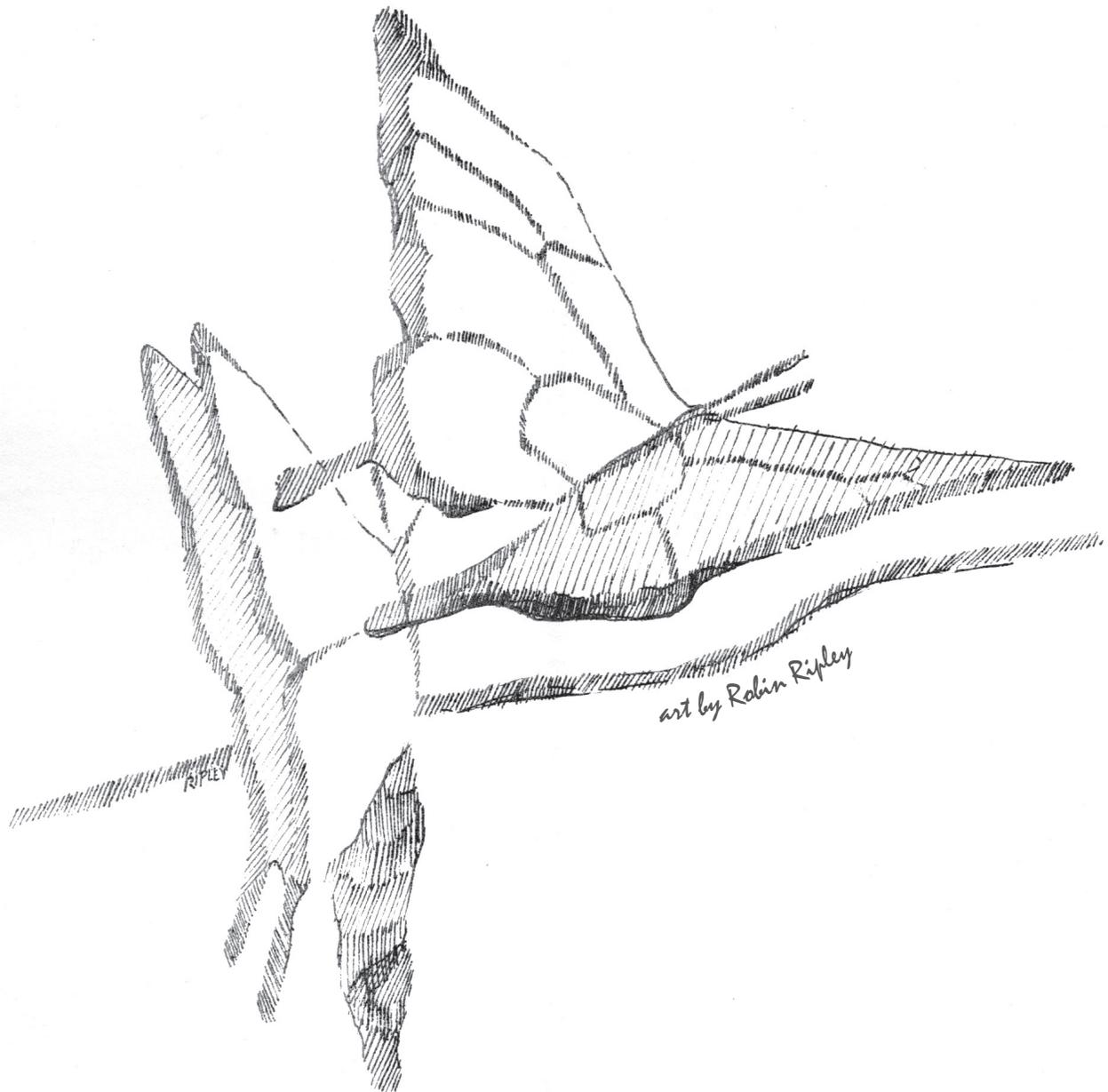


A New Creation



Worship Resources for the Creative Church Lent/Eastertide 2015

Sacred Seasons, a series of worship packets with a peace and justice emphasis,
from Seeds of Hope Publishers: 602 James; Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745;
Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor@clearwire.net; Web address: www.seedspublishers.org.

Sacred Seasons:



Worship Tools with an Attitude—Toward Justice, Peace & Food Security for All of God's People.

These unique resource packets are available for the liturgical year, three packets a year for \$100 (\$125 for non-US subscriptions), one packet for \$50 (\$65 outside of the US).

Staff and Volunteers

Editor: L. Katherine Cook
Copy Editor: Deborah E. Harris
Editorial Assistants: Taylor Grantham, Kristin Waites
Library Assistant: Bill Hughes
ActLocallyWacoEditor: Ashley B. Thornton
Artists: Robert Askins, Sally Askins, Peter Yuichi Clark, Robert Darden, Van Darden, Jesse Manning, Erin Kennedy Mayer, Lenora Mathis, Kate Moore, Sharon Rollins, Susan Smith, Rebecca Ward

2015 Council of Stewards

Sally Lynn Askins (Vice President)
Meg Cullar
Derek S. Dodson
Deborah E. Harris
(Corresponding Secretary)
Jaclyn Jeffrey
Sandy Londos
(Recording Secretary)
B. Michael Long (President)

Board of Advisors

Dale A. Barron
H. Joseph Haag
Kathryn Mueller
Jo Pendleton
Jacqueline Saxon
Jon Singletary
David Wilkinson

Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope, Inc., is a private, independent group of believers responding to a

A New Creation in this worship packet:

- 4 A Liturgy for Ash Wednesday
 - 5 *Here and There:*
A Sermon for Ash Wednesday
 - 8 A Liturgy for the First Sunday in Lent
 - 9 A Lenten Confession
 - 10 A Liturgy for the Second Sunday in Lent
 - 11 A Liturgy for the Third Sunday in Lent
 - 12 Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings
 - 13 A Liturgy for the Fourth Sunday in Lent
 - 14 *We Need the Scars; We Need the Hope:*
A Meditation for Lent
 - 15 A Liturgy for the Fifth Sunday in Lent
 - 16 A Liturgy for Palm Sunday
 - 17 A Liturgy for Maundy Thursday
 - 18 *A Lesson about Butterflies:*
A Children's Sermon for Lent
 - 19 A Liturgy for Holy Friday
 - 20 A Liturgy for Easter Sunday Morning
 - 21 An Easter Benediction (Dramatic Reading)
- The Emmaus Event: Resources for Easter Sunday Evening***
- 22 Liturgical Pieces for Easter Sunday Evening
 - 23 *Resurrection Imagination:*
A Sermon for Easter Sunday Evening
 - 26 *The Emmaus Incident:*
A Dramatic Reading for Easter Sunday Evening
 - 27 *Apocalypse: An Easter Poem*
 - 28 Benediction

common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. For 23 years, the group has sought out people of faith who feel called to care for the poor; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of hunger and poverty.

Editorial Address

The Seeds of Hope ministry is housed by the community of faith at Seventh and James Baptist Church. The mailing address is: 602 James; Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor@clearwire.net. Web

address: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2015.

Material in this packet is for the use of the purchasing faith community to enhance worship and increase awareness in economic justice issues. ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status. All contributions above the subscription rate are fully tax-deductible.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version, Copyright © 2003, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

A Word about This Packet

In this Lent/Eastertide packet, we chose the theme “A New Creation,” to emphasize the metamorphosis we propose to undergo during the next weeks.

We are most fortunate to have the talents and dedication of Guilherme Almeida in the formulation of our liturgies for this packet. Guilherme is a Lecturer in Musical Theatre in Baylor University’s Department of Theatre Arts.

A native of Brazil, he loves planning worship—especially with a justice emphasis. We are profoundly grateful for this immense labor of love, and also for his emotional support—and his musical expertise.

As always, we have had input from Deborah Harris—our longtime brainstormer, lyricist and copy editor—from the beginning of the process to the end.

We are grateful to Erin Conaway for his Ash Wednesday sermon, his creative spirit and his unflinching support of the Seeds ministry, which is housed by Seventh & James Baptist Church, the church he pastors.

We also included in this packet a confessional prayer by Bill Cooper and an Easter poem by C. W. (Wally) Christian, whose writings our readers have seen a number of times.

We are also delighted to introduce John Michael Longworth, a young Lutheran minister in Burlington, VT, who is a member of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans.

We did something rather unorthodox for Easter Sunday evening. We included a cluster of resources based on the resurrection appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, which is one of the Lectionary texts for the evening service.

The cluster includes some liturgical pieces written by the youth of Seventh & James and their pastors; a sermon written by Kent McKeever, the youth minister, and Brianna Jones, one of the youth; and a dramatic reading from the Seeds “Resurrection Monologue” collection, *With Our Own Eyes*.

The cover art is a piece that Bloomington, IN, artist Robin Ripley drew when she was in college. We decided to follow the metamorphosis theme in our art, which is almost all butterflies. Some you may remember from past worship packets, but our “artists in residence,” Sally Askins and Jesse Manning, created new butterflies just for this packet.

Sally is a member of the Seeds

Council of Stewards and professor of Costume Design in Baylor University’s Department of Theatre Arts. Jesse is a high-school student in Waco, TX. He also wanted to draw a “real” Lenten piece, so he chose the Gethsemane drawing you will see on page 17.

We continue to be profoundly grateful for all of the people who are so generous with their time and creative gifts, and who think of us when they have written worship materials or conceived of innovative ideas for worship themes.

We are also deeply grateful for all of you who subscribe to *Sacred Seasons*, and who make use of these gifts in your worship and work.

As always, we want you to feel free to play around with these liturgies and services, and adapt them to your congregation’s needs and resources. If you come up with something creative and different, we would love to hear about it.

The contents of this packet are your congregation’s to use freely and share with others as the need arises. We really do pray that our materials, and this packet in particular, will help you and your congregation to sing together a new song unto the Lord.

—Gratefully,
The Seeds Staff and Council of Stewards



A Liturgy for Ash Wednesday

by Guilherme Almeida

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
—From Psalm 51*

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: As we embark upon this Lenten journey, we give thanks to God, who receives us in love, again and again, to begin our covenants again and again.

MANY: *God's mercy endures forever.*

ONE: God creates our hearts afresh, and returns our spirits to the right place.

MANY: *God's mercy endures forever.*

ONE: God restores the joy of our salvation, and makes each of us a new creation.

MANY: *God's mercy endures forever.*

ONE: Bless the Lord, who will guide us from this place to newness of life.

MANY: *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.*

Meditation of Contemplation

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord.

—from The Book of Common Prayer

Song of Adoration

"Worship the Lord"

#115, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991

WORDS: John S. B. Monsell; David Horatio Steele

MUSIC: Tom Fettke

TUNE: JANICE

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

or Isaiah 58:1-12

Hymn of Penitence

"Search Me, O God"

#297, *The Baptist Hymnal* 1991

WORDS: J. Edwin Orr

MUSIC: Edward J. Hopkins

TUNE: ELLERS

Reading from the Psalter

Psalm 51:1-17

Canticle

"Create in Me"

CCLI Song No. 106855

WORDS & MUSIC: Mary Rice Hopkins

Reading from the Epistles

II Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10

Hymn of Dedication

"Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"

#180, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: Claudia F. Hernaman

MUSIC: Adapt. from John Day's *English Psalter*, 1562)

TUNE: ST. FLAVIAN

Reading from the Gospels

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Silent Meditation

Emmanuel

You come in silence

to my world of crooked noisy places,

places rough with agendas

that leave me bruised,

spirit light low,

a bare glowing ember.

Emmanuel

I will give you quiet moments,

bits of silence stolen

from the clamor of the streets.

Let my silence straighten

a way for you

to smooth my rough spots,

to heal my bruised spirit,

to fan my faith's faint flame,

to prepare in me a vessel

for your incarnation.

—Lisa Wells Isenhower

Imposition of Ashes

Loving God, you create us from the dust of the earth;

may these ashes be for us a sign of our penitence and

our mortality, and a reminder that only by the cross do

we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

—From the New Zealand Prayer Book

continued on page 5

Here and There

A Sermon for Ash Wednesday

by Erin Conaway

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

*From there to here, from here to there,
funny things are everywhere.
One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish.
Black fish, blue fish, old fish, new fish.
This one has a little star. This one has a little car.
Say! What a lot of fish there are.
Yes. Some are red. And some are blue.
Some are old. And some are new.
Some are sad. And some are glad.
And some are very, very bad.
Why are they sad and glad and bad?
I do not know. Go ask your dad.
Some are thin. And some are fat.
The fat one has a yellow hat.
From there to here, from here to there,
funny things are everywhere.*

Thus Dr. Seuss begins one of his many famous books. We often read this one at our house right before bedtime, as I'm sure many of you do or have done at some point along the journey—so it's only natural that many of you will drift off into a blissful sleep as I continue to drone on with the homily—try to dream of a wonderful and profound sermon.

(If your neighbor happens to be one of the several I'm sure who will take me up on this, be gentle when you wake them up.)

Seuss playfully invites us to see that funny things are not locked into one space neither in time nor in proximity. "Funny" can happen here and it can happen there—the thing about funny is it doesn't care where (that one is mine).

And it's not just funny that yields this free-ranging flow of depth and breadth, the sacred too has a long reach and thus: "From there to here, from here to there"...sacred things are everywhere.

We discover this in our Gospel reading this evening. Jesus sounds a cautionary tone when he warns us of practicing our righteousness (that's a better translation than "piety," even though we lose the alliteration) before others. We must not practice our righteousness in order to be seen by others.

Right at the beginning, I love that righteousness is something we practice—like the practice of medicine or the practice of law. Righteousness must not be thought of as an "on" or "off" switch: either

we are a red fish or a blue fish. Rather, righteousness is something we practice. We work at it with all of who we are, in hopes that we get it right more often than we did yesterday, and will continue to build upon that momentum.

When we practice our righteousness in order to be seen by others, we lose the delight of God in heaven. There is no reward beyond what we were hoping to find here on earth. What does that mean?

Jesus gives three examples in our reading this evening about this notion of practicing our righteousness in order to be seen by others, and he says in each case the reward for those moments of practice has already been received. So when we give alms "like the hypocrites" in order to be praised by those in the synagogues and at the street corners and so that others might see us—well, we have received our reward.

When we pray so that we may be seen by others, we have received our reward. When we fast so that we may be seen by others, we have received our reward. What reward is there in doing these acts of righteousness so that we may be seen by others? I guess it is that the others will see us and deem us righteous—good followers and practitioners of the faith.

That can sound a lot like what Jesus just said earlier in the Sermon on the Mount—"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand,

Liturgy for Ash Wednesday, continued

Benediction

Let us journey together through this season of Lent.
Let us listen to stories of exile
and hear cries for hope.
Let us reach out
for the hand of Jesus
and walk a path of dangerous love
into the possibility of new life.

—April Baker and Amy Mears

Postlude

and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Wait...what? But you just said that, and then you said we should beware of practicing our righteousness before others in order to be seen by them. I'm confused.

I've also been amazed at the number of scholars who write about the passage we read this evening and appear to have selective amnesia about the passage I just mentioned about letting our light shine before others.

*When our prayers are the overflowing
of our hearts, we don't care who
hears them because we can't possibly
care who hears them. They are
prayers that must be prayed; they
will not stay within us.*

Normally, we read this passage from chapter six, forget what we read in chapter five and withdraw the practicing of our righteousness to a secret realm. What could Jesus mean with this passage and the one before? And why in the world would this passage come up in the Lectionary on Ash Wednesday, when the longstanding practice of the church is to smear ashes on our foreheads in the shape of a cross that can be seen by others?

This is quite a dilemma and has given me no small amount of stomach and soul pain over the past week or so. It seems in our passage tonight the warning about practicing our righteousness in order to be seen by others is simply a self-fulfilling argument.

If what we are doing is motivated by what others will see of us, then that is where its effectiveness will end—in the eyes of the others.

If we are praying or fasting or giving alms to the poor just so others will see us do that and be impressed by our righteousness, then those acts will probably not be efficacious in our own lives beyond the ego boost that we receive thinking that the “others” have seen us in a certain way.

But if we practice our righteousness, if we pray and fast and give because that is what God is calling us to do—and we would do those acts just as genuinely in secret as we might on the street corner—then the audience we are seeking is God, rather than anyone who might be watching.

It is helping me to think about this in terms of *here*—what happens in our internal struggle to be the people God created us to be, and *there*—the things we might do to show off some sense of who we might hope to be, or the person we want others to think we are.

It is also helpful to put this in the context of first-century culture, which operated in a shame-and-honor, patron-and-slave manner. Every action in that culture

was one that either indebted you to someone or indebted them to you.

Therefore, if you were focused on bringing honor to your own house and in the synagogue context, the best way to do that was to play the game and pray loudly when others were watching, give boldly when others could see you, and fast drastically that others might notice.

Well, if that is your end game, then that is where the benefit of those things will stop. The contrast would be doing those things for the sole purpose of loving God with all of your heart, mind and soul, and loving your neighbor as yourself. We pray because we must pray. Our souls demand that we be in communion with God in voice and groans and praise and thanksgiving, with loud cries of lament and wild songs of joy.

When our prayers are the overflowing of our hearts, we don't care who hears them because we can't possibly care who hears them. They are prayers that must be prayed; they will not stay within us. Our bones are burning with their message and must not be shut up inside of us. Robert Lowry penned it beautifully when he wrote:

*My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, tho' far-off hymn
That hails a new creation;
Thro' all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?
What tho' my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Saviour liveth;
What tho' the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?
I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it;
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing;
All things are mine since I am his—
How can I keep from singing?"*

When we give to those around us, we do so because we cannot help it—our sisters and brothers are in need and it is our great joy to give that they might be fed, that their thirsts might be quenched, that their wounds might be bound up and their nakedness clothed. There is no other response that we can stand to make, except to give.

We do this in the best way often with our spouse or other members of our family. We become aware of a need in their lives and we cannot do anything less than

help them. It doesn't matter who sees, who knows, who cares. It is our loved one and we must respond.

You all did it so beautifully when refugees from Hurricane Katrina were traveling to Waco, worn and broken, tired and dismayed. You opened up our newly remodeled Melton Building to give—to those whose homes were washed away in the unrelenting flood

When we take an honest look at the way we live our lives in comparison to the grace and mercy God shows us time and time and time again, ashes on our foreheads seems too small.

waters—a shelter from the storm, a place to lay their heads, a place to feel human again, a place to be loved and cared for.

It didn't matter if anyone wrote a story about it, it didn't matter who saw it, who knew it. For our hearts were torn open to our neighbors, and we made a place for them and welcomed them in.

When we fast, in dust and ashes as our people have done throughout our story, we do so, not because we think someone will see our penitent foreheads and think what spiritual people we are. We do so because our hearts will tolerate nothing less. We know our sin: our trespasses are ever before us and it causes us to repent, to turn again to God, who suffers with us, who suffered for us.

When we take an honest look at the way we live our lives in comparison to the grace and mercy God shows us time and time and time again, ashes on our foreheads seems too small. We should be covered with them as an outward symbol of our inner reality. We are dust, we know that full well, and to dust we shall return. But, by the grace of God, that is not the whole of our story.

When what happens in *here*, in the quiet, secret places of our hearts and minds, is turned to God, it doesn't matter who sees us. We must respond, we must pray, we must give, we must fast and repent.

But what about *there*? What if we are in a season of life when our hearts don't want to bubble up in prayer? What if we are in that place where it's harder to see God's grace than it is to see God's absence? What about those times when we are blind or bitter about the needs of our sisters and brothers?

We've just said it is possible and expected for our faith to work from here to there—for the inner reality to express itself in visible ways, but is it also possible the other way around? Can our outer actions impact and influence our inner lives? Can it work from there to here? I think it can.

During those seasons when we feel that we cannot pray to God because we are angry or hurt or sad or feeling

all alone—when we express those feelings, when we bellow out to God, when we lament and yell and curse and cry, we often find that those prayers are some of our most honest and direct and, I dare say, sacred moments of communion with God.

Often it is in the act of loving our neighbors in tangible ways, giving to them because we know we should, not necessarily because we want to—often it is in those times when our eyes are opened and we begin to see more than just a person in need. We see someone as a sister or as a brother, who is just like us—in need and with gifts and hopes and pain and dreams.

Many times, it is in submission to the church calendar, this season of Lent, that we come to grips with things we had long ago buried deep, because of our shame. We put ashes on our heads and the reality of our sin—even the sin we tried so hard to forget, to ignore, to disregard—the reality of our sin works its way from the ashes on the outside to the burned places on the inside.

The passage we read tonight does not use the future tense—even in the sections about God rewarding us for what is done in secret. Jesus was not setting up spiritual capitalism for heaven. Then end game is not a bigger crown or mansion in heaven—God is the end game, for God's sake and not our own. Hypocrisy is just as egregious in heaven as it is on earth.

May we find our treasures in the things of eternity as we sojourn together, with our inner reality spilling outward and our faithful actions working their truth inward. From here to there, from there to here... sacred things are everywhere.

May we respond to God from where we are, here or there or in the complicated in-between, may we respond to God as a family now. Let us begin this Lenten journey together. Amen.

—Erin Conaway is the pastor of Seventh & James Baptist Church in Waco, TX, where the Seeds ministry is housed.



art by Susan Daily, IBVM

A Liturgy for the First Sunday in Lent

by Guilherme Almeida

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

—Philippians 4:8

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: Grace and peace from God be unto you.

MANY: *May God fill you with truth and joy.*

Responsive Confession

ONE: Lord, let everything I do this day and in this season of Lent come from you, be inspired by you.

MANY: *Lord, I long to be closer to you.*

ONE: Help me to remember that nothing is important in my life unless it glorifies you in some way. It's so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day of my life and keep saying, "Tomorrow, I will spend more time in prayer," but now my longing meets your love and I want to get closer to you now.

MANY: *Lord, help me to rely on you for help.*

ONE: Please, Lord, remind me that "perfection" isn't the crazy, "successful" way I try to live my life, but an offering of my most authentic, real self. My "perfection" might be holding my many flaws in my open hands, asking you to help me accept them.

MANY: *Help me, Lord, to find you in the darkness of my life.*

ONE: Let me reach out in this darkness and feel your hand and love there to guide me.

MANY: *Through our Redeemer, Christ Jesus. Amen.*

—Adapted from *Praying Lent*, Creighton University, Omaha, NE

Song of Adoration

"Creator of the Earth and Skies"

#148, *The Hymnal* 1982

WORDS: David W. Hughes

MUSIC: Jeremiah Clarke

TUNE: UFFINGHAM

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Genesis 9:8-17

Hymn of Penitence

"I Lay My Sins on Jesus"

#272, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991

WORDS: Horatius Bonar

MUSIC: Samuel S. Wesley

TUNE: AURELIA

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 25:1-10

Canticle

"Holy Is the Lord"

#10, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Traditional

MUSIC: Franz Schubert

TUNE: HOLY IS THE LORD

Reading from the Epistles

I Peter 3:18-22

Silent Meditation

Worship is dangerous. It is not a retreat from reality, but a direct engagement with ultimate reality: God. Genuine worship is a response to God and what God has done; in it we make ourselves vulnerable to the story of Israel and Jesus. Sham worship attempts to manipulate and transform God, but true worship praises God as God is and calls Christians to risk the transformation of themselves and the world.

—Robert Webber and Rodney Clapp, *People of the Truth*

Reading from the Gospels

Mark 1:9-15

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

"What Was Your Vow and Vision?"

#177, *Chalice Hymnal*

continued on page 5

A Lenten Confession

by William F. Cooper

Dear God,
You have come to my place
where I dwell,
And standing at the door, you knock.

At first, I wasn't quite sure it
was a knock, but just in case,
I began straightening up,
wanting to be somewhat presentable.

Then you knock again, clearly, and
call my name and I know it is you.
And on my way to the door, the
clean-up picks up speed, becomes
sort of frenzied because I become
deeply aware that I could straighten
out the place all day long and
what really needed attention would be
its forever mess.

Because the pilgrimage that I began
so earnestly, with honest and brave
intentions, veered off somewhere—oh so
slightly at first, but then it never
returned to the path. So I worked hard
on that parallel way, one that I hoped was parallel,
knowing all along
that the truth in my inward being was flawed.

And it became so easy to do
what was expected, which meant looking
respectable and getting very, very
busy with what was on that path to do.

Along the way, I avoided murder, although
thousands were dying violent deaths elsewhere.
I saw no robberies, although
millions were robbed of food and other necessities.
And on that pilgrim way, engagement with others
to create a community of grace, forgiveness,
and peace
to address violence and depravity,
a community that would not have to honor
the traditional banners we have built—
On that pilgrim way,
such engagement continues to flounder.

And here you are, knocking at the door,

calling us by name.
And then the door opens. And there is silence.
The disarray in the house seems to have loud voices,
but you pay no mind.
Even the warped and shunted intentions
and feelings
we have taken as our guides,
you ignore.

And instead, you offer an invitation:
"Come, walk with me. As best you can,
during this season you have set aside,
come walk with me.
We can have some retreats along the way
to work on the shriveled, misshapen paths of your heart,
and maybe some workshops to learn to
straighten up your dwelling places.
But do not lose hope and do not veer off.
I will guide and give you strength if you follow."

Dear God,
As you stand there silently waiting,
trying to help us clear out the cobwebs
that obscure our vision,
turn loose of the baggage that weighs us down,
we take heart that a new day is
dawning and that our renewed pilgrimage
will build a contrite heart and
guide us to wiser steps.

We would claim the Lord Jesus
as our guide and hope not to blaspheme
that light he shines upon us. Amen.

—Bill Cooper is a somewhat retired philosophy professor and
former Dean of Arts and Sciences at Baylor University in
Waco, TX.

Liturgy for the First Sunday in Lent, continued

WORDS: Brian Wren

MUSIC: *Southern Harmony*, 1835; harm. Hal H. Hopson

TUNE: COMPLAINER

Benediction

Beloved ones, go forth in the knowledge that our God is
faithful and just to forgive us our unworthiness, and to
cleanse our hearts from all unrighteousness. Go forth in the
promise that, in Christ, *you are a new creation—everything
old has passed away and all things have become new.* Beloved,
go forth to begin your journey of faith once again.

—Based on 1 John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Postlude

A Liturgy for the Second Sunday in Lent

by Guilherme Almeida

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

—From Colossians 3:12-17

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: The peace of the Lord be with you.

MANY: *And also with you.*

ONE: Glory be to God, this day.

MANY: *And to the Christ, and to the Holy Spirit.*

ONE: As it was in the beginning, it is now and will be forever.

MANY: *Amen and Amen.*

Song of Adoration

"We Will Give You Praise Unending"

#359, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS & MUSIC: Allison Gilliam

TUNE: UNENDING PRAISE

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Hymn of Penitence

"Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow"

#160, *The Hymnal*, 1982

WORDS: William J. Sparrow

MUSIC: John Stainer

TUNE: CROSS OF JESUS

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 22:23-31

Canticle

"Near to the Heart of God"

#581, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS & MUSIC: Cleland B. McAfee

TUNE: MCAFEE

Reading from the Epistles

Romans 4:13-25

Silent Meditation

Risking to go where Jesus went, risking life and limb in the name of Christ, is a calculated risk that reflects the best of radical Christianity. So is protesting the death penalty, resisting the payment of war taxes, and joining a Christian Peacemaker Team. We believe that God saves us from our enemies, by his grace, the same way God saves us from our sins. And so we take what we sing, what we pray, and what we believe seriously. It's a matter of life and resurrection.

—Jim Amstutz, *Threatened with Resurrection*

Reading from the Gospels

Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

"Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne"

#165, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Emily E. S. Elliott

MUSIC: Timothy R. Matthews

TUNE: MARGARET

Benediction

Let us depart now in peace, sure in the knowledge that we are God's holy and beloved children. May the Spirit of Christ empower us to profess our faith and to show—in our lives, our worship and our unity—the kindness and forgiveness that we have received through God's amazing grace.

—Based on Colossians 3

Postlude

A Liturgy for the Third Sunday in Lent

by Guilherme Almeida

The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody.

—From Ephesians 2:11-22 (The Message)

Prelude

TUNE: REMEMBER ME

Call to Worship

ONE: The Lord be with you.

MANY: *And also with you.*

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

MANY: *For the Lord is our God. We are the people of God and the sheep of God's pasture.*

ONE: Oh, that today you would listen to God's voice!

MANY: *O God, help us this day to hear your voice.*

Song of Adoration

"O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus"

#438, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Samuel Trevor Francis

MUSIC: Thomas J. Williams

TUNE: EBENEZER

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 20:1-17

Hymn of Penitence

"I Saw the Cross of Jesus"

#167, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Frederick Whitfield

MUSIC: Anonymous

TUNE: WHITFIELD

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 19

Canticle

"Jesus, Remember Me"

#569, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: Luke 23:42

MUSIC: Taizé

Reading from the Epistles

I Corinthians 1:18-25

Silent Meditation

Each of us is called to prophetic agony—to speak the Word, to do justice and righteousness. We are most truly ourselves when we live within God's insecurity, acknowledging Yahweh's sovereignty over creation, taking full responsibility as contingent creatures who yet must decide and act. Future is created out of past by those who live the present. Wherever history is unfolding, faith demands response. In the face of God-encounter, indifference does not suffice.

—Martin Bell

Reading from the Gospels

John 2:13-22

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

"Lord Jesus, Sun of Righteousness"

#144, *The Hymnal*, 1982

WORDS: Latin; tr. Anne K. LeCroy

MUSIC: Harold Darke

TUNE: CORNHILL

Benediction

Grant us, Lord, like Moses, Elijah, Daniel, John the Baptist, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to be full with Thee, constant in prayer and fasting. Lord Almighty, strengthen our spirits with Thy grace, and give us joy to see Thy face.

—Sixth-Century Latin prayer

Postlude

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

We live in dark times—with countless people all over the world suffering from war, genocide and natural catastrophes, many of them brought about by our abuse of the environment. Sometimes we feel that the weight of all of that suffering is about to suffocate us. Sometimes we feel as though we stand in the rubble of our endeavors, covered in the ashes of our dreams. But, as my former student, David Lane, wrote years ago, when he was in high school, darkness and chaos have to cover the face of the deep before the spirit can brood over it and call out life. I think this is the definition of Lent. And it is our hope.

—Katie Cook

Rather than interpreting the cross as an expression of God's wrath, for instance, it would seem to be more in character with the New Testament message to see it as the ultimate expression of God's love. The wrath actually revealed on Calvary is our human wrath, the high-handed rejection and mockery of God's love as revealed in Christ. From this perspective, the miracle of Calvary is God's loving acceptance of this rejection by humanly bearing the full weight and mystery of it, thereby transforming its burden and shame into an act of forgiveness.

—John Habgood

The resurrection is not a denial of the past. It is sacrament of tears shed, pain sustained, and death remembered.... To celebrate the sacrament of life in the face of death is an act of faith. To believe in life resurrected from the ruins of human conflict comes from God who is the power of transformation. And to work toward change in the human condition is a calling in response to the vision of God's reign.

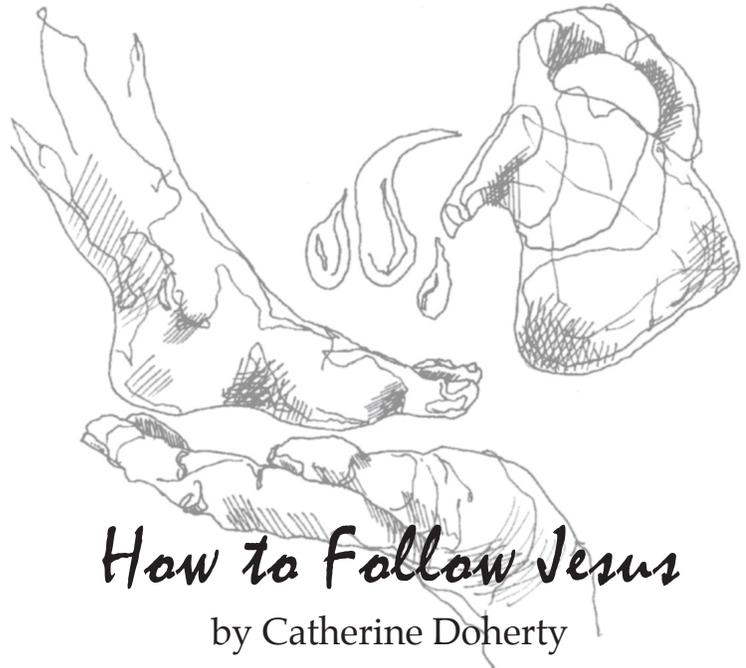
—C. S. Song

You are risen in power and wonder, You are risen out of the shambles of death and terror and doubt and fear; You are risen to turn the world to peace and justice and freedom and well-being; You are risen with healing wings to cure our diseased hurts and our public pathologies.

—Walter Brueggemann,
Inscribing the Text

The proclamation of Easter Day is that all is well.... Love is the victor. Death is not the end. The end is life. His life and our lives through him, in him. Existence has great depths of beauty, mystery, and benediction than the wildest visionary has ever dared to dream.

—Frederick Buechner, quoted in *the Christian Century*



How to Follow Jesus

by Catherine Doherty

Arise—go! Sell all you posses. Give it directly,
personally to the poor.

Take up My cross (their cross) and follow Me, going to the
poor,

being the poor, being one with them, one with Me.

Little—be always little. Be simple, poor, childlike.

Preach the Gospel with your life—without compromise!

Listen to the Spirit who will lead you.

Do little things exceedingly well for love of Me.

Love...love...love, never counting the cost.

Go into the marketplace and stay with Me. Pray, fast.

Pray always, fast.

Be hidden. Be a light to your neighbor's feet. Go without fear
into the depths of human hearts. I shall be with you.

Pray always. I will be your rest.

—Catherine Doherty was a Catholic social worker and founder of the Madonna House Apostolate, beginning with the Madonna House in Combermere, ON. She is under consideration for canonization by the Roman Catholic Church. This writing, used by all of the Madonna Houses and called "The Little Mandate," is what she said she received from Jesus Christ.

A Liturgy for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

by Guilherme Almeida

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation...

—From 2 Corinthians 5:16-21a

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: We search for the Lord. We search for God's strength. We continually seek God's face.

MANY: *O God, you are good and you bring forth good; instruct me in your ways.*

ONE: Holy and gracious God, in your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God of all.

MANY: *Jesus stretched out his arms and offered his own death as a way to bring life into the world.*

ONE: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory be to God, now and for ever.

MANY: *Amen.*

—First section from Psalm 105:4, Psalm 119:68; second section adapted from Kathy Kanewski's "Mass for the Lamb of God" and The Book of Common Prayer, courtesy of St. David's Episcopal Church, Austin, TX

Song of Adoration

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"

#406, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Charles Wesley

MUSIC: Joseph Parry

TUNE: ABERYSTWYTH

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Numbers 21:4-9

Hymn of Penitence

"Spirit of the Living God"

#234, *Celebrating Grace* Hymnal

WORDS & MUSIC: Daniel Iverson; arr. B. B. McKinney

TUNE: IVERSON

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22

Canticle

"He Touched Me"

#564, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS & MUSIC: William J. Gaither

TUNE: HE TOUCHED ME

Reading from the Epistles

Ephesians 2:1-10

Silent Meditation

If we would follow Jesus, we must take certain definite steps. The first step, which follows the call, cuts the disciple off from his previous existence. The call to follow at once produces a new situation. To stay in the old situation makes discipleship impossible. Levi must leave the receipt of custom and Peter his nets in order to follow Jesus. One would have thought that nothing so drastic was necessary at such an early stage. Could not Jesus have initiated the publicans into some new religious experience, and leave them as they were before? He could have done so, had he not been the incarnate Son of God. But since he is the Christ, he must make it clear from the start that his word is not an abstract doctrine, but the recreation of the whole life of man. The only right and proper way is quite literally to go with Jesus.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

Reading from the Gospels

John 3:14-21

Sermon

We Need the Scars; We Need the Hope

by John Michael Longworth, OEF

John 21:4-19

Editor's note: The following is a homily that was delivered to the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF) at their annual Chapter and Convocation last summer in Detroit.

In Douglas Adams' novel, "The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy," the protagonist Arthur discovers the meaning of life, the universe and everything. It is 42. Bewildered at the answer, he asks, "What is the question?" and he learns that the computer that solved the answer isn't powerful enough to decipher the question.

Sometimes, the question really is more important than the answer. One of the core challenges of living in ecumenical community is not that we have such different answers, but that we ask different questions.

One of these answers is present in today's Gospel lesson: "Follow me."

I suspect that everyone here has heard this answer in one form or another. But we ask different questions. Each tradition asks questions that matter deeply to it:

"How do we create silence?"

"How many candles shall we light?"

"How many grains of incense makes it holy?"

"Shall we sing loudly, dance, wave our hands or clap?"

We can be so good at asking our own questions that we talk right past one another instead of learning to ask deeply each other's questions.

As we attempt to discern the Body of Christ in this community, we need to expect there to be scar tissue. We need to expect wounds, the very sort of wounds that made the risen Christ known to his disciples.

Today we hear the story of Peter and we contemplate how he attempted to exercise a very different kind of discipleship. He tried to discern the body of Christ without any scar tissue, without any wounds.

When we follow this path, we find ourselves standing in Jesus' way, crying out "I will never let you die!" We reach for our swords and prepare to attack. Then, given a chance, one last chance to tell the truth, to speak the revelation about Jesus that God provided we scream out "I don't even know him!" *I don't even know him.*

But friends, there is good news in today's story. Jesus comes to Peter to invite once again, to say "Follow me." And he gives the image of feeding the lambs to indicate the type of discipleship Peter is called to exhibit.

During this past lambing season, our organist, who is also a shepherd, had ewes that gave birth. One ewe gave birth to two lambs, and as mothers

sometimes do, she preferred one and not the other. So there was a laundry basket in the church sanctuary, with a hot water bottle, piled high with blankets and containing a tiny, nearly dead lamb.

She was silent until the very moment when we began to sing "The Lamb of God," and then a tiny plaintive bleat came from the basket. At the end of worship, this lamb was carried right to the altar where I blessed her and prayed for her. We came to call her "Hope."

Now friends, it doesn't matter what station or strength you came to this place with. It doesn't matter your office or your role. Because the truth is that we have often tried to discern the Body of Christ without the scar tissue, without wounds, without suffering, without the cross. And when we do this, we wound each other.

No matter what spiritual gifts and charisms we bring here today, we come to this place in a laundry basket, piled with blankets, starving for love. It is here that the one who welcomed Peter once again, and who sustained the life of Hope the lamb, welcomes you. He promises to feed and uphold you, to strengthen and heal you.

Come and be fed, come and be blessed and he will help you to see that the Body of Christ in this community is beautiful, even the scar tissue.

—John Michael Longworth is pastor of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Burlington, VT and is a professed member of the OEF.

Liturgy for the Fourth Sunday in Lent, continued

Hymn of Dedication

"More About Jesus Would I Know"

#348, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: Eliza E. Hewitt

MUSIC: John R. Sweney

TUNE: SWENEY

Benediction

Let us go in peace and follow the path of Jesus Christ our Lord. We do this in the strength of him who was in every way tempted as we are, yet did not sin; by whose grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again.

—Adapted from The Book of Common Prayer

Postlude

A Liturgy for the Fifth Sunday in Lent

by Guilherme Almeida

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

—From Galatians 6:11-18

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: Precious Lord, teach us to pray always; teach us not to lose heart.

MANY: *Gracious Savior, give comfort and love to your suffering children.*

ONE: Loving Messiah, give support and encouragement to those whose hard labor is without reward or joy.

MANY: *Blessed Redeemer, we pray for compassion, wisdom, justice and mercy.*

ONE: We pray that you will establish the work of our hands.

MANY: *Through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*
—Based on Galatians 6

Song of Adoration

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

#104, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius

MUSIC: Plainsong

TUNE: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hymn of Penitence

“King Maker of the World”

#152, *The Hymnal*, 1982

WORDS: Gregory the Great, ver. *Hymnal* 1940

MUSIC: *Fleurs des Noels*, 1535

TUNE: A LA VENUE DE NOËL

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16

Canticle

Fraction Anthem: Jesus, Lamb of God

#S 164, *The Hymnal* 1982

(From *Deutsche Messe*; Franz Schubert; arr. Richard Proulx

Reading from the Epistles

Hebrews 5:5-10

Silent Meditation

O great Chief, light a candle within my heart that I may see what is therein and sweep the rubbish from your dwelling place.

—“Prayer of an African Girl” from the *Chalice Hymnal*

Reading from the Gospels

John 12:20-33

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

“I Am His, and He Is Mine”

#336, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991

WORDS: George W. Robinson

MUSIC: James Mountain

TUNE: EVERLASTING LOVE

Benediction

Go, little children, from this sacred place, pushed by the spirit who blows when and where she will, making all places sacred. Go and do some more singing and talking, laughing and crying, hugging and holding, by which you are strengthened to be tellers of truth, bearers of justice, offerers of resistance, so becoming part of the great cloud of witnesses. Go now, people of faith, to follow Christ.

—Adapted from a benediction by John Furry

Postlude

A Liturgy for Palm Sunday

by Guilherme Almeida

Now may our eternal God and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may the Lord so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

—From I Thessalonians 3:11-13

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: Lord, open our lips, and our mouths shall proclaim your praise:

MANY: *“Blessed are you forever, who come in the name of the Lord.”*

ONE: May our hosannas be true.

MANY: *May our songs for you never fail.*

Song of Adoration

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

#192, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: Theodulph of Orleans

MUSIC: Melchior Teschner

TUNE: St. THEODULPH

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Hymn of Celebration

“Mantles and Branches”

CCLI Song No.354470

WORDS & MUSIC: Ruben Ruiz Avila

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29

Canticle

“Thou Art Worthy”

#114, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS & MUSIC: Pauline Michael Mills

TUNE: WORTHY

Reading from the Epistles

Philippians 2:5-11

Silent Meditation

Crucifixion, Good Friday, Easter, Resurrection.

I once thought it was a once-in-a-lifetime.

But Jesus is shot on the streets of Cleveland
and it is Good Friday in Ukraine.

—adapted from a writing by Catherine J. Wright

Reading from the Gospels

Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”

#207, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: John Bowring

MUSIC: Ithamar Conkey

TUNE: RATHBUN

Benediction

As you leave this place, may God lavish love on you so that it fills your lives and overflows to everyone around you. May you be infused with strength and purity, and filled with confidence in the presence of God our Creator when Jesus returns again. Go in peace and joy!

—Based on I Thessalonians 3, inspired by Eugene Peterson’s *The Message*

Postlude



art by Erin Kennedy Mayer

A Liturgy for Maundy Thursday

by Guilherme Almeida

"Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

—John 13:34-35

Prelude

#377, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal
WORDS & MUSIC: Melody Green
TUNE: GREEN

Call to Worship

ONE: Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

MANY: *Tonight, we recommit ourselves to love one another as a community of faith.*

ONE: In our gathering this night, we testify of God's love shown perfectly in Christ.

MANY: *We pray that everyone will know, by our love, that we are Christ's disciples.*

ONE: Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

MANY: *We believe and come now to worship our God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.*

—Inspired by John 13:34-35; 14:1

Song of Adoration

"I Will Sing the Wondrous Story"

#607, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Francis H. Rowley

MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard

TUNE: HYFRYDOL

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Exodus 12:1-4, 5-10, 11-14

Song of Penitence

"Once Again"

CCLI Song No. 1564362

WORDS & MUSIC: Matt Redman

Reading from the Psalter

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19

Canticle

"There Is a Redeemer"

Reading from the Epistles

I Corinthians 11:23-26



art by Jesse Manning

Silent Meditation

Jesus' ministry was clearly defined, and the alternatives to the illusion and temptations of the desert were spelled out. A choice was made—life abundant, full, and free for all. Make no mistake about it, the day that choice was made, Jesus became suspect. That day in the temple he sealed the fate already prepared for him. How was the world to understand one who rejected an offer of power and control?

—Joan B. Campbell

Reading from the Gospels

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

"They'll Know We Are Christians"

#494, Chalice Hymnal

WORDS & MUSIC: Peter Scholtes

TUNE: ST. BRENDAN'S

Benediction

Where charity and love prevail there God
is ever found;

Brought there together by Christ's love,
by love are we thus bound.

Forgive we now each other's faults
as we our faults confess,

And let us love each other well i
n Christian holiness.

Let us recall that in our midst
dwells God's begotten Son;

As members of his body joined,
we are in Him made one.

—This is written for the tune of UBI CARITAS, and was
paraphrased by Omer Westendorf

Postlude

A Lesson about Butterflies: A Children's Sermon for Lent & Easter

by LeAnna Bryant Anantaraman

Materials needed:

- Illustrations of the metamorphic stages of a caterpillar/butterfly
- Butterfly stickers

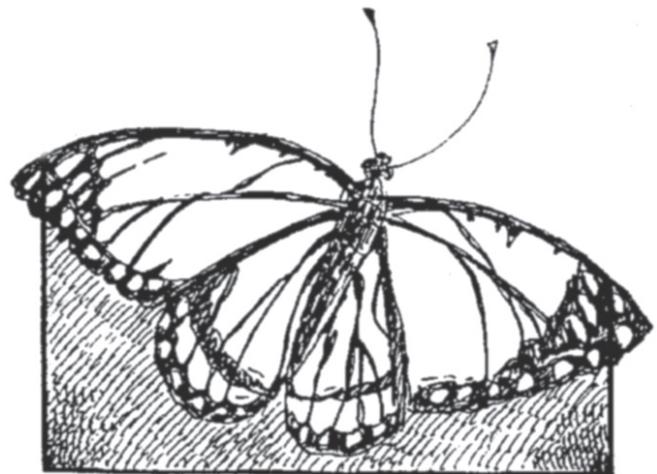
Show the children pictures of a caterpillar. Ask them what they know about caterpillars. Ask questions like, "Did you know the caterpillar is not always going to look like this?"

Next, show the children pictures of a cocoon. Ask "Do you see a caterpillar in this picture? What happens to this caterpillar?" Then show pictures of a butterfly coming out of the cocoon. Ask, "What's happening in this picture?"

Tell the children that the Easter story is similar to this caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Say something like, "Jesus lived many years serving God. Many people did not like what he did and taught, so they did a bad thing and killed him. But, just like the caterpillar doesn't stay in the cocoon, Jesus did not stay in the tomb where they buried him. And just like the butterfly is beautiful when it comes out of the cocoon, Jesus was also beautiful when he came out of the tomb."

Give each child a butterfly sticker and say something like "This sticker is to remind us that Jesus is alive and beautiful. When we act like Jesus, we are beautiful, too."

—LeAnna Bryant Anantaraman is in her 17th year of teaching in the Cobb County school system in Marietta, GA.



art by Robert Darden

A Liturgy for Holy Friday

by Guilherme Almeida

Note: This liturgy includes 14 scripture passages that can be used as Stations of the Cross. We encourage you to be creative in the use of these. You could set up stations in different areas, using art, sculpture and/or photography and ask the worshippers to stand at each one as the scripture is being read.

You could have fourteen readers of various ages and stages of life. You could print the scriptures on large posters or worship guides that can be carried, and include silent periods in which the congregants move from station to station, reading the passages to themselves. You could ask people to dress in First-Century clothing and tell the events of each passage in their own words. You could have a candle at each station, to be snuffed out when that passage is read, leaving the worship area darker with each passage.

Prelude

Call to Worship

ONE: What has happened? Why are you here?

MANY: *We have come because they crucified our Lord.*

ONE: Who has crucified your Lord?

MANY: *The Roman soldiers, at Pilate's command, as requested by the Jewish leaders.*

ONE: But I heard you yell "Crucify!" in the awful silence of your souls.

MANY: *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and on him is laid the iniquity of us all.*

Song of Penitence

"The Old Rugged Cross"

#548, Chalice Hymnal

WORDS & MUSIC: George Bennard

TUNE: THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

I. Jesus Weeps For His City

Matthew 23:34-37

II. The Last Supper

Matthew 26:26-30



III. Gethsemene

Matthew 26:36-39

IV. Betrayal

Matthew 26:27-50

Song of Adoration

"Lamb of God"

CCLI Song No. 16787

WORDS & MUSIC: Twila Paris

V. Despised and Rejected

Isaiah 53:2-3

VI. Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:4-5, 7

VII. Forsaken

Matthew 27:45-46

VIII. Forgiving

Luke 23:34

IX. Submission

Luke 23:46

Silent Meditation

Jesus was not killed by atheism and anarchy. He was brought down by law and order allied with religion, which is always a deadly mix. Beware those who claim to know the mind of God and who are prepared to use force, if necessary, to make others conform. Beware those who cannot tell God's will from their own. Temple police are always a bad sign. When chaplains start wearing guns and hanging out at the sheriff's office, watch out. Someone is about to have no king but Caesar. there are many ways to tell the story of what happened on Good Friday.

—Barbara Brown Taylor, *A Deadly Mix*

Choral Benediction

"Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley"

#211, Chalice Hymnal

WORDS & MUSIC: American Spiritual, arr. Bill Thomas

TUNE: LONESOME VALLEY

Postlude

art by Rebecca S. Ward

A Liturgy for Easter Sunday Morning

by Guilherme Almeida

But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him. This is my message for you.'"

—Matthew 28:5-7

Prelude

Call to Worship

Note: We suggest, for a call to worship, that you gather five or six people who speak languages other than English. Ask them to read Matthew 28:5-6 in each of these languages, in order. Then ask them to say, "Christ is risen" in each language. Ask one of them to say "Christ is risen" in English (or whatever is your primary worship language) and ask the others to respond, "Christ is risen, indeed" in your primary worship language. It could be followed by the responsive reading below.

Responsive Call to Worship

"Christ Is Risen Indeed"

#193, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

Hymn of Adoration

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

#216, *Chalice Hymnal*

WORDS: Charles Wesley

MUSIC: *Lyra Davidica*, 1708

TUNE: EASTER HYMN

Easter Pastoral Prayer

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 25:6-9

Hymn of Celebration

"We Welcome Glad Easter"

#197, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS: Anonymous

MUSIC: Welsh hymn tune

TUNE: ST. DENIO

Reading from the Psalter

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

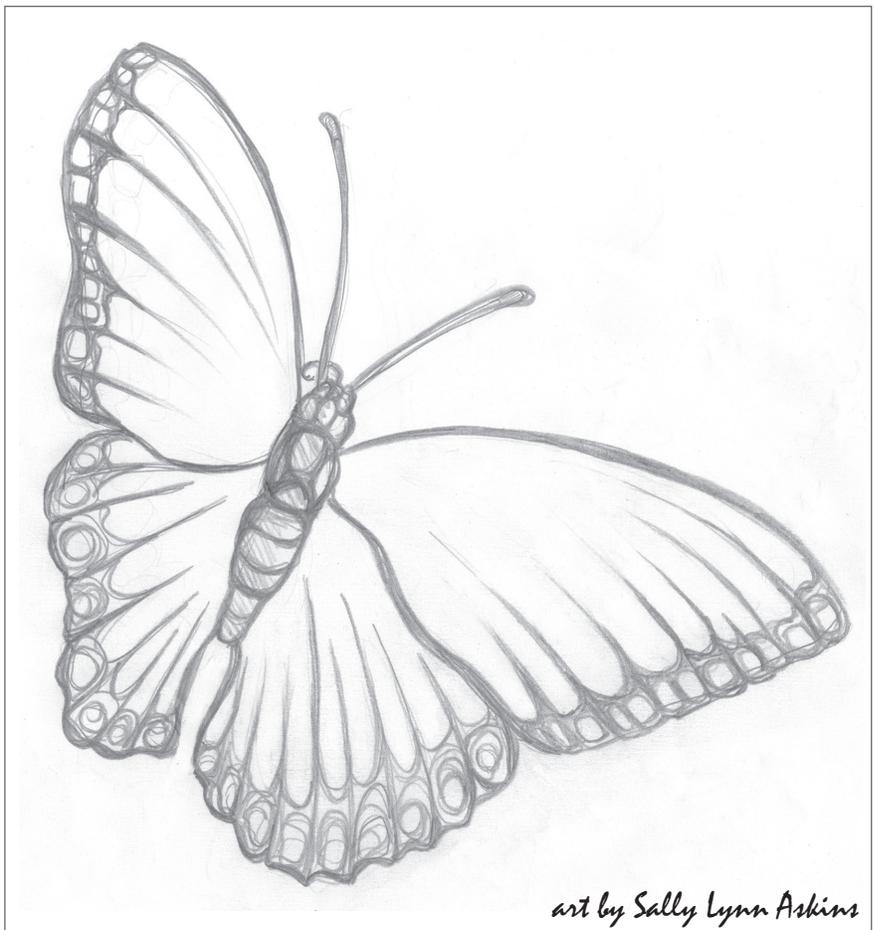
Canticle

"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"

#606, *Celebrating Grace Hymnal*

WORDS & MUSIC: Rick Founds

TUNE: LORD, I LIFT YOUR NAME



Reading from the Epistles

I Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43

Silent Meditation

God, you are our beginning
and you will be our end;
we are made in your image and likeness.
We praise and thank you for this day.
This is the day on which you created light
and saw it was good.
This is the day in whose
early morning light
we discovered the tomb was empty,
and encountered Christ,
the world's true light.
For us your acts are gracious
and your love endures forever.
—from the New Zealand Prayer Book

Reading from the Gospels

John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

Sermon

Hymn of Dedication

"Glorious Is Thy Name"

#344, *Celebrating Grace* hymnal

WORDS & MUSIC: B. B. McKinney

TUNE: GLORIOUS NAME

Responsive Benediction

ONE: Let the heavens be glad,

MANY: *And let the earth rejoice.*

ONE: Let them say among the nations,

MANY: *Our Lord is risen; our Lord is King.*

ONE: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

MANY: *For his steadfast love endures forever.*

ONE: Let us go forth, knowing in our hearts, and

showing in our lives, that Christ is risen.

MANY: *Christ is risen, indeed. May he bring resurrection to our hearts and lives. Hallelujah!*

-Adapted from I Chronicles 16:31, 34

Postlude

An Easter Benediction

Note: This benediction is taken from an Easter liturgy in which the Easter story from John 20 is adapted for reading by five readers. The words of Jesus are read by the Fifth Reader, the words of Mary Magdalene are read by the Fourth Reader, and the words of Thomas are read by the Third Reader. The words of the benediction are chosen to fit those characters. (See "Anointed with the Spirit of Easter," pp 19-21, from "Fools for Christ," Sacred Seasons, Lent/Eastertide 2002.

FIRST READER: The spirit of Easter has fallen upon us, to preach good news to the poor and proclaim release to the captives.

SECOND READER: Our hands have touched the holes in his hands.

THIRD READER: Our eyes have seen the wounds in his side.

FOURTH READER: We have known suffering, and received peace from him.

FIRST READER: We are apostles of the one called Christ.

SECOND READER: There is much darkness and chaos around us. Our world seems to be falling apart; the center will not hold.

FIFTH READER: Your eyes are anointed with the spirit of Easter. Go and fill the world with the light that cannot be overcome.

THIRD READER: There is pain and sorrow, confusion and despair in the hearts of our friends, our loved ones, ourselves.

FIFTH READER: Your hearts are anointed with the spirit of Easter. Go and fill the world with healing and hope.

FOURTH READER: There are wars around the globe, destruction in our land, and violence on our streets and in our homes.

FIFTH READER: Your minds are anointed with the spirit of Easter. Go and fill the world with the waging of peace.

FIRST READER: We will step out of this place into a world that sees us as fools.

FIFTH READER: Your lives are anointed with the spirit of Easter. Go and turn the world upside down.

ALL READERS: The spirit of Easter has fallen upon us, to preach good news to the poor and proclaim release to the captives.

FIRST READER: May God give us courage. May God guide our steps. May God intoxicate us with the spirit of Easter.

—by Katie Cook

The Emmaus Event: Resources for Easter Sunday Evening

Luke 24:13-35

Worship is the social space where the church gathers to watch for and describe the presence of the resurrected Lord in its midst.

Litany of Emmaus

One: The day is far spent...but we have not yet recognized your face in each of our sisters and brothers.

MANY: *Stay with us, blessed stranger.*

ONE: The day is far spent...but we have not yet shared your bread in grace with the least of these.

MANY: *Stay with us, blessed stranger.*

ONE: The day is far spent...but we have not listened to your Word and heard the resounding echo of your Mercy and Grace.

MANY: *Stay with us, blessed stranger.*

ALL: *Stay with us blessed stranger, because our very night becomes day when you are here.*

Invocation

As we gather for worship on this evening, we find ourselves grateful for many things.

We are thankful for your unfailing love, how you comfort us in our time of need and sorrow, how you strengthen us for the journey ahead of us, how you are present with us, even when we don't feel it.

We are thankful that you open our eyes and hearts in the breaking of bread. We give thanks for the light that you shine into our lives through the resurrection of Jesus.

We continue our grateful response for the Easter miracle with Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen.

—Prayer by Emily Dodson

art by Jesse Manning



Prayer for the People

O Lord, as we walk with our faces downcast to our own private Emmaus, stay with us and open our eyes so that we might sing "It is true; Jesus has risen!" Deliver us from the anguish of the grave, so that we may call upon the name of the Lord and lift up the cup of salvation so that all may partake of it. In your omnipotence, grant us the power to proclaim your message of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who so loved the world to die a criminal's death, our death, on Rome's cross. We pray these things in the Lord's name. Amen.
—Prayer by Caleb Cruseturner

Sermon

(See "Resurrection Imagination" by Kent McKeever and Brianna Jones on page 23.)

—These liturgical elements are from a Youth Sunday service at Seventh & James Baptist Church in Waco, TX. Emily Dodson is a student at Midway High School in Woodway, TX, and Caleb Cruseturner is a student at Vanguard High School in Waco.

Resurrection Imagination

A Sermon for Easter Sunday evening

by Kent McKeever and Brianna Jones

Editor's note: The following is a sermon that was delivered during Eastertide last year by Kent McKeever, the youth minister at Seventh & James Baptist Church in Waco, TX, and Brianna Jones, a member of the youth group. (Brianna is now a first-year high-school student.)

Kent's thoughts:

"Hey brother, did you see the autotune yet?"
"No, but I heard about it. It's all over YouTube."

"I know. So they got some witnesses, those women from our group, on some news report, saying 'Kapooyah, Kapooyah, Jesus is alive. Jesus's body isn't in the tomb.'"

"I know, I can't believe it."

The talk passes across the seats of the public transit as the two head back to their hometowns. The one who had promised to set them free is now dead. And with him their hopes for a different life, a new world, for release from the grind of their daily existence. Back to the real world, I guess. So they head home, returning to the familiar. To their work, school, programs, activities, schedules, competing interests. To the struggle.

And then a stranger sits down next to one of them.

"What are y'all talking about?"

"Are you kidding? Are you the only one who hasn't heard what happened? It's all over Facebook. The tweets about it shut down Twitter for hours. Every blogger and every major news outlet has covered the story. Get your smart phone out. It's gone viral, man. Seriously! Even people who still just use email have gotten the message. Where have you been?"

Although our surroundings today have drastically changed, the conversation remains the same. Our human condition never changes. As we struggle to wrap our minds and hearts around the death of Jesus of Nazareth, his resurrection appearances—this presence of our risen Lord—trying to find our place in the story, the emotions stay constant. Confusion and sadness. Doubt, worry, dejection. Betrayal and anger. Fear. The struggle continues.

As we journey through this life, with great expectations and the anticipation of joy, Death is ever-present. We cannot escape it. We want glory! Redemption! Resurrection! We want Easter! But we find suffering.

The pain isn't alleviated. Our bodies still wither. Our minds still wander. The powers still oppress. Our relationships are still broken. The experiences we share

don't seem to allow for an empty tomb. Good Friday lingers. Death is the story of the day. It has gone viral.

Thus, our faith teeters on the edge of despair. Hope is waning. Where are we going? What do we do now? How do we clearly see the way forward? The pangs of Sheol lay hold of us; we suffer distress and anguish. "O Lord," we pray, "save our lives!"

And then Jesus joins us. God's everlasting reign breaks in. The one we pray to for help sends Love down to conquer. Life, abundant and eternal, enters into our struggle, bringing us the glory and redemption we so desperately desire and long for with our entire being.

*As we journey through this life,
with great expectations and the
anticipation of joy, Death is
ever-present. We cannot escape
it. We want glory! Redemption!
Resurrection! We want Easter! But
we find suffering.*

We have seen with our own eyes, we have heard the stories of others, we have experienced these truths. No human power prevails against the power of unlimited love. Affliction and death give way to health and life. The powers are confronted and overcome. Suffering gives way to glory. Jesus is alive. Resurrection is for real. We are free.

Or are we? Can we truly discern God's life-giving presence in our life together? Or are our eyes kept from recognizing the resurrected Lord walking with us?

Two of them were going, one named Cleopas, the other unnamed, and while they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

As with any great story, the storyteller here leaves a few details a bit obscure, allowing for the reader to find his or her place in the story. Who is this other walker? It is you and me.

We find our way into the story, walking this road of heartbreak and despair, with our eyes keeping Jesus incomprehensible. The words Luke uses here actually

say something perhaps closer to “their eyes were seized so as not to recognize him,” leaving another detail open to our interpretation.

The passive voice of the verb suggests the choice is not necessarily their own. It is not that they see Jesus and choose not to acknowledge him. They just don’t know who he is at all. Is their blindness divinely imposed? Have their minds been blocked from seeing clearly because of their misunderstanding of who Jesus really is?

Does their misery—the bitter disappointment, grief and confusion that threatens the existence of the community of Jesus’s disciples—does this limit their sight? Or is it the fear of what it now means to follow the condemned criminal Jesus, who died such a horrible death, and because of whom the authorities now may go after his followers?

Perhaps their worldly concerns have resumed their former place. “Well, we tried. We thought life could be different with this Jesus fellow. It is not. We bet on the wrong savior. So we might as well not neglect our work, families, the old ways of life. It might not necessarily be easy, but at least it is familiar. And it is what the rest of the world seems to know really matters. We were wrong to believe in the life Jesus says he came to bring us. Might as well chase after whatever the rest of the world is chasing.”

Whatever it may be—probably some of all of the above—these disciples cannot see Jesus when he joins them on their journey.

Where do you find yourself in this story this morning? As a community of disciples, can we see our risen Lord walking with us?

All too often, the in-breaking reign of God is unrecognizable to us, even those who have decided to follow Jesus. Our eyes are seized, our minds are foolish, our hearts are slow to believe all that the Word of God has revealed to us.

We show up looking for Jesus to be someone who provides for something we need or does something for us that we want, but only in the preconceived ways *we* have for what that should look like.

And when our expectations for healing are unmet, our hopes for renewal shattered, the experiences of redemption we longed for not found and the world of freedom we anticipated unrealized, we turn to the familiar, to the easier course. We go back to the norm.

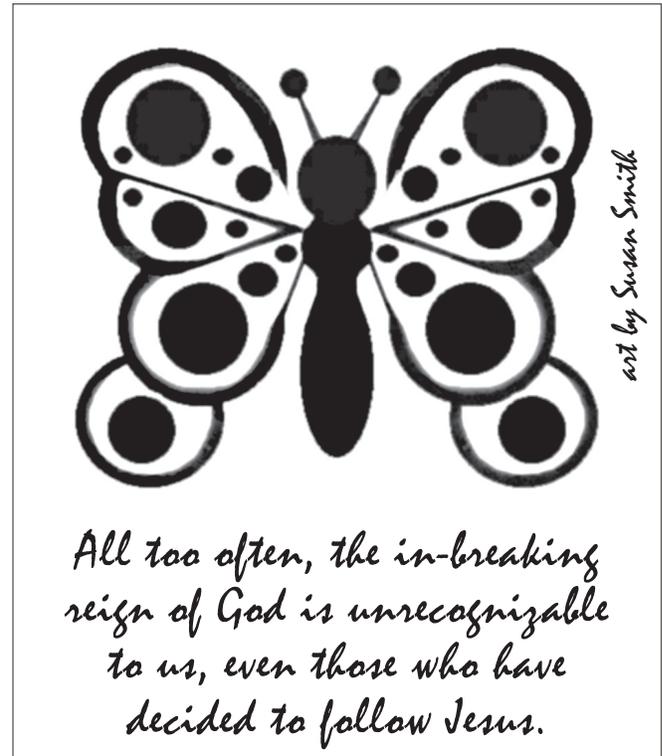
Too often we walk away in fear and confusion. We find some other path to follow. We are these disciples returning to our fishing nets and tax offices, to the safety of what we once knew.

A return to our aspirations for a successful career, to the pressures of jobs and school assignments, the over-programming and busy, busy, busy of our schedules, to keeping up with the Joneses, the relentless routines and the “this is the way it has always been.”

This is what we know. In fact, it is what the world tells us is worthwhile, the way to happiness and fulfillment.

When the promise of social and political change does not arrive in the way we desire, when we find ourselves tired and confused, losing our will to fight. When we are pushed back and cast aside in our efforts for a new world order, where do we go but back to what we know?

If Jesus can’t make things new, how could I possibly expect to transform my life, let alone change the world? And so our hopes die and we cease to see them resurrected. Who else should we listen to? How else can we see the way to go on with our lives?



Our eyes are kept from recognizing him. He who is Jesus, God among us. Jesus who is Life and Love walking with us. Life and Love that is God’s gracious way of seeing and going. But this in-breaking reign of God is all too often unrecognizable to us as we trudge along our familiar roads.

We lose our ability to see clearly the in-breaking reign of life instead of death, hope instead of despair, of all-conquering love. We cease to use our resurrection imaginations. And when we fail to see clearly with eyes of resurrection faith, we usually come to terms with the world’s way of looking at things, seized by the supposed realities of this world. But as followers of Jesus, we have another way of seeing and going.

This way of seeing and going is Faith guided by a resurrection imagination. It is how we can most clearly see the world for what it truly is and find our way in it. Rooted in the stories of Jesus and his disciples, a resurrection imagination opens the eyes of our minds, hearts and souls to see the risen Lord walking with us. It frees our spirits to discern God’s life-giving presence among us.

A resurrection imagination empowers us to speak Life, not death. To have the conversations that *are our lives*, along the road, as if Jesus is not dead, as if he is alive indeed, and how the death-dealing world no longer has any victory.

It enables us to sustain a faithful witness as we struggle together to move beyond fear and confusion, to understand what it means to move from suffering to glory, to find the true redemption we deeply desire and need.

*One woman raised her hand
and said the last thing I
expected. She asked how she
could keep faith with God when
her life was a complete mess.*

A resurrection imagination helps us see that Jesus's way of life is the only true way—his perception of reality, his organization of relationships, his way of dealing with the powers of this world. The world's ways turn us upside down; a resurrection imagination helps us see things right side up.

The in-breaking, eternal reign of the God of life and love has come to us and continues to be ever-present and all-powerful. A resurrection imagination makes this other way of seeing and going ours for the taking.

But it is not enough to simply walk with your community. Conversations along the way about what has happened are not enough. Bible study will not be enough. Hearing the great stories is not enough. Worship, not enough. All necessary, but not enough.

So what is enough? How might our eyes of understanding cease to be seized? Having a meal with a stranger. That's enough.

The writer of the Gospel of Luke loves meals. In them, he and his readers find the space for the "longed-for gathering of Israel" and see the all-inclusive spirit of Jesus's mission: Feeding the 5,000. Dining with tax collectors and allowing for a sinful woman bathe Jesus' feet at a Pharisee's table. Banquet invitations for disabled people of all kinds. Feasts for the prodigal one returned home. The final Passover meal.

All of these meals are celebrations of the beloved community, the people of God, the in-breaking reign of Life and Love. All of these meals reveal that we find Jesus in the middle of the basic moments of our lives, at home with us in the midst of our everyday activity.

Sharing a meal with a stranger. Radical hospitality. The grace to make oneself vulnerable. Trusting, hoping, risking. Self-giving welcome and acceptance of the other, the stranger, the one we do not know, who may even

scare us, but who walks this same hard road right beside us. The hospitality of travelling companions becomes the doorway to grace.

And it is here, in sitting down and sharing life with strangers, that God nurtures our resurrection imaginations, opening our eyes to recognize clearly another way of seeing and going.

Brianna's Story:

It was a Wednesday afternoon and anticipation filled the air. We were going to share and lead a Bible study for homeless people. We as a youth group had been looking forward to this for weeks. I had no idea that I would come out of a Bible study with the experience of a lifetime.

The passage we talked about was from Psalm 40—about God raising us from our darkest pits of misery. How we have to keep faith and persevere. One woman raised her hand and said the last thing I expected. She asked how she could keep faith with God when her life was a complete mess.

People would judge her because she was homeless. Because of one mistake in her life it was all messed up. She said she used to have faith, but since then it had decreased and recently gone away completely.

This woman had said the things that were my worst nightmare to say out loud—things that I had thought about, but I had pushed such notions away. My whole life being ahead of me, it was hard for me to picture myself or the others around me in such a bad situation that we or I would lose faith.

I raised my hand and shakily said what was on my mind. I said our faith can only take us so far. There comes a point when we have to take our faith and do something with it ourselves in order to make our lives better. There is no way we can do it with just God and there's no way we can do it without God.

I told her that I was adopted and that I most definitely did not come from glamorous situations. They were situations that were, in fact, very grim. I then admitted that I really was in no place to preach to her.

I said this because I had never been in a situation like this, where an adult looked to me for help. It had always been the other way around—me relying on parents and elders for help when I was in need. I went on to tell her that I did not know salvation because of my faith alone, but by the faith of others in me and themselves. Some of them are familiar faces and some are people whom I might never know or get to thank.

When I look back on it, it was very frustrating to me that I had no solution to readily fix her problem. This woman had suffered far longer than I ever had. It was even more bothersome that I could have easily been in her situation. But with the help of strangers and familiar faces, I wasn't.

I often think about the woman that I met that day. I would only hope that she listened and that her faith is growing every day. I'm sure she struggles, and so do I,

but I have faith in her, a complete stranger whose name I have forgotten and I'm sure she has forgotten mine. But it doesn't matter. Our youth group and I shared something far greater with this woman.

Invitation to the Table

Is that not what *this* (point to table and congregation) is all about? It is together, followers walking the hard road of heartbreak and despair, struggling to make sense of our lived experiences, finding our way in the way of Jesus, that we come to this table. Here at this table, we sit still. We slow the harrying pace of our walks so we may rest.

We pause on our frenetic paths to listen. We stop our chasing, chasing, chasing, and we invite the stranger to come in, to teach, to share, to give us the strength to alter our paths. We long for an authentic resurrection imagination. Our eyes that once longed to truly see our risen Lord Jesus walking with us may now open into

glory. Come to this table of self-giving welcome. And may our eyes of resurrection faith be opened.

O Lord, extend our resurrection imagination. Open our eyes that we may see you walking with us on this hard road, that we will see life instead of death, so that we may know the life that is truly Life, and experience Grace and Love in the meals Jesus shares with us, that we share with strangers, that we may know how the bread of life is broken, blessed and shared far, far beyond this table—more often than not when we least expect it. And may we run to tell our story. With all that we are, may we live fully into another way of seeing and going.

Editor's note: Kent is also the founding director of Mission Waco Legal Services, a legal-aid ministry for low-income people. For more of his work, see "40 Days in Orange," a compilation of his 2013 Lenten blog about wearing a prison uniform during Lent, in Hunger News & Hope, Vol 14 No 3, Fall 2013 (www.seedspublishers.org/news), beginning on page 5.

The Emmaus Incident

A Dramatic Reading for Easter Sunday Evening

by Crystal Goolsby
Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

Editor's note: This reading for two people was written by Crystal Goolsby, a writer who lives in Austin, Texas. It is one of seven dramatic readings in "With Our Own Eyes," based on the resurrection appearances of Jesus in the four gospels, from Seeds of Hope Publishers, for Lent 2009.

Setting: A road in first-century Palestine, daytime. This is written for two speakers, one whose name is unknown and one who is named Cleopas. They are dressed in modest traveling clothes. Scholars say that these two travelers were probably men.

FIRST TRAVELER: It was the first day of the week. Cleopas and I walked side-by-side toward Emmaus in a very sad state. So many bad things had happened in the last three days. We asked each other how it could be that the Master came to us and then was taken away so soon. How he could have been handed over so easily. He was supposed to be the one who saved our nation. Instead, he was killed.

As we walked, a man appeared in the distance. We had never seen him around before. He walked right up to us and began to walk *with* us. He asked,

"What are you two talking about?"

What could we tell him? We felt as though someone very close to us had died. How do you say something like that out loud, though? Finally, Cleopas said to him, "You must be new around here, or else you would have known what happened."

CLEOPAS: But all the stranger said was, "What has happened?" How was it possible that anyone could miss hearing of the events that occurred during the



art by Susan Smith

last three days? Nonetheless, we explained to him the amazing and sad events that have taken place. We told him that we were discussing the fate of Jesus of Nazareth—how we thought he would save Israel, but instead he was handed over by the chief priests to the Roman government. How he was nailed to a cross and died, instead of delivering us.

FIRST TRAVELER: We also told him about how some women from our group went to Jesus' tomb earlier that morning, only to find that Jesus' body was not there! Even more amazing, they said some angels who were sitting by the tomb told them that Jesus was alive! We didn't believe it when they told us, but some of the men from our group went to check the tomb, and found that the tomb was empty.

CLEOPAS: After he heard all of our story, the stranger looked at us, amazed, and said, "All of you people are so foolish! Why is what happened so hard to believe, when it is what the Scriptures say? You know very well that they say that the One to save Israel would have to suffer all the things you just told me about before He was glorified!" He then quoted many of the writings of the old prophets that included predictions about Israel's deliverer.

FIRST TRAVELER: By this point we were almost to Emmaus, and we asked the stranger to come and eat with us, and to stay the night with us so that we could keep talking to him. It was getting late, anyway. He agreed to come, and so the three of us went to our house. When we sat at the table, he blessed our food and then passed it out. Suddenly, we realized to whom we had been talking the whole time. We were sitting with Jesus himself, the very man we had been mourning! As soon as we realized who he was, he disappeared from our table. Cleopas and I left the table and ran out to find the other members of our group, who told us that the Lord was risen,

and that he had appeared to Peter.

CLEOPAS: How amazing! The Master had come to us, and we did not even recognize him! But when he broke the bread for our supper, we suddenly knew it was he!

FIRST TRAVELER: And how wonderful it is that he is alive once again.

—Crystal Goolsby is a freelance writer in Austin, TX. She is a former Seeds of Hope intern.



Apocalypse

(An Easter Meditation)

by C. W. Christian

Let there be fire,
Torch, sun, hearth,
Spirits incendiary,
Rising up
And everywhere, and everywhere
Burn out the humid breath of night.
The cold, dry, brittle breathing of the night.
Flame, candle, altar,
Sacrament!
Lava of purity, white hot,
Purge out the fetid smell of death
And dance in writhing flames, in rising swirls
Of golden sparks, in firestorms irresistible
To heaven.

—Wally Christian taught theology at Baylor University for 40 years. He still writes poetry, particularly for Lent, Eastertide, Advent and, above all, Christmas.

Benediction

Go in hope,

And may resurrection become a daily part of our lives.
May we emerge from this journey
renewed in our hearts,
Trying our new, wet wings against the spring air.
Soaring into the heavens with joyful abandon.

Go in peace,

Rejoicing that we are all created anew,
Ready to walk again in the path that Christ forged,
Ready to recognize him on the road.

Go in love,

And may the spirit of God drench all of us,
So that,
everywhere we go,
eyes and ears will be opened,
stumbling feet will become sure,
those who are outcast will be embraced,
those who are sick and sick at heart will be comforted,
death will give way to life,
and the Good News of Jesus Christ
will be proclaimed
in the prisons and on the streets;
So that,
everywhere we go,
people will say, "See how they love one another!"
So that,
everywhere we go,
God's reign will break through the darkness.

—Katie Cook

