



Devotions for Lent

2022

A LENTEN COMPANION

WELCOME

A Note from The Reverend Ryan Landes, Deacon and Theologian in Residence

It's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day; Yet to go part of that religious way, Is better than to rest:

**We cannot reach our Savior's purity; Yet are bid, *Be holy ev'n as He.*
In both let's do our best.**

Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone, Is much more sure to meet with Him, than one That travelleth by-ways:

Perhaps my God, though He be far before, May turn, and take me by the hand, and more May strengthen my decays.

- From George Herbert's Poem, *Lent*

These two stanzas of George Herbert's poem capture what one might call the paradoxes of Lent. We are commanded in Scripture to "be holy as God is holy" (and He is perfectly holy), and we know deep down we fail abysmally if that is the standard. The Gospel then preaches to us to flee to Christ alone for our salvation, resting in His perfect holiness to cover our sin. And so we do.

And then, we are again bidden in Scripture, over and over again, to grow in holiness and Christlikeness. And so we take up spiritual disciplines (sometimes called "means of grace") in the power of the Spirit and not the flesh, not in order to earn our salvation, but in order to make space and time to do what Herbert describes in vivid language: to meet God, and by Him be strengthened. The person who takes up the challenge of Lent (which parallels Christ's 40 days in the wilderness), that is, the challenge of consciously deciding to be intentional about imitating Christ through an extra measure of effort, is more likely to meet God and be healed of their flesh or sins (what Herbert calls "decays").

So, we pray that this 2022 PGW Lenten Devotional, generously provided by the 300th Anniversary Committee, will guide you into something profound: a personal encounter with the living God through His Word and His people. And as it does this, we pray it will help us savor more fully the source and center of our salvation: Christ himself, crucified for our sins, raised for our salvation, reigning now as King. Amen.

In Christ's Name,

The Reverend Ryan Landes,
Prince George Winyah Parish Church, 2022

Collect For Ash Wednesday

*Almighty and everlasting God, You
hate nothing you have made, and You
forgive the sins of all who are penitent:
Create and make in us new and contrite
hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our
sins and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may obtain of You, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives
and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.*

Amen.

MAR.

2

ASH WEDNESDAY

First Lesson

Proverbs 1

Second Lesson

Romans 14

Psalms

149, 150

Here starts our personal journey to the cross...in a few weeks our Lord will be marched down the Via Dolorosa and we too will be carrying our own cross side by side with Christ. Today, we will have the imposition of ashes and a solemn season begins. According to the **BIBLEref** there are four main messages in Proverbs 1: learning, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. These are the steps that King Solomon takes as he acknowledges his own failures. ***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction (v.7).*** Solomon had all the Wisdom God could give him, but he still had much to learn and how to use this wisdom, as he notes *“fools despise wisdom and instruction”*. Romans 14 talks to us about what it means to follow Christ: ***For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living (v. 7-9).*** Like the knowledge King Solomon was seeking, the Apostle Paul is teaching the Jews in Rome about what life in Christ is like. If we live to the Lord then we are alive! Christ is Lord to all and to live in Christ is eternal. This is like Solomon - ***the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*** After all, Solomon and Paul are actually talking about the same Lord! So where do we head this Ash Wednesday? Do we seek knowledge? Do we seek Christ? Do we follow Christ down the Via Dolorosa? Do we carry our own cross? I pray that we all seek knowledge in our Lord and follow Him wherever He goes - in the end we may walk down the Via Dolorosa, but it is only Christ who is nailed to the cross - He is our Savior and died for us. Let's start Lent with a holy search for knowledge of Him.

**- John Benson,
Senior Warden, PGW Vestry**

Notes:

First Lesson

Proverbs 2

Second Lesson

Romans 15

Psalms

3, 4

MAR.

3

After washing their feet, Jesus told His disciples He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house saying: *"you know the way to where I am going."* Thomas replied, "No we don't Lord; we have no idea...how can we know the way?"

I probably would have begged- Please don't leave us. Without You, we will stray from the path and be totally lost. We need You to GUIDE and show us the way! Paul's letter to the Romans reminds us of our need for guidance. He points us to the Scriptures written to teach us, give us hope and encouragement and help us live in complete harmony with each other. Paul knew too well a life lost on the wrong path before he met Jesus, The Word made flesh, The Way to The Father! What Christ did in Paul and does in us guides the way we live, work and serve so that others might see and understand the Good News and come to know The Way to the Father.

When wrestling with our own daily questions and searching for the right way to go, today's reading from Proverbs reminds us that we have been given the ultimate guide map in God's Word. Do not let doubts lead you astray. Search for insight and understanding as you would for hidden treasure or silver. Listen to what He says. Treasure His commands. Then you will understand and gain knowledge. God grants a treasure of common sense and guards the path of those who are faithful to Him. Wisdom will save you as you follow the steps of the good and stay on the path of the righteous...

You will find the right way to go.

**- Beth Bowen,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes: _____

MAR. 4

First Lesson

Proverbs 3

Second Lesson

Romans 16

Psalms

7

Chapter 3 of the Book of Proverbs is entitled, *Further Benefits of Wisdom*. Webster defines wisdom as the ability to judge soundly concerning what is true or false; living prudently and sensibly. Solomon asked God for wisdom—for a discerning heart and the ability to distinguish right from wrong—over all other conceivable desires. (1 Kings 3:9). In Proverbs, Solomon’s purpose is to equate wisdom with godly living. And Paul, in his Letter to the Romans, admonishes Christ’s followers “...to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil.” (v. 19). We should all seek wisdom. I know I do. I pray nightly for wisdom, patience, good health, and continued longevity for my family and for me. I believe one seeking wisdom must pray to God asking, as Solomon did, for wisdom in his or her relationship with family, friends and neighbors and others.

I further believe that one of the many benefits of wisdom is a long and prosperous life. Solomon certainly extolled the benefits of wisdom when he wrote: “*Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, The man who gains understanding, For she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.*” (v. 13-15).

Let us pray: Lord, we ask that you give us wisdom in dealing with others especially our families. Give us the ability to distinguish right from wrong and make us loving and faithful warriors for Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy grant our prayer.

– **Bill Doar,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes:

First Lesson

Proverbs 4

Second Lesson

Philippians 1:1-11

Psalms

10

MAR.
5

In Proverbs 4, we hear Solomon speaking about Godly wisdom and how it can help us in our struggle to avoid sin. He tells us a life of sin is to be actively avoided, not just ignored. We must live mindfully to choose wisdom, not sin, by being deliberate, thoughtful, and careful in all we do. The contrast made is of one walking on a jagged, dark path versus one of bright light and security. This brings to mind a lesson I learned when I was young about taking care to choose wisely the books, movies, and other messages I put into my mind and heart, and how they can affect me. Positive messages are good food for the soul, whereas dark or violent content can be corrosive. We must learn to choose mindfully and wisely for all aspects of our lives as Christians.

In Philippians, Paul discusses living the Christian life and how our thinking and attitude affect the way we live our faith. He stresses the importance of Christian love in the life of a believer. *“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God (v. 9-11).”*

Let the messages of these passages help us to prayerfully come to God to seek His wisdom, love, and help in avoiding sin and mindfully choosing to *“guard our hearts, for everything we do flows from it.”* (Proverbs 4:23).

– **Mary Holland,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

Collect For The First Sunday In Lent

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations, and, as You know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find You mighty to save; through Jesus Christ Your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

First Lesson

Proverbs 5

Second Lesson

Philippians 1:12-end

Psalms

15, 16

MAR.

6

Proverbs 5 gives us warning against sin which oftentimes appears beautiful and desirable. Our lust can appear innocent initially but leaves a bitter sting once we have fallen. But, God gives us direction through His Word and teachings that lay a path that is focused on Him and directs us away from temptation. Following the way of the Lord never leads to shame or pain but guides us into righteousness, love, and belonging. Through daily prayer and reading Scripture, the direction of God is made clear to us while the call of sin fades away.

In Philippians 1, Paul is writing to the people of Philippi from prison. He tells the Philippians, *“what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel”* (v. 12). In one of his lowest times, he still knows that the Lord is faithful and purposeful. In the past year, my family and I have faced challenges and heartbreak that have created similar lows. Yet I hold onto the truth that God is still good and that He has control. Through our darkest hours, we still need to proclaim at the top of our lungs that God is faithful! We cannot face life’s challenges without the help of the Lord and after we face trials, He can still create something good. Because of Paul’s time in prison, he was able to spread the gospel and shape the lives of others. God can do something similar with us.

**– Will Bellune,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes: _____

MAR. 7

First Lesson

Proverbs 6

Second Lesson

Philippians 2:1-11

Psalms

17

Philippians 2:1-11 gives us much to consider. For this reflection, I felt the Lord wanted me to explore humility.

I love using the *Blue Letter Bible* app (it's free!) to look up the original Greek and Hebrew words in Scripture. I learned that the Greek root for humility means "not rising far from the ground." Even the Latin root means "ground." At first glance, we might think humility has a negative connotation. But, Scripture corrects this view. Humility is not about bringing our self-esteem to the ground. Paul addresses his readers as "*saints in Christ Jesus.*" (v. 1). If we are in Christ, He also calls us His saints, which means we are accepted, secure, and significant in His eyes. So then, what is humility?

In verses 7 and 8, Paul reiterates Jesus' humanity in the midst of his discussion about humility. I wondered if he was making a connection. The Lord reminded me of Genesis 2:7, which says, "*The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*" I learned that in Hebrew, "man" and "ground" share the same root word. Paul's repetition reminds us that God created us to be grounded, humble creatures. We experience life when we are on the ground, when we humble ourselves under the Lord. Humility is about bringing our lives to the ground, God's intent from the beginning.

Jesus humbled Himself by descending to our ground (the earth), taking on human flesh, and becoming a servant. Further still, Jesus makes the ultimate descent to death on a cross as our substitute. He experienced utter humiliation, torture, and death for you and me.

In verse 9, Paul then reminds us that humility doesn't end in death. Humility always leads to life and resurrection. Jesus invites us to follow Him in humility, to ground our lives in Him. As we give our lives away to Jesus and to others (v. 3-4), we actually experience life, like in Genesis 2. Thanks be to God!

– **Caroline Stalvey,**
PGW Parish Family

First Lesson

Proverbs 7

Second Lesson

Philippians 2:12-end

Psalms

18:21-52

MAR.

8

These two passages relate to the power of God in our lives and those of our leaders at Prince George Winyah as we develop our relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

In Proverbs 7:1-7, the message from God is clear, *“My son, keep thy words and lay upon my commandments with thee”. “Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister”*. But who are these *“simple ones”* and the *“young man”* to whom the Lord is speaking? God is speaking to all of us. If we keep His commandments, we will be saved from certain death. Understanding the nature of man, we are warned in this reading that our hearts are vulnerable to sin and that evil awaits us at every turn and around every corner. Is that not true in our daily lives? Satan will use any means possible to tempt us including false religion, flattery and our senses to divert us from the ways of God. Even though Proverbs 7 describes one man, we understand that the message is addressing mankind. Because of this, we are forced to reflect on ourselves, individually. Were we that simple young man and are we still?

Paul’s letter to the Philippians brings God’s love to the forefront. Paul writes, *“that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world”* (v. 15). As God directed Paul to send Timothy and Epaphroditus, hasn’t the Lord similarly demonstrated the same love for Prince George and numerous Christian groups throughout time. We have been blessed with selfless leadership at Prince George to guide us in our journey with Christ. It is therefore appropriate that we should reach out to those around us and *“shine as lights in the world”*. That is our life with Prince George Winyah. Our love from God changes lives. We are called to keep God’s love moving forward.

– **Bill Bowles,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

MAR. 9

First Lesson

Proverbs 8

Second Lesson

Philippians 3

Psalms

20, 21

As I reflect on this reading in Philippians, I am reminded of a conversation I had recently with a treasured friend. We were discussing our faith and how we question ourselves often about our daily tasks and works and what it all really means in the big picture. Our discussion led us to commit to continue encouraging each other to strengthen our faith through *"being still"* in Christ and listening to and following His direction; as we know that *"works"* alone are not what God is asking of us. I am positive that it is not a coincidence that this is the passage that I am writing about follows this conversation! Philippians chapter 3 speaks about Christ as the proper focus during times of suffering. First, Paul discusses the importance of righteousness through faith in Christ rather than by works (v. 1-11). Second, Paul talks about straining toward the goal of following Christ (v.12-21). Throughout the reading, Paul gives several examples of works that don't mean much in the eyes of Christ. Nothing was and is now more important than knowing Jesus. In the second half of the chapter, Paul speaks of pressing on or straining toward Christ-like living. He begins by stating that he is not yet perfect, but is working toward living more like Christ (v. 12). Proverbs 8 points out that in order to truly tap into all the love and blessings that God has for us, we must eagerly seek Him and let Him guide our paths. Being a good listener is a gift that some possess naturally, others have to work at it. In my career, I have had to learn to be better at being silent in order to truly hear what my customers and their patients needs are vs. my agenda. This way I can more readily meet those needs and bring value. Similarly, as Christians, we all should strive to be silent in the presence of God in order to gain wisdom and direction from Him. Multiple times in Proverbs 8, the word "listen" is repeated. These two readings parallel in that they both teach us that knowing Christ and living in His word is more valuable than any earthly things that we may obtain. Heavenly Father, I pray that our desire to know Christ may continue to expand. Help us to seek your guidance in all circumstances and to become better listeners. Give us, as individuals and as a church family the ability to focus on the future, not the past, and love others as you love us. In Jesus name I pray, AMEN.

– **Robin Tiller,**
PGW Parish Family

First Lesson

Proverbs 9

Second Lesson

Philippians 4

Psalms

23, 24

MAR.
10

In Proverbs 9, we note the contrasting consequences of heeding wisdom, on the one hand, and heeding folly on the other. The author concedes the choice should be clear but can, instead, be clouded by ego and the temptation of the illicit. Sobering are the words associated with heeding folly. They include *dead*, which should strike fear in our hearts.

Meanwhile, in Philippians 4, Paul provides timeless guidance that is relevant and reassuring, namely to trust in God and to act reasonably, particularly when confronting difficulty. Who among us today is not confronting difficulty-financial stress, workplace stress or health issues, for example? We all are. Difficulty is omnipresent in this mortal life.

Paul provides comfort by guiding us in *how* to deal with difficulty, namely through faith and reason. Reason is emotion's opposite. Instead of resorting to anger when confronting difficulty, why not try reason? For example, money is tight. Okay, let's pray for God's help and take a look at where we can economize and where we might generate more revenue. Is a colleague at work difficult? Okay, why not pray for God's help and try an earnest approach with that colleague to identify and resolve the difficulty? A family member has a health issue? Okay, why not pray for God's help and pursue a diagnosis and prescription?

Tying together these two readings are faith and prudence. When we are faithful and prudent, we know God's wise path and the consequences of not following it, as described in Proverbs 9. When we are faithful and prudent we confront difficulty bolstered by faith in the God who is always with us and wisely eschewing anger, as Paul describes in Philippians 4. Amen.

– **Scott Gibson,**
PGW Vestry Member

Notes:

MAR. 11

First Lesson

Proverbs 10

Second Lesson

Colossians 1:1-20

Psalms

27

In my younger years, I had the time and inclination to train for and participate in triathlons. (My older self neither has the time nor the inclination.) At the time, I thought that the training was simply a means to an end. The glory was in finishing-competing against my peers and myself and the gratification of finishing a tough race. In hindsight, I realize the joy was actually in the journey.

Those morning swim practices and long-distance training rides gave me the opportunity to meet so many new people whom I otherwise would not have known. We pushed one another, cheered for improvement, and always enjoyed breakfast together after our Saturday morning workout. Always there to critique and applaud was our bionic 85-year-old collegiate swim coach, Bill. He kept every swimmer committed to his individual goal, holding each of us accountable for showing-up and showing no mercy to those who dragged into Saturday practice after a late Friday night in Five Points. Bill was our Paul.

In Paul's letter to the Colossians, Paul commends and encourages the people of Colosse to stay focused, steady, and committed to Christ. Then, as today, the temptation to slack off or lose focus or become distracted by worldly and immediate pleasures was everywhere. Paul prays for the Colossians' endurance, "not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy."

Sometimes we are so focused on finishing that we forget to embrace the getting there. Paul reminds us that committing to Christ is committing to the finish *and* the journey. God promises us eternal life in heaven-the finish line-and Paul reminds us to praise God in all that is bright and beautiful in everyday living.

– **Mary Smith,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

First Lesson

Proverbs 11

Second Lesson

Colossians 1:21—2:7

Psalms

31

MAR.
12

As I reflected on Proverbs 11, I couldn't help but think of King Solomon as a great life coach. His wise lessons are both broad and specific; spanning across most facets of our lives. He is, ultimately, coaching us on how and why to lead a righteous life. The word "*righteous*" appears in Proverbs 11 13 times.

Early in my career, I was called "uncoachable" by a boss. I was reminded of this while thinking about my own life performance in light of the clear direction of Proverbs. I want to follow the "game plan" but don't always succeed. At times in my life, this has led to-maybe not alienation-but a lack of closeness with God. There were many reasons/excuses for this-career, commute, family, coaching (ironic, eh?). It was how I prioritized my time and talents.

In Colossians 1:21, Paul (also a great coach) addresses this kind of "*alienation*." Then, he tells of the Resurrection as reconciliation along with faith in the Hope of The Gospel. Paul also provides a great life-giving game plan (v. 2:6&7). He extols us to remember that Jesus is with us-our Strong Foundation. We should live in Him knowing His Strength and building on it through faith and continued learning in the Word. Starting each day in the Word has helped to bring that close relational feel back to my life.

I love the last few words of this text, "*overflowing with thankfulness*," offering us myriad opportunities-joyful worship, prayers of thanksgiving, sharing our testimonies, generous giving, helping others. These are all ways to overflow with thankfulness.

Another great coach recently homilized, "Alka Seltzer doesn't work until you open the packet and let it out!" This great analogy challenges us to let our thankfulness overflow into the world around us, in our way, with Christ at the center.

– **Burt Palmer,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

Collect For The Second Sunday In Lent

*Almighty God, You know that we have
no power in ourselves to help ourselves:
Keep us both outwardly in our bodies
and inwardly in our souls, that we may
be defended from all adversities that may
happen to the body, and from all evil
thoughts that may assault and hurt the
soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who
lives and reigns with You and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*

Amen.

First Lesson

Proverbs 12

Second Lesson

Colossians 2:8-19

Psalms

33

MAR.
13

SUNDAY

Do you look at warning labels? Are you able to read the tiny print? Warnings in the Bible are always clear and upfront. Those in today's readings are no exception. The warnings in Solomon's proverb are implicit in his observations. The contrasts make it pretty easy to desire the right course of action-i.e., ***Should I accept discipline and be considered knowledgeable or hate correction and be thought of as stupid (v. 1)?***

The warnings to the believers in Colossae are set in the context of a book that is considered one of the most Christ-centered books in the Bible. Its theme is the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ in all things. Apparently, there was a heresy brewing in Colossae that threatened to dilute or pollute Paul's clear teaching. These young Christians were being influenced and confused by those who were mixing ancient Jewish ordinances with Greek speculations and mysticism. These teachings stressed asceticism and even the worship of angels. All of these were intended to be added to their faith and enhance their experience.

The Message sums up this issue like this: *"You don't need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ and the emptiness of the universe without Him"*. Paul reminds these new Christians that they are full, complete and fully alive in Christ. He urges them to remember that ***"while they were yet sinners Christ Jesus died for them"*** (Romans 5:8). They must not allow themselves to be intimidated, deceived or made to feel judged. So, tear up your legalistic "to-do" lists. There is absolutely nothing you need add to your faith. Just like the Colossians, heed Paul's warnings and be convinced that...***Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the LOVE of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8: 38-39).***

– **Judy Robinson,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

MAR.
14

First Lesson

Proverbs 13

Second Lesson

Colossians 2:20—3:11

Psalms

35

There is a common theme between these passages in Colossians and Proverbs. They are a playbook on how to give up your earthly behaviors and create a New Self. It challenges us to examine our old self and to eliminate immorality, anger, pride, gossip, slander and all other types of evil that can take over your earthly life. These should be replaced with kindness, understanding, humility and all other godly virtues. Solomon stressed for us to have a teachable spirit, build others up, work hard, share your treasures, show leadership, help the poor and watch your words carefully as they define you. Both are asking you to strive to live a more Christ-like life. Do not hold a grudge against anyone. Forgive others as Jesus has forgiven you. Thank the Lord for where you are today and enjoy the peace it brings. It is a daily challenge for many, including myself, to fulfill all that is asked here. I am trying to start each day with a prayer to remind me of these virtues, and act accordingly. We can quickly get bogged down in daily issues and forget our New Self as we go about our day.

Lord give me a New Self with a New Heart so I may live a more Christian life, forgiving others and asking You for forgiveness for my sins. I thank the Lord for my life today and pray for inner peace. My favorite day of the week is today. Be careful how you use it, don't waste the opportunity.

**– Pete Williams,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes:

First Lesson

Proverbs 14

Second Lesson

Colossians 3:12-end

Psalms

38

MAR.
15

FORTY. It's not the smallest number on a scale, and it most certainly isn't the largest. However, in years, a teenager identifies with age 40 much differently than a 90-year-old. Forty miles seems like a short trip to the mall but is the longest distance to a mother whose child leaves for college 40 miles away. Forty dollars to a business executive may be mere change but to a homeless, starving man that same forty dollars is gold. And eating a 40-count bag of generic brand cookies may seem nearly impossible; however, purchase a box of Girl Scout cookies and 40 seems like you are just getting started. During Lent the number 40 is significant because it is the number of days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. Do you think Jesus thought this was a long period of time? I don't think so; I think Jesus was engrossed in intimate conversation with His Father and all of the days ran together.

As we move through the season of Lent, we focus on the preparations that Jesus made before He paid the ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross. During our current season of COVID-19, it seems that many people have lost patience, respect, and compassion. Our world appears to be in turmoil due to uncertainty, loss of control, and politics. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he gives us words to live by today during difficult times. *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* (Colossians 3:12-13). During these 40 days, I pray that our hearts and minds would be filled with clarity, and we would all exercise compassion, kindness, humility, and patience.

– Kelly Stuckey,
PGW Vestry Member

Notes:

MAR.
16

First Lesson

Proverbs 15

Second Lesson

Colossians 4

Psalms

37:18-41

As I read Proverbs, I am reminded of the good advice I received as a child. Too much of it went in one ear and out the other. Later in life, however, I came to understand the value and wisdom of that advice and, similarly, the value and wisdom of the Proverbs. For example, in Proverbs 15, we are told to avoid anger and a sharp tongue. In my career in real estate, I learned early that when encountering an angry person, let the person vent. When he pauses, take the opportunity to say, "God bless you." Almost always, the tension would subside and we could discuss concerns calmly and logically. Fighting fire with fire never works.

Later in this Proverb, we are reminded of what Psalm 14 tells us, namely ***"only a Fool says in his heart there is no God."*** I have looked back on the times in my life when I, like the Fool, did not regard God or His word properly.

Folly is a joy to a fool ***"but a man of understanding walks straight ahead."*** This sums up the way I have tried to follow the Lord in my marriage, business, and friendships. I have tried to lead a life of little regret, saying thank you to the Lord often and walking with Him. Sometimes the path has not been easy. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s in Spartanburg, I hired the first black, female real estate agent to work in our firm. That gave many of my colleagues and friends pause. I told her when I hired her that I would train her so well that her performance would be an inspiration to the industry! She continues to thrive to this day. She became president of the Multiple Listing Service and first black president of the National Board of Realtors. I followed the Lord not because I thought I was being wise, but because I made a decision a long time ago to hate no one. Hatred resides only in a bad person, which may sound like a proverb. However, it has served me well throughout my life. One other bit of wisdom: "A handwritten note is always better than an email!"

**– Jack Newton,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes: _____

First Lesson

Proverbs 16

Second Lesson

Philemon

Psalms

39, 41

MAR.
17

One of my mother’s favorite expressions when speaking of how we should relate to others was actually something that sounds like it could have been in the Proverbs. It is relatable, easy to understand and leads with a bit of humor: *“you attract more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.”* Funny, true and wise.

In Proverb 16, two words jump out to me that seem to carry over into the Philemon reading today. *“The wise of heart is called discerning”* (v. 21).

The writer of Proverbs 16 is making the Scriptural truth that our hearts are where our faith comes from. It is the heart of a person that guides them into folly or truth. Jesus tells His followers that it is the thoughts and words that come out of a person’s heart that show who they really are. Our hearts are precious to the Lord because they not only bear His wisdom, but as Paul says in his letter to Philemon, we indeed *“bear others in our very hearts.”* What an amazing idea! Our very hearts are the places that we should care and tend our relationships with others. My mother’s words of wisdom seem to line up exactly with what Paul is saying to his friend Philemon and by extension all followers of Jesus. Love others as you love yourself and take it a step further *“bear them in your hearts.”* A healthy person would never intentionally harm their own hearts or bodies. The author of Proverbs, Jesus, Paul and my mother stand in agreement that our response to everyone regardless of the way we have been treated or spoken to is always to love first.

– **Jordan Grasso Smith,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

MAR. 18

First Lesson

Proverbs 17

Second Lesson

Ephesians 1:1-14

Psalms

44

In these opening lines of Paul's Epistle, we see how The Godhead works our salvation:

"The Work of the Father: Election (Eph. 1:3-6)

The Work of the Son: Redemption (Eph. 1:7-12)

The Work of the Spirit: Protection (Eph. 1:13,14)"

(MacArthur, BC)

In the last two verses of this passage Paul states, *"In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory."* (v. 13-14)

How cool is that? We don't have to wait until death to begin experiencing God's presence. He decided to "indwell" us with His Holy Spirit in this life. My first experience with this occurred when I was a very young boy. My mother took me to church every Sunday - Holy Trinity Episcopal in Fayetteville, N.C. It was a big church and we always arrived early. I would help her fold down the prayer bench in front of our pew right after we sat down. As I knelt and prayed beside my mother, I remember this warm feeling washing over me, almost like the Lord was wrapping His arms around me. I remember how comforting it was, how peaceful it made me feel. And even though I've experienced it many times since then, all those Sundays at Holy Trinity remain etched in my memory.

What an awesome God we serve.

**– Danny Morgan,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes:

First Lesson

Ephesians 1:15-end

Second Lesson

Matthew 1:18-end

Psalms

46

MAR.
19

Although the Matthew reading is a must-read, this reflection will be focused solely on the second reading from Ephesians. *"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."* This verse and the old praise song *"Open the Eyes of my Heart"* have always intrigued me. To me, they describe the experience of prayerfully and willingly allowing the Lord to open the eyes of my understanding. There are three things Paul prays for the Ephesians to know: the hope to which God calls us, the riches of His powerful inheritance in us, and the incomparable greatness of His power. When we do not allow Him to open our eyes, we fail to see these realities, and we lose our relationship with Him and the hope and confidence that relationship imparts.

C. S. Lewis wrote in his letters, *"Relying on God has to begin over again every day as if nothing has yet been done."* Or, perhaps, it must begin every hour or every minute at times! My Christian walk is one of waxing and waning. I can remember when my eyes opened and I first saw the light—such joy to know His love, power, hope, and riches! With each *"dry"* period, each rebellion, each failure, and each spiritual blindness comes finally a point of repentance and begging for forgiveness and, praise be, our Lord is always faithful and loving.

It is my prayer for each of us this Lenten season that He will continue to open the eyes of our hearts and we will know our Lord and know His love, hope, power, and riches that are ours but for the taking and keeping.

– **Sally Lumpkin,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes:

Collect For The Third Sunday In Lent

*Heavenly Father, You have made us
for Yourself, and our hearts are
restless until they rest in You: Look with
compassion upon the heartfelt desires
of Your servants, and purify our disordered
affections, that we may behold Your
eternal glory in the face of Christ Jesus;
who lives and reigns with You and the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

First Lesson

Proverbs 18

Second Lesson

Ephesians 2:1-10

Psalms

49

MAR.
20

SUNDAY

In today's reading of Proverbs 18, we see contrasts between the fool and the wise man. The foolish man's actions bring contention and destruction; the wise man's bring safety and favor. Verse 10 tells us, ***"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe."*** In verse 22 we read, ***"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD."*** There is a progression of encouragement to the wise man culminating in the final words of verse 24, ***"...but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."*** That friend is Jesus! How wonderful to know Jesus not only as Savior but as friend.

We read of another contrast in Ephesians 2:1-10. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul lays out for us the utter hopelessness and degradation of our condition. Then, beginning in verse four, St. Paul proclaims one of the great truths in scripture, ***"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved-..."*** Continuing, he describes the marvelous gift of God: salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. Paul explains the consequences of this salvation in verse 10, ***"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*** God has a plan for us as an individual-designed beforehand-a journey for us to walk.

This Lenten season is a good time to reflect upon the contrast in our life before we accepted Jesus as our personal Savior and the knowledge we now have as a child of God, knowing Jesus as Savior and friend. As Christians-saved for fifty years or five minutes-we are on the journey God has for us. Are we resting or are we moving? What better time than now to commit ourselves to get moving and walk the journey ***"which God prepared beforehand"*** for us?

– **Layne Smith,**
PGW Vestry Member

Notes: _____

MAR. 21

First Lesson

Proverbs 19

Second Lesson

Ephesians 2:11-end

Psalms

51

In this excerpt of Paulus's letter to the Ephesians, he compares "uncircumcised" Gentiles with circumcised Jews. Historically, the Gentiles were separated from the promise of Christ, and were considered aliens in the Jewish community. But the purpose of God's love through Jesus is to include everyone in his love. Jesus opens His arms and invites everyone, through His shed blood, to rest in this love.

Proverbs 19 reminds us that we live in a fallen world. We yearn to live in the kingdom of God, but in our humanity, we pursue things that separate us from God. We are convinced that our mistakes and missteps have made us unlovable to the Messiah. We compare our broken selves to the perfection that is Christ Jesus.

But God's plan for us is perfect: that we receive His blessings and love and live in the light of Jesus Christ through his Holy Spirit.

There have been times in my life that I have felt separated from Jesus. It wasn't until I received spiritual healing that I realized, in my heart, how much God loves me. Through this knowledge, and with the presence of the Holy Spirit, I am living in God's purpose. I am able to receive joyfully God's blessings and love.

Do you remember the song, "Jesus Loves the Little Children"? There is a second verse:

*Jesus died for all the children,
All the children of the world.
Red, brown, yellow, black, and white,
They are precious in his sight,
Jesus died for all the children of the world.*

I pray that in this Lenten season you will be able to experience the love of Jesus in a new way. He knows you and loves you, and 2000 years ago He died for you. Let Him into your heart. Rest in the knowledge of His love and share that love with the world.

– **Lee Jones,**
PGW Parish Family

First Lesson

Proverbs 20

Second Lesson

Ephesians 3

Psalms

55

MAR.
22

Saint Paul prayed for God to strengthen our inner beings with power through His Holy Spirit, so Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, so we can be rooted and established in His love, so we may be empowered to grasp the enormity of the love of Christ, so we may know His love which surpasses knowledge, so we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God and overflow with His goodness, His glory. It is a sweet depth to profess our exhaustive wholeness as wretched sinners. Sweeter still to know faith will only grow after we are first declared right with God. Christ is man, is God, possesses the holiest, meekest, and most humble heart, one of perfect balance and proportion. Christ always intercedes. As sun is to candle, there is no love so great and so wonderful as the love which is in the heart of Christ. Everything lovely in God is in Christ. Everything that is or can be lovely in any person can only first be found in Him. A knowledge of His love surpasses all knowledge. Our hearts call out. Our intellects crave. Our souls thirst. Drink deeply from the beautiful chalice of the knowledge of His love. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. He in the Father, He in us, we in Him. The highest plane of existence is to know the love of God. Faith enables knowledge. Know His love. Know He exists before the universe was formed at His command. His Spirit indwells and strengthens, adds capacity, deepens, widens, heightens, lengthens. Knowing the love of Christ is the most filling thing in existence, so diffusing as to define and surpass. By faith, truth is revealed, our hearts made contrite, our inner beings cleansed. By faith, with prayer, our salvation becomes more than deliverance from sin and hell as the gift of the fullness of God is received and flows outward. Fade into and encounter Him. Reflect His glory.

**– Charles Nation,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes: _____

MAR.
23

First Lesson

Proverbs 21

Second Lesson

Ephesians 4:1-16

Psalms

58, 60

In Ephesians 4, Paul addresses spiritual maturity and unity in the body of Christ. In the ESV translation, Paul urges us to ***“walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience bearing together in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love.”*** Eugene Peterson’s Message says it with more urgency: ***“I want you to get out there and walk -better yet, run! -on the road God called you to travel.”*** In other words, “Get to it!” Proverbs 21 gives direction on how we should live. It points out golden nuggets like pride and arrogance are sin, that our motives matter and God examines them, and that watching our words and holding our tongues will save ourselves grief. Proverbs 21:21 states that whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.

So how do we pursue righteousness and walk in a manner worthy of God’s calling on our life? How do we get on the road God called us to travel? Carrie Underwood wrote a song a few years ago called Jesus Take the Wheel. The chorus goes like this:

Jesus, take the wheel, Take it from my hands, Cause I can't do this on my own, I'm letting go, So, give me one more chance And save me from the road I'm on Jesus, take the wheel.

Letting Jesus take the wheel means relinquishing control. It means getting connected to the source of true life, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It means walking in the Spirit and yielding our plans, thoughts, and desires to His master plan. It means prioritizing time in prayer with the Lord and time with the body of Christ. It means surrendering ourselves to a better way of living. It means putting Christ first.

A famous old hymn, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” talks about what a privilege a friendship with Jesus can be:

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear, And what a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer.

What a privilege to have a personal relationship with Jesus. He will set our feet on the road He is calling us to travel. Best of all, He will travel the road with us. Thanks be to God!

– Julie Stalvey,
PGW Parish Family

First Lesson

Proverbs 22

Second Lesson

Ephesians 4:17-end

Psalms

63, 64

MAR.
24

While I do not enjoy writing reflections, I thoroughly enjoyed reading Proverbs 22. Proverbs is considered the wisdom book of the Old Testament. I feel like they are an easy set of rules that if one follows, can only lead to a stronger faith and closer relationship with God. Proverbs is written like a guide for all Christians to live by. Proverbs 22 touches on integrity, humility, generosity, and parenting. Meant to be read as individual verses, some can be grouped together with a common theme. Verses 6 and 15 both reflect on parenting and teaching your child in the way of the Lord: ***“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”(v6)***. A child needs training. The job of a parent is not to let him grow up in a particular way, but to train him ***in the way he should go***. When a child is trained in the proper way, though the child may depart for a season (and a long season), in principle the child will return. Verse 15 reads, ***“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.”*** Children are not born as morally neutral beings. There is a moral problem (described here as *foolishness*) that is bound up in the heart of a child, evidenced by the fact that our children will naturally sin without be taught how. This is our nature inherited from our ancient ancestors, Adam and Eve. Again, the theme is to train our children in the way of the Lord. Starting at verse 17 titled, ***“Words of the Wise,”*** the sayings are longer and more arranged according to theme: ***Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, (v17) for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips. (v18). That your trust may be in the Lord, I have made them known to you today, even to you (v19). Have I not written for you thirty sayings of counsel and knowledge, (v20) to make you know what is right and true, that you may give a true answer to those who send you? (v21)*** Here we are invited to receive the words of wisdom. Sometimes we feel the way of wisdom is difficult to follow, but it is much more pleasant than the way of the fool. True wisdom makes us more dependent on God, not less. We grow in our trust in the Lord, realizing that the pursuit of wisdom begins and continues with a proper view of God. The pursuit of wisdom makes us more confident in the truth, not less. Certainly, wisdom discovers that some things are more complicated and doubtful, but in general it sees God and His truth with more clarity and certainty. My prayer this Lenten season is that all of Prince George Winyah follow the wisdom given to us in the Bible and forever trust in our Lord.

– Danielle Pope,
PGW Vestry Member

MAR.
25

First Lesson

Proverbs 23

Second Lesson

Ephesians 5:1-17

Psalms

131, 132

I've heard it said that the Lord surely has a sense of humor and I have to agree. As I read these Scriptures, I thought to myself, why would the Lord want me - the "poster child" of failed relationships - to reflect on His words about wisdom and relationships? I can also agree with the Scriptural truth that the Lord wastes nothing! When I read Proverbs 24, I was brought to a place of deep thanksgiving as I reflected on a time when the Lord showed me the way forward and later gave me His wisdom. *"Know that wisdom is such to your soul: if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off" (v. 14).*

I remember praying fervently for wisdom to follow the Lord as I saw my marriage coming to an end. In my heart marriage was forever, however, I was facing the truth that my marriage would end before death and I asked the Lord how to move through it in His love. I could no longer walk the path my husband was choosing and his addiction would only worsen if I stayed in the marriage. Through prayer, I realized that in our present state I would not achieve God's plan for my life or my husband's. Looking back, I understand that we would not have grown in the wisdom planned for each of us. Many years and life lessons later it was each of us experiencing the deaths of high school friends in the same week which opened up communication. Vic lost a friend who fell off a roof. The friend's death prompted Vic to get his house in order, and he called to talk about it. What Vic did not realize was that I had just come from the funeral of a high school friend. We talked at length about both and caught up on our lives. In the conversation I realized that God had provided him with a path to sobriety. He sounded more like the man I married than the man I divorced. After working through the anger, hurt and disappointment, God gave me the wisdom to forgive. God's wisdom then and now has provided each of us with the means to walk the new life paths God has planned for us. Even though these paths are not together, they are ones which allow us to walk in a supportive and loving friendship and closer to the Great I AM.

– **Timm Miller,**
PGW Parish Family

First Lesson

Proverbs 24

Second Lesson

Ephesians 5:18-end

Psalms

65, 67

MAR.
26

“A house is built, not with wallpaper, drapes and throw pillows, but with wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Wisdom is the ability to take the knowledge about God concerning life and apply it in a practical and successful way in our homes.” (The Woman’s Study Bible NIV)

When you build a house, how much time and energy is spent planning? How many trips to Home Depot? When building a house, we are equipped with the blueprints and have thoroughly examined all options for fit and finish, all for a future house we cannot yet see and will not last.

However, Proverbs 24 teaches us that our eternal home cannot be built with all the beautiful shiplap and shiny granite in the world.

“By wisdom a house is built and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures” Proverbs 24:3-4

We are not called simply to spit out facts for the sake of knowledge. We are called to true wisdom. In the words of Jen Wilkin, “the heart cannot love what our mind does not know.”

Therefore, we must know God and his character in order to apply godly wisdom in our lives.

We must commit ourselves to studying his Word and learning who God is. Throughout this Lenten season, may we commit our homes, our PGW family, and our community to studying and learning God’s character through His Word.

Lord, as we go through this Lenten season, may our houses be filled with wisdom-wisdom that can only come from knowing You, Your character, and Your love for us!

– **Rob and Rachel Henry,**
PGW Parish Family &
Junior Warden, PGW Vestry



**Collect For
The Fourth Sunday In Lent**

*Gracious Father, whose blessed Son
Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be
the true bread which gives life to the world:*

*Evermore give us this bread, that He
may live in us, and we in Him; who lives
and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Amen.

First Lesson

Proverbs 25

Second Lesson

Ephesians 6:1-9

Psalms

68:19-36

Today's scriptures reveal wisdom for us as leaders and followers at home and in our occupations. As Christians, we are called to be leaders, yet we are most importantly followers of Christ. These scriptures give guidance about forming a balanced identity where qualities and traits of a good shepherd are the same for the faithful sheep. As followers like the sheep (children, employees): we are commanded to honor and obey. As leaders like the shepherd (parents, employers): to train and instruct. Today's Scripture reminds us that we both serve the same Master. Our goal, no matter our path in life, should be to serve the Lord *"wholeheartedly."* By bowing down and serving Christ first, we are then able to raise up and lead others at home and work. How can we be effective shepherds of our sheep if we haven't learned that *"first commandment with a promise"*: to honor and obey your Heavenly Father? How would we know what good leadership looks like if we don't know the leadership of the Lord? Only then can we be truly equipped to train and instruct others. By choosing Him first (first in the morning, first in our thoughts, first in our priorities) we can acknowledge and respect that God is the One Shepherd, and we are all the sheep. He is the ultimate balancer that restores order in a broken world that too often blurs the lines between right and wrong when it comes to leading and serving others.

The scriptures for today outline many traits and qualities that define a faithful Christian who is both a leader and a follower. Here are some that stood out to me. I pray these qualities over you and over me, over those we love and those we resent, over those we serve and those who serve us, and over all those we encounter today:

-*"trustworthy"*

-*"patience"*

-*"refreshes the spirit of his masters"*

-*"gentle tongue"*

-*"one who sings songs to a heavy heart"*

– **Brad & Suiter Wasserman,**
PGW Parish Family

MAR.
27

SUNDAY

MAR.
28

First Lesson

Proverbs 26

Second Lesson

Ephesians 6:10-end

Psalms

69:19-37

Our Proverb today begins with verse after verse of simile comparing things of this world to the foolish person who, as the Psalmist wrote, *"says in his heart there is no God"* (Psalm 53).

This Proverb then unfolds like many before it to warn the followers of Yahweh to disregard the laws and promises of God at one's own peril. The loving and righteous God will one day exact judgment on His creation, and those who are found to be foolish or disregarding God will come up short. The promise found in this Proverb and the Ephesians passage is simple. Those who surrender their wills and hearts to the loving God will enjoy today and eternally the freedom from sin's punishment that all deserve. Surrendering our foolish hearts will bring us back to relationship with Him so that we, like the fools in the Proverb, don't wake up one day and find ourselves separated from God. It happens gradually. Scripture tells us that most of us don't run into sin; instead, we negligently, foolishly and simply slide. We replace the spiritual things in our lives with the things of this world.

One of the joys of teaching, leading, and loving the children of PGW in Preschool, Sunday School, and St. Martha's is being part of their earthly preparation for eternal life. Each child is another sacred opportunity to bring hearts, minds, and souls to Jesus. It starts by explaining and teaching them that sin left unchecked will separate them from a loving God. Like Paul in Ephesians, we all want our children in relationship with Jesus and prepared for the battle of life. We pray that they will keep themselves protected and surrounded by an army of believers. First their family, then their larger church family and finally the saints in heaven and the saints on earth, the followers of Jesus worldwide.

I try to teach the children everyday what I believe these two readings are saying to each of us. *"God is faithful and compassionate and He loves you. If you feel yourself separated from God, I assure you He hasn't moved. Draw near to Him, and He will draw nearer to you."*

– Tracy Morris,
PGW Children & Family Minister

First Lesson

Proverbs 27

Second Lesson

1 Timothy 1:1-17

Psalms

70, 72

MAR.
29

Lent is a time for prayerful reflection. Scripture is always the right place to start when asking ourselves, "Lord how then should we pray? We want to be in Your will Lord and therefore we come to You asking for Your guidance in prayer and reflection."

It is in that posture, as we read verse six of today's Proverb that says "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,*" we get confronted with some harsh realities of life in this fallen world.

As Christians, we are certain of the truth that Christ Jesus is the way of salvation for our individual, eternal souls. This truth gets confronted in the season of Lent as we contemplate through Scripture that humanity left to its own will and devices operate outside the will of God.

This Proverb and all of Scripture warns us that all too often it is easier to believe a lie than it is to be convinced we have been lied to. Scripture repeatedly pushes back at the lies of the world with the often difficult truth of living in Christ and by the power of His Holy Spirit. We are commanded to speak the truth in love and sometimes the truth of our sin, illuminated by a friend's criticism, does sting. But a constructive and corrective criticism that points to the truth of Scripture and Christ serves us better on this side of eternity than any kind words from someone who seeks to manipulate, harm or use us for their gain. In other words, as an enemy of God.

Today as in times past, it is vital for the people of God to pray for discernment so that we may all be brought into a deeper love and appreciation of the truth of Scripture.

A prayerful Lent that uses the truth of Scripture as a mirror offers all who read it the opportunity to see ourselves in the light of Christ's love and to listen for His true words of correction and guidance.

– **Joe Nooft,**
PGW Parish Family

MAR.
30

First Lesson

Proverbs 28

Second Lesson

Timothy 1:18—2 end

Psalms

73

When King Solomon wrote this Proverb, he was offering insight into the benefits of working hard, following righteous leaders, and having a clean conscience.

Those with a guilty conscience cannot get past their sins. Even though others do not know of their sin and are not pursuing them to find out about their sin, they hide the sin from the public. It's a dark spot taking up space that does not allow a close bond with God or others. Those who confess their sins have a pure heart. They have nothing to hide and are an open book because they know by the grace of God their sin is gone. They stand before mankind with a clean conscience.

King Solomon also touches on the importance of God-fearing leaders. The public needs to be cautious about who they allow to rule society. Wicked rulers and leaders focus on themselves and how society can benefit them. They ignore or abuse the poor because they cannot profit from them. Wicked rulers believe the law does not apply to them. Rulers and leaders are there to serve the public, not profit from it. Jesus shows us the ultimate example of this is being our Servant-King. It is the responsibility of the righteous to not stay silent and not to put wicked rulers in office.

Lastly, he wrote about the benefit of working hard. Those who spend days working hard for what they have appreciate what it took to obtain it, and they will not foolishly lose it. Those who obtained their riches easily have nothing invested in it and therefore carelessly manage it.

**– Suzanne Nash,
PGW Vestry Member**

Notes:

First Lesson

Proverbs 29

Second Lesson

1 Timothy 3

Psalms

77

MAR.
31

After reading the passage from Proverbs 29, I realize that we are given the blueprints to be better disciples and parents. This passage touches on many things that we as Christians face on a daily basis. One in particular for me is being a better parent to my children and teaching them to be accountable for their actions. To reward them for doing what is right, as it says in verse 14, ***“The King who judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever.”*** Parenting also comes with difficulties, such as punishing your child for wrong doings. This for me is hard, and my wife will tell you I'm horrible at it and give in too easily. I hurt when I see my child upset, when these rare times occur. I'm reminded of this in verse 15, ***“The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to herself brings shame to her mother.”*** Parenting is one of the greatest joys God blesses us with. In verse 17 it says, ***“correct your son and he will give you rest. Yes, he will give delight to your soul.”*** Allison and Stella have certainly given Susan and me much delight to our souls.

The passage from Timothy 1:3 teaches us how to live a righteous life. It says in Verse 2, ***“The overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,”*** These are the tools that men need to be better Deacons as we seek his glory. The devil is always biting at our heels, trying to prevent these godly tools from being used. We are at times tested in our faith in Christ. It says in Verse 12, ***“A Deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well,”*** while in Verse 13 we read, ***“Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.”*** This past year has been extremely difficult on my family with Stella's cancer bout. I can honestly say that throughout the hard fight our faith has never been stronger as we seek His glory. The Welch Family is very grateful to our faithful parish family for your love, support and many prayers that you have prayed for us.

– **Brian Welch,**
PGW Parish Family
#stellastrong

Notes: _____

APR.
1

First Lesson

Proverbs 30

Second Lesson

1 Timothy 4

Psalms

79, 82

Proverbs 30 is titled “*Sayings of Agur son of Jakeh.*” Agur’s proverbs offer insight regarding his thoughts on life. He begins with a confession of human ignorance. He admits that he does not understand the mystery that lies at the center of God’s creation. Yet later in the proverb, he lists some things that he does understand: an eagle in the sky, a serpent on a rock and a man with a woman. These simple yet profound observations reveal that Agur believes that God’s wisdom can be known and observed and that God’s wisdom is always greater than his understanding. That fact, Scripture tells us, is the beginning of true wisdom and the first step toward faith.

In 1 Timothy 4, Paul is writing to Timothy his friend and giving him the benefit of his wisdom and experience of ministry. Timothy is Paul’s young protegee’ and Paul offers him practical advice that is based on the “real life” experience and **FAITH**. He concludes this passage by telling Timothy, and all who follow that they should try to be an example to the world by what they say, in what they do, in their love, in their spirit, in their purity and in their FAITH. Taken together these scriptures, remind me that faith is so important, and that God provides for us completely. He even gives us our Faith, if we ask Him and believe Him.

One of the names of God is Yahweh-Yireh which means “the Lord will provide” and He does! Faith in God is the key to trusting Him and walking by faith means to do so even when there are unanswered questions like Agur and Timothy had.

So, whatever you’re going through today, take a step of faith and pray, “God, I know You love me. I trust You. My fate is in Your hands, and I know all things in my life will work together because of You. Amen”.

– **Hosanna LaMancusa,**
PGW Director of Communications

Notes: _____

First Lesson

Proverbs 31

Second Lesson

1 Timothy 5

Psalms

78:19-40

APR.
2

To me, Proverbs 31 and 1 Timothy 5 reads like advice for every husband and father who believes In Jesus. The Proverb opens with fatherly advice to a son and then transitions to a description of the godly woman and wife. Proverbs for me has always been a book that sounded like advice from my father or grandfather. Practical, useful but not rules for our salvation!

The King's advice to his son ends with the same call Jesus left with His disciples to care for the poor and those in need. The words of the Proverb author seem to flow straight to the mouth of Jesus many years later. Same Bible, same words but spoken at a different time and spoken to encourage us, not give us more rules. The Proverb closes with a list of qualities of the godly woman. It describes the Scripturally perfect woman, no faults and no shortcomings, impossible to achieve in human strength.

In my life I have been blessed to be in the company of three "Proverbs 31" women. Not perfect, but close, and most importantly they know the solution to any shortcomings can be solved by the only perfect One, Jesus. My mother, my wife and now my daughter are shining examples of women who are dedicated heart, mind and spirit to living out Proverbs 31 with the power of the risen Lord in their life. Paul's advice to Timothy, his young friend reminds me of another Proverb that advises raising children up in a certain way (*Proverbs 22:6*).

It describes what Paul is saying to Timothy. Paul is offering serious and practical advice to Timothy and not holding back on the truth of fallen humanity. He points out the pitfalls and problems that broken humanity bring into the Church and his advice like that of a father or husband to their children is...rely on Christ and live as if everything we do is in the presence of Christ and the angels (*1 Tim 5:21*).

To live like that in the Church and family is great advice and it means that we rely solely on the only perfect One for our salvation, and for that I say... "Thanks be to God!"

– **Andy Crocker,**
PGW Parish Family

Collect For The Fifth Sunday In Lent

Almighty God, You alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant Your people grace to love what You command and desire what You promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

First Lesson

Job 1

Second Lesson

1 Timothy 6

Psalms

80

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. (2 Chr. 16:9)

It seems that Job was such a man, a man fully committed to God. He was also truly blessed by God as he was considered to be *“the greatest man among all the people of the East”* (Job 1:3).

Satan crashes a meeting of God and his angels. When God asks Satan where he has come from, Satan answers God with a similar verse as from 2Chr.16:9. He says that he has been roaming the earth going back and forth in it. (He was looking for a righteous man to ruin). God tells Satan to consider Job. Satan retorts that it’s no wonder that Job loves God given how much God has blessed him. God then tells Satan that he can go after Job’s things but he is not to harm Job. Job could have been a street beggar and with his faith and trust in God he would have considered himself rich. The fact that Job was considered the wealthiest man in the East plays well in this story of profit and loss. God lets us know that even during times of hardship if we are faithful we will not come to any real harm as long as He is on His throne and in control.

Paul urges Timothy to pursue a life of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Paul tells him to command those who are rich in the world to not be arrogant or put their hope in wealth but to hope in God. (1 Tim 6:17)

Having the advantage of the Bible, we have the opportunity to view the past as it applies to the present and even to the future. In order to understand our place in God’s creation we need to dwell on the Word, lock it in our hearts and follow its’ teaching with the help of an unwavering and hope-filled faith. We should never be stagnant or complacent in our faith but make it new and awe-filled each day. Stay in step with God and no matter what trials He tests us with, if we will endure we will be rewarded abundantly.

– **Tom Newmister,**
PGW Parish Family

APR.

3

SUNDAY

APR.
4

First Lesson

Job 2

Second Lesson

Titus 1

Psalms

83

It is said there are two certainties in life; death and taxes. This was true during the time of the Old and New Testaments. It is true today. Another certainty I would add is described in Job 1:2; Satan spends his time *“roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth.”* He wreaks havoc, causing great suffering throughout the world.

In Job 2 Satan afflicts Job with painful sores from head to toe. Satan wishes to show God that a human can only be righteous under favorable circumstances. Put someone in pain, put one's back against the wall, take from them what they have rightfully earned and they will curse God. Satan is certain of this because, as St. Paul writes in Titus 1:15, *“...to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure.”* Satan is corrupted, weak of spirit, and devoid of faith. He cannot conceive of a righteous person.

Yet Job, writhing in pain, remains righteous. He's the embodiment of the blameless, faithful elder. St. Paul directs Titus to seek. Titus would be lucky to find a man like Job. Job personifies righteousness as he rebukes his wife, whose faith is shaken and taunts Job to curse God. *“Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”* Job asks of her. Job's self-control requires a deep and steadfast faith. A faith that is sure righteousness yields a reward greater than the temporary cessation of pain and suffering. A reward greater than anything.

We must endeavor to be a righteous elder. To be hospitable, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. But we are continually tested because the world shares Satan's cynical mantra that *“nothing is pure”*. This is the moral of every HBO or Netflix series I've ever watched. I wonder why I don't turn it off and reach for the Gospel more often.

We will all suffer death, taxes, and Satan's curses, but I would like to add one more certainty. Those who keep faith in God, trust in Jesus, and allow the Holy Spirit to flow through them like living waters will be restored and have eternal life in God's kingdom. Take that Satan!

– **Brett Kucera,**
PGW Parish Family,
Audio/Video Minister

First Lesson*Job 3***Second Lesson***Titus 2***Psalms**

85

**APR.
5**

Sadly, I think we've all felt like Job did in chapter 3, cursing the day we were born. This passage is very personal to me as I mourn my best friend Heather, who died of cancer last year. Hev and I met in 2008 and became fast friends and adventure buddies. Rowing on the Willamette River, getting certified in scuba diving at Hood Port canal, kayaking the Rogue River, and paddling a dragon boat for breast cancer. We took on every adventure and had plans for many more.

Four years ago, she told me she woke up on the kitchen floor. She had no recollection of being in the kitchen the night before. She pushed it aside, as she otherwise felt great. She began having dark paranoid thoughts of the devil being in her home. This was unlike Heather. After many tests she was diagnosed with stage 3 cancer in her brainstem. It was growing like a spider's web. They told her she'd been having seizures, and that's why she awoke on the kitchen floor.

The last six months of her life were extremely difficult. Most of her friends stopped visiting and she lost her business clients and closed her business. She became partially paralyzed, losing the ability to walk and talk the way she used to. She lost her most of her vision and her ability to care for herself. She fought so hard to live. Hev was a humanitarian, always giving back and helping others. She was a marketing genius and owned a successful business. She had a loving family.

Yet, she began to question her existence and wonder why this was happening. The pain was too much to bear. Like Job, she wished she'd never been born. Still, she never asked, "God, why me?" She never cursed God. I'm in awe of her inner strength. I am immeasurably grateful for our friendship. Her pain and suffering have ended, and her life was not lived in vain. My faith tells me she is snorkeling in God's kingdom, chasing after blue whales in the most beautiful ocean ever imagined.

– **Sherry Kucera,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

APR.
6

First Lesson

Job 4

Second Lesson

Titus 3

Psalms

88

The story of Job is amazing. It is the story of how God tested a man's obedience, and how righteousness prevailed. God allowed Satan to test Job's obedience by taking away everything in his life that brought joy. Job fell into despair but he never lost faith. Job knew that God would repair and restore him. In Job 4, his friend Elizaphaz comes to comfort him. Elizaphaz reminds Job that Job has helped others who have had troubles, and now trouble has come to him. He tells Job that it's his confidence and integrity that keeps God in his favor, which is wrong to assume. He even goes so far as to say in verse 7, *"Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?"* Elizaphaz has certainly forgotten about Cain and Abel. Abel killed (cut off) his righteous brother Cain and was forced to wander the path, toiling without reaping...Thanks, Cain, we all bear your mark! Elizaphaz's own words were contradicted in a dream in verse 17. *"Can mortal man be right before God? Can a man be pure before his maker?"* Insert Jesus Christ here! The Son of God and the only person in history that could ever stand righteous before Almighty God! Elizaphaz fails to comfort Job. Job never curses God and He restores his house, wealth, and health. God, not Job. The book reminds us to trust in God, even if we cannot understand His ways, we must trust His wisdom. In Titus 3, we see the letter of Paul commissioning and upholding Titus in his duties of elder and Bishop. Titus would go on to be the first Bishop of Crete and was referred to as Saint Titus. Paul reminds Titus and us how to uphold the priestly work gifted by the sacrifice of Jesus made possible by the Holy Spirit in us. *"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* (v. 3-7) Jesus is the gap bridged between Job and Elizaphaz. Was it Jesus who appeared in the dream? We do not know. However, what we hope to do this Lenten season is to focus on the gifts of Almighty God; brought to us by our Savior Jesus Messiah. How great it is to know that our God has defeated death and the grave! We deny, suffer, and hope for the glorious Easter resurrection of Jesus Christ our God! I pray that all people in our Parish who suffer pain, death and infirmity will find hope, comfort, and regeneration in Christ Jesus this Lenten season.

– Matt Springs,
PGW Vestry Member

First Lesson

Job 5

Second Lesson

2 Timothy 1

Psalms

89:19-51

APR.
7

"Join with me as I suffer for the good news." This doesn't sound like a very enticing invitation, does it? Come on, let's suffer together! However, this is what Paul encourages Timothy to do in today's New Testament reading. Paul is in prison, about to be executed, and is somehow filled with joy, gratitude, and contentment. He refers to himself as *"His prisoner."* He is suffering FOR God, for the good news.

In today's Old Testament reading, Job is also suffering, yet his friend advises him to repent because he obviously did something to cause his suffering. Eliphaz reminds Job that suffering is the punishment for sin. On this side of the cross, we know this isn't how God operates.

So, what are the implications of these passages for us? I think it is the beauty that can be found in our suffering if we are believers. Suffering is dirty and can be messy, but it is beautiful if we lean into Jesus in the midst of it. In 1 Thessalonians we are called to *"be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for [those of us] who belong to Christ Jesus."* Is suffering fun? Of course not. Is it necessary? Absolutely. How can we, as Christians, relate to unbelievers if we haven't suffered and made it to the other side? We must go through dark times and experience God's grace and mercy. The desperation that accompanies a complete lack of control in our circumstances allows us to embrace the ONE who is in control. Suffering gives us a testimony. The challenge is to remain thankful and grateful in the knowledge that God will never leave us or forsake us. We glorify God when we share our suffering with others. When we share of God's goodness during our dark times, it shines a light and gives our suffering a purpose. Let us all strive to be a little more like Paul and invite others to join in the joy of our suffering and the peace that God brings-if only we allow Him.

– **Mary Ann Coker,**
PGW Parish Family

Notes: _____

APR. 8

First Lesson

Job 6

Second Lesson

2 Timothy 2

Psalms

91

Occasionally, passages from The Bible may not seem clear or relatable, but that's not the case with today's readings. If you've ever felt you have the weight of the world on your shoulders and need some true friends, then you can relate to Job 6. The chapter headings in The Message translation are "God has Dumped the Works on Me," "Pressed Past the Limits," and "My So-Called Friends." I think we've all felt this at some point and wondered, "what should we do?"

We can find answers in 1 Timothy 2. Paul writes in verses 1, 3, and 4: *"The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know...This is the way our Savior God wants us to live. He wants not only us but everyone saved...to get to know the truth we've learned: that there's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us-Jesus, who offered himself in exchange for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free."* Charles Spurgeon referenced these verses from 1 Timothy 2 in a sermon entitled, "Salvation by Knowing the Truth."

So what might it look like to put these readings into our lives? We can find a great example in Psalm 142, which I strongly encourage you to read. It's a prayer offered by David when he was hiding in a cave. He cries aloud to the Lord, lifting up his voice for mercy. When he is weary and lost, he is sure the Lord knows the way. David says *"the Lord is my refuge, my portion in the land of the living,"* and asks *"Set me free from my prison that I may praise Your name."*

Let us remember to always-especially during times of despair-pray to our Savior and Redeemer and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us. And help us bring others to salvation by helping them know the Truth.

**– John Stalvey,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes:

First Lesson

Job 7

Second Lesson

2 Timothy 3

Psalms

94

APR.
9

I guess it has always been *“the last days”* because Paul’s list in verse two describes humans from the Fall to today. It’s a punch-list of sin, and on top of life’s suffering, it’s a burden that leaves us crushed. Perhaps we even conclude, like Job, that human life is nothing but a struggle.

We may wallow in our suffering, even anxiously awaiting death as poor Job does. Eventually, though, we hit bottom, and we decide we’ve got to help ourselves. We seek a savior of some sort. As Paul warns Timothy, if we are not careful, we will run into the embrace of people who seem like saviors. These people *“have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power.”* Prophetically, Paul specifically warns women about these “godly” gurus - today’s “religious” self-help sisters who attract women by the millions with their promises to teach them how to “love themselves.” We are all desperate, and we will often grab onto the first person or idea that offers us relief.

Instead, in the midst of our despair, we need to hear the voices of Paul and Job telling us where to find help. We don’t have to grasp at straws. We can, like Job, *“speak in the anguish of [our] spirit,”* calling out to God to listen to our cries for help. Next, we have to realize that *“all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* Suffering is to be expected for all who follow Jesus. The good news is that our help is a power-filled, “God-breathed” lifesaver: the Truth found in Holy Scripture. We are given the choice between a “savior” who speaks sickly-sweet platitudes to hide our brokenness and a Savior who speaks Truth to save us with the power of His Word.

**– Julie Kunes,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes: _____

Collect For Palm Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, in Your tender love for us You sent Your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon Himself our nature, and to suffer death upon the Cross, giving us the example of His great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of His suffering, and come to share in His resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

First Lesson

Job 8

Second Lesson

2 Timothy 4

Psalms

97, 98

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2Tim 4:3-4).

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Joh 14:6).

How true this is! We are all tempted to exchange sound teaching for myths. Often the appeal and danger of the myth is that it contains elements of the truth.

My thirteen year old is studying Classical Logic. One of the axioms in that discipline is that any statement that contains true and false assertions cannot be true. A statement may even be mostly true but one drop of falsehood deems it a myth (false).

Myths are flourishing today. One common theme of today's myths is “shortcut.” These shortcut myths are consumer-culture creations advertised as the latest and greatest. Think of all of the TV commercials: take this pill, drink this shake, use this exercise program, and health and wellness will be yours. Our *“itching ears”* hunger for this quick fix.

Sound teaching is time-proven, slow and steady. Prayer, Scripture, and worship deepen our relationship with Jesus. Proper nutrition, adequate rest, and exercise are the foundation of good health. Often the thing touted as the latest and greatest is a repackaged old truth. Intermittent fasting is popular now, but the efficacy of fasting is an ancient truth. Sound teaching is rooted in the truth, and the truth is found in and through Jesus. *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth...all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:16-17).*

– **Reverend Rob Kunes,**
PGW Priest Associate

Notes:

APR.
10

APR.
11

Collect for Monday

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first He suffered pain, and entered not into glory before He was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First Lesson
Job 9

Second Lesson
Hebrews 1

Psalms
102

One of the things I love about the liturgical church are the seasons that we move through during the year. To me, the mystery of God and what He has done for us is revealed as we move through the church calendar. But I also love the contrasts that we see in each one-the longing of advent fulfilled in the birth of Christ at Christmas or the fasting during Lent replaced by the feasting and celebration at Easter. I love that we hear the Decalogue during Lent and get our Alleluias back on Easter.

Our passages today illustrate another important contrast that I need to fully embrace this Lenten season-who I am and who God is. Job 9 states that His wisdom is profound and His power vast. His wisdom is so great that I cannot argue or dispute Him. Both passages establish Him as Creator and not like a man, while I am a created being, part of His creation (*Job 9:8, 32; Hebrews 1:2,10*). I am perishing, wearing out, and my days are flying away (*Hebrews 1:11, Job 9:25*), while He will last forever, remain, and His years will never end (*Hebrews 1:8, 11, 12*). And then, what this Lenten season really points to-I cannot be righteous (*Job 9:2*) but He is Righteousness; it is the scepter of His Kingdom (*Hebrews 1:8*). Lent shows me the depth of my sinfulness and my utter need for a Savior.

I think the point of this realization-the humility, the fasting, the repentance, the point of Lent-is to leave us with the same yearning as Job, "If only there were someone to arbitrate between us...someone to remove God's rod from me" (*Job 9:33, 34*).

On the cross, Christ bore the rod, He became our Mediator and Advocate, He gave us His Righteousness, defeated death forever-He became like me and took my punishment, so I could be like Him. So let us fully embrace this season of Lent, our humility, our need, our lack of wisdom and power, our frailty. Easter is coming and the Alleluia will be sweet.

**– Stephanie Oxner,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes: _____

First Lesson

Job 10

Second Lesson

Hebrews 2

Psalms

104

Often I find it easy to relate to Job and his self-righteousness. But when pain, loss, suffering, or rejection come, I pray to a God who sometimes seems distant and who seems to not understand my human problems. Job cries out to God, *“Do you have flesh? Do you feel pain like I feel pain?”* When I read these chapters from Job and Hebrews, I realize that I am like Job, who is searching for a true relationship with God. A relationship where we not only rejoice and celebrate in our blessings, but also share and comfort one another in times of distress.

In Hebrews, Paul explains that through Jesus, God offers the way to re-establish the true relationship He intends for me. Jesus comes fully human, and despite tremendous temptation, He lives a completely righteous life without ever sinning. Somehow, in the mystery of this all, Jesus suffers and dies for me and my sins. Somehow, my sentence has been paid by Jesus.

Paul explains that after making us holy, Jesus calls us His brothers and sisters. This is often hard for me to accept. In this mystery, by accepting Jesus and inviting Him to rule my life, I am re-established in my true relationship with God as a son.

Lord, I pray that during that during this Lenten season we gain even more understanding and truly accept the miraculous gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.

**– Dr. Lee Jones,
PGW Parish Family**

Notes:

**APR.
12**

**Collect for
Tuesday**

*O Lord our God,
whose blessed
Son gave His
back to be
whipped and
did not hide His
face from shame
and spitting;
Give us grace to
accept joyfully
the sufferings of
the present time,
confident of the
glory that shall
be revealed;
through Jesus
Christ our Lord,
who lives and
reigns with You
and the
Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever
and ever.
Amen.*

APR.
13

**Collect for
Wednesday**

*Assist us
mercifully with
Your grace,
Lord God of our
salvation, that
we may enter
with joy upon
the meditation
of those mighty
acts by which
You have
promised us life
and immortality;
through Jesus
Christ our Lord,
who lives and
reigns with You
and the
Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever
and ever.
Amen.*

First Lesson

Job 11

Second Lesson

Hebrews 3

Psalms

105:23-44

In our Job passage, Job's friend Jophar comes to him in his suffering and calls him to prayer and repentance. This is the same cry of God's heart throughout the Old Testament, which is spoken to the Israelites through the Prophets. *"Pray to Me in repentance and be saved!"*

Job's prideful belief that he is upright, without blemish, and undeserving of suffering places him mentally and spiritually at odds with God. Throughout the book Job is seeking a mediation with God to plead his case, a case Job believes he will win, and thus bring an end to his suffering. Job rightly believes that God is merciful and if he could just explain the facts of his life and case to God...he could somehow change God's mind and end his suffering. Job and I have often, in the midst of suffering, forgotten that God's great wisdom and plan for our lives and all creation since sin's introduction will include suffering and adversity. The point of the book and a foundation of our faith is simply that man's wisdom is no match for the wisdom of God. Many times in my personal and business life I have, in frustration, confronted this truth only to be reminded later that we must put our hope and trust in Him regardless of our circumstances; in health and in sickness, in strength and in weakness, and in wealth and in poverty.

Our Hebrews reading reminds us of the high priest we have in Jesus. All have sinned, Paul tells us, and have fallen short of the glory of God (*Rom. 3:23*). Enter Jesus, Son of God and our eternal and perfect Mediator. He suffered to the point of death to offer to all who will believe in Him eternal forgiveness and new relationship with God. Our challenge is not to escape suffering but rather, in the middle of it, to seek Jesus and, in faith, trust Him and His plan for our life. Scripture is trustworthy and it reminds us that even in the midst of earthly suffering like Job's, God is always working out His good plan for those that believe. Believe, turn to God and live!

**– Tom Rowland,
PGW Vestry Member**

Notes:

First Lesson

1 Corinthians 10:1-22

Second Lesson

John 13:21-38

Psalms

142, 143

The church's practice of celebrating the Eucharist has its very origin in Maundy Thursday: it was that night that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and commanded the Church to practice it for the rest of the age. Jesus gives us a glorious gift, as Paul knew well: *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"* (1 Cor. 10:16). In some mysterious way, when we receive the Eucharistic bread, we participate in the Body of Christ, and when we receive the Eucharistic wine, we participate in the Blood of Christ. As one of Jesus' final acts before His coming salvific crucifixion, He gives the church a means by which to fellowship with Him and be united to Him even after He ascends to heaven. What a gift!

Maundy Thursday has always had a special place in my heart since I came to know what that name referred to. Growing up we just called it a "Communion service," and I love that our Prayer Book commends the practice of washing feet within a Maundy Thursday Eucharist, because that is how I grew up practicing Communion: foot washing was a part of every service. And yet, our passage focuses not on the foot washing (that's in the Morning Prayer lesson for Maundy Thursday), but what comes after it: the betrayal. Did you catch the order of events there? It may catch us off guard once we realize it: Jesus washed Judas' feet, and Judas participated in the great gift of the first Eucharist, even though Jesus knew Judas was just about to betray Him. And yet, this is just how Jesus is with rebellious, betraying humanity: calm, gracious, and with the offer of forgiveness should we repent. Let us, then, as the holiest of holy seasons begins tonight, *"test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord!"* (Lamentations 3:40)

**– Reverend Ryan Landes,
PGW Deacon & Theologian in Residence**

Notes:

APR.
14

**Collect for
Maundy
Thursday**

*Almighty Father,
whose most
dear Son, on
the night before
He suffered,
instituted the
Sacrament of
His Body and
Blood: Mercifully
grant that we
may receive
it in thankful
remembrance
of Jesus Christ
our Savior, who
in these holy
mysteries gives
us a pledge of
eternal life; and
who lives and
reigns with You
and the
Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever
and ever.
Amen.*

APR.
15

**Collect for
Good
Friday**

*Almighty God,
we beseech
You graciously
to behold this
Your family, for
whom our Lord
Jesus Christ was
willing to be
betrayed and
given into the
hands of sinners,
and to suffer
death upon the
Cross; who now
lives and reigns
with You and the
Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever
and ever.
Amen.*

First Lesson

1 Peter 2:11-25

Second Lesson

Luke 23:18-49

Psalms

102

Luke tells us that about the sixth hour, or noon, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour because the sunlight had failed. He then writes one of the most significant sentences in the entire Bible. *“And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.”*

In the temple this veil separated the holy place from the holy of holies. In the holy place all the services of the temple were carried out, but the holy of holies was the place of the presence of God. No one was allowed to enter the holy of holies except the High Priest. After an elaborate cleansing ritual, he was allowed in one time a year, on the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for the people of Israel. Failure to perform the cleansing ritual or to enter at any other time but the Day of Atonement would result in immediate death of the High Priest.

The curtain was four inches thick and made of blue, purple, and scarlet linen, finely twisted, with cherubim worked into it by skilled craftsmen. The cherubim takes us back to the angel that God posted at the gate of the Garden of Eden after he expelled Adam and Eve. Jesus’ death on the cross has destroyed the wall of separation between God and His children.

Paradise has been reopened and all are invited in to live in the presence of God because of Jesus, our true High Priest who died for us.

**– Reverend Ramsey Gilchrist,
PGW Priest Associate**

Notes:

First Lesson

1 Peter 4:1-8

Second Lesson

Luke 23:50-56

Psalms

91

It has often been hard for me to engage Holy Saturday. Today is April 16. That means it is springtime, warming-up time. The beach, the creeks are calling for play, for fun, for boating. It's time for a road trip, not a time to focus on suffering and death.

But, for those who have been walking *The Way of the Cross* this week, this is Holy Saturday. The worst that could possibly be done to Jesus has been done. It has been awful hearing the story again of betrayal, arrest, torture, abandonment of friends, and dying by slow asphyxiation. The cross itself? A device for prolonging pain and suffering. And, this was the fate of a *perfectly* innocent man...the unblemished human/lamb offering.

And, here is the story of a good, good man (John tells us Nicodemus joined Joseph). Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy and influential Jewish leader, had opposed the actions of the Sanhedrin Council. Joseph does what little can be done. Before Sabbath begins at Friday sunset, Joseph provides Jesus with a decent burial. Joseph claims the broken, shattered body of Jesus, respectfully wraps Him in a linen shroud, then lays Jesus in his own tomb. All is done. There must be a profound sense of finality, utter failure, and unfathomable loss.

What we know now, was not known on that first Easter. Today, we know Holy Saturday is merely a pregnant time between death and resurrection. I Peter gives us a powerful sense that even this day is not a wasted day for Jesus... *For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead...*We are given the insight that Jesus' self-offering is also for those who lived previously. What an awesome God!

Of course, this reading concludes with the marvelous New Testament default: *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.* The Geritol ad said "When you've got your health, you've got just about everything." Let's one up that and say, *When you've got the love of Jesus, you've got just about everything!*

**– Reverend Mike Lumpkin,
Senior Associate Rector**

APR.
16

**Collect for
Holy
Saturday**

*God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of Your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with Him the coming of the third day, and rise with Him to newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Collect For Easter Sunday

Almighty God, who through Your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may, by Your life-giving Spirit, be delivered from sin and raised from death; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

First Lesson*Romans 6***Second Lesson***Luke 24:13-43***Psalms***111, 113, 114*

There is always more with Jesus. As I read the words of Luke, I can imagine the first time He or the disciples first shared this news orally. I can imagine how short of breath they may have gotten telling one another this story of the Emmaus Road. That short of breath feeling that comes on all of us when trying to describe an emotional event like the birth of new baby! We start to tell this fabulous news and suddenly we are talking faster and smiling from ear to ear. This Emmaus story had to have brought a smile to the faces and hearts of all who heard it! A HOLY kind of..."and that's not all!" moment.

Yes, some women saw the resurrected Jesus, yes some of the men who followed him for three years saw an angel at the tomb and Yes, even Peter went to the tomb and returned home marveling. Peter, of all people! But that's not all...Today we heard that two men were walking away from the scene of the crime (the crucifixion) and suddenly the risen Lord appears to them. Flesh and blood, not instantly recognizable, but talking, walking and even eating with them. And that's not all...He opened their hearts and minds to the scriptures in a way that opened their eyes to who he was! And that's not all...As soon as they recognized Him...He vanished...poof! And that's not all... They ran all the way back to Jerusalem to tell others what they had seen and experienced!"

Easter 2022 ought to leave us all that breathless and excited to tell others the unbelievable truth! Easter morning comes with the greatest announcement of all!
Christos Anesti - Christ is Risen

"But that's not all"... we say, a little short of breath and smiling Jesus promises that today, in 2022, we can have that same resurrection life! And that's not all...If we believe that, receive His forgiveness for our sins, this risen Savior will pour His Holy Spirit in us! And that's not all...With Jesus and the Spirit come the promise gift of eternal life now and for eternity. And that's not all...Eternity with Jesus means there will never, ever, again be anything else we need to add Only Jesus. And that my friends should leave us breathless and smiling.

**– Reverend Gary N. Beson, II
Rector**

APR.
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Notes:





2022 HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE & SERVICES

- Ash Wednesday, March 2** • Noon Service At Historic Church
5:30pm Lenten Soup Supper
6pm Service At Historic Church
- Wednesday, March 9** • 5:30pm - 7pm Lenten Soup Supper, Teaching & Compline
- Wednesday, March 16** • 5:30pm - 7pm Lenten Soup Supper, Teaching & Compline
- Wednesday, March 23** • 5:30pm - 7pm Lenten Soup Supper, Teaching & Compline
- Wednesday, March 30** • 5:30pm - 7pm Lenten Soup Supper, Teaching & Compline
- Wednesday, April 6** • 5:30pm - 7pm Lenten Soup Supper
- Palm Sunday, April 10** • 8pm, 9pm & 11am Service At Historic Church
- Wednesday, April 13** • Noon Holy Wednesday Service At Historic Church
- Thursday, April 14** • 6pm Maundy Thursday Service At Historic Church
- Friday, April 15** • Noon & 6pm Good Friday Service At Historic Church
- Easter Sunday, April 17** • 6:45am Sunrise Service Cravens Grant
8am, 9am & 11am Easter Service At Historic Church



This Lenten Companion is brought to you by the generous donors of the 300th Anniversary Celebration.

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