that even in those tough spots, God's grace is right there, ready to bring peace that doesn't depend on perfect circumstances.

Take our participants at Arrow Home, the UGM Women's Recovery Home on Vancouver Island. They're new mums who have battled addiction, even up until when their babies were born. Their wilderness was a deep, lonely place where nothing satisfied. But when their little ones came into the picture, they knew they had to find a way out. Recovery isn't easy, but with the support of our team, the local recovery community, and God's relentless love, they find the strength to keep going. Exhausted, rocking their babies back to sleep, they can hold onto the words of this psalm: "I sing in the shadow of your wings." Slowly but surely, they can begin to see God working in their lives.

Their stories remind us that the wilderness – whether it's addiction, stress, or just a tough season – doesn't define us. God's grace is bigger and offers peace in the midst of it all.

Reflect on a time when you were in your own wilderness. How did God's grace carry you through? If you're there now, take a few moments each day to ask God for His peace.

God, thank You for Your grace that sustains us, even in the wilderness. Help us find peace in Your presence and thrive, no matter what we face. Amen.



KARLA RUDRAM is the Manager of Victoria at UGM.



Day 16 / Saturday, March 22

Luke 6:43-45 reminds us that the fruit we bear reflects the condition of our hearts. Jesus teaches us, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.” Just as a tree’s fruit reveals its nature, our actions, words, and choices reveal our inner life state. In this Lenten season, we are invited to examine the fruit we are producing. Are we bearing fruit that reflects the goodness of God?

The season of Lent calls us to introspection, to reflect on the condition of our hearts and how we live out our faith. Focusing on outward appearances is easy, but Jesus teaches us that true transformation begins with the heart. When our hearts are aligned with God, we naturally bear good fruit – love, kindness, compassion, and selflessness. These qualities should flow from us in moments of ease and daily life, especially when encountering those in need or experiencing challenges ourselves.

Reflecting on this passage, we must consider how our actions impact our community. How do we interact with those around us? Do we reflect Christ’s love in how we speak and serve others? This Lent, let us reflect on our hearts and commit to bearing fruit that serves and blesses those around us.

I challenge you to think about one way to actively serve others in your community – through acts of kindness, offering support to someone in need, or speaking words of encouragement. As we allow God to transform our hearts, let us bear fruit that reflects His love and makes a tangible difference in the lives of others. May we be known for the good fruit we produce, bringing glory to God and hope to the world.

Lord Jesus, You taught that the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, growing from the smallest beginnings into a great tree. During this Lent, may Your Spirit transform our small acts of faith and love into a source of hope and renewal for all. Amen.



路加福音6:43-45提醒我們，我們所結的果子反映出我們內心的狀況。耶穌教導我們：“沒有好樹結壞果子，也沒有壞樹結好果子。”就像樹的果實揭示了它的本質，我們的行為、言語和選擇也顯示了我們內心的狀態。在這個四旬期，我們被邀請來檢視我們所結的果子。我們是否結出反映上帝良善的果子？

四旬期是一個呼召我們反思的季節，讓我們反思自己內心的狀況以及如何活出信仰。專注於外在的表現是容易的，但耶穌教導我們，真正的轉變是從心開始的。當我們的心與上帝對齊時，我們自然會結出好果子——愛、善良、同情和無私。這些品質應該在我們的日常生活中，特別是在遇到需要幫助的人或面對挑戰時，流露出來。

反思這段經文，我們必須思考我們的行為如何影響我們的社區。我們如何與周圍的人互動？我們在言語和服務他人時，是否反映出基督的愛？這個四旬期，讓我們反思我們內心的狀況，並承諾結出能服務並祝福周圍人的果子。

我挑戰去思考一積極為社區中人士服務的方式——無論是通過善意的行為，提供幫助給有需要的人，還是說出鼓勵的話語。當我們讓上帝改變我們的心時，讓我們結出反映祂愛的果子，並在他人生活中產生具體的改變。願我們因結出好果子而被認識，將榮耀歸給上帝，並將希望帶給世界。

主耶穌，祂教導我們，神的國度如同芥菜種，從最微小的開始長成一棵大樹。在這個四旬期中，願祂的聖靈將我們的微小信仰和愛的行為，轉化為給所有人帶來盼望與更新的源。阿們。



BILL MOK is the Founding Pastor of 360 Community in Richmond, BC. 莫雨晴是列治文360社區的創辦人和牧師。



Day 17 / Monday, March 24

Last year, God humbled me. I watched a football game on TV and as one of the teams kicked a field goal someone held a large sign with the writing, "John 3:16." I turned to my friend and mockingly stated, "Such a classic, in-your-face Christian thing to do."

The very next day, I met a man who told me how he came to know Jesus. Years prior he was watching a football game on TV. As one of the teams kicked a field goal, someone held up a "John 3:16" sign - my jaw dropped - and he heard a voice telling him to read the verse. He searched for a bible, read the famous passage on God's love, fell on his knees, and gave his life to Jesus!

The very thing I judged the day before, God used to change this man's destiny. Humbled.

God called out in me an echo of what Paul called out in the Jews of Rome two millennia ago: we aren't meant to be the judge.

Some Jews judged the difference in others. They had always been the people of God, but in Jesus, anyone is now welcome. The problem with judging others is that we miss God's heart for them, but when we hold up the mirror to ourselves, we realize we also are broken. Paul states that "in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things" (Rom. 2:1 ESV).

We aren't meant to be the judge. Why? Because there is only one true judge, and He shows "no partiality" (Rom. 2:11). Yet thankfully, He is a good judge. A judge who lavished us with kindness through the offering up of His only son (Rom. 2:4 ESV). Let's let God alone do the judging today.

Father, thank You that through Jesus I am a child of God, part of the family of God, and stamped with Your approval. Please reveal and forgive me for where I am currently judging others and help me to see them as You see them. In Jesus' name, Amen.



ANDREW SHIELDS is the Associate Pastor at the Village Church in Surrey, BC.

Day 18 / Tuesday, March 25

Today's Gospel from Luke takes us far from the world's gaze to a remote Galilean village where God fulfills the prophecy that a young woman would bear a son whose name would be Immanuel, "God-with-us" (Isaiah 7:14).

Jesus' conception in the Virgin's womb was a humble, hidden event – no one was present except Mary and the Angel Gabriel – but it was crucial to the history of salvation. The wonder of the Incarnation challenges us to open our hearts and minds to the limitless possibilities of God's grace and power. There, in Nazareth, the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), and thereby enabled us to share in divine sonship as sisters and brothers.

The Spirit who overshadowed Mary (Luke 1:35) is the same Holy Spirit who hovered over the waters at the dawn of Creation (Genesis 1:2). This enfleshment of God's Son ushered in the dawn of the New Creation. Indeed, it is "through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10) that we are sanctified.

"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God" (Luke 1:30), Gabriel says. In fact, she had every reason to be afraid, because she was about to live her calling as Mother of the Messiah in suffering and in joy. "Do not be afraid." Today the Lord Jesus addresses these same words to us. Our world is so full of fear: the fear of misery and poverty, of illness and suffering, of solitude, violence, and death. The only true protection we have against these feelings of fear comes from the Lord. He assures us: "Do not fear, I am always with you, and if you fall, I am there to lift you up."

The Gospel ends with Mary's words: "I am the Lord's servant," ... "May your word to me be fulfilled." (Luke 1:38). She said "yes" to doing God's will, a definitive and unconditional "yes" to his divine plan: "thy will be done!" Despite the many challenges we face in living our faith, Mary invites us to say "yes" to God no matter the cost. Doing His will is our peace and leads us to true happiness.

Pour forth we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts: that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of the Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Amen.



J. MICHAEL MILLER, CSB, is the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver.

Day 19 / Wednesday, March 26

"Then Jesus asked, 'What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?'"
(13:18)

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven in Luke 13:18-21 describe the growth and spreading influence of the church, but from different approaches.

To the crowds who expected the kingdom of God to come with fanfare and drum-beat, Jesus offers two wonderful images of organic growth.

The first image is the mustard seed which grows slowly, but as a tree it has room for all sorts of birds in its branches. Such is the church of God that has room for all races, colors and cultures. The parable of the mustard seed is about outward growth. Birds from outside fly into and become part of the tree.

Another image of the kingdom: yeast in the dough, working for good even when unseen. The leaven works from inside the dough. Leaven makes dough rise from within which pictures the way the gospel changes us inwardly: it changes our hearts and then works its way into our actions.

What do everyday images of the kitchen and garden say to me? Can I let Jesus give me some real encouragement? The slow growth of the mustard tree and the arduous work of the baker are metaphors for the gradual but saturating and inevitable work of the gospel.

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose." (Philippians 2:12-13)

Father, too often I believe only what my eyes see, and I get discouraged. Forgive my faint heart. Help me to be filled with Your hope and Your vision for Your Kingdom. Expand my seeing, mushroom my understanding. Help me to see the Kingdom of God as Jesus sees it. In His holy name, I pray. Amen.



BILL WONG is the Senior Advisor of Church Relations at UGM.

Day 20 / Thursday, March 27

When I was about ten years old, I stole some CFL helmet stickers from the local Mac's store. At first, I felt very relieved that I hadn't been caught, and imagined how great they would look in my room. However, during my long walk home the Holy Spirit put His hand of conviction upon my shoulder. The joy of possessing these football stickers was being replaced with feelings of guilt and shame.

By the time I reached home, my guilt was too much to bear. I walked in the door and immediately confessed to my parents what I had done. They promptly drove me back to the store, where I had to admit my crime and pay for everything that I had taken. When we got back into the car, I looked at my mom and said, "It sure feels good to do the right thing!"

So, why is it so difficult for us to confess when we say or do things we know we shouldn't? Deep down we know we are guilty, and yet we act as if we are innocent. Isn't that what David does in Psalm 32? At first, he tries to keep silent, he tries to conceal his sin, but then in verses 3 and 4, he declares the Lord's hand of conviction was so heavy upon him that his strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah – stop and think about that. Do we really want to live all our days beneath a cloud of guilt and conviction?

Then, in verse four, David acknowledged his sin; he confessed his transgressions to the Lord and found forgiveness. The peace of knowing that he once again stood clean before his God was so freeing that he announces in verse 1, "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Notice that verse 5 also ends with this word 'Selah.' This reminds us that while it is never easy to repent, it is worth it, because it puts us in a mindset whereby we are willing to look to God for forgiveness and cleansing!

Lord, thank You for convicting us when we sin and not leaving us all on our own. That gives us confidence that You will make us overcomers, upright in heart and righteous by faith. And so we say, 'be glorified in our lives' for You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.



DAN EAGLE is the Lead Pastor at Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly in New Westminster, BC.

Day 21 / Friday, March 28

Psalm 32 speaks to the blessed life, or the happy life, within the very real context of personal sin. Isn't that a question so many of us ask: how to live a life of happiness amid the consequences and shame of our sin? So often in our lives it seems easier to cover, minimize, or overlook sin. As the psalmist shares here, however, in confessing to the Lord the ways we've missed the mark, gone our own way, and been defiant towards Him, there we will find true happiness – a blessed life.

The distress of the Psalmist in verse 3 and 4 isn't primarily due to the consequences of his sin, but in keeping silent amidst his sin. In confessing, the Lord removes the burden of our transgressions. He covers our sin and no longer counts them against us. Because of His righteousness, He sees us without iniquity, without deceit. And it can feel tempting to see this as something transactional; I confess and am forgiven and therefore blessed. But this completely misses the core of a blessed life.

Confession doesn't lead to the blessed life because it makes us blameless, but rather because it leads us into fellowship with the Lord. As Craig Broyles wrote, "Forgiveness is good, but fellowship is better." Fellowship with the Lord is what marks the blessed life. And we know this to be true – think of your close friendships or family relationships. Those relationships aren't significant because they're without hurt and without wronging one another. Those relationships are safe and meaningful because there is a mutual knowing of the other, often as a result of uncovering the hidden places in your life and revealing yourself for who you are. In that place of truly being known, love can take root. In confessing to the Lord, we uncover hidden places where shame has bound us. When we trust in the Lord, his steadfast love surrounds us.

Thank you, Jesus, for Your faithful, dependable love. In Your kindness, we ask that You reveal places in our lives where sin has taken root. We confess them to You now [take a moment of pause for Your own personal confession]. Lord, I declare that You are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Teach me and instruct me in Your ways; for You make known to me the path of life, You will fill me with joy in Your presence. Amen.



REBEKAH CORBIN is the Apprenticing Pastor and Partnerships Coordinator at The Way Church in Vancouver, BC.

Day 22 / Saturday, March 29

It must be so jarring to see a respected leader eat with those that we consider “sinners.” Consider someone that you hold in high esteem. Maybe it’s a parent, mentor, spiritual leader, author, teacher, or friend. You bump into them at your favourite coffee shop with heaps of empty plates and cups on their table with a vicious bully from high school – the one that made your life utterly wretched. Both greet you and within the small talk, share an inside joke that you don’t understand. You stare blankly, dumbfounded by this turn of events.

Jesus told these parables in response to the Pharisees’ reactions to his friends and chosen company. It can be difficult enough for us to spend holidays with family – how much more with people that are drastically different? Or with people that have diverging ideas, belong to a different wealth class, worship a different god, express unique spirituality, and identify as another ethnic group or gender?

Who are those people you could never associate with in your own life? Think about having dinner with that person. Inviting them to your home. Offering them egg tarts or chocolate cake and a decaf tea for dessert. All the while, you have to talk to that person, hear their views, learn of their experiences, and listen to their stories. Yikes!

Lent is a time of prayer and reflection where we learn to abstain from our desires. It is a time of repentance – turning from the ways where we have “missed the mark” (definition of sin in Hebrew). We trade our immediate satisfaction (sin) for slow-release joy. It might seem like a gigantic chasm to span in spending time with those that are, effectively, our enemies. However, what might be a step we can take in that direction, if we follow Jesus’ words?

For me, I am giving up social media for Lent, where I can easily lose hours of my life. By denying that addictive tendency, I hope to grow in my ability to handle emotional discomfort and conflict in my relationships, praying it would lead to loving those I can’t stand.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, help us to believe that as we choose the difficult, trying way of the Cross, we are giving up making mud pies for that holiday at sea.



LESLIE ROSENAU-LAI is a Church Relations Advisor at UGM.



Day 23 / Monday, March 31

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns!" This line from Revelation 19, which is the first line in Handel's Hallelujah chorus, recalls some of the most favorite bass notes that I have sung in my life. Anyone who has had the privilege of singing bass in a choir performance of *The Messiah* knows that the bass line in this refrain both tests your vocal range and brings exhilaration when you hit the rapidly ascending and descending notes. While we know very little about Handel's personal life, one detail we do know was that he wept while composing the Hallelujah chorus.

There is something deeply moving and wildly hopeful about the promise, not only that the God who brought the cosmos into being reigns in the present time, but that God will ultimately be victorious over the forces aimed against God's vision of a just, flourishing and restored creation. In the book of Revelation, after the long series of visions describes the great war in heaven (beginning in chapter 12), the war is finally resolved, the victory secured, the culmination of God's salvation announced. This was, has, and will be won by the lamb who was slain, who is now finally united with His bride, the Church. The time of restoration and rest has arrived, and all creatures now join in the joyous celebration: Hallelujah, for our Lord God Almighty reigns.

When you are in the middle of a story, you do not usually know how it will end. In the middle of our own stories, the ending can feel pretty uncertain or even dark at times. Our personal losses and lapses as well as the fissures and failures of our communities, governments and businesses – let alone the vexing problems we face such as the



Psalm 53; Leviticus 23:26-41; Revelation 19:1-8

climate crisis, entrenched racism and growing inequality (especially in a city like Vancouver) can all make the ending seem very uncertain.

One of the gifts of the Biblical story, so jubilantly announced here in Revelation 19, is that all our stories and the story of creation itself will end with a hope beyond our wildest dreams. The challenge for us who find ourselves in the middle of this story is to hold on to that ending, to let it permeate our longings and desires, to trust that God will bring together all of creation through death or resurrection, as God did for Jesus.

Are you allowing the ending to impact your present life – in the ambiguity of the middle of your story? Paul puts it this way: in light of the hope of Christ restoring all things, in light of the ending of all our stories, “stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Lord, help me trust in Your promised ending, especially when I feel like giving up. Give me courage to seek Your kingdom in the ambiguities I face in the middle of my story.



TIM DICKAU is the Director of Citygate and a team member of the Center for Missional Leadership in Vancouver, BC.

Day 24 / Tuesday, April 1

Reading Psalm 53 took me back to a time when I led a group of students on visits to different churches, allowing them to experience worship across various Christian traditions. I especially loved doing this during the Season of Lent and Holy Week, as these times tell the climactic story of Christianity. Lent is also a season of repentance and spiritual renewal, a call to reflect and return to God.

One year, we visited a beautiful sanctuary filled with stained glass windows, where we listened to the pastor explain a liturgy of Lent. As we read the liturgy printed in the worship order, we were surprised to find that the word "sin" was absent. Out of curiosity, we asked about it. The pastor's response was, "We don't talk about sin anymore these days."

This moment highlighted a trend in our polite culture, where we avoid words that might offend or cause discomfort, even at the expense of truth. In Scripture, particularly in the Wisdom literature, the word "fool" appears frequently. There are two kinds of fools: the first refers to those who are indifferent to wisdom and knowledge, living complacently without direction. The second type refers to those who believe they are always right and have no fear of God. These people, mentioned in Psalms 14 and 53, are practical atheists who live as though God does not exist, assuming their actions carry no consequences.

As Christians, we must not assume we are immune to foolishness just because we "know" God. A famous story about the great reformer Martin Luther illustrates this well. One day, his wife dressed in mourning clothes.

"Who has died?" Luther asked. "God," she replied.

"God!" Luther said, shocked. "How can you say such a thing?"

"I'm only saying what you are living," she answered.

It's easy to acknowledge God with our lips while keeping Him at a distance in our lives. We like making our own decisions and charting our own paths. In this season of Lent, may the Holy Spirit open our eyes to our true spiritual condition, allowing God to reclaim His kingship over our daily living.

Dear God, forgive us for living as though You are not present in our everyday lives. We try to solve our problems and plan without seeking Your guidance. Help us lean not on our own understanding, but to acknowledge Your lordship and trust in Your direction in all that we do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

讀到詩篇第53篇時，我想起許多年前曾帶領一群學生參觀不同的教會，學習並體驗不同的基督教崇拜傳統，特別是在四旬期和聖週期間，因為這段時間講述了基督教信仰的核心故事。四旬期也是一個呼籲悔改和靈性更新的季節。

有一年，我們坐在一座美麗的教堂中，四周環繞著壯麗的彩繪玻璃窗，聽牧師講解四旬期的禮儀時，我感到震驚，因為在四旬期的崇拜的禮文中，「罪」這個詞完全未被提及。出於好奇，我們問牧師為什麼，他的回答是：「現在我們已經不再談論罪了。」當今的社會人與人之間以禮貌文化交往，不願說出可能讓人不舒服的詞彙，「罪」是一個使人感到被冒犯的詞語，所以被刪掉，但這實際上是在否認真理。

詩篇53:1-2說：「愚頑人心裡說：『沒有神。』他們都是敗壞，行了可憎惡的罪孽，沒有一個人行善。神從天上垂看世人，要看有明白的沒有，有尋求神的沒有。」（中文和合本）

在聖經中的智慧文學裡，「愚頑人」這個詞經常出現。愚人有兩種：第一種是那些對智慧和知識漠不關心、不感興趣的人，他們自滿自足，生活中沒有方向。第二種是那些認為自己永遠是對的、不敬畏神的人。內疚或悔恨並不存在於他們的字典裡。詩篇第14篇和第53篇所談論的就是這樣的人，這些踐行無神論者過著仿佛神不存在的生活，認為可以隨心所欲地行事，覺得不會有任何後果。

基督徒特別應當謹慎，不要認為自己因為「認識」神就可以免於成為愚頑人。一天，偉大的宗教改革家馬丁·路德的妻子穿上了黑色的喪服。

路德問道：「誰去世了？」

「神。」她回答。

「神！」路德驚愕道。「妳怎麼能說這樣的話？」

她答道：「我只是說出你生活的模樣。」

我們很容易口邊掛著上帝的名字，卻不希望祂過多介入我們的生活中。我們喜歡自行決策，自行計劃自己的道路。在這個四旬期，願聖靈打開我們的眼睛，讓我們看見自己的屬靈狀況，讓神重新在我們每天的生活中執掌王權。

親愛的上帝，請原諒我們在日常生活中活得仿佛祂不在。我們試圖自行解決問題，並且不求問祢就規劃我們的未來。求祢幫助我們不倚靠自己的聰明，讓我們在凡事上認定祢的主權，並信靠祢的引導。我們奉主耶穌的名禱告，阿們。



JOYCE CHAN is the Principal of the Chinese Canadian School of Theology in Richmond, BC. 陳頌恩是加拿大華人神學院院長。

Day 25 / Wednesday, April 2

"They answered, 'We have only five loaves of bread and two fish" - Luke 9:13

Through this season of Lent, there is a divine dance between the sacred and earthy mundanity. Humanity is both sacred, filled and energized by divine breath, and made of the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7). There is an earthy humanness to our daily experience. A temporal earthiness. A dependence. We are dependent on divine breath from outside of ourselves to fill us with life. Dependency is the defining marker of humanity, whether we acknowledge our dependency or try to grasp at the myth of autonomy. Eventually we run head long into this thing called life and are invited to face reality. This is my *actual* life. These are my *actual* gifts. This is my *actual* story. The good and the bad.

This Lenten season propels us to stare our human frailty in the face, to not try and puff ourselves up and think of ourselves as more highly than we ought. But to sit before the feet of Jesus and instead of trying to impress Him ask what are the loaves and fish that He has given us to give to Him.

Here is the beautiful thing: that in acknowledging our little, it invites His much. In saying before the Father of abundance: "This is all I have. I know it's not much. I don't have much to give. But I give it all to you." That He can take whatever it is we give Him and breathe the breath of divine life into it (a.k.a. throw a fish and chips party). One writer invites us to "pray as you can, not as you can't" and I think it is in this season where we are to bring before the Father our little and acknowledge "I don't have enough bread, but I know the one who does have bread".

Lord Jesus, as we prepare our hearts for Easter, we acknowledge before You, our need. Open our eyes to our dependence. Reveal the abundance of Your cross that brings life. May we live more and more bringing our life, just as we are, and giving it all as a gift for You to bless. Amen.



MATTHEW BENDER is the Young Adults Pastor at Christian Life Assembly in Langley, BC.



Psalm 126; Isaiah 43:1-7; Philippians 2:19-24

Day 26 / Thursday, April 3

There's something powerful about reflecting on moments when God has intervened in extraordinary ways. In Psalm 126, you can almost hear his people reminiscing: "Remember when God brought us back? We were laughing – we couldn't believe it! He did such amazing things for us." Yet even amid that celebration, there's a yearning: "God, do it again." They've witnessed His goodness and now long for Him to move like that once more.

Isaiah 43 echoes this sentiment. God reassures His people: "*I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; ... When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned.*" This isn't just a past promise; it's a present reality. God's faithfulness isn't a description of a historical event but the promise of His unchanging nature among us, now.

If God did it before, He can do it again. He restored joy to places of deep sorrow, He parted waters, walked with His people through fire, and made a way where there was no way. And the beautiful part? He didn't just do this for them – He's done it for us. We know He can do it for others: for those we love who feel like they're walking through fire, for those waiting for restoration. We get to stand as witnesses of His nature and boldly declare His faithfulness to the hearts of the weary.

Father, You've shown up for us in ways we can't fully comprehend, and for that, we simply thank You. We know You are unchanging, and Your faithfulness endures from generation to generation. Today, we lift up those who haven't yet experienced the beauty of salvation in You. For those who are searching for Your love. For those who are struggling with the weight of addiction — God, we ask that You meet them right where they are. What You've done for us, we ask that You do for them. Do it again.



RYAN JOHNSON is one of the Lead Pastors of church: untitled in Downtown Vancouver, BC.

Day 27 / Friday, April 4

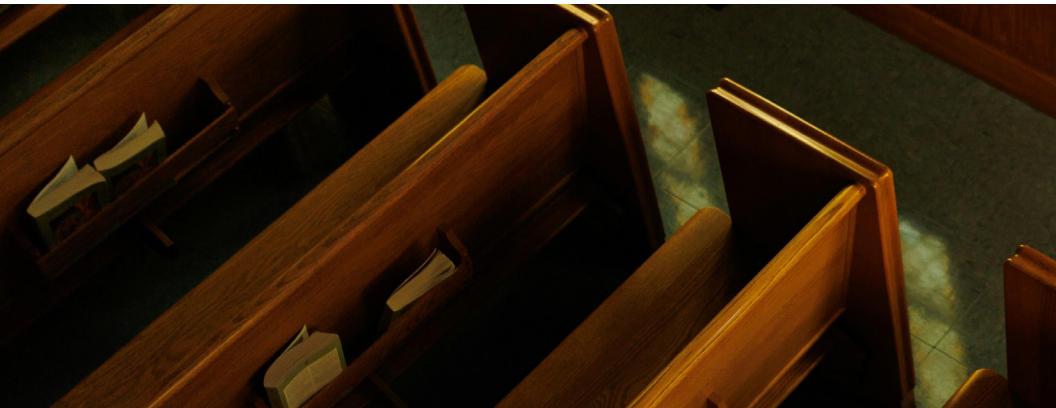
When the Bible says, "*Lead out those who have eyes but are blind*" (Isaiah 43:8a), I can't help but think of the experience of leading eleven brothers and sisters to the Republic of Congo in Africa for three weeks of short-term mission service in mid-July 2024. Our ministry partner was 'New Sight Congo' and their vision is "*for a world where no one is needlessly blind.*" Four in five people in the world who are blind or visually impaired, suffer from preventable or treatable causes of blindness. They are committed to eliminating all reversible and preventable causes of blindness and severe visual impairment. When we hear how they have experienced God's power, protection, and provision over the past twelve years, we are amazed at what God has done!

During our three-week service in Congo, our entire short-term mission team had many wonderful experiences of God answering prayers, which were quite impressive. After returning to Canada, we also shared these stories on different occasions, and everyone was amazed by God's amazing work.

The Bible says that "*all the nations... and the peoples*" (Isaiah 43:9) are to gather together to hear the testimony of God's people. God is the Almighty One, Redeemer, Creator and King, yet He insists that His people be His witnesses to the truth and power of God through their lives (Isaiah 43:10, 12). Not only did God make this call in the Old Testament and Isaiah's day, but He still wants to proclaim God's truth to the world today through His people as His witnesses in this age.

Do you still believe in God's power today? If so, trust Him to continually call you and I today to be His faithful witnesses in this age, and every experience in your life will never be wasted!

My Lord and my King, give me a courageous and willing spirit so that I may boldly go wherever and to whomever You send me and be Your witness. Amen.



當讀到聖經說「你要把那些有眼卻看不見，有耳卻聽不到的人民領出來。」(以賽亞書 43:8a)，不禁令我想起在2024年七月中，帶領十一位弟兄姊妹前往非洲剛果共和國作短宣事奉三星期的經歷。我們的事工夥伴是「目養計劃」(New Sight Congo)，他們的願景是「讓世界再沒有不必要的失明」。其實世上每五位失明人士中，有四位的眼疾是可以預防或治癒的。剛果共和國的「目養計劃」眼科中心致力扭轉局面，預防失明。當我們聽到他們在過往十二年中如何經歷神的能力、保守和供應時，實在叫我們驚嘆上帝的作為！

而我們整隊短宣隊，在三星期的剛果服侍中，也親身經歷了不少上帝垂聽禱告的奇妙經歷，印象相當深刻；返回加拿大後，我們也在不同場合向人分享，大家都都驚嘆上帝奇妙的作為！

聖經說「列國和萬族」(以賽亞書 43章9節)都要聚集起來，聆聽上帝子民的見證。其實上帝是獨一的真神和救贖主，也是全能的創造主和君王，但祂却堅持讓祂的子民來作祂的見證人，藉著他們的生命來見證上帝的真實和能力(以賽亞書43章10、12節)。

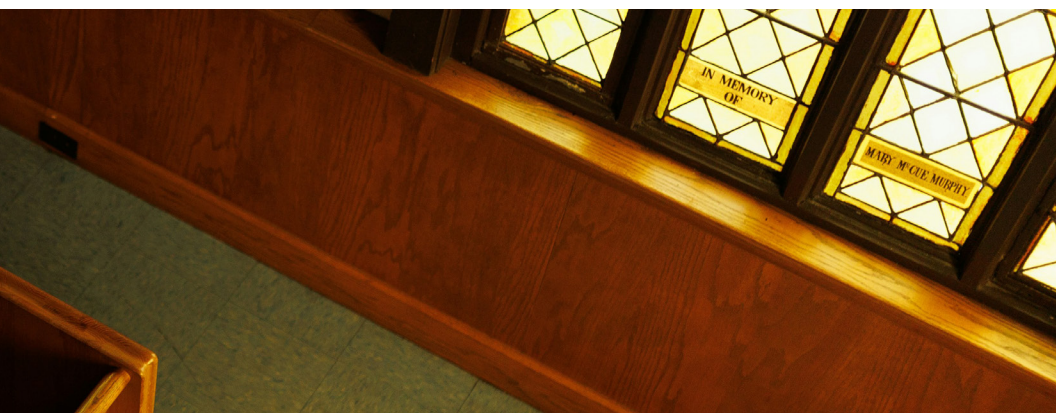
上帝不但在舊約及以賽亞的年代，發出這個呼召，今天依然要藉著祂的子民，在現今世代作祂的見證人，向全世界宣告上帝的真實。

你今天依然相信上帝滿有能力嗎？仍然能施行拯救嗎？如果是的話，也請相信祂今天仍然會呼召你和我，在這個世代，作祂忠心見證人！而你生命中的每一段經歷，也絕不會白白浪費！

我的主，我的王，請賜予我勇敢和甘心樂意的心，使我能夠大膽地前往您派我要去的任何地方和任何人，成為您的見證人。阿門。



XAVIER LAW is the Cantonese Ministry Pastor at Fraser Lands Church and is the Chairperson of the Alliance Global Serve Canada board in Vancouver, BC. 羅志明牧師是溫哥華菲沙崙教會的粵語堂牧師和加拿大環球宣愛協會的董事會主席。



Day 28 / Saturday, April 5

As we pioneer through this Lenten season, this reading from John's Gospel centers us into the deep tension and oppositional landscape Jesus faced on His journey to the cross. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, some people reported the miracle to the Pharisees. These hypocritical religious leaders were gripped by the fear of losing their political control and social power, which led them to plot Jesus' death. Unknowingly, (and likely much to their chagrin) they became critical instruments of God's plan for humanity's salvation. Caiaphas, the high priest, declared, "It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." (John 11:50) While Caiaphas spoke from a position of political expediency, his words carried prophetic truth. Jesus' death was indeed the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of not just the nation of Israel, but for all of humanity.

Lent invites us to remember that God's purposes prevail especially when the challenges of life feel hopeless and confusing. The religious leaders' schemes, though motivated by fear, self-indulgence, and power, ultimately served to fulfill God's subversively redemptive plan for His creation. As we reflect on the cross, may we be reminded that God frequently harnesses opposition and suffering to bring about His restorative kingdom. This truth invites us to trust God, especially when we face challenges and uncertainty. Followers of Jesus are never promised an easy life. Like Jesus, we will encounter opposition when we live faithfully – in fact, that is a litmus test for whether we are living faithfully at all! Yet, the cross and the empty tomb bring assurance that God is always at work, weaving together His purposes in ways we cannot always see or comprehend. We must learn, as disciples of Christ, to accept the chaos of the cross, embrace the challenge of the waiting, and faithfully pray into the promise of our Creator that His burden is light.

As we prepare our hearts for Easter, let us surrender our fears at the foot of the cross and trust in God's goodness. May we find comfort and hope in knowing that the same God who brought life from death through Jesus Christ is working today to bring His purposes to fulfillment in and through you.

Lord, help us to grow in intimacy with You through prayer, and to trust in Your goodness, even when it doesn't make sense to us. Help us to walk faithfully in the footsteps of Christ, willingly accepting the challenge of discipleship, and sacrificing all else. Amen.



PAUL THIESSEN is a Church Relations Advisor at UGM.

Day 29 / Monday, April 7

A growing number of online content creators are uploading videos of their bold attempts to gain access to events where they lack the credentials for authorized access. Perhaps you've seen various individuals trying to sneak into concerts, sporting events, and even Disneyland without getting caught.

It's amazing the lengths to which some will go to accomplish their feat, and while I admit that it makes for entertaining viewing, I can't help but conclude that the experience itself would be less than satisfying. Without a ticket or authorized credentials, you remain at risk of being caught and escorted out. One simple question from a curious security guard or staff member and you are quickly removed from full participation because they discover that you do not rightfully belong.

Where's the joy and life in that?

The author of Hebrews reminds us that through the work of Christ on the cross we have been granted an all-access pass. The curtain is pulled back. The gate is opened. We are free to enter...with confidence! We have been welcomed in to fully participate in the life-giving Kingdom.

There's no need to pretend to be someone we aren't. No need to fake it until we make it. No need for deception. No need for coercive or persuasive words. No watchful eye. No suspicion.

To enter with confidence means that we are exactly where we are supposed to be. We belong in the presence of the Most Holy. And what is our proof of entrance? It is Jesus Himself that provides us with that assurance. May that fill us with hope that we can't wait to share with others!

God our Father, thank You for the hope that is provided through the work of Your Son Jesus on the cross. As we draw near to You, fill us with confident assurance that we belong in Your loving and holy presence. Cleanse us and renew us. Amen.



MIKE KNOTT is the Lead Pastor at Surrey Alliance Church.

Day 30 / Tuesday, April 8

Have you ever been asked to take on a new responsibility?

Each of us has been given unique gifts by our Creator, who, throughout our lives, presents us with opportunities to serve Christ using those gifts. The key to faithful living is to discern the authentic call of the Spirit in our lives.

Sometimes we're asked to do something because there's a need - at our workplace, or in our family or community. Sometimes we're tempted to jump into a role because we see a need. And as people of faith, we know God asks us to participate however we can in helping to care for our neighbours and be agents of healing and wholeness in God's world.

However, is everything we're asked to do something God wants us to do? How do we know if this is God's calling for us and to resist letting other motivations (pride, status, needing-to-be-needed) make the decision for us?

Author Parker Palmer suggests that genuine call occurs at the intersection of "the world's deep hunger" and our "deep gladness." It is when we serve at this intersection, whatever roles we assume, that our leadership and offering is authentic, and God is most able to act in and through us for the sake of God's good purposes.

None of us can meet every need that arises, nor are we called to. A key aspect of our spiritual journey - and discerning God's call in our lives - is deepening our knowledge of ourselves and our God-given gifts. So also is honing our ability to listen for the leading of the spirit to discern how God is calling us to live out our faith and use our gifts in each phase of our lives.

Loving and faithful God, thank You for making me who I am. In this Lenten season and beyond, help me to listen for the leading of Your Spirit and find my deep gladness in offering my gifts, in love and service to Christ, Your Word incarnate. Amen.



SANDRA NIXON is the Pastor of Trinity-Grace United Church in East Vancouver, BC.

Day 31 / Wednesday, April 9

Here, it seems that the disciples lived in a state of naïveté, unable to recognize the significance or trauma of what would happen in Jerusalem. Their inability to understand had a spiritual reason: “the meaning of the saying was hidden from them.”

From our vantage point, Jesus’ words during Passion Week seem clear. Bad things will happen, then one amazing thing will happen. He isn’t speaking in puzzles or using parables – He says the plain truth about Himself. Still, the disciples understood none of it. In grace, the full meaning was hidden from them. If they had known, they might not have followed. If they had questioned further, they could have become cynical. If they had grasped the devastation ahead, they might never have witnessed the power of the resurrection.

Similarly, when we face trauma – abandonment, abuse, loss – we often ask: Why did God let this happen to me? There’s no answer that satisfies our need for understanding. The reason for our suffering is hidden from us. In suffering, we may think: “God wants me to learn a lesson” or “I must have done something to deserve this.” But these are not the gospel. They are echoes of karma. To believe these messages is to misunderstand God’s grace. When we suffer, Jesus’ message remains clear: bad things happen, then one amazing thing happens.

That amazing thing is the resurrection. The resurrection makes the suffering worth it. It reveals the power of God and ensures that what is hidden will no longer remain hidden. Everything we suffer will contribute to the glory of God revealed in Jesus’ resurrection.

Lord Jesus, we confess on this day that You are the resurrection and the life. We confess that our hope lies in this truth alone, that You have conquered sin, Satan and death, through suffering leading to resurrection. Would You instill this hope in our hearts today. Empower it by granting us the faith to leave the meaning of our suffering as not something to be pursued but rather an opportunity to experience trust, the acceptance of Your resurrection as evidence of Your power at work in us. In Your name, and for Your glory. Amen.



BEN HALL is the Lead Pastor at Saanich Baptist Church.



Day 32 / Thursday, April 10

Many years ago, our family began attending an Anglo-Catholic church with all the bells and whistles. Well, bells anyway. And incense. And a commitment to follow the seasons of the church year, including the associated traditional spiritual practices.

Ash Wednesday was a revelation to us. There we were as a family, kneeling at the communion rail alongside the rest of the congregation. And there was our priest, moving down the rail, using ashes to make the sign of the cross on each forehead, and – with eyes full of love and pain – saying to each of us, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

He touched each of us gently and said, essentially, “you’re going to die.” I had never heard that kind of talk in church before. I had been led to think of suffering and death as unreal, as mirages. I had been led to think that if I were a real Christian, a good Christian, I would be perfectly happy and comfortable and wealthy – all the time.

But Lent is a yearly reminder that struggle and suffering and death are real. In the person of Jesus, God struggled. And suffered. And died. It’s hard to get more real than that!

The story doesn’t end there, of course. Every Lent ends with Easter – a celebration filled with overwhelming (and even unsettling) Joy. But Easter does not erase Lent. The Resurrection does not eliminate the Crucifixion. They come to us together.

In the New Testament, we find the early church declaring that today’s Isaiah “Suffering Servant” passage could be understood as foreshadowing Jesus. This means that the very human journey from suffering to joy is a path God walks, too. The Resurrection waiting for us at the end of Lent shows us that Joy, too, joins suffering in being as real as anything can be!

Loving God, who has given us lives filled with so much more than we could ask or imagine, help us to receive all of life as a gift. All of it. Following the example of Jesus the Suffering Servant, may we resist the urge to separate our joy from our struggle. Amen.



PAUL TEEL is a Co-Pastor at The Place Community Church in Victoria, BC.

Day 33 / Friday, April 11

Christ is God. And if Christ is God, then He is also the Creator. The One who created all things became man. We call this 'the incarnation,' where God the Creator became a human creature just like all of us. But why did God become human? The Bible says that Christ, who is God, came to this earth as the Son of God, so that we could become "the sons of God." If Christ had not come down to earth as the Son of God, then not only would all of mankind not be able to enter God's salvation, but we would not have the authority to become sons of God. Therefore, Christ came down to earth and took on a human body for the purpose of making us sons of God.

Not only did Christ, as the Son of God, take on a human body like ours to add to His Godly divinity, but His body took on the suffering necessary to grant us healing and restoration. The most important mission for the body of Christ was His death on the cross. Christ defeated death and achieved perfect salvation for us, allowing all those who believe in Christ to become children of God. The author of Hebrews intended that both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified should all come from the same source. Christ is the Son of God by nature, but we who believe in Him become children of God only by His grace. As a result, we are made the children of God with equal standing before God the Father.

Therefore, us believers who have become children of God, have Christ as our brother. This is because we have become children of the same God and share the authority of being children with the Lord. We are children of heaven who have inherited the flesh and blood of God in Christ Jesus. All of this is because Christ destroyed the devil through his death on the cross for us. We are no longer bound to death or sin. We are the spiritual descendants of Abraham and share in the brotherhood of Christ. We, who are in this position, must know that we can confidently overcome any trial or temptation. Even death can no longer threaten us, because Christ's death has given us resurrection. During the Lent season, I hope that you will be able to successfully run the race of faith that lies before us as you meditate on the spiritual blessings and graces that Christ's death has given us.

Lord! Thank you for coming down to earth as the Son of God for us. For also having suffered in the same situation as us, and even having died, we believe that this is so that we can all become children of God, and we give thanks, praise, and glory to the Lord. Through Lent, let us participate in the Lord's suffering, and may that suffering grant us grace and blessings so that we can become holy children who are pleasing to God. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

그리스도는 하나님이십니다. 그리고 그리스도께서 하나님이시라면 그분은 창조주이시기도 합니다. 그러나 우리가 잘 아는 것처럼 창조주이신 그 분이 인간이 되신 겁니다. 이것을 우리는 '성육신'이라 부릅니다. 성육신 사건은 창조주 하나님께서 우리와 같은 피조물이 되신 사건입니다. 그렇다면 왜 하나님이신 그분이 우리와 같은 피조물이 되셔야만 했을까요? 하나님이신 그리스도께서 하나님의 아들로 이 땅에 오신 것은, 우리로 하여금 "하나님의 아들들"이 되게 하시기 위함입니다. 만일 그리스도께서 하나님의 아들로 이 땅에 오시지 않으셨다면 우리 모든 인간들은 하나님의 구원에 들어갈 수 없을 뿐만 아니라 하나님의 아들이 되는 권세도 지닐 수 없었을 것입니다. 그러므로 그리스도께서 우리로 하여금 하나님의 아들들이 되게 하시기 위해 우리와 같은 인간의 몸을 입고 이 땅에 오셨던 것입니다.

그리스도께서는 이 땅에 하나님의 아들로써 우리와 똑같은 육신을 취하시고 그 육신을 하나님의 신성에 더하셨습니다. 뿐만 아니라 그 육신으로 우리에게 치유와 회복을 주시기 위해 고난을 받으셨습니다. 그리스도의 육신의 가장 중요한 사명은 바로 십자가의 죽으심이었습니다. 그리스도께서는 당신의 죽으심으로 우리의 죽으심을 물리치시고 죽음의 문제를 완전히 해결을 하셨습니다. 즉 십자가에서 우리를 위한 완전한 구원을 이루신 것인데, 그것은 바로 그리스도를 믿는 모든 자들에게 하나님의 자녀들이 되게 하신 것입니다. 히브리서 기자는 거룩하게 하시는 이와 거룩하게 함을 입은 자들이 다 한 근원에서 나게 하시기 위함이었던 것입니다. 물론 그리스도는 하나님의 본질상 하나님의 아들이시지만 믿는 우리는 오직 그분의 은혜로 하나님의 자녀들이 되는 것입니다. 그러나 결국 성부 하나님 앞에 같은 위치로서의 하나님의 자녀들이 되게 하신 것입니다.

그러므로 하나님의 자녀들이 된 우리 신앙인들은 그리스도가 우리의 형제가 되시는 것입니다. 즉 그리스도는 하나님의 맏형이 되시고, 우리는 그분의 동생들이 되는 것입니다. 왜냐하면 우리는 동일한 하나님의 자녀가 되기 때문이요, 자녀됨의 권세 또한 주님과 같이 나누게 된다는 것입니다. 우리는 더 이상 마귀의 자녀들이 아닌 그리스도 예수 안에서 하나님의 혈과 육을 이어받은 하늘의 속한 자녀들이 된 것입니다. 이 모든 것은 그리스도께서 우리를 위해 십자가에서 죽음을 통하여 마귀를 멸하셨기 때문입니다. 우리는 더 이상 죽음이나 죄에 매여 있는 자들이 아닙니다. 우리는 영적 아브라함의 자손들로 그리스도와 형제됨을 나누는 자들입니다. 이런 위치에 있는 우리들은 어떤 시험이나 유혹 앞에서도 당당히 이길 수 있음을 알아야 합니다. 심지어 죽음도 우리를 더 이상 위협하지 못합니다. 그리스도의 죽으심으로 우리에게 부활을 주셨기 때문입니다. 사순절 기간 동안 그리스도의 죽으심이 우리에게 어떤 영적 복과 은혜를 주시는지 묵상하는 가운데 우리 앞에 놓인 믿음의 경주를 잘 감당하시기를 바랍니다.

주님! 우리를 위해 하나님의 아들로 이 땅에 오심을 감사합니다. 뿐만 아니라 우리와 같은 처지에서 고난 받으시고, 죽기까지 하셨으니 이는 다 우리로 하여금 하나님의 자녀들이 되게 하심을 믿고 감사와 찬양과 영광을 주님께 올려 드립니다. 사순절을 통해 주님의 고난에 우리도 참여하게 하시고 그 고난이 우리로 하나님 기뻐하시는 거룩한 자녀들이 될 수 있도록 은혜와 복을 내려주소서. 예수님 이름으로 기도합니다. 아멘.



FRANCISCO LEE is the Senior Pastor at Korean Mok Yang Church in Surrey, BC. 이경원 목양교회 담임 목사.



Day 34 / Saturday, April 12

The waiting is almost over. There are no more parables left for Jesus to preach, no questions to be debated, no apocalyptic visions to be cast. The predictions have all been made and are now coming to pass. The cross begins to cast its shadow over everything as we enter Luke 22.

With the players all in their places, the final preparations are being made. While we know these two stories are separated by hours, if not days, in my imagination I see them happening almost simultaneously. Peter and John are tasked with seeking out the water bearer, while Judas begins seeking a member of the chief priests. Two meetings are played against each other – one planning a celebration of God's faithfulness, one planning a betrayal of that same faithfulness. Both will be necessary to seal the new covenant that is coming to pass.

As Peter and John haggle over the details of feast elements, Judas haggles over the price of his loyalty. It is hard not to dissect the motives of Judas; we want to grapple with his psychology, his history, even the possibility of supernatural possession, in order to separate him into a class of condemnation all his own. For whom among us would ever see themselves in their right mind betraying Jesus?

The Gospel story will not let us off that easily. Luke merely states that the Tempter, the Satan, who has been waiting for the "opportune time" since fleeing in 4:13 now finds it most opportune to enter into Judas. It is no violent wresting away of his self-control, no Hollywood special effect. Judas does what we've all done at one



Psalm 31:9-16; Leviticus 23:1-8; Luke 22:1-13

point or another; he entertains and believes the Slanderer's take on the situation he finds himself in rather than trusting the way of God that doesn't make sense. Then he exchanges his unhindered communion with his Lord and Friend for the lie of self-preservation. It is the same story that has been repeating ever since the Garden, a cycle Jesus is determined to break.

For even here, in the story of perhaps the most vilified individual in history, we see the mercy of God at work. While Judas is busy preparing to save himself, Jesus is busy preparing to save a place at the Table for him. We will learn later in verse 21 that Judas is served the same bread, the same cup, with the same promises as anyone else in the room. If that is the case, we can be assured that we, too, have a place prepared at this Passover Feast. We can also be assured that our Lord calls us to prepare that same opportunity for others, especially for those we might want to disqualify.

Gracious Father, we reflect on this vast mercy You extend to us through Your Son, and we are amazed. As we draw closer to the Table and its promises may we experience Your transforming love, and may it drive us to extend this same grace to those around us. Amen.



TRAVIS HUTCHINSON is a Victim Services Worker and Spiritual Director in Victoria, BC.

Day 35 / Monday, April 14

I want to start with a free tip for reading the New Testament, developed over years of study. Buckle up, here it is: when reading a story in the life of Jesus, if you find your most relatable avatar in the narrative to be the character of Judas, there may be a lesson in there for you.

You're welcome; I know that was mind-blowing stuff.

Of course this is basic, but unfortunately, this is where I find myself as a reader every time I read the story of Mary anointing Jesus at Bethany. Like Judas, there are just too many questions running through my head.

Aren't there problems with this behaviour? Isn't it wasteful? Couldn't the money from this perfume be used for greater means? What about the poor? What about the widows? What about...?

These are valid. In fact, Jesus in his response both here and in Mark's account of this event acknowledges but doesn't really answer these questions. How frustrating. But what if this is precisely the point of this story of devotion? What if devotion that is worthy of Jesus, like Mary's, looks like taking "good sense" and "reason" and blowing a hundred yards past it? Is it possible that if our devotion to the person and cause of Jesus makes "sense" in our societal context, that it must be missing the true glory of who He is?

Mary is presented as the one who gets it, more even than Jesus' disciples. And it is her excessive devotion that Jesus carried with Him, smelling the perfume all the way to the cross. Maybe, if we truly understood who it is we are worshiping, we wouldn't need all our "what about's" answered. We would be too busy throwing ourselves and all that we carry at His feet.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, renew our sense of wonder this Lenten season. Give us a taste of the extravagance of Your glory, Your grace, and Your sacrifice, that we might, like Mary, throw all that we are and all that we have at Your feet with abandon. Amen.



BRAD BRUNESKI is the Pastor at The Garden Church in Vancouver, BC.



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

Day 36 / Tuesday, April 15

How do we speak of something that can only be understood through living it? The message of the cross, as Paul tells us, seems like foolishness to some, but to those who walk in the way of Christ, it reveals the very power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Living the cross is not about grasping an idea or theory; it's about experiencing transformation through suffering, love, and hope. Like a hidden treasure unearthed only through the trials of life, this journey with Christ reshapes our hearts. Personal suffering, the kind we all encounter, becomes a mirror of the suffering Christ endured. In those moments, we sense God's presence, not in distant explanations, but in the silent, yet profound, companionship of Jesus walking with us on the Via Dolorosa – the way of sorrows.

This lived experience transforms how we see the world. Instead of despair, we learn to glimpse hope even in the darkest corners. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the suffering around us, we find strength in knowing that Christ has already gone before us, carrying the cross for us all.

Examples of living the cross might come through forgiving someone who has deeply hurt you, showing compassion when it costs you something, or standing in solidarity with those who suffer injustice. It is a journey of love and sacrifice, a journey that, once lived, brings the power of God to life in ways words cannot fully explain.

To understand the cross is to live it. And in living it, we are saved.

Gracious God, help us embrace the cross in our lives. Transform our suffering into hope, and may we reflect Christ's love, forgiveness, and compassion in a world longing for healing. Amen.



TELLISON GLOVER is the Director of Mission and Ministry Development for the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster.



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

Day 37 / Wednesday, April 16

I may not be a runner, but I understand the importance of focus when striving to win a prize or simply finish the race. In Hebrews 12:1-3, we are taught about the need for focus as we run the race of faith. The first lesson is in verse 1, where the author encourages us to consider the examples of the heroes of faith from chapter 11. Despite their weaknesses and failures, they ran with endurance. For instance, Moses chose to endure mistreatment with God's people rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin, because he was looking forward to the reward (verses 25-26). In other words, Moses was able to persevere in the race of faith because he hoped for God's reward. Like us, he had his struggles and shortcomings.

The second focus is found in the example of Jesus, who endured the cross and its shame because of the joy set before Him. Jesus embraced suffering for our sake, finding joy in obeying His Father's will to save us from sin.

Two weeks ago, I lost sight of God, and it led me to feelings of entitlement and anger towards my wife. I struggled with a sense of failure, but even in that time, God filled my heart with hope for victory. I asked for my wife's forgiveness and chose to believe in the possibility of overcoming my struggles, remembering that even heroes of faith like Moses experienced victory despite their failures. In moments of temptation – whether the desire to control or seek fleeting pleasures – I'm learning to ask God to help me choose the joy of obeying Him.

Like you, I'm still learning to focus on hope and joy as I run the race of faith every day.

God, You know how easily we lose our focus on You and loving others, turning our attention to ourselves. Please forgive us. Renew our joy in obeying You and fill us with a deep, personal hope in Your transforming power. In Jesus' name, Amen.



JOEY UMALI is a Case Manager at UGM.



Day 38 / Thursday, April 17

"On the night he was betrayed" – these words fall upon my soul with profound weight, as in this Lenten season I consider my own sin and brokenness. Here in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he "delivers to us" what Christ himself established that incredible night when – having washed the disciple's feet – He set the Lord's table for the first time.

Amid this Lenten season, the remembrance that God set such a glorious table in the face of undeniable unworthiness draws me close. Where, in this Lenten season, God is uncovering "any grievous way in me" it is especially healing to encounter Jesus at the table He set for me. May our participation in this meal ever be a living reminder that God responds in saving grace to the brokenness of our humanity.

Almighty and everlasting God, You hate nothing You have made, and You 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.



CHAD BLOCK is the Rector at Emmaus Road Anglican Church in Langley, BC.



Day 39 / Friday, April 18

The first part of the first verse of Psalm 22 should sound familiar. Those were the very words spoken by Jesus on the cross, in his darkest hour.

It troubled me to read Jesus' cry on the cross, to hear him say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" If the Father could turn His back on the Son, what hope do I have? It troubled me because I only knew that first part of Psalm 22, and that part sounded like the cry of one who's faith has been shaken. So to hear those words come from the mouth of the Son gave me cause for concern.

It was cause for concern because I did not know the rest of Psalm 22. Because Psalm 22 is not the cry of someone who has lost their faith. It's the cry of one whose faith is not shaken even in the midst of suffering.

The first 20 verses of Psalm 22 are a prayer for help. But David's prayer goes from one for help to one of trust in the final 11 verses, going from "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" to "They will proclaim His righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn; He has done it!"

So as Jesus says "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", He is professing His trust in the Heavenly Father in His darkest hour. He is professing His confidence in the goodness of God when life looks most bleak. Just as David did before Him.

David knew that he could trust God to be with him even in his darkest hour, just like Jesus had full confidence that God was with Him on the cross.

That's the kind of faith I want to have, that even in my darkest hour, that my prayers will not just be cries for help, but that they will be prayers of trust, trust that God is in control, trust that God has not forsaken me, trust that God's ways are better than my way.

Loving and Almighty God, help me to trust You in all circumstances. May my prayers not always be cries for help and pleas for more, but may they also be proclamations of Your goodness and faithfulness, of confidence in You despite me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.



SAMUEL LEE is the Manager of Church Relations at UGM.

Day 40 / Saturday, April 19

There are times when an ending is actually a beginning. Maybe you have discovered that in your own life, when all seems to be lost and suddenly a new possibility comes to light. In the gospel of John, after Jesus dies on the cross, two secret followers unexpectedly come forward to take charge. Two secret supporters who were quite happy to sit on the sidelines and not get too involved while Jesus lived and breathed, preached and healed, loved and prayed. They didn't want people to know of their faith, they didn't want to be seen to be associated with this Jesus character. These two, who kept to the dark, chose the time after Jesus died to step into the light. Curious.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were their names. They came and carried the lifeless body of Jesus to lay the corpse into a tomb, a place of burial. These two who had tried so hard to make sure that no one knew of their faith and hope in Jesus only stepped forward after the life and light seemed to disappear from Jesus. These two, perhaps, realized that their faith in God's love involved much more than what other people thought of them. Maybe it was only when He breathed His last that they found what it meant to know God amongst us.

Maybe we can relate.

Maybe we too know about staying in the shadows when it comes to showing our faith.

Maybe we too know about keeping our faith to ourselves.

And maybe we too have discovered that day where this relationship we have with God can no longer stay hidden. That it needs to come to the forefront and change how we live and hope and love.

O God, You call us from the shadows to the light. We need this light to push back the darkness that can weigh so heavily upon us. In all that we must face this day, carry us from death into life, from sin into forgiveness, from confusion into peace. Bring us to that place where we reject all that holds us back from You. In Jesus's name. Amen.



JOHN STEPHENS is the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster.

Taanishi (Hello),

The UGM Church Relations Team and I have been praying for you on your journey through Lent. May your ears be open to hear the guidance of Creator as you travel through the rest of 2025. It is a joy to be together on this good road.

*Maarsii (Thank-you),
Elder Joanne ∞*

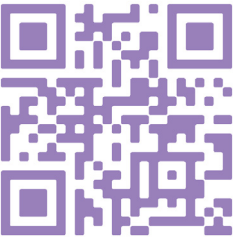


ELDER JOANNE ANDERSON, of Metis Nation, BC, serves as Matriarch and Elder at UGM.



To each contributor we say a resounding THANK YOU for leading us through this beautiful Lenten season together. We are grateful for your honesty and thankful for your involvement.

If you would like to learn more about the work of Union Gospel Mission, access the online version of Lent Devotional, or see if there are opportunities to partner with us, please visit [UGM.ca/church-relations](https://ugm.ca/church-relations) or scan the QR code below.

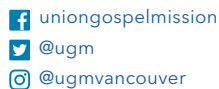


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Union Gospel Mission acknowledges with humble gratitude that our sites are located on the traditional, unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and salilwatał Nations, the Halq'emeylem-speaking peoples, the q'w'a:níł'ən, qíčəy, Máthxwi, Se'mya'me, Stó:lō, Lək'wənan-speaking People, W̱SÁNEĆ, Schian'exw, T'Sou-ke Nations, and the Coast Salish Peoples