

March

Dear St. Timothy Folk,

We are now well into Lent. The forty days of Lent are patterned after Jesus' forty days in the wilderness following his baptism in the Jordan. The Book of Common Prayer in the liturgy for Ash Wednesday gives us an Invitation to a Holy Lent (spoken by Celebrant): "The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting.

This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith."

"I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." (BCP page 264)

The Sundays in Lent are not part of the forty days – even in Lent Sundays are feast days, celebrating the Resurrection. This year for the five Sundays between Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday, we are using the traditional language and liturgy of Rite I from the Prayerbook, and the Healey Willan and Shubert musical settings for the service music.

On the first Sunday in Lent we reflected on the various experiences of wilderness we might have. On the second Sunday in Lent, with Peter's challenge to Jesus and Jesus' challenge to the disciples (and us) we reflected on expectations and letting go. "Letting go" is the theme of Bp. Wright's 2024 Lenten meditations [[https:// episcopalatlanta.org/lent24/](https://episcopalatlanta.org/lent24/)]

Other resources are available for focusing on our spiritual lives during Lent. Sunday, March 3rd, a new book study will begin on Barbara Brown Taylor's recent book *Holy Envy* led by Charlie Phelps and Kelli De Guire. Some will choose to read through one of the Gospels during Lent or choose one of the daily meditation series. A more light-hearted option to add to your Lenten days is Lent Madness, offered by Forward Movement, publishers of *Forward Day by Day*. Each weekday two "saints", drawn from groups of both ancient and contemporary examples, go head to head, voted on by those who read their stories online. The "winners" go forward in brackets (which look like the collegiate basketball brackets) until one emerges victorious for the year, being awarded the "Golden Halo". It's a fun way to learn about folk who have left a lasting effect on the Christian faith. Check out [https:// lentmadness.org](https://lentmadness.org) .

This year the last eight days of March are Holy Week, beginning with **Palm Sunday/ Sunday of the Passion** on March 24th. We will begin by celebrating- ing Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem with lessons, psalms, hymns, and waving palms. Then we will transition during the

service to the more solemn recitation of the Passion story. **Maundy Thursday** is the remembrance of the institution of the Eucharist. **Good Friday** we will hear again of Jesus' betrayal, trial, and crucifixion from the Gospel of John. Walking through these stories prepares us for the wonderful good news of Easter: Christ has conquered death, and we share in his Resurrection.

May you continue to find wisdom and blessings in your Lenten journey, and joy in celebrating the Resurrection.

Blessings, Rev. Linda +