

March 7, 2020 – Email/At Home Missal

A pleasant Third 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. In today's teaching, we ask some questions and there is opportunity for conversation on the first two stories and scriptures ☺ We will also record the discussion from Zoom on the stories, and post it to our YouTube channel later in the week.

We are making a slight adjustment to the original Lent learning plan, so this week the study task brings some questions to you to compare your response to the first story and your response to the second story. These questions and scriptures will follow Sunday's worship, with the sermon link from Sunday's Zoom worship. On March 14th, you will receive the third story with scripture (*George in the Garage*). On March 21st, our AGM Sunday, we will skip story work in favour of a more "traditional" Zoom service. On March 28th (Palm Sunday we will study on "*George in the Garage*", and you will receive "*Sheldon Seeks Sanctuary*"). Our Easter Sunday service will focus on teaching around the final story ☺

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. Based on our current Red Zone status, council advises with regret, no in-person option will be available for our AGM. We want everyone who will connect by Zoom to be able to participate and vote, so on March 7th and March 14th, we will work some training into our in-worship study time on Sundays. Council may follow up with additional training on March 14th.

This is our first Sunday of using St Peter's Zoom account. Pray for us ☺

Our scheduled Zoom meeting for St Peter's Sunday Worship opens at Mar 7, 2021 09:45 AM America/Toronto

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85063569404?pwd=bjl4TnErTHg0YW9HeWVxYlh3eis0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 850 6356 9404

Passcode: 971161

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 ☺ 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, led by Rev. Steve Greene. This Sunday, the study covers chapters 4,5 and maybe 6.

Time: Mar 7, 2021 01:30 PM

Meeting ID: 838 1168 1829

Passcode: 005591

Join Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83811681829?pwd=RkRER09DUC80VEM2a1ZpQU04QVRodz09>

Wednesday night study at 7pm – hosted by Peace Lutheran Church, Pickering taught by Rev. David Maginley for a 5 week Lenten wilderness journey. This week, the group will study "**The Body as Temple**" - Who, or better still, what are you? You'll be surprised and intrigued to discover a scientifically spiritual model of yourself, and reality. An astonishing surprise awaits!

Time: March 10, 7pm

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>

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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 give us earthly families of our own blood, and make of us a Kingdom family through the blood of Jesus. You give us room in your household, through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Help us to live well as family together: as Your Kingdom family, as your Kingdom household following Jesus' example. Amen.

"Summary of the Story: Susie's Home on the Grand":

Our study homework last week included a story Pastor Janaki wrote, based on true real-life situations. A young woman, Susie, grows up in a home in which abuse is the norm. She is kicked out of her home when she finishes high school. By that time, she has, perhaps out of the need for emotional support of some kind, gotten into a relationship with Ricky, a man who is 12 years her senior, via a dating app on her phone.

Ricky "takes her in", offering her a home when her parents kick her out, claiming their responsibility for her only extended to her completion of high school. Ricky is abusive – a familiar dynamic for Susie, and he also gets Susie using drugs, under the guise of helping her when she sinks into a depression, probably due to his abusive behaviour at home with her. She finds herself chemically as well as financially and in every way dependent on him.

She finds a way to escape Ricky, but then COVID has already begun and the shelter system is limited in what it can offer to her. She finds a spot and makes an encampment on the banks of the Grand River, near Myers Road, in order to get through winter, along with a few other homeless women. She is trying to save up for first and last month's rent in this rugged, harsh context.

First Lesson: Gospel of John 13:12-17, 20.

After washing their feet he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Master' and 'Lord,' and you do well to say it, for it is true. And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow: do as I have done to you. How true it is that a servant is not greater than his master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends him. You know these things—now do them! That is the path of blessing.

"Truly, anyone welcoming my messenger is welcoming me. And to welcome me is to welcome the Father who sent me." [The Living Bible]

This is the gospel of our Lord. **C: Praise to you O Christ.**

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

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

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The Holy Gospel according to John 14:1-3

C: Glory to you O Lord

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

This is the Gospel of our Lord **C: Praise to you O Christ**

Message (Imagine Pastor Janaki's voice here ☺) What does it mean to be Kingdom Family?

For many months now, we have been praying for Gee Schatz' sister Penny who was in hospital. She died on Monday; her death was expected by her family by the time she died. I was privileged to be able to join the family for prayers just before and shortly after her death – by Facetime (so video call in to her hospital room).

This past week also marked the completion of six years of ministry together, the beginning of a seventh as pastor and congregation. If we were meeting in person, this would be a cake eating Sunday ☺

During this six years, many of you have allowed me this privilege which Gee's family afforded me – to journey with you as your beloved family members have died. In my mind and my heart, they have gone to "be with Jesus" as Helen Majunke would say ☺ For all of you, during a time of bereavement, I pray especially for the family, and this week when I was praying for Penny's family, the image came to mind of that house Jesus speaks of

... In my Father's house there are many rooms ...

There are many translations for this often-quoted scripture "In my Father's Kingdom there are many dwelling places" is another translation. The Kingdom of God is very much a family – and it is a family not bound by our genetic commonality, not by human blood ... it is a family that is bound by the blood of Jesus.

As the image came to me, I saw Penny in one of those rooms, in the house of God, in full and complete health, and she walked over to the window where a curtain gently blew, and she looked out onto a sunny blue-sky day.

The room in which I saw Penny was a room which felt like hospitality come to life. This is in fact the radical hospitality Jesus offers each one of us – this grace-filled space in which we are welcomed with love, to spaciousness and freshness, to renewal and resurrection into one, in the Kingdom of God.

This scripture about the household of God occurs in John 14, and in John 13, we encounter the familiar scene of Maundy Thursday ... Jesus washing his disciples feet, and then speaking to them, teaching them after he does this servant duty with them.

Jesus says to his disciples in John 13: “I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow: do as I have done to you”
 “Do as I have done to you”

Do the task of servant duty. Do the task that feels uncomfortable. The task that calls for love and not judgment, the task that calls for serving and doing rather than merely speaking.

I bring this scripture up to hold it before Jesus saying he goes to prepare a place for us in his Father’s house ... Jesus prepares a place for us ... and we were asked to do as Jesus has done for us. What does that mean for us? And what does it mean for us when it comes to people like Susie and Treesey and Joe from last week’s story?

All three homeless individuals in the stories come from households where parenting is challenged. When we grow up in households that are healthy, with parents or a parent-figure who is healthy, we also learn to live in healthier ways ... our emotional as well as our physical and psycho-spiritual needs are met. Like a deer, running to the river, our family homes are the places where we return, parched, weary from the chase ... our family homes are the places where we can come, hurting, hurrying, thirsting for grace and KNOWING that we will be received.

My own earthly father always offered that radical hospitality to me ... he always gave me the “you can always come back home if it doesn’t work out” speech – and was especially careful to do so when I was haring off to do something that he was not sure about. But my earthly father, a very quiet Christian man, always tried to extend to me the power of my own agency as an adult, and stood like the father in the prodigal son story: at the ready to welcome me home.

Healthy households offer that security, that assurance – there is always a room for you here. In my Father’s house there are many rooms ... I go to prepare a place for you.

And where our human households fail to provide that safety and sanctity, the Kingdom of God, the household of God is instructed to follow Jesus, to do as Jesus has done for us, to do as Jesus has taught us, to do as the Word of God instructs us.

The Isaiah reading that was given for Lenten study included this instruction from God, through the prophet Isaiah:

“What I’m interested in seeing you do is:
 sharing your food with the hungry,
 inviting the homeless poor into your homes,
 putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,
 being available to your own families.”

It is not an easy instruction to follow ... but I guess that is why following Jesus is considered a matter of cross bearing, not just spa-like comfort 😊

And when Isaiah gives this instruction being available to our own families is not just about being available to those who are blood relatives in Jesus ... that is a very wide definition of family. So when we encounter people like Susie, Treesey and Joe, whose family context was not healthy, and we come from the household of God, which is healthy, how do you understand that??

What do you think God is asking of you? How do you hear God calling you to respond?

In your spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, scripture study, meditation or otherwise, how does God nudge you to respond to the hungry, the homeless, the shivering ill-clad?

When you hear Jesus say to his disciples after the foot-washing, and the instruction to follow his example, when Jesus says: “anyone welcoming my messenger is welcoming me. And to welcome me is to welcome the Father who sent me”

When Jesus says that, how do you think he calls us to respond to the homeless messengers who come from homes so different than the household of God?

When we read the scriptures, all of the scriptures as a Kingdom Family, there is no way to escape the sometimes uncomfortable prick of Gospel conscience ... I believe that prick is even sharper when we are truly aware of how immense a gift God has given to us in Jesus.

Where Isaiah the prophet says "Come and drink, all who for God's mercy's plead!" we are reminded in the very next breath: we each come from desert places, deepest thirst unsatisfied ... but Jesus leads us to the water, living water where we are also satisfied.

And Jesus says, "Do as I have done to you".

Hear what our Redeemer and Way-maker says to us. Hear and Heed.

Hymn of the Day: #331 As the Deer Runs to the River

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBKQGNWWo50>

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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>

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: 334 Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery ELW 334

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MBTeD9XpFw>

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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. **

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