

The Messenger

All Saints' March, 2017

From the Priest...

Doors of many kinds hold fascination for many people.
Often they are designed with clear intension –
To be welcoming, to be esthetically pleasing,
To speak boldly and/or symbolically about
The space being entered.
(There's an example we know about at All Saints: **red** church doors.
They've always been a symbol of sanctuary,
Of safety for those who enter;
And they're usually marked by a cross.)
There are some doors we rush longingly to enter,
Like those familiar and comfortable ones of home.
Others are approached with hesitation and timidity,
Like maybe a neighbor's house after an emergency call,
A hospital ER at an early A.M. hour, or
The entry to the home of an estranged relative or friend.
There's a unique kind of feeling associated
With attic or basement doors in old, mysterious houses.
Doors, while just inanimate wood, or metal or glass,
Always seem to have *personalities*
Derived from what's on the other side of them.
And that has an impact on the way we move toward them.

Let's think for a moment about a more *symbolic* kind of door.
It's **Lent** – a stretch of days
(40 of them – actually 46 if you were to count the Sundays).
These days come before the celebration of Easter.
Lent is a formidable door that involves a hard journey if we take it seriously.
It is demanding – of discipline and commitment –
And it leads to gazing upon one who suffers, *the suffering servant*
Whose reward for genuine love is his brutal execution.
It is a potentially disturbing sight for sure.

This door has several components, at least figuratively.
There are some **glass windows** in it. Through them we are enabled to see:
The Jesus who resisted temptation to make *human* use of his *divine* strength,
While among an ever extending line of humans who are unable to resist
The abuse of *human* strengths wanting to defy the *divine*.
The Evangelist John proclaims how much God loves the world
With arguably the most remembered verse in the Bible –
The 16th verse of his Gospel's 3rd chapter;
There's a woman who found *living water* at a town's well;
Also a man's congenital sightlessness that was transformed to *vision*;
And the close friend whose lifeless, entombed body was restored to life
Before the tearful eyes of his sisters and the whole town.

There's some *steel* in this door. It could be called *hardness of heart*.
There's plenty of that in self-righteous *religious people*,
Paranoid *officials*, a governor and king,
An angry and incited *mob*, and dutiful *soldiers*.

The *hard wood* of this door's make up
Is a Cross, an instrument of torture.
This gruesome tool of death brings the culmination
Of a *passion* that we'd never seen before,
Nor have we since.

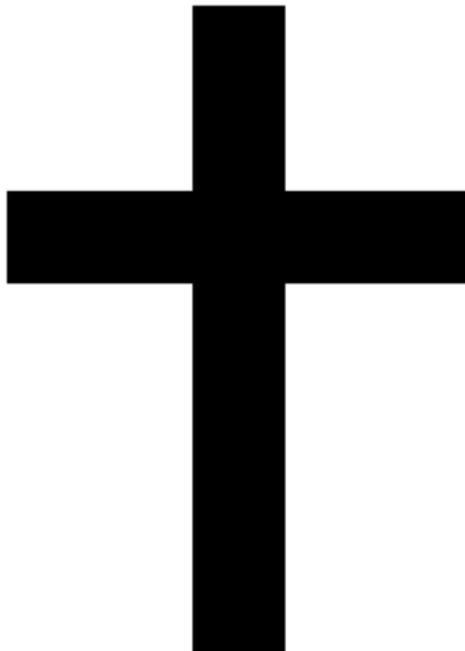
But by far the strongest *material* in this door
Is the undaunted and tenacious commitment
Of God's own Son, the one we know as Jesus.

Lent's door is not for the faint hearted.
Its images are often distressing,
And its obligations are demanding.
But it is a door through which we must walk
Because it's the entry way to restoration, re-creation,
To Salvation!!

One does not come to resurrection
Except by traveling through The Tomb.
Lent provides the *door* that opens to the journey.
So we're invited, yet again, to enter
As it swings open to us. Come along –
It leads to **Easter!!!**
And it brings us home.

Peace for the journey,

Fred



Lent at All Saints', 2017

On **March 1** Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**. To start the penitential season at All Saints we'll worship together at **7:00 PM**. There will be the traditional Imposition of Ashes which calls us to the confession of our sins; there will be Eucharist to remind us that God is gracious and forgiving; and there will be time for us to contemplate God's Word, specifically the passage in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus' teaching about "piety" is reported.

On the **Sundays** in (notice it's not "of") Lent, we'll focus on some of Jesus' experiences that reflect faith that changes life for people he encounters. Now, back to that distinction between "in" and "of" that's pointed out in the previous sentence. The Season of Lent, as you know, is defined as **forty days** preceding Easter. However, if you literally count back from the date of Easter you will get **46**. **That's because** the Sundays in that stretch of days are not counted. The reason: Sundays are always a celebration and recollection of Jesus' Resurrection. So there are always 6 Sundays in (not "of") the Season of Lent.

During Lent this year – mid week, specifically **Wednesdays (March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5)** – we'll gather for a time of spiritual contemplation. Each of those evenings will begin with a simple meal of soup and sandwiches. The soup will be provided – you bring the sandwiches (to share). Those evenings will include group discussions of some very provocative words in the Christian language, **words that are very familiar to us but which have become confusing and misunderstood** because of the wide variety of understandings and interpretations that have grown out of the church's history of denominationalism and divided traditions. (See the article elsewhere in this Messenger that gives some details about these discussions.) The evenings will conclude with our worshiping together using the contemporary musical setting we learned called Holden Evening Prayer.

As intended, this season's programs, events and worship are preparation for our celebration of the Festival of the Lord's Resurrection. During the final week which starts with The Sunday of the Passion (or Palm Sunday) when there will be Blessing and Distribution of the Palms as well as special worship on both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. As we make the annual journey to Jerusalem, the Cross and the Empty Tomb, we invite you to be a part of all that takes place.

Mid-week Lenten Series at All Saints'

Beginning on Wednesday, March 8, there will be a **five session series** of gatherings at All Saints' to give us an opportunity for faith growth and conversations. They will be held each time in the Parish House starting at **6:30**, and all the evenings begin with a light meal of **soup and sandwiches**. The soup will be provided and all participants are asked to bring sandwiches that can be shared. The **discussions** will follow the meal, and the evenings will conclude with worship as we sing together the melodic **Holden Evening Prayer**. Remember that Lent begins on March 1, Ash Wednesday. At **7:00 PM** we'll worship with the **Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist**.

About the Mid-Week Series: In 2011 a well-known theologian named Marcus Borg wrote a book entitled *Speaking Christian – Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Power and How They Can Be Restored*. Marcus Borg was a New Testament scholar, theologian and author. An American, he was among the most widely known and influential voices in progressive Christianity. Borg was a major figure in historical Jesus scholarship. He retired as Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University in 2007 and died eight years later at the age of 72. On May 31, 2009, he was installed as the first canon theologian at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, Oregon. *Speaking Christian* discusses no less than 22 familiar Christian words. Some of those words will be the subject of our Lenten discussions. While this will

not be a study of that book, it will be guided by many of the points the book raises. Many of the questions with which we wrestle in our conversations will reflect the questions Borg insist we must be asking in our time.

Among others, the words that we'll specifically address are *God, Sin, Righteousness, Born Again and Forgiveness/Repentance*. We'll examine and discuss *if* and *how* these words (that are so much a part of our Christian tradition and its teaching) have lost their power; and, we'll give thought to how they can be restored to their places of meaning and importance.

Lectionary Readings for March

March 1 Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 Return to the Lord, your God.

Psalms 51:1-17 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10 Now is the day of salvation.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 The practice of faith.

March 5 Lent 1

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Inez Gardner, Lector

Psalms 32 Mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

8:00 Julian Gardner, Lay Reader, Chalice
11:00 Gaynell Jennings, Lay Reader, Chalice

Romans 5:12-19 Death came through one; life comes through one.

Jack Barber, Lector

Matthew 4:1-11 The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness for forty days.

March 12 Lent 2

Genesis 12:1-4a The blessing of God upon Abram.

8:00 Joanne Parrott, Lay Reader, Chalice

Jennifer Quinn, Lector

Psalms 121 I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the Lord.

11:00 Pat Barnes, Lay Reader, Chalice

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 The promise to those who share Abraham's faith.

Carl Burke, Lector

John 3:1-17 The mission of Christ: to save the world.

March 19 Lent 3

Exodus 17:1-7 Water from the rock in the wilderness.

8:00 Julian Gardner, Lay Reader, Chalice

Inez Gardner, Lector

Psalms 95 Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

11:00 Scott Barber, Lay Reader, Chalice

Romans 5:1-11 Reconciled to God by Christ's death.

Miles Gregory, Lector

John 4:5-42 The woman at the well.

March 26 Lent 4

1 Samuel 16:1-13 David is chosen and anointed.

8:00 Joanne Parrott, Lay Reader, Chalice

Ginny Orvedahl, Lector

Psalms 23 You anoint my head with oil.

11:00 Chris Lehman, Lay Reader

Ephesians 5:8-14 Awake from sleep, live as children of light.

Pat Barnes, Chalice

John 9:1-41 A man born blind.

Ruthie Gregory, Lector



Hymn Notes

Paul Gerhardt was the writer of one of the greatest hymns about the Passion of Christ, *O Sacred Head Now Wounded*. He was born on March 12, 1607 at Grafenhaynichen, near Wittenberg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany.

He enrolled at the University of Wittenberg in 1628. In 1655, he married Anna Maria Barthold. In 1651, Gerhardt was appointed, at the recommendation of the Berlin clergy, Lutheran Probst (chief pastor) at Mittenwalde, near Berlin. Then, in 1657 he returned to Berlin as third assistant pastor of St. Nicholas' church. However, Gerhardt became involved in the conflict between Elector Friedrich Wilhelm (who was of the Reformed Church) and the Lutheran clergy of Berlin. Ultimately, Gerhardt was deposed from his office in February 1666, but he remained in Berlin. In November 1668, he accepted the post of archidiaconus at Lübben an der Spree, was installed in June, 1669, and remained there until his death (May 27, 1676). The motto on his portrait at Lübben read "Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus" (a theologian sifted in Satan's sieve).

The "sieve" referred to in that motto was surely derived from the journey that took his life through tragedies of great proportion. He made his way in spite of them with great faith which is reflected in many of his hymns. Altogether he wrote 133 of them, many of which were strong "songs of the heart" that possess a high degree of warmth and compassion. Perhaps his greatest sorrow was from the deaths of those he loved. His wife and a son died after three of their children had died earlier. But this left him alone with one son who was just six years old.

Paul Gerhardt prepared his "testament" on his 70th birthday for that son. It offers insight into this important writer of many great chorales. It is filled with expressions of his deep faith and confidence in God's promises. Surely that had guided his life, and certainly it is reflected most articulately in the hymns that he wrote. It concludes with these words: *Pray diligently, study something honorable, live peacefully, serve honestly, and remain unmoved in your faith and confessing. If you do this, you too will one day die and depart from this world willingly, joyfully, and blessedly. Amen.*

O Sacred Head Now Wounded is really based on a 12th century Latin hymn generally ascribed to Bernard of Clairvaux, a preacher of the Second Crusade and one of the most brilliant and spiritual of all the Latin hymn-writers. It achieved fame and recognition five centuries later when revived by Gerhardt in his German language.

The tune to which this hymn is set is a simple melody that, in 1601, had been an adaptation of a German folksong by Hans Leo Hassler. It is named *Herzlich thut mich verlangen*. But it was not even until Bach molded the tune into the "Passion Chorale" that it became classic. That chorale is regarded as one of the masterpieces of sacred music.



March, 2017 at All Saints'

1 Wed	Ash Wednesday, Worship 7:00 PM
2	
3	
4 Sat	Diocesan Convention, Elect Bishop Daughters of the King, Quiet Day 10:00 AM
5 Sun	Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 8:00 AM Adult Education 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist, Rite 2 11:00 AM
6 Mon	Handbells 5:30 PM Vestry 6:30 PM
7	
8 Wed	Lenten Mid-week Program 6:30 PM
9	
10	
11	
12 Sun	Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 8:00 AM Adult Education 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist, Rite 2 11:00 AM
13 Mon	Handbells 5:30 PM
14	
15 Wed	Lenten Mid-week Program & Worship 6:30 PM
16	
17	
18	
19 Sun	Holy Eucharist 8:00 AM Adult Education 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 11:00 AM
20	Handbells 5:30 PM
21	
22 Wed	Lenten Mid-week Program & Worship 6:30 PM
23	
24	
25	
26 Sun	Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 8:00 AM Adult Education 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist, Rite 2 11:00 AM
27 Mon	Handbells 5:30 PM
28	
29 Wed	Lenten Mid-week Program & Worship 6:30 PM
30	
31	

A Moment for Liturgy

There's a long standing practice in the Liturgical tradition that "drops" (or eliminates, or "puts away," or some say "bury") the **ALLELUIA** throughout the Season of Lent. Like many other things we do regularly in worship by tradition of custom, we sometimes wonder **why**. So let's look at the *why of putting away the Alleluia*.

The word itself comes from the Hebrew word *hallelu yah*. It means, "**Praise the Lord!**" In Christian worship "alleluia" has been used for centuries to say that very same thing. Because the Season of Lent is one marked by solemnity and penitence, the "alleluia" is thought to reflect kind of joyous tone that is not altogether in keeping with that more solemn mood. Thus, it is "suspended" during the days of preparation for Easter's great Festival. Adding back the "alleluia" on Easter increases the jubilant nature of the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection.

The elimination of the *Alleluia* during Lent goes back at least to the Fifth Century in the worship practices of the western Church. The custom of actually *bidding farewell* to Alleluia began at some time in the Middle Ages. An Eleventh Century hymn entitled *Alleluia, song of gladness* makes reference to the practice and gives the indication that it was already in place by that time.

Alleluia, song of gladness,
voice of joy that cannot die;
alleluia is the anthem
ever dear to choirs on high;
in the house of God abiding
thus they sing eternally.

Alleluia thou resoundest,
true Jerusalem and free;
alleluia, joyful mother,
all thy children sing with thee;
but by Babylon's sad waters
mourning exiles now are we.

Alleluia cannot always
be our song while here below;
alleluia our transgressions
make us for a while forego;
for the solemn time is coming
when our tears for sin must flow.

Therefore in our hymns we pray thee,
grant us, blessed Trinity,
at the last to keep thine Easter
in our home beyond the sky;
there to thee forever singing
alleluia joyfully.

Some congregations have a practice of *literally burying* the *Alleluia*. On the Last Sunday of the Epiphany Season they recess from worship and ceremonially place in the ground a banner or carefully made sign bearing the word **Alleluia**. It is one of those symbolic actions that especially appeals to children who like to have an active part in such visible experiences. Likewise, such graphic experiences speak to adults as well. That is just one way the return of the *Alleluia* enhances the joyful celebration of Easter Day.

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