

People of Promise

Lent 2018



“... after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” The Prophet Jeremiah

Recently in a sermon I confessed my love for the Old Testament, better known as the Hebrew Scriptures. Needless to say it got me some raised eyebrows and funny looks. Really?? Isn't that the part of the Bible with the violent, bloodthirsty God? No doubt this part of the bible can be hard to understand and parts of it seem far removed from the 21st century digital world that we inhabit. But what I love about the Hebrew Scriptures are the stories that try to make sense of how we relate to God and to each other. These stories weave together to create the grand mosaic story of covenant or, better yet, the story of the covenant God.

In our present age covenant is a word that doesn't resonate much anymore. Outside of particular religious traditions it's not a word that is used often, but not so in the ancient world. For the Hebrew people, in particular, covenant was central to their self-understanding. After all it was God who had called their ancestor Abraham into covenant, promising that through Abraham all the world would be blessed. After liberating the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land, God enters into a covenant with them making them a chosen people. They are called to be a people of holiness and righteousness, justice and love. In fact, the most repeated word in the Hebrew Scriptures is covenant in the form of *hesed*, which is pictured in tattoo form on the front cover of this flyer. *Hesed* is translated many ways including covenant love, faithfulness and steadfastness. Covenant is about promise and relationship. As the prophet Jeremiah says in pointing to a new covenant that will go beyond the old: "I will be their God, and they will be my people." As the story unfolds we see that God, and not the people, is the one who is truly faithful to the covenant relationship.

For Christians too, covenant is central to who we are. Without an understanding of the covenant-keeping God of the Hebrew Scriptures, the story of Jesus and the church make no sense. As contemporary Christian writer Rachel Held Evans says, "When the people of God abandoned the covenant of love and fidelity, drawn as we are by the appeal of shallow, empty pleasures, God removed every possible obstruction to the covenant by being faithful for us, by becoming like us and subjecting himself to the very worst within us, loving us all the way to the cross and all the way out of the grave."

It is not by mistake, then, that the notion of covenant gets associated with baptism by the earliest Christians. Nor was it by chance that the Lenten season of baptismal preparation used the covenant stories of the Hebrew Scriptures to tell new Christians of their place in the story of the covenant people of God. This Lent we return once again to these stories...the stories of Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses and the Hebrew people, Jeremiah and promised covenant renewal. What will they tell us about God and ourselves?

Our Lenten journey this year, then, is one of promise - the promise of the never-failing, steadfast love of God. The promise of our place in the great story of God and God's covenant people. Also it is a reminder that this covenant love cannot be kept to ourselves but must be shared - shared with each other, but also shared with all whom we meet.

Lenten Lunches

Mental Health: In This Together

On Thursdays from 12:15 – 1:15 p.m., come and hear a variety of speakers share how faith has helped them overcome obstacles in their lives. You are invited to join us at St. Mark's for a brown bag lunch and a guest speaker. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions.

February 22: Grant Fitzpatrick – Canadian Mental Health Association (NL)

March 1: Tina Davies – Survivors of Suicide

March 8: Cathy Skinner – Eating Disorders Foundation

March 15: Rev. Robert

March 22: Boyd Merrill – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



The Daily Offices

“The function of prayer is not to establish a routine; it is to establish a relationship with the God who is in relationship with us...to bring us in touch with ourselves.”
~ Saint Benedict, 530 AD



Once again during the season of Lent, as part of our parish focus on spirituality, we will be keeping a rhythm of prayer in the daily offices Monday through Friday. Morning Prayer will be at 8:30 a.m. Monday-Friday. Evening Prayer will be Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

This year (for the first time) we will be broadcasting the morning daily office on Facebook Live. That means you can join in live at 8:30 a.m. or pray along at a time that is more convenient for you. The office is simple and only takes about 15 minutes. With this new approach you can pray along via your computer, tablet or smartphone at home, the office or in public transit.

If you are unable to join us for this set time of prayer we will be making resources available so that you can keep the offices, morning and evening, at your own time.

The Future of the Church or the Church of the Future?

On the Wednesday evenings of Lent, in the context of prayer and contemplation, we will wrestle with a complex question: The future of the church or the church of the future? Our conversation partners will be speakers from other Christian denominations. They will offer their reflections on how they and their denominational communities are dealing with this question.



February 21: Rev. Robert will start us off by introducing the question at hand and offering some examples from the wider church.

February 28: Kevin Hoddinott – Pathways Community Church (Salvation Army)

March 7: Tony Bidgood – Roman Catholic

March 14: Jason Normore – Local Church (PAONL)

March 21: Rebecca Pike – United Church

A Lenten “Carbon Fast”

Lent is a time of fasting, self-reflection and self-discipline. A different kind of fast is worth considering: a carbon fast. By this, we mean doing what we can to reduce our environmental impacts and contributions to climate change. This is partly creation care and partly taking care of ourselves and our communities. By reducing the amount of garbage we generate, the types of foods we eat and the amount we drive, we can make small but meaningful changes for our world: a cleaner environment and (hopefully) more time for our own wellbeing. Here are a few examples of actions we can take, and their benefits:

- By choosing to drive less and combining errands, we can have more time to read books, call a friend or play games with loved ones.
- By creating less garbage, we can eat healthier foods (fresh food does not come in cans) and find time to explore other hobbies (e.g. baking cookies instead of buying them in a plastic container).
- By changing the types of food we eat we can choose to eat food grown locally, which reduces the carbon footprint, as well as supporting local growers and building the market for such products.

These may sound like small, insignificant actions, but from small actions come big change.





HOLY WEEK

The Passion with the Liturgy of the Palms

Saturday, March 24 at 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 25 at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Today Jesus entered the Holy City of Jerusalem in triumph. His path was lined with palms and shouts of praise but lead to self-giving, suffering and death.

Stations of the Cross

Tuesday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Walking around the church, we stop at fourteen stations to reflect upon various points of our Lord's Passion and death.



Triduum



The Three Days

The Three Days or the *Triduum Sacrum* is the name given to the three days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, commemorating the final meal, the betrayal and arrest, and the trial, execution and burial of Jesus the Christ.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m. - Maundy Thursday worship

On the night before his death Jesus set an example for his disciples by washing their feet, an act of humble service. Foot washing is done in the context of the Eucharist. The altar is stripped in preparation for Good Friday.

9:00 p.m. to midnight – Gethsemane Watch

Jesus said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

Good Friday

Friday, March 30, at 9:30 a.m. - Children’s Liturgy

12 noon - The Celebration of the Lord’s Passion

A time to remember the great price Jesus paid as he willingly stretched his arms on the cross for those he loved.

Easter Vigil

Saturday, March 31, at 7:30 p.m.

This is the first service of Easter and includes the Service of Light, the Renewal of Baptismal Vows (possibly a Baptism) and Holy Eucharist.

Easter Day

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Sunday, April 1 at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.