

February 21, 2020 – At Home/Email Missal

A pleasant Second Sunday of Lent to you, and thank you for joining us for worship, whether by print, email or Zoom. For the season of Lent, we are working with a combination of stories/articles and scriptures, and our services invite you into a reflective mode. Today's teaching includes a tool for reflection and for contending with some of the discomfort that arises when Jesus (or your persistent pastor) takes us into those discomforting places 😊 We will also record the discussion from Zoom on the stories, and post it to our YouTube channel later in the week.

At the end of this service today, a reflection tool, story, with scripture and some reflection questions are included. We will be studying that story and the attached questions on the Third Sunday of Lent (March 7). This process will repeat through Lent, with a different story/scripture combo each week (excepting AGM Sunday).

For those who are voting members at St Peter's, a reminder that our AGM will be held by Zoom (with mail-in ballot vote for those who are unable to connect by Zoom) on March 21st following worship. Council is committed to providing an in-person participation option for those unable to attend by Zoom if at all this becomes possible, and will communicate about this accordingly. We want everyone who will connect by Zoom to be able to participate and vote, so on March 7th and March 14th, following Zoom worship, we will have some training for those who will attend the AGM on Zoom. The training is also worked into the pedagogy of our study time during worship on our story study Sundays. When you returned the survey to you, if you indicated you want to attend the AGM by Zoom, please stay tuned to know which training you are to attend

This is our last Sunday of using Heide's Zoom and on March 7th we move to the church Zoom account. Pray for us 😊
This week's Sunday worship service on Zoom is available via this link:

Time: Feb 28, 2021 09:45 AM

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89451274152?pwd=N0ljTTJOdHVmKys2bGhJd3VLQVJMUT09>

Meeting ID: 894 5127 4152 Passcode: 151067

You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of the Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply):

1 587 328 1099 or
1 647 374 4685 or
1 647 558 0588 or
1 778 907 2071 or
1 204 272 7920 or
1 438 809 7799

As we proceed through Lent, doorway and walking visits, telephone/video call visits and delivery of home communion kits including a dining table liturgy remain available. Please contact the church office if you would like any of these 😊 Also, I am on 3 days of study leave in the coming week (March 3, 4 and 5) and emergency pastoral care has been arranged for these three days in the event support is needed. Keep safe and love each other.

With love, in Christ
Pastor Janaki.

Other Lenten Study offerings which we have been invited to join include:

Sunday afternoon - BOOK STUDY: *"With: Re-imagining the Way You Relate to God"* by Skye Jethani" with friends from St Luke's Anglican, lead by Rev Steve Greene. This Sunday the Book Study examines chapters 2 & 3.

Time: Feb 28, 2021 01:30 PM America/Toronto

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81772803399?pwd=MjEvaDN1MHdQK0hmbm83TmY0Y24vUT09>

Meeting ID: 817 7280 3399 and Passcode: 296729

Wednesday night study at 7:00pm – hosted by Peace Lutheran Church, Pickering taught by Rev. David Maginley for a 5 week Lenten wilderness journey. This week, the group will study ***“Baptism and awakening.”*** Explore rituals as ways to tune yourself to God, to love, to your true self, especially during the pandemic.

Time: Feb 24, 7:00pm Meeting ID: 860 3939 7546 Passcode: 318076

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86039397546?pwd=SkJiV1J2azNoVjZKZDRXZjRWHg3QT09>

OPENING OURSELVES TO GOD’S GENEROSITY

Blessed be Creator: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Whose abundant forgiveness and grace surround us – always available
Welcoming us back from dark and unforgiving places. **Amen**

Brief silence is kept for SILENT PRAYER & reflection

Then, we pray ... Holy One:

We know we have fallen short.

We turn our backs instead of facing each other.

We remain silent when we could speak.

We speak when we could listen.

We close the door when we could fling it wide open.

We judge when we could seek understanding.

We cling when we could give.

We use when we could refrain.

Forgive us, Holy One, for being so very human at times.

help us to continue to grow into your way:

The Way of Jesus. Amen.

We hear the assurance of God’s forgiveness:

Through Jesus, we are always welcomed back home with God

Who receives us with love, forgiving and renewing us every time we return.

When we dare to forgive and stop judging others, we open ourselves to God’s generosity.

Our hearts are open and available for God’s forgiveness

Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Adapted from: <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/prayer-of-confession>

Hymn of Welcome for Lent: God is Forgiveness

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR1g0UAY2II>

Text & Tune: Taizé Community Tune: © 2007, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent Text: © 2007, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with Permission under ONE License # A 727610

Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day: Holy God, you bless us with abundance and you challenge our hearts and souls. Help us to have the courage to rise to that challenge, making room for Spirit to have full power within us, to guide us and show us the way of Jesus. Amen.

“Summary of the Story: Two Guys in the Attic”:

Our study homework last week included a story Pastor Janaki wrote, based on true real-life situations. Two young boys, Treesey and Joe find themselves homeless at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. They are living out of a car, and there is no room in the shelter system for them; no housing they can afford. They observe some households over a period of time, and decide to try and live in the mostly unused attic of a house owned by a well-to-do couple.

In their first hours in the house, the story says: “they had eaten and showered, done the exploring necessary to know what gifts this home could give them, what they could use without the owners ever even knowing what they had supplied to two complete other adult human beings from the sheer abundance of their own lives. Well in advance of the couples’ usual return time, the boys retired to their new abode, safe and snug as two bugs in a rug, happy for the shelter over their heads, the food in their tummies, the warmth that was kissing them goodnight, and the freedom to stretch out in sleep: all things they had missed dearly during their weeks of sleeping in the car.

Spring gave way to summer. The couple who lived in the house must have had stressful jobs and good leave packages. By the time Canada day rolled around, winter clothes had been stashed at the edges of the attic; clothing and bedding and coolers and inflatable beach toys were packed as the couple began enjoying that season of cottage time that is the pleasure of those who have more than one home. “

The story concludes with the question: “When there is no room in the inn, no affordable housing on the market, what else were these boys to do?”

Gospel Acclamation: Take, O, Take Me As I Am ELW 814

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf3QHqQ-004>

Text & Tune: John L. Bell © 1995 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland Administrators; Wild Goose Resource Group Used by Permission, CCLI License # 11098609

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 19:1-10

C: Glory to you O Lord.

Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho. There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus, the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way—he was a short man and couldn’t see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by.

When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home.” Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him. Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped, “What business does he have getting cozy with this crook?”

Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, “Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I’m caught cheating, I pay four times the damages.” Jesus said, “Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.” [The Message Translation]

The Gospel of our Lord. ***C: Praise to you, O Christ.****

Message (Imagine Pastor Janaki’s voice here ☺) How do we contend with our discomfort?

I have always loved this story of Zacchaeus, the short tax collector who wants so badly to see Jesus, who is so disliked by the people because he was, scholars believe, party to the unjust and oppressive taxation system that prevailed over the Roman Empire of the time. He had no anticipation of communing with Jesus, just was driven to climb a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

Maybe sometimes our own Sunday worship is like this, we bring our most human selves, falling literally short of the glory of God, and we climb the Sunday worship tree, just to catch a glimpse of Jesus as he passes by.

But Jesus never passes us by!

We might be all bent out of shape stuck in a tree of our own creation, like a cat that has crawled too far, now needing a fireman to get us back down safely. But Jesus never passes us by! He comes to the tree and he says to each one of us, come down, walk with me, today is my day to be a guest in your home. It is not a request. It is an instruction. But it is a very unusual instruction ... today is my day to be a guest in your home.

When we think “guest” we tend to think of ourselves as the hosts. We invite. The guest responds to an invitation. Jesus however is able to see that our stuckness itself is his invitation. And he does not wait for us to be unstuck, he doesn’t wait for Zacchaeus to change from his crooked ways, he doesn’t require the households of our souls to be

clean, or the attics of our hearts to be opened and swept out for him. He finds us up the tree of our own humanity, and he responds

“come on down, today I will be a guest in your heart, in your soul”

We are not worthy. But Jesus joins us anyway. We are not ready to share our households, but Jesus comes in anyway. And so it is we encounter the story of two homeless young boys, who come from less than 100% healthy home situations, seeking their way into a home that they have not been invited into.

Last Sunday, I shared an article in worship: it threw down a challenge for us to open our homes to those who need shelter. I was so very thankful to those of you who responded to me, by email, on Zoom, by phone and otherwise to say “Pastor that is not as simple as you made it sound,”

And you are right.

There are many considerations to be made. Safety being probably the first of them. Our capacity as individuals to support the diverse needs of people who may be homeless – that is another concern. Most of us have no knowledge or training in how to support someone who might have needs vastly different from our own. Some of us have had relatives or friends with deep mental health challenges stay with us, and we know the impact it can have even on our ability to complete day to day functions.

The point I am making is there is a very real tension ... some of you named it to me ... the tension between our call as disciples to feed the hungry, house the homeless and the fact that, like Zacchaeus, our households, the households of our very souls are not ready, not yet equipped. We are like the Kingdom of God itself, ALMOST but NOT YET 😊

The point of my challenge to you, and I will say the point I was trying to draw from Anya’s article in the Canada Lutheran, was to ask the question:

how are you willing,
or are you even willing,
to have Jesus be a guest in your home?

The home of your heart, the home of your soul, where the messiness of our humanity and fear of death and scarcity co-exist, where past experiences of hurt and lack co-exist with a sometimes threadbare fabric of faith ... we may be willing to climb the tree, to get a peek, but it is with surprise we encounter Jesus’ willingness to enter this inhospitable territory. Are you, are we ready to have Jesus be our guest?

The incredible thing about God’s grace with us is that God does not wait for us to be ready.

Jesus is the willing guest into the mess.

Jesus is the willing guest who, unlike Treeseey and Joe in the story, doesn’t need to know we have abundance;

Jesus doesn’t need our abundance. But we need His.

Jesus doesn’t need our readiness to let him in. But we need His readiness to enter.

And we need the initiative that Jesus takes with us. That initiative is transformative. That initiative, the Jesus initiative burns a hot fire that melts down the concealment:

of ego and pride,
of saviour complex and victim complex,
of the haves and have nots,

bringing to bear a pure, Kingdom form of love whose fingerprints are justice, whose DNA is compassion, whose very lifeblood is forgiveness, mercy and grace.

So it is, we move from the practical of needs and wants, the tensions of Jesus’ gospel teaching “feed them” to Jesus desire to be our guest and show us the way from the inside out.

I don't have the answers to all the hows, how do we meet these needs with safety in mind, how do we work around our own fears and discomforts which have good, sound basis – I don't have all the answers, not by far. But what I do have is the desire to climb the tree, the desire to see Jesus – and a complete faith and trust that, as he did with Zacchaeus, he will do with me, with each and every one of us, and despite our unpreparedness, despite our unreadiness, he will be with us as we journey.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn of the Day: Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song ELW 808

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNNani5BbPc&feature=youtu.be>

Text: Les Petites Soeurs De Jesus and L'Arche Community; tr Stephen Somerville; Tune: Les Petites Soeurs De Jesus and L'Arche Community
Tune: © 1970, Les Petites Soeurs de Jesus, admin. Augsburg Fortress ; Text: © 1970, Les Petites Soeurs de Jesus, admin. Augsburg Fortress
All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission under ONE License # 727610.

Prayers of Intercession:

Awaiting the promised light of God that comes in Jesus, we pray for the body of Christ, the world, God's creation and those who suffer ...

God of abundant blessings, God whose love denies confinement, make us true disciples, removing empty piety from our midst. Make us, your body, an example of Jesus' unbounded love. We bring forward our prayers for your church, calling on you to show us how to be your body in this time, most effectively.

God of abundance ... Hear our prayers.

Jesus our redeemer and way-maker, You came for everyone, bringing forgiveness and grace to everyone.

Not one person or nation or place did you leave out. We pray for our world, our country, our region: so badly in need of all you bear.

God of abundance ... Hear our prayers.

Spirit of God, mighty counsellor of all creation, you are here. Where creation groans in pain, where all hope seems lost, you are here. In carbon footprints, big and small, in waterways and forests, in garbage dumps and trash heaps, you are there. Our responsibility for creation and the environment weighs heavily on us. Move us to be better stewards of your creation.

God of abundance ... Hear our prayers.

God who comes as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we pray: for families affected by addictions and suicide, of which indigenous families are affected in disproportionately high numbers.

We pray for those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit: we pray for those we name out loud, and in the silence of our hearts:

(leave some silence here)

May we all lean on you for comfort,

God of abundance ... Hear our prayers.

These, our prayers, spoken out loud or within our souls, we bring before you entrusting all into your tender-loving care. In Jesus' powerful name. AMEN.

Share the peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

Meal:

Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsiaRdyFr50>

I invite you to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

Communion

Our bodies, the dwelling place of God – taste and see that God is good!

This is bread for the journey: the body of Christ, given for us - let us eat together. (eat)

This is wine of compassion: the blood of Christ, shed for us - let us drink together. (drink)

Prayer after Communion

Compassionate God:

you feed us with your bread of love,

you quench our thirst with your wine of forgiveness.

Sustain us during this time of Lent:

give us your hunger for justice,

make us generous with a love like yours.

Make us one with Jesus.

Amen

Sending Hymn: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy ELW 588; Bradley Moggach, Organ

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x40YdUod_ng&feature=youtu.be

Text: Frederick W. Faber, Tune: North American, 19th cent.; Tune Name: Lord, Revive Us; Text & Tune: Public Domain

Used by Permission CCLI License # 11098609

Blessing:

May God bless you and keep you.

May the face of God shine upon you with grace and mercy.

May God look upon you with favor

and give you ☩ peace.

Amen.

Dismissal:

Go with openness to SPIRIT,

Trusting in all that God provides.

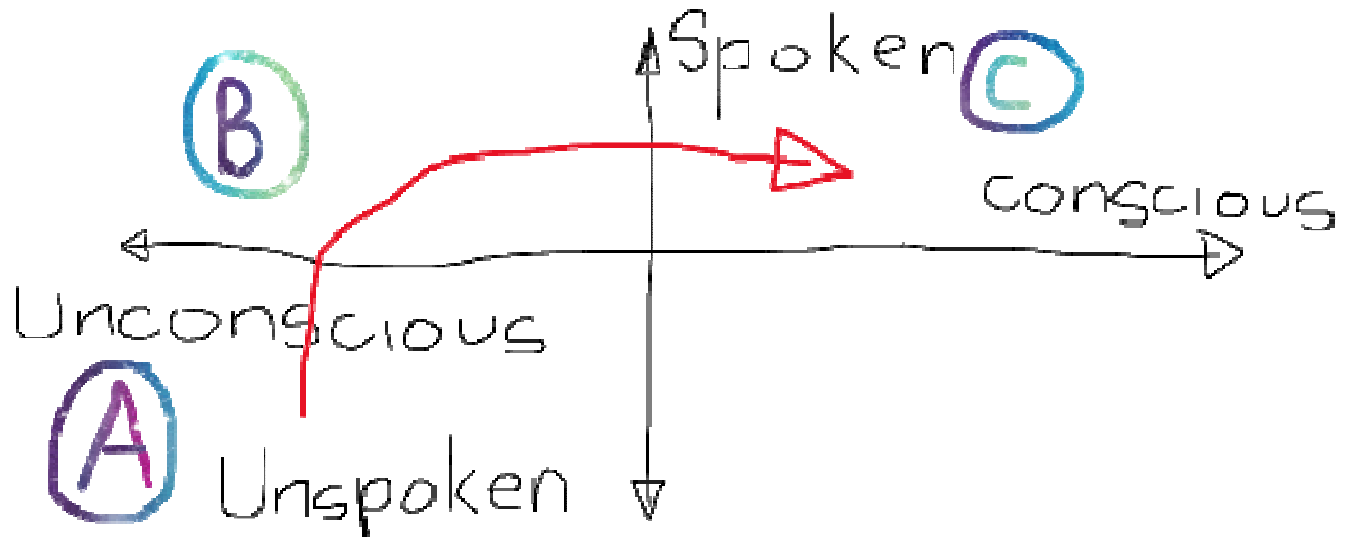
C: Thanks be to God. *

*From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #42368. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

A Simple tool to help us move through our Lenten learning (and other uncomfortable things in life)

Here I would like to draw your attention to the discomfort you may have felt when you read the story, and the scripture and the reflection questions – or just generally when the gospel might stir us to discomfort as it is intended to do. Bring your attention to all the feelings and questions the discomfort brought up for you. To help you do this, I'm sharing with you a tool I learned in my clinical training to be a pastor.



When you hear or read or watch something that makes you uncomfortable, whether in worship or any other context, that is Spirit's signal to you to pay attention. That discomfort is like a big flag waving in your soul "something is going on here" do not ignore it. Ask yourself some questions:

Can you speak about what is uncomfortable for you?

Are you consciously able to address what is making you uncomfortable?

If not, you are in area A of the diagram, and whatever is going on, the cause of the discomfort has the most negative power over you ... you are most likely to ignore the discomfort or bury it, and in so doing, more harm and possible injustice is likely.

On the other hand, even if you don't know where to begin, if you can acknowledge that you ARE uncomfortable and begin speaking about your discomfort with others, with curiosity rather than self-criticism, with compassion rather than judgment, the conversation itself moves you into a position of better power over your discomfort. Through talking it through you move to area B of the diagram.

Through conversation, you will become more aware of what is at play. Your unconscious things become conscious things ... now you are moving into the arena of spoken and conscious – area C ... just being in that space makes your own power over your own discomfort most productive, least harmful.

What does this look like in justice or relationship work? What does this look like in Kingdom building work?

It looks like naming discomfort out loud when you feel it. You don't have to know why you feel it. You don't have to have a solution. But name it. Speak it. "This makes me uncomfortable." Own the vulnerability of that discomfort.

Then be curious. What is the nature of this discomfort? Is it shame? Is it embarrassment? Is it anger? Is it frustration? Is it judgement of myself or others? Talk some more.

Then enter the territory of why ... why might I be feeling this? Do I feel unsafe? Do I feel my goodness being challenged? Do I feel my character is being challenged? Do I feel like I am being blamed?

Go deeper ... why do I have these feelings? Are they about me? Are they about systemic injustices that I am a part of? Are these injustices mine to help fix? Am I responsible?

By asking these questions, by speaking out your discomfort, you deny simple discomfort the power of being the unaddressed elephant in the room of your soul. By patiently, with oodles of self-compassion, walking your way through the questions, and walking your way through the feelings, you move your reactions from powerless places of discomfort to powerful places in which your voice and your consciousness become part of the solution.

I encourage you to think about this little model when you are working your way through the Lenten learning and other challenges in life.

But don't let your work stop there 😊 Give Spirit the upper hand by having the conversations of soul that move your discomfort from the dark well of unconscious and unspoken ick, to the powerful place of spoken and conscious problem solving.

I teach on this tool with a short video, available to you by clicking here – it is the same teaching, the same tool, but this video was made for Black History Month Challenge for our Eastern Synod.

Click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR2pXvgYCaIZWtpZKDcdCl8xhxdfQMFq6znsO4IMu7YDF9Y71TJlgA7ibK8&v=2ULRLNyP0Uo&feature=youtu.be>