

Lent at King's Chapel



Image © Kent Wittenburg

A Lenten Journey, 2021

Ash Wednesday, February 17 – Easter, April 4

Dear Friends and Members of King's Chapel,

Lent is the forty-day season between Ash Wednesday (February 17) and Easter Sunday (April 4). Mirroring the forty days of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness before his public ministry, Lent invites us on our own journey in the wilderness to freedom and the rebirth of Easter. It is a time not only of solemnity and quiet reflection, but also of preparation and anticipation—of practicing justice and joy in fellowship with God and one another. "Lent" derives from the Old English *lencten*, "springtime." In Latin, *lente* means "slowly." Thus, Lent points us to the coming of spring and invites us to slowness, simplicity, and solidarity, that we might have an abiding sense of God's presence, an unguarded sense of ourselves, and a deepened awareness of the needs of this world.

May your Lenten Journey with others at King's Chapel prepare you for the new world ahead.

In Love,

The Rev Joy Fallon, Senior Minister

David Waters, Minister for Education and Membership

This booklet, the work of many hands, has been prepared by members of King's Chapel, hoping it might help guide us in the great moral and practical tests that lie before us as a congregation, as a faith, and as a species. How will we treat one another and our world?

Weekly gatherings by Zoom Fridays at 5-6 PM, to share reflections on these materials, hosted by the primary editors of that week's offerings. Zoom meetings open at 4:50. Session officially starts at 5:00 PM.

February 26 Week 1: Julie Hyde and Dorie Seavey

March 5, Week 2: Kent Wittenburg and Betsy Peterson

March 12, Week 3: Carol Genovese and Amanda Pickett

March 19, Week 4: Julie Hyde and Betsy Peterson

March 26, Week 5: Dorie Seavey and David Waters

Obtain link by registering; information available at www.kings-chapel.org/lent

Worship services. Our regular services will continue on Sundays February 14, 21 and 28, March 7, 14, and 21:

Morning Light by Zoom at 9 AM, a live service with brief homily, piano, and opportunity to pray together. Obtain link by registering; information available at www.kings-chapel.org/lent.

Morning Prayer, our traditional service with full choir and sermon, taken from our King's Chapel Book of Common Prayer, pre-recorded and available by 7 AM on Sundays at www.kings-chapel.org and on the King's Chapel YouTube Channel.

Special services on Ash Wednesday, in Holy Week, and on Easter Sunday are listed on the back cover.

A LENTEN JOURNEY, 2021

We enter into the winter darkness of the Lenten season as part of the seasonal rhythm of our faithful journey towards the light of renewal. But this Lent feels different.

Over the past year, our country has been roiled by one terrible event after another: Covid-19, and then devastating wildfires, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Millions of our fellow citizens are out of work, small businesses are collapsing, and food and housing insecurity are at record highs. Our “essential workers”—many of whom receive the lowest wages in our society—stand in sharp contrast to industry titans making pandemic fortunes in the hundreds of billions of dollars. The deepest fractures in our society have been revealed by brutal police killings of African Americans, efforts to overturn the presidential election, and then the recent assault on our nation’s Capitol by a mob with strong ties to white supremacy. Truly, we have been living in extraordinary times.

But Lent approaches, and Lent is traditionally a time for prayer and reflection, fasting, and almsgiving – a time that can bring us closer to God and each other, and build new resolve. This year’s Lenten Program is structured as a journey of the soul. We suggest some fresh ways to understand fasting and almsgiving not as deprivation but as opportunities for growth.

Week One, In the Wilderness. We begin with an inward turn into the wilderness and isolation that Covid and the ensuing shutdown have brought for many of us. Everything familiar has been thrown up into the air with profound ramifications for our lives. We find ourselves in a liminal space—a threshold between the known and the unknown. But while uncomfortable, the unknown can also generate productive and creative new thinking. What have we learned?

Week Two, Our Planet is Crying. The next stop is attention to our planet. We have brought the earth to a crisis and jeopardized its future. How can we now repair and honor the sacred web-of-life gifts we have been given?

Week Three, Compassion Across Racial and Economic Divides. We then focus on human suffering. The year’s events have exposed the deepest fractures in our society—economic, racial, and political. How do we embrace, engage, and make sense of the suffering around us?

Week Four, The Great Reset. “Let the disorder in and allow it to teach you” (Joanna Macy). We now live in an era that demands holistic thinking: a deep awareness that all systems are interdependent and connected. Climate justice, social justice, and economic justice are not separate spheres. This place of reckoning offers the possibility of transition and transformation. What old ways could you let go of and what is the new life to which you are drawn?

Week Five, Faithful Citizenship. In this last week, we contemplate how to live with greater integrity and character in an unpredictable and often unjust world that is offering us an evolutionary moment. How do we overcome our culture of excessive materialism and individualism and embrace our duty to the human community and planet as an essential part of faithful citizenship? How can we support each other to cultivate a renewed ethic of “faith in action” grounded in courage and sacrifice, faith and love, and infinite hope?

WEEK ONE

IN THE WILDERNESS

Image © Kent Wittenburg

THEMES

The practice of wilderness is fundamental to Lent. For many of us, the pandemic's darkness, groundlessness, and confusion have brought an inward turning.

This interiority has at times felt like liminal space--a "parenthesis" or threshold space between the known and the unknown next.

Richard Rohr describes the liminal paradox as "a disturbing time and space that not only breaks us down," but also offers a pathway to feeling our way into a new beginning.

OPENING PRAYER

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart
from that desire.
And I know that, if I do this,
You will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore I will trust you always
though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton,
King's Chapel Book of Common Prayer, page 166

Psalm 63: 1-8

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah

O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where
there is no water.
So I have looked upon you in the
sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better
than life,
my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on
your name.
My soul is satisfied as with a rich
feast,
and my mouth praises you with
joyful lips
when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the
watches of the night;
for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings
I sing for joy.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Image © Kent Wittenburg

A LENTEN MEDITATION

A TIME IN THE WILDERNESS

by JULIE HYDE

As with Jesus' time alone in the desert,
driven away from security and beloved
companions, we too have been unwillingly
thrown into an unfamiliar, dangerous place —
by the pandemic. Hunger and thirst, for human
touch and children's hugs, open us to feel
even more strongly the love in our hearts and
to practice new ways to reach one another.

We ask ourselves to face the truth of what
is, and to feel compassion for all who are living
in fear; experiencing injustice and despair. We
lament, and build back spirit with Love. We are
practicing how to relinquish what has been
familiar and comforting, even to excess, and
strengthening our commitment to sufficiency
for everyone in need, even strangers.

Jesus' vision came clear in the wilderness.
May it be so for us all.

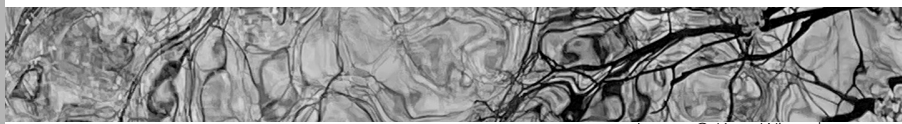


Image © Kent Wittenburg

READING

Between Two Worlds

The global pandemic...is an example of an
immense, collective liminal space" -- a betwixt and
between space where "we can begin to think and
act in new ways.

Richard Rohr

<https://cac.org/between-two-worlds-2020-04-26/>

REFLECTION

ON PILGRIMAGE

by EMMA HEALY

“Do *your* Camino,” pilgrims are known to say. These words have come to me often this past year, a year of great difficulties, a year of new distances, and a year in which a global pandemic has redefined our lives. In the winter especially, I am reminded of pilgrimage, because it is during this time of year that three times, I have chosen the cheapest flight to Spain, endured a layover or two, and carried what I could on my back to walk in the footsteps of those who came before me. The Camino de Santiago (the Way of Saint James) is a pilgrimage route that has existed for over a millennia, and modern pilgrims still walk the trail that winds its way from southwestern France to northwestern Spain. The five hundred mile journey ends in Santiago de Compostela, a medieval-era town whose cathedral holds the bones of Saint James the Greater, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus.

This journey is a spiritual practice of walking, with nothing but the steps of my feet and the methodical beat of my walking stick to accompany me. I love the intrinsic contradiction of this place. Imagery of Spain so often calls to mind the violent rush of bullfighting, Flamenco dancers with rustling dresses in a riot of color, the sensual strum of a guitar with its intricate notes like fingers caressing a body, the heat of it, Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia –yet Northern Spain is another world altogether. My heart yearns for misty hillsides cloaked in a quiet haze and a murmur of green, of a place of fog and the threat of rain, for the castles fallen into disrepair built by knights in days long since passed, in a land as unfamiliar to me as I am to it. Somewhere in those long days and tired nights, I find something sacred. And somehow, thousands of miles from anything familiar, I find a sense of home.

During our Lenten journey this year, we are reminded of wandering in the wilderness, just as the countless pilgrims who have walked the Camino de Santiago have done, leaving echoes of their own journeys. While modern pilgrims enjoy the benefits of signposts and maps, guidebooks and GPS, medieval pilgrims had to rely on vague instructions and local knowledge. During this past year, we too have been grasping for direction, strangers in a strange land as COVID-19 has reshaped our reality. Today’s Camino has infamous yellow arrows painted and posted along The Way, telling pilgrims where to go. At forks in the road, pilgrims will scratch arrows into the soil, helping those who follow. As we walk in the footsteps of those who have come before, let the arrows that guide us be those of justice, peace, and above all, love.

PRACTICE

We each find spiritual dimensions where the divine can reach us in the ebbs and flows of our lives, often illuminated by spiritual practices. Below are some suggestions:

Fasting-based spiritual practices:

Fasting from certain foods
(for example: meat, sugar, etc.)

Fasting from certain drinks
(for example: alcohol, soda, etc.)

Fasting from unnecessary purchases

Fasting from companies that damage the world and the environment:

Fasting from purchasing chocolate that uses slave labor
more info:
<https://www.slavefreechocolate.org/ethical-chocolate-companies>

Fasting from purchasing brands that test on animals
more info:
<https://crueltyfree.peta.org/>

ALMSGIVING

Consider supporting charitable efforts to address the food insecurity and hunger faced by so many families in Massachusetts during the ongoing pandemic and economic contraction.

Greater Food Bank of
Boston

<https://www.gbfb.org>

The One Chelsea Fund

<https://unitedwaymassbay.org/covid-19/local-funds/chelsea/>

READING

"And who would not want to be here at this time? I would hate to miss out on this! ...Being fully present to fear, to gratitude, to all that is -- this is the practice of mutual belonging.

As living members of the living body of earth, we are grounded in that kind of belonging. We will find more ways to remember, celebrate and affirm this deep knowing: we belong to each other, we belong to Earth. Even when faced with cataclysmic changes, nothing can ever separate us from her. We are already home."

—Joanna Macy

Image © Kent Wittenburg



CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Spirit, the more I contemplate your life in my heart, and Christ whom you make present within me, the more presumptuous my so-called self-knowledge seems. I am as much a mystery as you are!...

As I seek to understand myself, let me leave room for the hidden selves whom you alone know. The more I acknowledge the unknown in myself the less fear I will have of the unknown in my neighbors. The more I revere the mystery of your life in me, the more prepared I will be to treat others, too, as bearers of mystery, and be in communion with them. I cannot love my neighbor unless I get used to letting love go where knowledge cannot penetrate. Prayer is the place where I can practice loving without knowing. For Christ is known and yet unknown to me, and I love him. Help me love without restraint him whom my understanding cannot grasp.

Martin L. Smith, *A Season for the Spirit*

OUR PLANET IS CRYING

Sept 15, 2020 NASA Earth Observatory images by Joshua Stevens, showing smoke plumes from western fires along with hurricanes impacting North America simultaneously.

**The earth dries up and withers,
the world languishes and withers;**
the heavens languish together with the
earth. The earth lies polluted under its
inhabitants; for they have transgressed
laws, violated the statutes, broken the
everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse
devours the earth, and its inhabitants
suffer for their guilt; therefore the
inhabitants of the earth dwindled, and
few people are left.

Isaiah 24:4-6

THE SERVICEBERRY: AN ECONOMY OF ABUNDANCE

This abundance of berries feels like a pure gift from the land. I have not earned, paid for, nor labored for them. There is no mathematics of worthiness that reckons I deserve them in any way. And yet here they are—along with the sun and the air and the birds and the rain, gathering in the towers of cumulonimbi. You could call them natural resources or ecosystem services, but the Robins and I know them as gifts. We both sing gratitude with our mouths full...

these are gifts from our plant relatives, manifestations of their generosity, care, and creativity. When we speak of these not as things or products or commodities, but as gifts, the whole relationship changes. I can't help but gaze at them, cupped like jewels in my hand, and breathe out my gratitude. In the presence of such gifts, gratitude is the intuitive first response. The gratitude flows toward our plant elders and radiates to the rain, to the sunshine, to the improbability of bushes spangled with morsels of sweetness in a world that can be bitter.

Gratitude is so much more than a polite thank you. It is the thread that connects us in a deep relationship, simultaneously physical and spiritual, as our bodies are fed and spirits nourished by the sense of belonging, which is the most vital of foods. Gratitude creates a sense of abundance, the knowing that you have what you need. In that climate of sufficiency, our hunger for more abates and we take only what we need, in respect for the generosity of the giver.

Robin Wall Kimmerer

<https://emergencemagazine.org/story/the-serviceberry/>

Questions

1. *Spiritual responses to the ecological crisis have an important role to play in healing the Earth moving forward, but to what extent has a spiritual crisis led us to our current situation. Can you comment on this?*

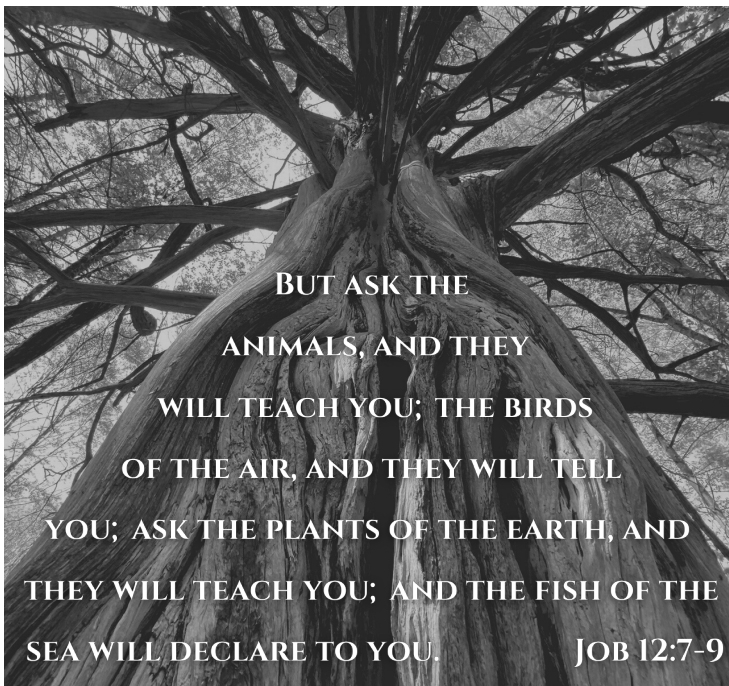
2. *What was it like for you to witness the fires in Australia and in the western part of the United States, or the multiple hurricanes and storms in the south?*

Image © Kent Wittenburg

REFLECTION

by DORIE SEAVEY

We have been given the unique and sacred gift of serving as the custodial species of our planet, a holy duty entrusted to us for our grandchildren's children. But we have fouled our own nest. How could we have been so greedy, so short-sighted? We have not treated the earth as a single interconnected living whole to which we belong, but are only one part. Going forward, how can we reshape our spiritual groundedness and practices to protect, repair and regenerate our planet, shared with other species and with future generations?



"For many of us now, nature is just scenery, mostly disconnected from our human-centered lives. Nature has become a place we think of as being "out there," optional entertainment, something we visit. Not a primal force in which we are acutely aware we are always and forever embedded."

Lynda V. Mapes, *The Witness Tree: Seasons of Change with a Century-Old Oak*

Oh sun, moon, stars, our other relatives peering at us from the inside of god's house walk with us as we climb into the next century naked but for the stories we have of each other. Keep us from giving up in this land of nightmares which is also the land of miracles.

Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate from "Reconciliation, A Prayer"

PRACTICE

Find a way to spend some time concentrating on the natural world. Study one tree--for ten, twenty, or thirty minutes, considering all the gifts it gives us. Look for the sunrise. Watch the pigeons outside your window or in the park.

Explore some natural space, meditatively: the Public Garden, the Arnold Arboretum, the Emerald Necklace, the Esplanade, the ocean, or some woods.

Read:

The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate, by Peter Wohlleben

The Witness Tree: Seasons of Change with a Century-Old Oak, by Lynda V. Mapes
Coming Back to Life, by Joanna Macy and Molly Brown.

The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance, by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Consider the ways that your life choices may be contributing to the environmental crisis. How could you consume less (meat, plastic, fuel, stuff in general)? How could you take action to help your communities, your cities, and your country consume less?

REFLECTION

Every religious tradition calls us to stop climate change.

Every religious tradition forbids theft.

Climate change is theft from our own children and from the most vulnerable people on the planet, most of them poor and of color.

Every religious tradition commands us to care for Creation.

Climate change desecrates Creation.

Every religious tradition condemns materialism and greed.

Climate change is the consequence of our making an idol of materialism and greed.

Every religious tradition calls us to care for the weak and helpless.

Climate change devastates the weak and helpless.

Rev. Fred Small

Watch the sermon:

<https://youtu.be/irGG4mUqHso?t=1075>



image © 2020 Kent Wittenburg

CLOSING PRAYER **ENVIRONMENTAL CONFESSION**

by KENT WITTENBURG

Almighty and most merciful,
we have strayed from your creation
like lost children.
We have followed too much the devices
and desires of comfort and convenience.
We have offended against thy natural laws.
We have used only once and thrown away.
We have fallen in love with our automobiles.
We have enjoyed the fruits of air travel
with no thoughts of consequence.
We have turned away from rising seas
and refugees from our thoughtlessness.
We have ignored the cries of animals,
the disappearance of insects from our windshields,
fish from our oceans,
mollusks from our shores,
birds from our skies,
the heat that suffocates,
the drought that chokes,
the fires that devour,
the rain that bombs our countryside.
But thou, oh merciful one,
have mercy upon us.
Give us strength to face these truths.
Grant us the means that we may henceforth
live a more wholesome life
in accordance with the world that thou hast given us.

WEEK THREE

COMPASSION

Across Racial & Economic Divides

Image © Kent Wittenburg

THEMES

The pandemic has sharpened our awareness of pre-existing inequalities. People of color and people living in deprivation are suffering the most. Food lines wrap around the block while the Dow Jones surges to record highs. We now live in the most economically unequal and politically divided industrial democracy in the world.

Could we dare to dream of a future where the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and global uprisings against racism drive us to build an equitable society in which no one is sacrificed and everyone is essential?

How do we honor the divine in all life - ourselves, family, friends, fellow parishioners, strangers, and the planet?

Do we limit our humanity by limiting the humanity of others?

OPENING PRAYER

Isaiah 58:6-9

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.



REFLECTION

BY CAROL GENOVESE &
AMANDA PICKETT

What can we collectively as a church do to bring about equality?

What is it like to be unhoused?

To get out of prison and have nothing?

To experience oppressive conditions in prison?

What is it like to live without healthcare?

Without food?

Without education?

How can we get out of our own bubbles and hear these struggles and take action?

When have you been gifted with the capacity to see and hear these struggles?

How are you moved to use your compassion, power, and intelligence to work for a more just world?



Image © Kent Wittenburg

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 25:35-40

Jesus spoke to his disciples on the Mount of Olives

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

REFLECT:



“Racism may target Black people, but it damns a democracy and it damns humanity.”

“...the scripture is very clear about where you have to be to be in the moral center – you have to be on the side of the poor, the working, the sick, the immigrant.”

**– Reverend Dr.
William J. Barber II**

Join the Poor People’s
Campaign at
WWW.POORPEOPLESCAMPAIGN.ORG

PRACTICES

Intentional Practice with a daily focus:

Bring compassion to self and others, reciprocal nourishment (of spirit and body and mind).

Because we each are a child of God, we must honor ourselves and one another; take time to reflect on this every day.



Image © Kent Wittenburg

1. Read:

“I’m a black climate expert. Racism derails our efforts to save the planet.”

Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/03/im-black-climate-scientist-racism-derails-our-efforts-save-planet/>

Turning the Floodlights on the Root Causes of Today's Racialized Economic Disparities: Community Development Work at the Boston Fed Post-2020, Sunday, December 20, 2020

This field note casts floodlights on some of the most egregious incidents of racial injustice in our country’s history that helped create and continue to perpetuate today’s stark economic disparities and social unrest.

<https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/community-development-field-notes/2020/racialized-economic-disparities.aspx>

Sign up for the Inequality.org weekly newsletter,

www.Inequality.org

2. Attend:

Confronting Racial Injustice: Slavery, Wealth Creation, and Intergenerational Wealth

Register for this Massachusetts Historical Society event, <https://www.masshist.org/calendar>, February 18th. Thursday, 6:00PM - 7:00PM

3. Invest:

Institutions creating and sustaining social change, such as our KC Community Action Partners

- *Louis D. Brown Peace Institute* provides comfort and solace to survivors of homicide. Consider participating in the Mother’s Day Walk for Peace. LDBPI also supports people re-entering society after having been incarcerated.
- *common cathedral* is the church for the unhoused on the Boston Common. Spring dates for KC to make sandwiches for the unhoused are March 7 and April 5.
- *UU Urban Ministry* supports youth of color in Roxbury with after-school programming and college preparation, and provides a home for gender-based violence survivors.

THE GREAT RESET

Image © Kent Wittenburg

Image © Kent Wittenburg

Thus says the Lord,
 who makes a way in the sea,
 a path in the mighty waters,
who brings forth chariot and horse,
 army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
 they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
“Do not remember the former things,
 or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
 now it springs forth, do you not
 perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
 and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:16-19

REFLECTION

by DORIE SEAVEY

The journey of this last year for me brought an inward turn where I have often felt adrift. I've come to believe that we are living through a momentous shift in the human story, and that profound shifts are required in how we know and who we are if we are to realize the hope of this transformation.

I've found myself questioning and then discarding ways of knowing that I previously took for granted. For example, over the past year I've shed ways of looking at economic systems that I spent years learning – in particular, the idea that progress is to be measured by expansion and growth (i.e., make, use, and dispose of increasingly greater quantities). We have blindly measured our growth success without regard to its distribution or effect on the sacred web of life. On the hopeful side, there are countries that use well-being indicators—not GDP or stock market indices—to measure progress and that are instituting sustainability and “circular economy” concepts.

For me, the tumultuous journey of the past year has required me to see harder and look deeper. It's been a time of reckoning, change, and reset. I've been challenged to redefine my spiritual intention and to align it anew with my actual works. Plus figure out how to practice rugged hope – and there, I am deeply grateful to the community of spiritual explorers I have found at King's Chapel.

READINGS

“We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.

Pope Francis,
Laudato Si'

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

God did not say, “You will not be troubled,” or “You will not be labored”, or “You will not be disquieted”, but God did say “You will not be overcome.”

Julian of Norwich,
The Revelation of Divine Love

How do we move forward?
It's not rocket science. We need to worry less about what is more important, and more about doing whatever we can. Those of us who are used to power need to learn to listen as much as we talk, and those with less power need to learn to talk as much as we listen. The truth is that we can't know which act in the present will make the most difference in the future, but we can behave as if everything we do matters.

Gloria Steinem

PRACTICE

Image © Kent Wittenburg



READING

"This is an evolutionary moment for humans and the earth. We can't go on as before but we don't know what the alternative is. There's no blueprint. What we can become will be borne out of trust in each other and sorrow about what hasn't worked -- the damage we have done. Remember that we are capable of love. The future will grow out of our trust and love. Hang on to the call you feel to care for the earth and each other.

The greatest danger of our times is the deadening of our response.

We must be alive to our world, even when its suffering breaks our heart. Because when the heart breaks, it can break open.

Joanna Macy

Could you take these vows?

I vow to myself and to each of you to commit myself daily to the healing of our world and the welfare of all beings.

I vow to myself and to each of you to live on the earth more lightly and less violently in the food, products and energy I consume.

I vow to myself and to each of you to draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future beings and our brothers and sisters of all species.

I vow to myself and to each of you to support you in your work for the world, and to ask for help when I need it.

I vow to myself and to each of you to pursue a daily spiritual practice that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart and supports me in living these VOWS.

Joanna Macy and Molly Brown,
Coming Back to Life

READING

If our first response [for gifts] is gratitude, then our second is reciprocity: to give a gift in return. What could I give these plants in return for their generosity? It could be a direct response, like weeding or water or a song of thanks that sends appreciation out on the wind. Or indirect, like donating to my local land trust so that more habitat for the gift givers will be saved, or making art that invites others into the web of reciprocity.

Gratitude and reciprocity are the currency of a gift economy, and they have the remarkable property of multiplying with every exchange, their energy concentrating as they pass from hand to hand, a truly renewable resource. I accept the gift from the bush and then spread that gift with a dish of berries to my neighbor, who makes a pie to share with his friend, who feels so wealthy in food and friendship that he volunteers at the food pantry. You know how it goes.

Mistreating a gift has emotional and ethical gravity as well as ecological resonance...

If we view these berries, or that coal or forest, as an object, as property, it can be exploited as a commodity in a market economy...Why then have we permitted the dominance of economic systems that commoditize everything? That create scarcity instead of abundance, that promote accumulation rather than sharing? We've surrendered our values to an economic system that actively harms what we love.

Robin Wall Kimmerer

The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance

<https://emergencemagazine.org/story/the-serviceberry/>

A CALL

Against our will, but with our faith, we are called into a future beyond our dreams, beyond our nightmares, beyond our imagining. We are called to build a new world of safe and sustainable energy, of justice and compassion, of care for the sacred web of life. We are called to courage and sacrifice, to faith and to love. We are called to radical hope.

Rev. Fred Small,

*from sermon at King's Chapel,
January 10, 2021*

<https://youtu.be/irGG4mUqHso?t=1820>



CLOSING PRAYER

O Thou, in whom we live and move and have our being, awaken us to thy presence that we may walk in thy world as thy children, and grant us reverence for all creation that we may treat our neighbor with courtesy and all good and living things with gentleness, O Lord our God.

King's Chapel Book of Common Prayer, page 177

WEEK FIVE



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FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

THEMES

How do we live as a “faithful citizen” with integrity and character in an unpredictable and often unjust world?

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*

What purpose brings you alive and helps the world? What one event or person has helped you believe in yourself during this past year?

How can we support each other to cultivate a renewed ethic of “faith in action” grounded in courage and sacrifice, faith and love, and infinite hope?

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, we do not always rush to do your will. Often we tiptoe our way into obedience, dragging old habits and mindsets with us. Help us to delight at your voice and to trust that your calling is always good news to be acted upon not for some distant future but claimed right now, today. Teach us what we must do and say in our local communities and in our larger world to participate in your promise. Give us the inspiration and courage to build a harmonious world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Enuma Okoro,
Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals

READINGS

"The fruits of oppression are rarely hidden and yet so few choose to really see them. Our everyday comforts, our own power preserved, can lure us into inaction, silence, and complicity. The privilege of apathy is a benefit of power, and we cannot authentically question the oppressive systems that destroy lives if we are not willing to forego the benefit of their shelter.

Dismantling these kinds of liminal spaces means shedding comforts we're taught to desire, and we do that by sacrificing ourselves for and with those who have been pushed from the center.

This is the work of seeing.

This is the work of sacrifice.

This is the work of relationship.

This is the work of transformation.

Seeing is more than knowing that oppression is real. Seeing is using the resources of our lives--our money, our access, our stories--to work for change. If we sacrifice nothing of our power in the work for healing, then we have not yet truly engaged the work."

Christian Peele

"The Liminality of Oppression," Oneing: An Alternative Orthodoxy, Vol. 8, No. 1, Center for Action and Contemplation (2020)

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SCRIPTURE

James 2:14-18

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? There is no one but us. There is no one to send, nor a clean hand, nor a pure heart on the face of the earth, nor in the earth, but only us, a generation comforting ourselves with the notion that we have come at an awkward time, that our innocent fathers are all dead--as if innocence had ever been--and our children busy and troubled, and we ourselves unfit, not yet ready, having each of us chosen wrongly, made a false start, failed, yielded to impulse and the tangled comfort of pleasures, and grown exhausted, unable to seek the thread, weak, and involved. But there is no one but us. There never has been."

Annie Dillard, *Holy the Firm*

READINGS

A just anger

Anger shines through me.
Anger shines through me.
I am a burning bush.
My rage is a cloud of flame.
My rage is a cloud of flame
In which I walk
seeking justice
like a precipice.
How the streets
of the iron city
flicker, flicker,
and the dirty air
fumes.
Anger storms
between me and things,
transfiguring,
transfiguring.
A good anger acted upon
is beautiful as lightning
and swift with power.
A good anger swallowed,
a good anger swallowed
clots the blood
to slime.

Marge Piercy

"Love and justice are not two.
Without inner change, there
can be no outer change.
Without collective change, no
change matters."

Rev. angel Kyodo williams, Sensei

"Justice is what love looks like
in public, just like tenderness is
what love feels like in private."

Dr. Cornel West

PRACTICES

Fasting

- Fasting from false speech and unkind words
- Fasting or limiting screen time (for example: social media, television, internet, video games)

Almsgiving

- Talk to friends and acquaintances about local and state-wide groups they are involved with
- Reach out to join a new action group in your area that is working on causes you care about

CLOSING PRAYER

God, you have given all peoples one common origin.

It is your will that they be gathered together
as one family in yourself.

Fill the hearts of humankind with the fire of your love
and with the desire to ensure justice for all.

By sharing the good things you give us,
may we secure an equality for all
our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

May there be an end to division, strife, and war.
May there be a dawning of a truly human society
built on love and peace.

We ask this in your name.

Author Unknown

Image © Kent Wittenburg



Image © Kent Wittenburg

This project has been a collaboration between members of the Adult Religious Education Committee, the Community Action Committee, the Environmental Action Initiative, and the clergy of King's Chapel, specifically:

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We have found this an amazing and rewarding experience: what church can be.

King's Chapel

Special Lent Services: Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, and Easter

Ash Wednesday - February 17

12-2 PM "Ashes to Go"

Outside King's Chapel, 58 Tremont St. (corner of Tremont and School Streets)

Available to members and all passers-by

5 PM Ash Wednesday Service

Candle-lit service with prayers, organ and cantor.

Pre-recorded and available on church website at 5 PM

Palm Sunday - March 28

11 AM Palm Sunday and Passion – Live Zoom Service

With congregation members in pre-assigned roles reading the Passion, the story of Christ's betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion.

Obtain link by registering; information available at www.kings-chapel.org/lent

Morning Light service will not meet so all may worship at 11 AM together

Maundy Thursday - April 1

6 PM Maundy Thursday Service

Candle-lit service in commemoration of Christ's Last Supper with prayers, foot washing and communion, concluding with the stripping of the altar. Led by clergy, with cantor and organ.

Pre-recorded and available on church website at 6 PM

Good Friday - April 2

6 PM Tenebrae Service

Candle lit service with reading of the Passion. Candles are doused until church is in darkness and mourning. Led by clergy, readers, choir quartet, and organ.

Pre-recorded and available on church website at 6 PM

Easter Sunday - April 4

Easter Sunday Service, available at 7 AM

Joyful celebration of our traditional morning prayer service from the King's Chapel Prayer Book with organ and full virtual choir.

Pre-recorded at the church, available on website at 7 AM

11 AM - 12 noon Festive Zoom Coffee Hour

Obtain link by registering; information available at www.kings-chapel.org/lent

Morning Light service will not meet so all may join the coffee hour