



# Grace in Plain Sight



## Reflections for the Lenten Journey Based on the Gospel of John



CREATED IN 2026 BY THE CONGREGANTS OF  
WESTMINSTER UNITED CHURCH  
WHITBY, ONTARIO  
[HTTPS://WESTMINSTER-UC.CA](https://westminster-uc.ca)

# INTRODUCTION: FORTY DAYS

Dear Friends,

Lent. Forty days.

Yes, Forty.

Does that number sound familiar?

In Scripture, forty shows up a lot. The flood waters rained for forty days and forty nights.. Moses spent forty days on the mountain. The Israelites spent forty years in the wilderness. Elijah walked forty days to Horeb. And Jesus fasted in the wilderness for forty days before beginning his ministry. Forty is an important number in Scripture that seems to indicate a time of waiting, preparation, formation and paying attention.

The forty days of Lent do not count Sundays because each Sunday is meant to be a reminder of resurrection.. Though we journey toward the cross, we still pause each Sunday to remember that joy and life have the final word.

## **Encountering Jesus**

John's gospel tells stories of encounters with Jesus, whether at a wedding, at a well, in the temple, or at the side of the road. People notice who Jesus is, sometimes slowly, sometimes with confusion, sometimes all at once.

John tells us, "the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory." (John 1:14) And then he extends the invitation to each of us: "Come and See!" (John 1:39)

The reflections in this book engage John's gospel in many ways: short prose meditations, poems, prayers and art. Alongside these reflections are also a series of everyday parables that people have shared..."the kingdom of God is like."

Everything in this devotional was written by members of our congregation, kids through to adults. Here we are sharing where we see God's Spirit moving through the text and through our lived experiences.

## **How to Use This Devotional**

The following entries are to be read/reflected upon one per day across the weeks of Lent.

Begin by reading the day's Scripture passage where one is listed,

Maybe you'll do this first thing in the morning to begin the day, or in the evening as a way of reflecting back. Notice what stands out for you. Some days may touch upon something that reminds you of your own experiences. Some entries may offer a challenge. Other days may feel quiet.

You may find it helpful to write a few lines of your own in response, or have a conversation with family or friends who are walking this Lenten season, too.

However you engage with it, I hope that this booklet will be a companion on the journey, and nourishment for the road.

Yours in Christ,  
Rev. Michelle

# THE JOURNEY BEGINS...

Parable (parabolé - thrown together/alongside)

The throwing together of everyday life alongside God's reign--  
Christ's "good news"--and letting them speak together.

The beauty of parables is that they offer glimpses that are meant to be experienced, not explained. The details invite curiosity.

1. **Read Slowly** - Let the words settle
2. **Notice** - feelings, images, memories that are sparked by the parable
3. **Wonder** - what does it reveal about God, Life, Love?
4. **Respond** - carry it with you...how does it speak throughout your day?



# DAY 1 - FEBRUARY 18

EVERYDAY PARABLES BY LINDA MOROZIUK

God's Way is like a group chat you muted, then opened later, only to realize they never stopped cheering you on.

Life as God intends is like  
doing something no one will ever post about—  
and knowing it mattered anyway.

Life with God in it is like a shirt you almost passed by,  
until you tried it on and saw yourself differently.

“I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT  
ABUNDANTLY.” JOHN 10:10



## DAY 2 - FEBRUARY 19

REFLECTION BY JAN LE PAGE

**Read John 1:1-5 “What has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of all ...”**

Whenever I encounter this passage of scripture, I'm thrown back to the age of thirteen. I had signed up again, to take part in a BMA course (Bible Memory Association). This particular year, the course would involve memorizing 15 Bible verses a week for 12 weeks and reciting them weekly to an assigned adult at the church. And the first session started with John 1:1-5. Of course, in those days, the King James Version of the Bible was the one being used.

While I thought I had always known God created the world, in memorizing this passage I remember becoming more deeply aware of the connection of God to my very existence, and to the existence of my family and community and the actual physical world around me. But it was difficult getting my head around verse four, “in Him was life and the life was the light of men [all people].” It felt like a mystery to me to know that we all had God's light in each of us. It was in every living thing. Could people see a light in me? Could I see other people's light, a God light? Could I see God's light in nature? A great mystery!

As time has gone on, these thoughts of the mystery of life have come back to me many times, often when I'm least expecting it. As a mom, playing with my children. Watching birds gather at the feeder. Seeing a field of ripe canola in the late summer. As a nurse, at a patient's side bearing witness to the God light leaving them, or working as hard as we could during a Code to keep someone with us (keep the God light going.) Being brought to tears seeing a bear cub lying on the side of a busy highway.

And over time, I've come to realize that the intellectual curiosity I had in the beginning has gradually changed and the intellectual thoughts have become more connected to the heart. That has not lessened the sense of mystery, nor necessarily increased my understanding of this passage. But during this Lenten time, at a time when the journey of Jesus to a crucifixion is remembered again, I would like to also dwell on John 1:4. " in him was life, and the life was the light of all people" and respect the mystery of God's light in all of us.



# DAY 3 - FEBRUARY 20

## EVERYDAY PARABLES BY JAN LE PAGE

The kingdom of God is like...

...a dog's warm tongue.

...a friend offering you a cup of your favourite coffee

...a cat coming to purr against your leg

...a friend's email

“AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH  
AND DWELLED AMONG US...” JOHN 1:14



# DAY 4 - FEBRUARY 21

PRAYER BY SUES SHKOLNIK

**Read John 1:19-23 The Testimony of John the Baptist**

Dear God,

Thank you for your never-ending mercy and grace.

Thank you that you are here for us today  
and for all our tomorrows.

Thank you that we can be baptized into faith  
as John baptized; that we can enter heaven  
because Jesus died to save us.

John listened to God's calling.  
He responded with unwavering faith  
even when questioned by authorities.

May we do the same.

When people ask "What's it to you?

*Who died and made you boss?*

*Just who do you think you are?"*

let us be able to respond with John 's confidence  
that we are Children of God.

When God calls on us to volunteer, reach out, donate,  
let us be kind to everyone.

Let us listen for his word then say... no sing...

"Here I am Lord, I will go Lord where you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart". Amen

# DAY 5 - FEBRUARY 23

POEM BY JOHN BOWMAN

## Read John 1:35-42 - Jesus Calls the Disciples

When Jesus starts his ministry  
He went looking for some friends,  
Ones who chose to follow him  
when invited to attend.

Daily as they witnessed  
Jesus' message was so clear,  
Show Love and Kindness to each other  
Express it with no fear.

We need to be his messengers  
So others are aware,  
By helping one another  
Every chance, to show we care.

Yes, aid the poor with daily food,  
Caress those who are depressed,  
Encourage youth, see other ways  
Our faith we must express.

Find little things that ease the way  
for those of older ages,  
Open doors, give helping hands  
Remember all lifes' phases.

There's ways, when we are able  
To relieve the pain of others.  
Give helping hands where e'er we can  
Consider it no bother.

I watched a wheelchired lady  
Having struggles just to shop,  
Had difficulties reaching  
The boxes near the top.

A child of 12 was watching  
Without a hesitation,  
Offered her assistance  
Without any reservations.

He filled her cart, waved good bye  
Then left to join his brother,  
He didn't wait for accolades  
Just walked out with his mother.

In this we find the message  
One, Jesus did impart,  
It's up to us to follow  
Like disciples at the start.



## DAY 6 - FEBRUARY 24

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY MARGARET SUEPAUL

**Read John 2:1-12- The Wedding at Cana**

The kingdom of God is like the joyful surprise  
and unfiltered love of a mother's beating heart  
when her son, from behind his kitchen sink full of dishes,  
calls out his welcome.

"Mom have a seat at the table; I've got this,"  
And presents the simplest, most scrumptious pasta  
paired with the most delicious red wine!



*My peace*  
I GIVE TO YOU  
*John 14:27*

# DAY 7 - FEBRUARY 25

REFLECTION BY JOANNE GIBB

## **Read John 2:13-22 - Cleansing the Temple**

One summer, while a student, I worked in France and explored some beautiful cathedrals. The tours were crowded, postcards and souvenirs were plentiful, and there was lots of noise.

These structures seemed more like tourist attractions or places of business than places of worship. The age of these structures, the length of time and expense it had taken to build them and the historical events they had been able to withstand was impressive, but I felt something was missing. Awesome structures though they were, my reaction to them seemed more of curiosity than of reverence.

Contrast them with the chapel in the woods at a church camp I attended as a teenager where we would gather for Vesper or Sunrise services. As if on cue, our voices would lower while we found a comfortable spot on a rock or stump and prepared to open our hearts and minds to the moment.

There, surrounded by the sounds of nature, amongst the trees, overlooking the lake, watching the sun rise or set, and supported by prayer, meditation and song, I felt a holy connection.

As I recall this memory, I realize once again how important it is for us to try to overcome the current distractions of a chaotic and combative world and to center ourselves in a faith that seeks to worship God in spirit and in truth. It is not easy to do this, but I believe that God has a plan for us if we only open ourselves to trusting in it.



# DAY 8 - FEBRUARY 26

REFLECTION BY HELEN BOWMAN

## **Read John 3:1-8- Jesus and Nicodemus**

A Jewish Pharisee of great faith and education was involved in his community. He was a leader, and understood the need to help the poor, not with handouts and charity, but with teaching them acquired living skills. He was doing his part and was comfortable in his faith. That was, until he began hearing about a new teacher who brought a message of a personal God who required only love of God and love of each other. Would he just stick with the status quo, or risk learning more about this new teacher?

Nicodemus not only listened but actively sought this messenger, Jesus, asking questions so he could understand this relationship with God.

Our "Pantry" here at Westminster is an active example of "loving your neighbour as yourself."

First, a need had to be identified. A plan was needed to make space available. Pantry products would be required to stock shelves for giving out. Volunteers would be invited to sort and pack hampers. Service agencies in Durham could identify those in need.

Sharing our worldly possessions gives gratitude to those who are able to share and an example to those looking for a way to help. Listening with open ears and hearts to what the needs are around us leads to possibilities becoming reality.



## DAY 9 - FEBRUARY 27

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY CATHY CHERWINKA

The Kingdom of God is like the phone call with a dear friend living with a terminal illness. You feel unprepared, not well-equipped when asked what your faith means to your life. You struggle to find words that could make a difference to her, feeling inadequate.

Later that evening, your friend sends you a text to say you always have the words she needs to hear that bring her so much comfort.

“BUT THE ADVOCATE, THE HOLY SPIRIT,  
WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME,  
WILL TEACH YOU EVERYTHING,  
AND REMIND YOU OF ALL THAT I HAVE SAID TO YOU.”

JOHN 14:26

# DAY 10 - FEBRUARY 28

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY MAUREEN DINGMAN

The Kingdom of God can sometimes be like  
taking a giant leap off a cliff!



“BUT JESUS SAID TO THEM,  
‘IT IS I; DO NOT BE AFRAID.’”  
JOHN 6:20

## DAY 11 - MARCH 2

REFLECTION BY HOLDEN ROBINSON

**Read John 5:1-9- Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath**

**What does this story make you think of?**

It makes me think, "How did he do that?"  
Because nobody can just heal right away.

**What does this story tell you about God?**

God wants us to have peace.  
And Jesus never wants anybody to give up.  
Even when life feels hard, never give up.  
If you want to do something,  
don't give up trying to do it.



## DAY 12 - MARCH 3

REFLECTION BY KATIE COSTA

**Read John 6:1-14- The Feeding of the 5000**

"Better to have too much than too little" is my mom's motto in the kitchen. When she used to host holiday family dinners, that often meant a few extra potatoes in the pot, an extra pie or two for variety, and an extra few pounds on the turkey. It also usually meant leftovers. Lots of leftovers. If she was going to pull off the miracle of a huge family feast, she wasn't going to cook for days afterwards, but we wouldn't starve.

This motto also applied to the large church dinners she would host; as the pastor's wife, she focused her ministry on that of hospitality. When the congregation gathered together, they could be sure to be filled, no matter how hungry they were. There was no chance that someone would ask for more and be denied; there was always more. And yes, many walked away with leftovers to sustain them into the week.

This abundance never felt unnecessary or extravagant; rather it was a demonstration of love and an assurance that it wouldn't run out. Being fed feels safe. In that security, we linger around the table, share stories and laughter, and often there is a moment of connection that can be taken home to sustain us until the next one.

Jesus provides so much to us, not just to sustain us now, in the moment, but to assure us there is enough to last into the future. He will not run out of love or grace or forgiveness. He will leave us with more than we had to begin with.



# DAY 13 - MARCH 4

ART REFLECTION BY AMELIA COSTA

Read John 6:16-21- Jesus Walks on Water

I + is I; do not  
be afraid.



## DAY 14 - MARCH 5

### EVERYDAY PARABLE BY BEV CRUMB

The Kingdom of God is like...  
a multitude of the heavenly host hovering everywhere:

when the salon door is too heavy to open,  
the hairdresser leaves her client in mid-clip  
to run and open it for you;

when the shopper ahead of you, with a full cart,  
lets you go through ahead of him with your 6 items;

when a mother whispers to her young  
daughter to hold the door open for you;

when a man gets out of his car  
on a cold winter's night to help you  
because your trunk won't close.

These are angels sent to brighten your day  
with their kindness.



# DAY 15 - MARCH 6

REFLECTION BY AYODELE MOFFETT

## Read John 8:1-11

The passage of the woman caught in adultery places the reader in a charged public setting where legal judgment, moral authority, and divine mercy intersect. The narrative highlights the woman's vulnerability as she stands exposed in the temple courtyard, surrounded by accusers whose voices are certain and condemning. The text invites reflection on her social, emotional, and spiritual isolation, as she is reduced to her transgression and placed at the center of a hostile crowd.

A striking feature of this passage is Jesus' refusal to join the urgency of judgment. While the scribes and Pharisees demand an immediate legal response, Jesus bends down and writes in the dust. This pause disrupts the momentum of condemnation and creates space for reflection. His silence acts as protection, shifting the focus from punishment to moral self-examination.

The narrative invites readers to see themselves not only in the woman but also among the accusers. The text exposes the human tendency toward judgment and moral certainty, even among those who have experienced shame or exclusion.

Jesus' response is both truthful and compassionate: he neither denies the reality of sin nor lets the woman's identity be defined only by it. By redirecting the accusers' attention to their own moral standing, Jesus reveals the universality of human shortcomings and the shared need for grace.

This passage is still important today, especially in cultures that are quick to judge and exclude others. The stones the accusers hold can be seen as symbols of judgment, resentment, and moral superiority-attitudes that are still common in our relationships and communities. The text asks us to consider how we might participate in these behaviours.

In the end, God's presence is found not in accusation, but in the quiet space that mercy creates, after the stones drop and judgment is replaced by silence. Jesus calls us not just to avoid condemning others, but to leave changed, living out the grace we have received.



# DAY 16 - MARCH 7

REFLECTION BY PAT ARTYMKO

**Read John 8:12 Jesus, Light of the World**

**APRICITY**  
[uh-pri-si-tee]

"Apricity" is the rare, poetic and specific English term for the warmth of the sun on a cold winter's day. It describes the soothing, golden sensation of sunshine on the skin, providing a feeling that is rejuvenating and comforting in contrast to the cold chilly air, often bringing feelings of hope and peace.

JESUS SPOKE TO THEM, SAYING,  
'I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.  
WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME  
WILL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS,  
BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.'"



# DAY 17 - MARCH 9

POEM BY JORDYN LESSER

## Read John 9:1-12 Healing of a Man Born Blind

He sat where dust met footsteps,  
a life measured by sound and shadow.

People passed him like questions  
they didn't want to answer.

They asked why—  
whose fault, whose mistake—  
as if suffering always needs someone to blame.

But the Teacher knelt low,  
close to the earth,  
hands shaping hope out of ordinary ground.  
No lecture. No accusation.  
Just touch. Just trust.

"Go," he was told.  
So he went—  
blind faith before clear sight,  
washing doubt away in quiet water.

When he opened his eyes,  
the world rushed in—  
faces, light, color, disbelief.  
The same streets,  
but nothing the same.

They asked him who did this.  
He didn't have all the answers.  
He only knew the truth that mattered:  
*I was blind.*  
*Now I see.*

# DAY 18 - MARCH 10

REFLECTION BY BOB LE PAGE

## **Read John 10:11-21 I AM the Good Shepherd**

This is a familiar text for many. We have probably seen at least one of a number of paintings that are based on these words of Jesus. One that comes to my mind is the one that portrays Jesus standing, holding a lamb in the crook of his right elbow and forearm, while holding an upright staff in his left hand. Adult sheep gather around him; some grazing, and at least one is looking up at his face and the lamb on his arm.

That image moves me. I grew up on a small farm in northern Ontario. We had a small flock of sheep on the farm, along with a few cows, pigs, geese and chickens. Of all the animals, the sheep seemed to me to be the cutest and most loveable; but also the dumbest and most vulnerable. They had little means of protecting themselves. Every wolf in the township knew that. So wolves often took any lambs or adult sheep that strayed too far from the barnyard. Thinking back, I suppose that in some sense we may not have been very good shepherds.

Jesus obviously knew that sheep needed constant care, guidance and protection. And so, thinking of those who would come to trust in him, he compared himself to a shepherd; - not just to any shepherd, but to the good shepherd, - the one who would give his all to care for, guide and protect the sheep.

I prefer not to think of myself as a dumb, passive, and vulnerable sheep. But I do know that if I am to live my best life I need wisdom and insight to guide my steps. I need attentiveness to avoid falling victim to any of a multitude of scammers, pretenders or predators, who could damage or ruin one's life. I need to know that I am not on my own.

At this point in my journey I have come to trust that these two things are true:

1. Listening to, and reflecting upon the teachings of Jesus offers me both insight and wisdom.  
His teachings are true. His guidance is sure.  
His care is certain.

2. And, by being with others in the community of Jesus, I experience his presence, grace, goodness, and support. And my life is all the better for it.



I was sad and my friend Oscar gave me a hug and cheered me up.

## DAY 19 - MARCH 11

### REFLECTION BY OPALINE ROBINSON

#### Read John 11:17-44 The Raising of Lazarus

This story reminds me of a time when I was sad and my friend Oscar gave me a hug and cheered me up.

I can relate to Mary because I have felt sad and when people comfort me, I feel better. I can also relate to Jesus because when I see people cry I feel sad, too, just like Jesus did when he saw Mary grieving.

It is a confusing story, too because if somebody died today, ministers and doctors couldn't just say, "So and so, Get up!" or "Come out" and they just come back to life. So the story leaves you with a lot of questions.

It tells me that God was trying to make Mary feel better by comforting her. It also tells me that God does not want us to be sad and think that death is the end of all good things because it is not. I also think he raised Lazarus from the dead to make the people that did not believe that he was the Messiah to believe that he is.

I like that he was showing he is with us when we are hurting. And I like that when he raised Lazarus he showed that God has more power than death. Death is not the end. It is the beginning of something new.

## DAY 20 - MARCH 12

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY MARGARET MOTUM

The Kingdom of God is like a potluck supper.  
You're invited to bring your best dish to share  
or you can just show up. The plates are the same size  
and there is always more than enough.

“JESUS SAID TO THEM, ‘I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.  
WHOEVER COMES TO ME WILL NEVER BE HUNGRY,  
AND WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME  
WILL NEVER BE THIRSTY.’”

JOHN 6:35



# DAY 21 - MARCH 13

REFLECTION BY SUSAN PLEASANCE

## Read John 12:1-11 Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet

Why did Mary break open the jar and pour the costly perfumed oil on Jesus' feet? Some say it was an act of gratitude in which she was thanking Jesus for raising her brother from the dead. Others say it was an act of consecration as Jesus was preparing to go into Jerusalem. Others say it was a foreshadowing, an act of preparation, in which she was anointing His body for his death which was to come a week later. Whatever the reason, it was an act of love and kindness.

But the story doesn't end there. Judas reprimanded Mary for being so wasteful. And then Jesus reprimands Judas for being so "stingy" and commends Mary for her action. What Mary did was a beautiful act of sacrificial generosity. In words and action, Jesus taught us that it's okay to be extravagant in our gratitude.

Sometimes words just aren't big enough.

There is an oral story that tells of a small tribe, who lived along the banks of a very swift and dangerous river. The current was so strong that if somebody accidentally fell in, they would be swept away to their death.

One day this tribe was attacked by another tribe. They found themselves literally with their backs up against the treacherous river and greatly outnumbered. Their only chance for escape was to cross the dangerous current, which would mean sure death for the children, the elderly, the weak, the ill, the injured... and likely death for many of the strong.

The leaders of the tribe came together. The logical, reasonable, and sensible thing would be to leave the weak ones behind. Why risk losing the strong in a futile effort to save the weak? But the leaders couldn't do it! Instead, they decided that the strong would pick up the weaker ones and put them on their shoulders. So, the little children, the elderly, those who were ill or wounded, were all carried on the backs of the stronger.

With great fear, they waded out into the dangerous river and they were met with a great surprise. They discovered that the weight on their shoulders enabled them to keep their footing through the treacherous current... and helped them to make it safely to the other side. Their own extravagant generosity saved them all – the weak and the strong.

Do we have the spirit of Mary's extravagant gratefulness? Whatever meanings scholars attach to Mary's act of anointing Jesus with precious oil, it was without question an act of love and kindness and graciousness. This story reminds us that the spirit of Christ can empower and enable us to be extravagant in our generosity, to be extravagant in our gratitude, and to be extravagant in our graciousness.



*Abide in me...*

JOHN 15:4

# DAY 22 - MARCH 14

REFLECTION BY MICHELLE ROBINSON

## Read John 12:12-19 Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Within the week, he will be crucified. We usually read this text on Palm Sunday. As much as Palm Sunday is a celebration for us, it is also one of foreboding as we hold in mind what happens after the procession. The cross looms.

Here we see people shouting and celebrating, but it isn't long before the shouts change, going from Hosanna to Crucify.

*How is it that things can change so fast?*

Like a siren that makes cars stop in the street;  
or a joy that flips suddenly into foreboding;  
Like a peaceful protest that leads to an unjust death.  
*Lord have mercy.*

We know what is coming and that makes the the ride into Jerusalem with Jesus all the more ominous. Every time, I want him to get off the donkey. *Stay safe, Jesus. Find a place to just hang out, hang low, and be inconspicuous.*

But he never does. Whether it's John, or Luke, or Matthew or Mark telling the story, Jesus rides into the noise of a world that will turn on a dime. And all we can do is stay with him through the celebration, the shift, the shattering and the grief.

I realize...again...that the gospel has never been safe. Jesus won't get off the donkey because apparently, God doesn't calculate risk the same way that I do.

We follow someone who won't save himself because presence matters more than self-preservation, and because God's relentless love – reckless as it is – is what somehow saves us all.



# DAY 23 - MARCH 16

REFLECTION BY JAKE ROBINSON

## Read John 12:20-26 Grain of Wheat

When I read John 12:20-26, I see a reflection on loss, transformation, and the nature of true life that reaches beyond a single religious tradition. Jesus' image of a grain of wheat that must fall to the ground and die in order to bear fruit points to a simple but challenging truth: growth often requires letting go.

Even the sun itself will one day expand and consume the earth. Everything in the universe is impermanent; the difference lies only in timescale. A human life such as Jesus' own is fleeting in the vast span of existence. Something the divine can grasp far better than us.

Jesus' words challenge our instinct to preserve life, identity, and control at all costs. They also point toward transformation. The grain of wheat does not vanish. It does not dissolve into the earth. It sprouts and while it is no longer a wheat berry it becomes something more. Something that can grow and consequently bear more fruit, spurring on further change.

When Jesus teaches that losing one's life is the way to truly find it, he suggests that change and self-giving are not failures but marks of the Divine.

We have all, in recent days, witnessed what can happen when an administration decides that the progress painstakingly achieved through the many sacrifices of important social leaders was a mistake and tries to undo transformation. We have seen the cost of sacrificial giving and of protecting others in such a system. Yet, it is my hope and belief that the sacrificial gifts that have been made are not in vain, but will bear the fruit of transformation.

In today's world, worth is often measured by competition, productivity, and accumulation. Status, wealth, and national output, rather than well-being or happiness tend to be the chief measures (Bhutan being a notable exception with their emphasis on Gross National Happiness). Jesus' teaching proposes a different measure of fulfillment. True life emerges when we loosen our grip on what we cling to and live with greater compassion, mindfulness, and humility. Letting go in this way becomes not an act of loss, but a doorway to transformation.



## DAY 24 - MARCH 17

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY JOANNE MACPHERSON

**Read John 13:1-15 Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet**

The Kin-dom of God is like.....

The man in our church neighbourhood who has seen the lineups for our food bank and had the wrong grocery order delivered. When the right order was later delivered he was told to just keep the first order. Instead he brought the 8 bags of fresh food to our Pantry for our clients to enjoy.

MY FOOD IS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME  
AND TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WORK - JOHN 4:34



# DAY 25 - MARCH 18

REFLECTION BY PAUL PIERSON

## Read John 13:33-35 The Love Commandment

Reading this passage reminds me of a common phrase:

“Do unto other as you would  
have them do unto you”.

Such a simple concept to understand  
yet we find it at times very hard to do. Why is that?

What prevents us from doing this?

Is it because we are overly focussed on the negative?

Is it due to our competitiveness?

Our lack of proactiveness – waiting for the other  
person to show empathy and understanding?

At a time when we are looking for peace and calmness  
what can we do?

In our daily interactions with each other, we can turn the  
tide from disruption to peace  
by proactively avoiding negativity,  
listening to others,  
showing patience, empathy and love.

Easy, right?

It will take practice and perseverance  
but what a difference it could make in our lives.



# DAY 26 - MARCH 19

REFLECTION BY AMY MEDLOCK

**Read John 14:1-7**

So many paths.  
So many detours.  
Red lights. Pot holes.  
Cars full of people, music, baggage.  
Hands clutching the bar of the bus.  
Baskets of flowers bobbing on bicycles,  
Queen of hearts thrumming the spokes.  
Treads of sneakers worn from dashing to the train.  
We travel on.  
Running parallel with companion and passerby.  
We all arrive home together eventually.  
Welcomed by a mug of tea with our initials on it.



## SALT LABYRINTH BY AMY MEDLOCK



It occurred to me while I traced my finger along the path over and over that each journey felt different. Grains moved, the sides changed, the path widened and narrowed. What a great metaphor. We walk the same path - from birth back to God - but every journey feels a little different. And at the centre is God with room for us all.

# DAY 27 - MARCH 20

ART REFLECTION BY JOANNE YOURKEVICH

**Read John 15:1-8 “I AM the vine”**



CONTINUED

John 15:1-8



# DAY 28 - MARCH 21

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY SUES SHKOLNIK

The Kingdom is God is like a whole Community of Faith coming together to share comforting words, hugs and tears in remembrance of a beloved friend on Friday, celebrating a milestone birthday with another beloved friend on Saturday, and coming right back again on Sunday morning ready to be there for one another all over again.

"We are not alone Thanks be to God."

“ABIDE IN MY LOVE.  
IF YOU KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS,  
YOU WILL ABIDE IN MY LOVE,  
JUST AS I HAVE KEPT MY FATHER’S COMMANDMENTS  
AND ABIDE IN HIS LOVE.  
THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU,  
THAT MY JOY MAY BE IN YOU,  
AND THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.”

JOHN 15:10-11



# DAY 29 - MARCH 23

REFLECTION BY HEATHER JACK

## Read John 15:12-17 Love Each Other

Valentine's Day, a day to celebrate love! Flowers, chocolates, beautiful cards... It's easy to love someone, when you are...well...in love!

Physical attraction, youth, happy circumstances...love seems easy and natural. It's also pretty easy to love a sleeping baby, and our children when they are behaving well. But John 15:12 asks us to love one another even when it's not easy.

Jesus commands us to love one another as He loves us. And He loves everyone! Everywhere! ALL the time! No easy task because sometimes people are difficult to love (or even like!)

We are called to love our neighbours, our co-workers, our extended family, refugees and even our enemies. This can be tough and definitely not natural.

I am reminded of Romans 5:8 where we are told that Jesus died for us while we were still sinners. He didn't wait until we were loveable and obedient. He loved us and died for us as is! This makes it a little easier to love the unlovely.

We can offer dignity, respect and kindness to those around us, even those we find difficult and different than us. In our increasingly small world, our neighbours are those that live beside us and those that live across the globe. During lent, let us think of the big and small ways we can love one another as Jesus loves us.

# DAY 30 - MARCH 24

REFLECTION BY BEV CRUMB

## Read John 16:12-14 Spirit of Truth

Reflecting on these verses in John's gospel (Good News), two thoughts leap to mind: that we, like the disciples, need to understand that sometimes it's too overwhelming to learn too much all at once; that it's a gift of hope to be promised that the "Spirit of truth" (Holy Spirit) will be coming to guide us.

We need to realize that we all have limitations, that we may not yet be ready – mentally, physically or spiritually – to handle the next phase of life. As the disciples are advised that they will have to wait, and in the future be guided by the "Spirit of truth", so we also have to have faith, and be patient and listen intently and purposefully for what the Spirit may be trying to reveal to us.

When confused or in the depths of despair and struggling to move forward, I usually fail to notice the arrival of the Spirit of truth. It is only after I have made an unforeseen decision or an unexpected change in my life that I seem to realize it.

I wish, that like the disciples, I had had a 'heads-up' to be on the lookout for the Spirit's messages. Perhaps I would not have spent so long wondering about my next steps in life.

# DAY 31 - MARCH 25

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY MONIQUE CAISSIE

The kingdom of God is like children holding hands in a circle, laughing as they sing and dance in the schoolyard. When one of them sees a child sitting alone and unsure, they shift over and invite them into the circle.

FROM HIS FULLNESS  
WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED, GRACE UPON GRACE  
JOHN 1:16



# DAY 32 - MARCH 26

EVERYDAY PARABLES BY LINDA MOROZIUK

Faith doesn't always arrive as certainty;  
sometimes it arrives as curiosity that won't  
leave you alone.

The kin-dom of God is like getting lost and  
realizing the detour was the destination.

JESUS SAID,

“I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE...”  
JOHN 14:6



## DAY 33 - MARCH 27

ART REFLECTION BY NIGEL AND NOVA ANKARAH

**Read John 17:20-22 Jesus Prays That We May Be One**



**“...MAY ALL BE ONE. AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN ME  
AND I AM IN YOU, MAY THEY ALSO BE IN US...”**

## DAY 34 - MARCH 28

## A REFLECTION BY YOU

Take a quiet moment. Think of a reflection, scripture passage or everyday parable from this booklet so far that has stayed with you. Re-visit it.

If you were to add a short reflection alongside what you've read, what would you say? You might share a memory it stirred, name a question it raised, write a short prayer in response. Draw something or write an everyday parable. There's room for your response here:

# DAY 35 - MARCH 30

## BEGINNING OF HOLY WEEK

ART REFLECTION BY SPENCER COSTA

**Read John 18:1-12 Jesus is Arrested**



**So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons**

# DAY 36 - MARCH 31

REFLECTION BY JAKE ROBINSON

**Read John 18:15-27**

**Peter Denies Jesus while Jesus Testifies**

## **How We Act in the Garden vs. the Courtyard**

In many instances in the bible the garden is synonymous with being close to God. The garden of Eden, the garden here in John, and perhaps even your own garden. When we are close to God, we do the right things, and when we are estranged from God it's often a bit less easy,

Doing the right thing despite consequences is one of the very human realities put forth in this part of scripture. Changing allegiances when things are difficult or it appears your side is losing is something that seems all too familiar in today's climate of fear and injustice. We have seen very clearly in the past month what defending those without power can cost.

Even though Peter is a disciple of Jesus and knows and loves him, he acts very different when in the garden vs the courtyard. In the garden he is willing to strike out at those who would arrest Jesus with his sword. Perhaps he felt with only a few soldiers the balance of power was on his side,

However, in the courtyard when there are only two disciples present, he waivers. When the cost in his estimation outweighs the benefits of allegiance. And I think we've all been there at one point or another.

How easy is it to be on the 'winning side' and how difficult to be with those whose prospects look less sure. Fighting against the system while living inside it is a balancing act. How can you support those outside the system while not becoming the target of the system? How can we affirm being a follower of Jesus while still recognizing we alone can't win against the system? Peter was pragmatic, and I think we must be as well.

Many corporations, especially ones with names you recognize, are complicit in the system. And I recognize this as I type on my phone and order products from A to Z. George Orwell never could have guessed the number of ways we can be controlled and forced into supporting the system.

For Lent, it is my hope that we may all awaken from the system and proclaim Jesus.



# DAY 37 - APRIL 1

REFLECTION BY PAUL KNEEBONE

## **Read John 18:28-38a Trial Before Pilate**

The text for this John 18 devotion is both political and cultural, as well as spiritually significant for us 2000 years later as modern-day Christians.

Judea was one of many regions in the Roman Empire under the direct control of the emperor and was called an imperial province. Pontius Pilate was the Roman-appointed governor. Each of these provinces would have a sizeable military presence, and the emperor would appoint someone to represent and preserve his interests in that province.

This passage describes Jerusalem's Jewish religious leaders taking Jesus to Pilate, then Jesus' interrogation by him. It concludes with Pilate's display of cynicism, questioning "What is truth?"

While Jewish authorities were allowed to punish blasphemers, Roman law would not let them administer the death penalty. Jesus is too well-liked to be assassinated, so His enemies will attempt to paint Him as a rebel against Rome.

For me, I am particularly struck by Jesus' succinct and powerful testimony and His utter courage in doing so. As he unapologetically faced his accusers before this powerful Roman governor. I can only imagine the intense physical and emotional pressure He was under while paraded between the Jewish hierarchy, King Herod and eventually before Pontius Pilate. All doing what only furthered their own aims and ambitions.

I also see stark parallels with our present-day society and worldwide political circumstances. Autocratic leaders, supported by society's 1% elite, complicit legislators and unfortunately all-too-often, some religious leaders and congregants. Yet, I also gain solace in seeing Jesus' message for today alive and well as demonstrated recently: by the citizens of Minneapolis, including refuge and testimony in church sanctuaries; by Canadians coast-to-coast-to-coast for the grieving Tumbler Ridge community; by the many outreach initiatives all around us...

I take great comfort in Jesus' succinct message and challenging words. May I have the courage and spiritual fortitude to do likewise.



# DAY 38 - APRIL 2

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

ART REFLECTION BY AVA TOMLINSON

**Read John 13:1-15 Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet**

The following art piece is made from many miscellaneous bits and pieces and together they represent John 13:1-15.

There are 2 people - one in black on the left (perhaps Judas), one in purple on the right.

There are 3 stars in the sky.

The sun's rays come through a window and the water of life flows into the bowl.

There is also a white towel that has tiny red crosses reminding us of what is to come.

CONTINUED

John 13:1-15

ART REFLECTION BY AVA TOMLINSON



# DAY 39 - APRIL 3

## GOOD FRIDAY

REFLECTION BY REV. SUSAN L. GENGE

**Read John 19:16b-30 The Crucifixion**

While Glenn and I were on vacation recently, I struck up a dinnertime conversation with a young woman in our tour group. She was wearing a medium-sized cross on a chain around her neck. Feeling a spiritual kinship with her, I smiled at her and said, "I see that you are a Christian. To which church do you belong?" She seemed embarrassed, didn't know what to say, and quietly responded, "Well, I'm not really. I just wear it." Sensing her discomfort about discussing Christianity, I let her comment go and turned the conversation to a secular topic. The next day and every day after that on the tour, I noticed that the young woman no longer wore the cross. Was it just a piece of trendy costume jewelry to her? I never discovered the answer to that.

What does the cross signify for you? Some people wear it on a necklace, as earrings, or as a pin on their clothing. Most traditional Christian churches have it displayed front and centre at the altar. The cross appears in stained glass windows, in countless paintings, sculptures and mosaics, on tombstones and in books. Why do we Christians include the cross as a prominent symbol of our faith?

During the Roman Empire, criminals and non-Roman citizens who were convicted of being enemies of Rome's authoritarianism suffered death publicly on a cross. It was a shameful, humiliating, lengthy, torturous way to die.

Today, on this day which we call "Good Friday," we gaze upon the cross at Golgotha, outside Jerusalem, and sorrowfully witness our Lord Jesus hanging there and dying, innocent of every crime. Two convicted criminals hang on crosses beside him. On the cross above Jesus' head, Pontius Pilate had written, "Jesus Christ, King of the Jews." While Jesus' blood and sweat dripped onto the ground, soldiers gambled for his clothing. Jesus must have felt so alone. But he was not. God was with him, loving him and strengthening him to endure and remain faithful right to the end. And some of Jesus' followers were there at the foot of the cross, loving him, watching him and waiting with him.

At the moment of his death, Jesus uttered these words, "It is finished." Let us hear these words not as words of defeat, but as words of accomplishment. Jesus' life-long mission and ministry was complete. God's Son Jesus, was victorious in accomplishing all that God had called him to do. He had loved God, loved God's people, and loved God's creation fully and unconditionally. He had reflected God's unconditional love for us in his life.

It's a mystery, but in Jesus' surrender, in his suffering and death, something holy was being accomplished. Some tremendously liberating, forgiving, redeeming work was being accomplished- for you, for me, and for the whole world. Today, and every day, let us continue to gaze upon the cross of Jesus, thanking our courageous, surrendering Jesus for his victorious love, and seeing in his cross, the key to the world's redemption and salvation.

Glory be to God!



## DAY 40 - APRIL 4

### HOLY SATURDAY

EVERYDAY PARABLE BY MICHELLE ROBINSON  
(IN LOVING MEMORY OF BARB)

**Read John 19:38-42**

Jesus was planted in a tomb. They tried to uproot him. A stone was rolled over the grave and guards were posted to declare it finished. And yet...

The kingdom of God is like horseradish.  
Once planted, it spreads in unexpected places.  
It is stubborn, persistent, impossible to uproot.  
It keeps growing long after we think it's gone.

# JOIN US THIS LENT/EASTER!

## **Youth Event - Lenten Pray-tzles**

March 1 after service

Bake Lenten "Pray"tzles

## **Family Event - Easter EGG-stravaganza**

Saturday April 4

Enjoy the Egg Hunt, Crafts, Snacks, and Photo Booth

## **Maundy Thursday**

April 2 at 7:00pm with communion

## **Good Friday**

April 3 at 7:00pm

Wrapping of the Cross

## **Early Morning Easter Service**

April 5 at 8:30am

Communion. Outdoor service, weather pending

## **Easter Sunday Breakfast**

Join us for a delicious Easter breakfast  
between the 8:30am and 10:30am Easter services

## **Easter Sunday Service**

April 5 at 10:30am



