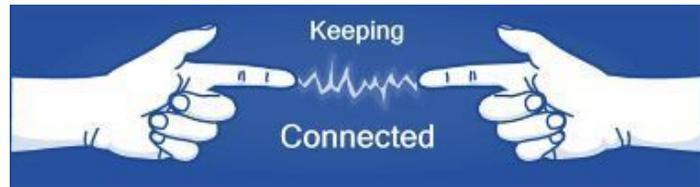


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For Sunday March 14 2021

Lent 4

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Crosstalk

Bishop Shane's Message in *Crosstalk*, March 2021

The Making of Brother Thankful

"...In mid-March last year, everything changed overnight. Words that had been abstract and distant suddenly became real and present: novel coronavirus; severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, called SARS-CoV-2; a disease called COVID-19; exponential spread; global pandemic; lockdown. The buildings that house our parish and community ministries closed on March 15, and our service to one another and the world shifted and pivoted as we did our very best to respond faithfully. Suddenly, we were reaching out more than ever before, to stay connected, to worship together, and to serve those we once gathered in our sanctuaries, halls, day programs and offices. We went online, on phones and on the street— whatever it took to be the Church in pandemic times, whatever it took to be Christ-like..."

[READ MORE...](#)

**Encouragement from the Ontario House of Bishops
On the First Anniversary of the Global Coronavirus Pandemic Declaration**

Grace and peace to you in Jesus Christ.

We pray that in this time of ongoing uncertainty Lent remains a time of drawing nearer to God through prayer, penitence, and generosity.

In a year of many firsts for our generation, we are approaching the first anniversary of the declaration of the pandemic by World Health Organization on March 11th. Only two days later this was followed by an announcement from the bishops that church buildings would be lockdown and in-person worship would be suspended as of March 15th .

The scripture verse that we have chosen to mark these anniversaries in our common journey is Jesus's arrival at the grave of his friend Lazarus - John 11.35, "Jesus wept."

[READ MORE...](#)

A Message from Rev. Jonathon All About Lent - Part 5

Last week I wrote about the dangers of engaging in Lenten practices such as fasting, self-denial, and alms-giving for the wrong reasons, namely in order to receive recognition and praise from others. There are other reasons why people may engage in Lenten practices which can be equally damaging.



It is true that we should be spending time during Lent re-committing ourselves to following Christ and re-focusing our efforts to live a better life. Lent is a time of repenting and returning to the Lord. And it is a time to prepare ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually for the celebration of Easter. But how we go about doing that is important.

There is a great variety within Christianity and among Christians as to how they prepare themselves for Easter and observe Lent. This has unfortunately led to some misunderstandings about what Christians should and should not be doing during Lent. Some people confuse traditional Lenten practices that have built up over time with the notion that there are rules about Lent that must be followed strictly.

In reality, there is a huge difference between a tradition and a rule. And there is nothing that you "must" or "should" be doing or not doing during Lent. Traditional Lenten practices are suggestions for things that you "could" be doing during Lent, if you find them to be helpful for your own spiritual growth.

This means that we should not be imposing Lenten practices on ourselves based on some notion of what we believe is the "right" or the "wrong" way to observe Lent. And it also means that we certainly should not be imposing our views about Lent on

others.

Lenten practices such as fasting, self-denial, and alms-giving can be difficult and unpleasant at times. Sometimes we need to experience things that are unpleasant in order to grow. But unfortunately the association between these practices and a sense of unease has led to the false notion that Lent must therefore be a time which is meant to be difficult and unpleasant.

Over time this misunderstanding has taken hold in the minds of many Christians. Some people believe that Lent is a difficult time which we are forced to endure every year. Some people can't wait for Lent to be over. There may even be a sense that if we are unpleasant and unhappy carrying out our Lenten practices, then it must be because we are doing them properly!

Worse still, some Christians have misunderstood the ultimate goal of Lenten practices. It is true that if practised correctly, various Lenten practices can bring us closer to God. But some Christians have made the mistake of thinking that these practices can actually result in us earning God's approval, and perhaps ultimately our salvation. They believe that if Lent is a time of repentance from our sins, and if fasting (for example) is an outward sign of our inner repentance, then by fasting we are "proving" to God that we have truly repented, and therefore God will truly forgive us and we will be able to get to heaven. This is a completely inaccurate understanding of how repentance and salvation work.

Christianity teaches that our salvation is a free gift from God. It is not something that we can earn ourselves. Being a follower of Christ does take hard work and sacrifice, but we can never earn what has already been freely given to us. Our Lenten practices, when undertaken with the right motives, can help us to be better Christians and better people, but they can never help us to get to heaven.

Only Jesus can do that.



What Me, Fast?

Fasting is one of the 3 traditional Lenten disciplines. Often we decide to "give up" coffee or

chocolate, or dessert, or something else that isn't good for us. And, of course, there's nothing wrong with these kinds of fasts. But there are so many different ways to fast!

Even if we can't "fast" for the whole of Lent, perhaps we could devote a day a week - or even part of a day - to try something like this:

A Fast for the Earth (Creation Care, Diocese of Toronto)

"What does a Lenten fast look like in a time of Covid? We have already sacrificed much in the last year: time with family and friends, community gatherings, and the give and take of personal interactions at work or play. While some of these changes have been good for the earth, many of us would like further guidance on faithful living in the face of the climate crisis."

This Lenten fast provides guidance, with weekly themes of : Meat Fast, Consumption Fast, Food Waste Fast, Water Fast, Injustice Fast, Electricity Fast, and Ignorance Fast. All culminating in an Easter Resurrection Feast.

[READ MORE ...](#)

And while fasting, we remember that the fast is not the focus of Lent. The future feast is the focus, and fasting is a way to prepare for that feast. (from [ANGLICAN COMPASS](#)).



Music is the language of the spirit. It opens the secret of life bringing peace, abolishing strife.

--Khalil Gibran

Recently, I have found myself needing encouragement. It's been such a slog, hasn't it?

But I found a suggestion online that is helping me: I've made a playlist of songs and hymns to help me keep focused on my walk with Jesus. Maybe it will help you too? Or prompt you to make a playlist of your own?

When you click on the linked titles, you will be taken to YouTube.

[Forty Days and Forty Nights: Songs of Praise](#) (BBC)

[Lord Jesus, Think on Me](#): sung by Magdala, *Hymns for All Seasons*

[Take up Thy Cross, the Saviour Said](#): sung by the Choir of St. Albans, Wickersley

[There's a Wideness in God's Mercy](#): sung by Nate Macy

[Ubi caritas](#) (Taize)

[Ubi caritas et amor](#) (Where there is charity and love): composed by Marcel Durufflé; sung by Kings College Choir

-- from Deane Zeeman

READINGS FOR THIS SUNDAY
Lent 4

**Click on a reading to see the text from the
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) on the Bible Gateway**

First reading: [Numbers 21:4-9](#)

Psalm [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#)

Second reading: [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

Gospel: [John 3:14-21](#)



Steadfast God, you reach out to us in mercy even when we rebel against your holy call and prefer to walk in disobedience rather than in the way of your divine truth. Soften our hearts with the warmth of your love, that we may know your Son alive within us, redeeming us and raising us up into your eternal presence. Amen.

In the World. Pray for the Iglesia Anglicana de Chile. In our Companion Diocese of Jerusalem and The Middle East, we pray for St. Paul's Church, Shefa'Amr, Israel.

In Canada. Pray for The Rt. Rev. Bruce Myers, Bishop, and the people and clergy of the Diocese of Quebec.

In our Diocese. Pray for the Rt. Rev. Shane Parker, our bishop and Michael Bird, our assisting bishop; and for St. Paul's, Almonte and their [our] priest The Reverend Jonathon Kouri.

In Our Community. We ask God's blessing on local faith communities and on their ministries and, we pray for the people and leaders of this town of Almonte and the surrounding communities that the Lord will help us contribute to its well-being. We pray for the volunteers, staff and clients of the our local hospice initiative, Hone Hospice North Lanark.

We pray for the health, safety and well-being of our neighbours in the face of increased numbers of covid-19 cases in our area.

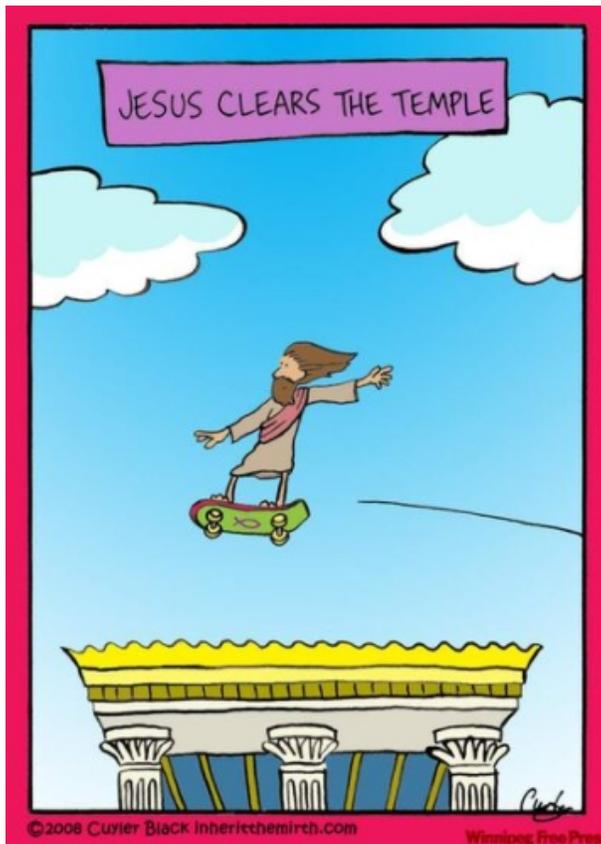
In Our Parish. We pray for Jonathon, our priest, for ourselves and for each other.

We ask for God's healing hand to cover our members who are struggling with health issues.

We ask for God's wisdom for our Parish Council as they meet on March 17.

We ask for God's blessing on our members Kathy Aird, Jim and Joan Anderson, Ron and Katrina Ayling, Robert and Vicki Bassett, and Bertha Basurto.

We remember our neighbors, especially Assad, Alsit, Lana and Elias.



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