

SECOND  PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SPIRE

LENT 2020

LENTEN SERMON SERIES
A Clearing Season

❖ A welcoming community of faith where Jesus Christ transforms lives ❖

The *Spire* is published seasonally by



**SECOND
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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Indianapolis, IN 46260

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**SUNDAY MORNING
WORSHIP HOURS
(Holiday Hours Vary)**

8:15 a.m.—Chapel
9:30 a.m.—Sanctuary
11 a.m.—Sanctuary

TOGETHER@5

5 p.m.—McFarland Hall,
followed by a family supper.

**SERVICE OF COMMUNION
& WHOLENESS**

10:35 a.m.—Chapel

CONTACT INFORMATION

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[@SecondChurch](https://www.facebook.com/SecondChurch) | [@SecondPresINdy](https://www.facebook.com/SecondPresINdy)

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(317) 522-1943

Children's Circle Preschool
(317) 252-5517

Childcare Reservations
Childcare@SecondChurch.org

CenterPoint Counseling
(317) 252-5518

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to noon



**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

Wednesday, February 26, 7 p.m.

Service of Penitence and Communion

Rev. Chris Henry

At Second, we celebrate the Season of Lent beginning with our Ash Wednesday worship service, communion and the imposition of ashes. The Season of Lent reminds us of the presence of the divine even during life's seasons of solemnity, struggle and shadow. With ashes on our foreheads, the words of our mortality whispered in our ears, and the taste of bread and wine in our mouths, we enter the season of Lent.

Ash Wednesday begins with a family meal and Caring Conversation with Pastor Brian Shivers. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Please register online for the meal at [SecondChurch.org/Events](https://www.SecondChurch.org/Events).



**LENTEN SERMON SERIES
A Clearing Season**



Dear Friends,

Sarah Parsons, whose book *A Clearing Season* will provide the focus for our observance of Lent this year, describes these six weeks as “our annual invitation to come closer to God.” In order to do this, we must ask ourselves what it is that keeps us from accepting that invitation, or which obstructions and obstacles stand in our way. This time of preparation for the joy of Easter offers the opportunity to clear our lives of clutter and make room for the gift of God’s grace.

Frederick Buechner offers these words of introduction to this sacred time: “In many cultures there is an ancient custom of giving a tenth of each year’s income to some holy use. For Christians, to observe the forty days of Lent is to do the same thing with roughly a tenth of each year’s days. After being baptized by John in the river Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness, where he spent forty days asking himself the question what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves.”

In the weeks ahead, as we worship and serve together, as we engage in spiritual disciplines that deepen our faith, I pray that we will have the courage to ask what it means to be the people God has created us to be.

Lent at Second begins on February 26 with a solemn Ash Wednesday worship service and culminates with joyful worship services on Easter Sunday, April 12. I look forward to sharing this journey with you as we draw closer to God and prepare to welcome the stunning news of new life on Easter morning.

With peace and hope,

Christopher A. Henry



A Clearing Season

Week one (March 1-7)

Driven into the Wilderness

BY: REV. KELLEY JEPSEN

“And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.” – Mark 1:12-13

When I recall the story of Jesus’ baptism, I always imagine Jesus making a decision to go off into the wilderness to be by himself. To me it seemed like his choice, something he felt that he needed to do to start his ministry. However, upon a more careful reading of the text, that is not what happened at all! The Spirit, we are told, drove him there.

You see, the wilderness is not necessarily a place we want to be. It’s wild there. We don’t know what we’ll encounter, we can’t prepare for what might happen, and if we’re being honest, it is not where we expected (or wanted!) to end up at all. We find ourselves alone, lost, trying to find our way through these unknown spaces. We can all look back and see places and times in our lives where we have wandered through the wilderness. The wilderness can be a place of transformation, a place where we emerge a different person with a different mission or outlook for life. That is not to say that transition and transformation are not

painful – they are. But, they are critical for our spiritual journey and growth.

Perhaps you have recently emerged from the wilderness or feel yourself there now. My friends, know this: although the wilderness can be scary, we have one promise during this time. That promise is that we will have angels caring for us there, just like Jesus did. They might not be the form we expect, but God puts people into our lives to care for us, to guide us, and to love us unconditionally even during our hardest journeys.

Worship Highlights

March 1 – First Sunday of Lent

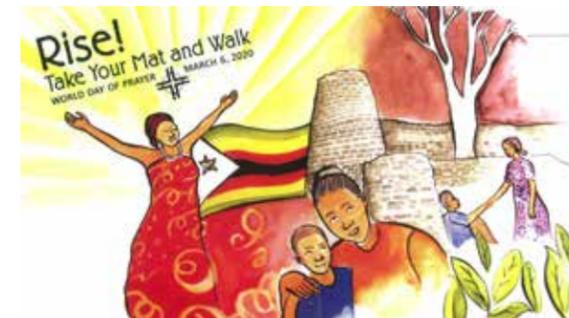
Sermon Series: A Clearing Season – Entering the Wilderness

Jeremiah 2:1-6 & Mark 1:9-15

“And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.”

Mark 1:12

Instrumental Music by Second Winds Ensemble
Candi & Rick Granlund, directors



World Day of Prayer

MARCH 6, 10 AM, MILNER CHAPEL

Many churches around the country host World Day of Prayer services on March 6, 2020. Presbyterian Women will be hosting a prayer service starting at 10 a.m. in the Chapel. Prayer materials are provided by the Women of Zimbabwe. The service is an hour, followed by refreshments in the Parlor. All are welcome!

Drawing Closer to God: Transformation Through Spiritual Practices

WEDNESDAYS (MARCH 4-APRIL 1) 6:30-8 PM, ROOM 356

The season of Lent is an invitation to draw closer to God through a renewed appreciation of God’s presence in our lives. God is always present with us. However, we often fail to perceive this due to thoughts, feelings, and actions that hinder our awareness of this reality. One of the ways in which we make space in our lives to communicate with God and appreciate God’s presence is through spiritual practices.

This class, taught by John Franke and David Bell, will examine specific spiritual formation practices that offer a pathway of life transformation through a greater awareness of God’s constant presence in our lives. In addition to exploring spiritual practices that are essential for all of us, we will also consider those that particularly correspond with particular Enneagram types.

The Enneagram is wisdom about nine styles of human character and core motivation that shape how we see, interpret, and experience the world. For followers of Jesus Christ this wisdom becomes truly transformational in relation to spiritual practices that sharpen are awareness of God’s presence in ourselves and others. The class will introduce the Enneagram and the various motivational types and provide particular attention to spiritual practices that accentuate the virtue of each type.

Join us for this Lenten journey of transformation for the purposes of God in our lives.

Rev. Kelley Jepsen, Rev. Chris Palmer, and Rev. Gracie Payne. Sponsored by Young Adults, Children & Family Ministry, and CenterPoint Counseling.

Be a Part of Mission Madness in March!

WEDNESDAYS, MARCH 4-25, 6:30-8 PM

Wednesday Night Kid’s Club will be making a difference in March! Each week, the children, their family, friends, and acquaintances are invited to make a difference by seeing what they can do to show the way through a desert of hunger, homelessness, sadness, and loneliness.

Join the children’s ministry staff for Mission Moments to last a lifetime! Be on the Mission Madness team, and let’s show that God’s love is a SLAM DUNK!

Drop off and pick up in the Library.



Be renewed in mind and soul through a free performance
of Johannes Brahms' choral masterpiece

Ein deutsches Requiem

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 3 PM

Second Presbyterian Sanctuary Choir

University of Indianapolis Concert Choir

Festival Orchestra

Christina Pier, soprano

Wilbur Pauley, bass

Dr. Michelle Louer, director

with

University of Indianapolis Women's Chorus

Dr. Mitzi Westra, director

Brahms and His German Requiem

KARL E. SNIDER, ORCHESTRAL LIBRARIAN

One of the only two sure things in life (the other being taxes), the ubiquity of death means that every culture has created ways of dealing with death and grieving. In western music (the Catholic Church specifically), the tradition is the Requiem Mass. This service includes selections like the Dies Irae, a medieval poem describing the departed souls facing judgement and damnation. Composers over the centuries, including Mozart, Verdi, and Berlioz, have written highly dramatic settings of this somewhat violent liturgy. Other composers, such as Britten, Foulds, and Rutter, have used the liturgy as a framework for adding their own commentary.

Johannes Brahms took an entirely different approach. He eschewed the traditional Latin text, instead taking selections from the Bible in his native German; the result was his own very "Human Requiem." Brahms began considering a requiem after his friend and mentor Robert Schumann's attempted suicide, committal to an asylum, and eventual death in 1856. Nine years later, the death of his own mother in 1865 spurred him on to complete six movements. This version, when performed on Good Friday, 1868, was a triumph. Still not quite satisfied, he added a movement for soprano solo and chorus, which took its place as the fifth movement.



Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

This work in seven movements, unlike traditional requiems, does not call for judgement of the departed; it instead offers comfort to those left behind. Instead of the familiar "Kyrie eleison" (Lord have mercy), we hear: "blessed are they that mourn." This first movement is distinctive because the violins do not play, and the lower strings are divided to enhance the texture.

Movement two has the most dramatic opening; perhaps it is Brahms' nod to the traditional Dies Irae. "All flesh is like the grass, withering and fading away." This foreboding theme marches on, always intensifying, as it moves inexorably to a fortissimo for chorus and orchestra. This movement uses thematic material that began as an early attempt at a symphony and then a sonata for two pianos.

Movement three introduces the baritone soloist. As he sings, we are reminded of our own impending death. "Lord let me know the measure of my days." Eventually things change and the chorus asks "Lord, in what shall I find solace?" The answer returns, "the souls of the righteous are in God's hands and there

no torment shall touch them." These words of hope for the departed are in sharp contrast to the traditional requiem that pronounces judgment on lost souls.

Movement four, *How Lovely are Thy Dwelling Places*, is the most familiar section; this centerpiece of the work describes the beauty of God's Heaven. Movement five marks the only appearance of the soprano soloist. This movement, the last to be composed, was Brahms' response to the death of his own mother. The text offers maternal consolation and solace.

Movement six's walking bass line depicts restlessness, reminding us that we have no permanent dwelling place here. The baritone returns to sing the familiar words, "Io, I tell you a mystery." The chorus takes over at the announcement of the last trumpet. The trumpets and other instruments soon join in the triumphant declaration of praise to the Lord. This movement parallels the third by ending again in a huge fugue for chorus and orchestra. The word "death" ("Tod") makes its first appearance in this movement, nearly at the end of the entire piece. This indicates again Brahms' concern with comforting the living rather than praying for the souls of the dead.

In the final movement, Brahms offers blessings again. In contrast to the first movement, which blessed the mourners, movement seven tells us to "bless the dead that die in the Lord." Using thematic material heard in movement one we come full circle, both blessing the dead and comforting the living.

This performance is in honor of two
important musical mentors in our
community and beyond.



Joseph Flummerfelt
(1937 - 2019)



Fiora Contino
(1925 - 2017)



A Clearing Season

Week Two (March 8-14)

Making Space

BY: REV. CHRIS PALMER

“Does it bring you joy?” According to Marie Kondo, author and host of Netflix’s Tidying Up with Marie Kondo, this question is the key to a tidy home. After collecting and sorting everything one owns, Kondo encourages a messy materialist to ruminate on the piles of stuff. How much do we need? Does that extra pair of black shoes -- you know, the one now covered in dust -- really bring you that much joy?

When we aren’t paying attention, things pile up.

But, mess management is what Lent is all about. After all, junk isn’t just material, but spiritual. The growing pains, grudges, and bad habits that we accumulate over the course of a year pile up just like a stack of hole-ridden T-shirts. Lent is the time where we bring all that junk that we’ve acquired and, like Kondo suggests, ask the prayerful questions, “Does it bring me joy? Does it bring God joy?”

In fact, Christians have been heeding Kondo’s advice since the very beginning. Saint Augustine, preaching in the late 4th century, encourages his monks: “With good you are to be filled: pour out the bad. Suppose that God would fill you with honey: if you are full of vinegar, where will you put the honey?”

Christians are receptacles of grace, but if there’s no room within us, how will we be filled? How will we fill others? This Lent, identify those dusty corners within yourself that you’re afraid to tackle. Bring those piles of “stuff” before God in prayer. Talk about them with those that you trust. Do they bring you joy, or are they holding you back from relationship with God and your neighbor?

Worship Highlights

March 8 – Second Sunday of Lent

Sermon Series: A Clearing Season – Making Space

Mark 10:17-22 & Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

“Rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.”

Joel 2:13

Baptisms

Anthem: *O Lord, My God to Thee* – Jacques Arcadelt

O Lord, my God, to thee do I lift up my soul.
O Lord, in thee, in thee have I trusted.
Let me not be ashamed,
Let not my foes triumph over me.
O lead me in a plain path;
cast me not off, neither forsake me.
Teach me thy way, Lord, Lead me, lead me in a plain path.
O hide not thy face, Hide not thy face far from me.
Lord God, Lord God, Hide not thy face far from me.
Amen.



Lilies and the Memorial Flower Fund

ORDER ONLINE:
[SECONDCHURCH.ORG/FLOWERS](https://secondchurch.org/flowers)

Support the Memorial Flower fund with donations in your loved one’s name. The Fund provides chancel flowers for the Sanctuary every Sunday, poinsettias at Christmas and lilies at Easter.

After worship, the Deacons distribute the chancel flowers to hospitalized members. The fund also provides poinsettias and lilies to homebound members during the holidays.

Forms are available online at SecondChurch.org/Flowers, in pew and literature racks, and at the reception desk. Names of those being remembered or honored will be published in the Easter Sunday bulletins on April 12. For more information, please contact Erica Hewitt at (317) 253- 461, Ext. 367.

FIRM DEADLINE: Sunday, April 5, Midnight.



A Clearing Season

Week Three (March 15-21)

Developing Rhythms

BY REV. KAREN LANG

“Come to me all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” MATTHEW 11:28

Why is it so difficult for us to lean into these words of promise offered by Jesus? It is as if we are afraid of slowing down and allowing God to renew us. As we begin the season of Lent this year, let us lay down our own efforts of ‘trying harder’; own efforts of ‘getting it right’ and instead trust that God will meet us right where we are.

There are natural rhythms that God offers to each one of us. Rhythms of renewal, relationship, and rest. Rhythms that feed us instead of drain us. God in the Ten Commandments directs us to rest and to lay aside the burdens of the week, and yet we resist. The beauty of sabbath—of taking a break—offers us space to breathe and truly live.

This Lent I invite you to first, consider what would the rhythms of renewal, rest, and relationship look like for you?

Ask yourself: “Where do I find renewal?” Do you even know? Notice the things in your day and life that leave you drained, discouraged, and spent. Now, ask yourself: “Where do I find that I am energized? “What gives me hope?” God promises that His mercies are new every morning. We are not created to live exhausted, frantic lives. Crowded schedules are a reality of life today, yes. Exhaustion is not. Do you find that you long to be outside? Do you crave quiet, or reading, or a walk through an art gallery? Notice and then during this season of Lent, allow

yourself to do the things that allow you to be renewed.

Next, consider what people give you life? Set aside some time to just be with your family and your friends. Take a walk with your favorite nephew, or enjoy a cup of coffee with a neighbor. Notice what the rhythm of relationship brings to you. God gives each one of us people that ‘feed us’; people that make us laugh; people that encourage our spirits, and people that challenge us. Give your self the gift of relationship. Develop relationships. Live as if they matter.

Last, how do you rest? Jesus regularly took time to be alone to rest, to pray and to be renewed. Does a nap give you energy? Does moving your body offer your mind rest? Give your self the gift of rest in whatever form you find most helpful.

This Lenten season may we bold enough to trust ourselves enough to lean into the rhythms of sabbath. May we approach each day knowing we are enough just as we are in the eyes of our Creator. May we allow ourselves to rest, to renew, and to enjoy relationships for which we were created. Amen.

Worship Highlights

March 15 – Third Sunday of Lent

Sermon Series: A Clearing Season – Developing Rhythms

Genesis 1:31-2:3 & Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest”

Matthew 11:28

Anthem: *Be at Rest Once More, O My Soul* – Jim Stanton

Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.

For He has delivered my heart from death; for He has delivered my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

for He has o'erflowed my fountains with holiness, for He has o'erflowed my rivers with blessing, my cup with compassion.

Cords of death entangle me in the anguish of the grave, But the radiant light of the Lord, the magnificence of His cathedral of life broke the darkness.

Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.

How can I repay the Lord for drinking the cup meant for me?

I will dwell in the garden of loveliness, I will raise up the banner of life;

I will praise the Lord for His overwhelming mercy. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord for His overwhelming mercy.

Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.

—adapted from Psalm 116

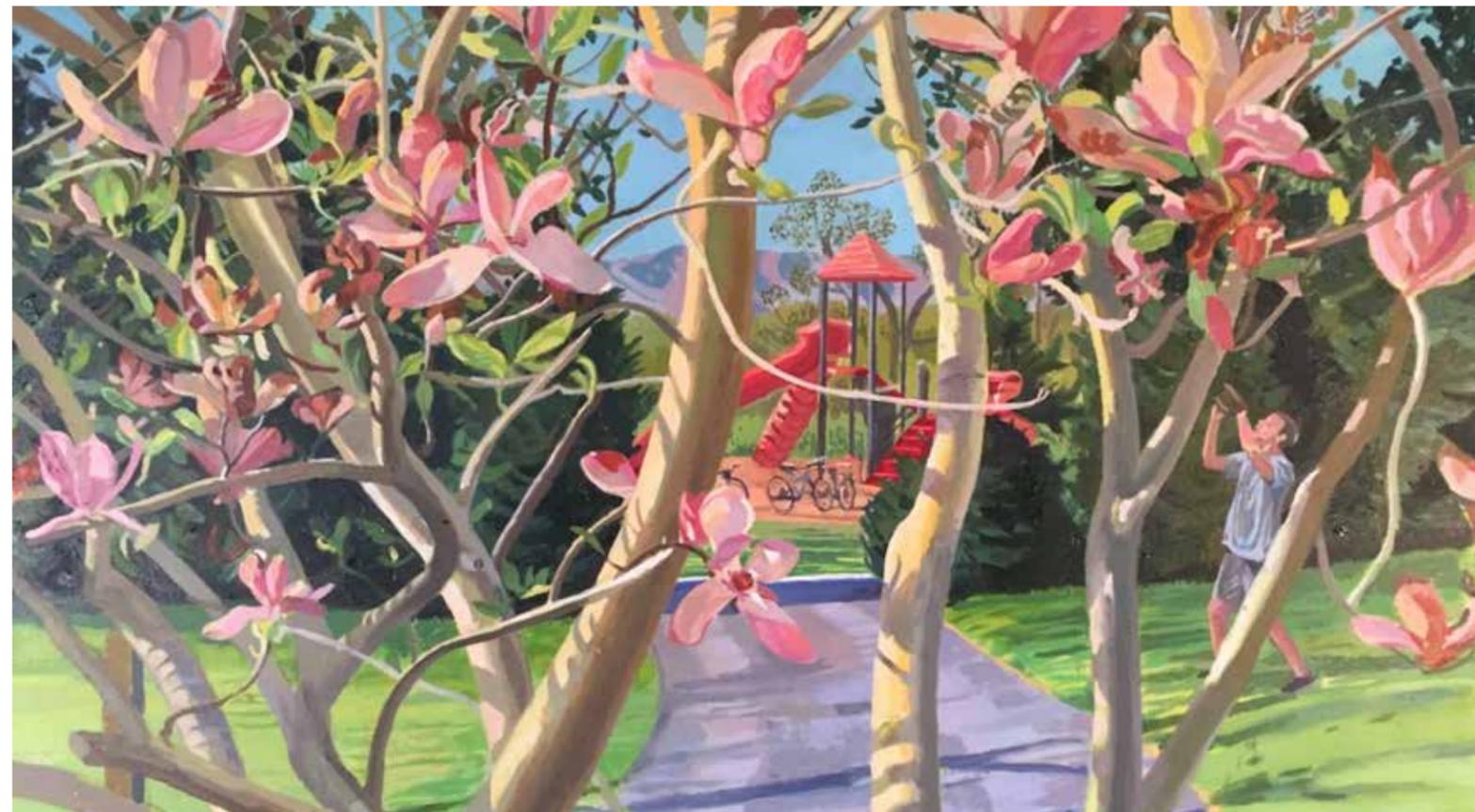
The Beautiful: Fine Arts Exhibit

FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 20, MCFARLAND HALL

Second hosts a national traveling art exhibit, *The Beautiful*, from February 23 to March 20 in McFarland Hall. Made available through CIVA (Christians in the Visual Arts), *The Beautiful* features thirty-three original artworks, carefully selected to speak to the theme of Beauty as it is found in a fallen world.

Encounters with beauty are essential to human flourishing. Indeed, such experiences capture our imagination and animate our souls; they invite us to pause and consider the nature and meaning of our material world and the one who created it all. In the modern period, artists often had a conflicted relationship to beauty. On one hand, they were drawn to beauty’s sublime qualities. On the other, they realized that a superficial understanding of beauty could be either a means to avoid the world’s suffering or a charm that incites consumer desire. Nonetheless, our need for beauty remains. In the shadow of Adam and Eve’s fall from grace there exists what some describe as a “broken beauty” — beauty that captures heart and mind while contending with the fallen nature of our world.

This exhibit gathers contemporary works of art executed in a variety of media that bear witness to beauty as it appears to us in the complex landscape of contemporary culture. Members of the Fine Arts Advisory Team coordinate artwork and exhibits at Second. If you would like more information, contact the Music & Fine Arts office at (317) 253-6461 x309 or MFA@SecondChurch.org.



A Clearing Season

Week Four (March 22-28)

Watching for Growth

BY REV. GRACIE PAYNE

I like to imagine that one of God's favorite words to speak over us is "already"...

- In baptism, you are "already" a child of the covenant...
- In childhood, you are "already" a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ...
- Each week when we confess, you are "already" forgiven and beloved...

Jesus Christ always stands ready to offer us what we are seeking but, at times, the searching can distract us from recognizing. I search so passionately after perfection, I miss the ways God is using my good enough. I search wholeheartedly for a peaceful resolution, I miss the ways God is forging a new path and a transformed relationship amongst the conflict. The clattering noise I make as I forge through the wilderness seems to scare away the tender and sensitive signs of life around me. But, alas, if I slow down just enough; if I can "be still and know," I can glimpse the life I'm longing for is already arriving.

I've taken up gardening with a growing enthusiasm over the last few years, and this year I decided to take the leap and begin

starting things from seed. I cleared a shelf in a sunny spot, set up my warming pads and grow lights, and rested various vegetable seeds in their rightful spots in the grow trays. I walk down the stairs each morning eager to check on my experiment. Report: some are beginning to take root, and some aren't. Some will grow into viable seedlings, and others won't. But, here's what they're teaching me: even in the waiting, before any vine has borne fruit or any vegetable has taken root, a miracle is happening in the dirt of all of our lives. Those scary and shadowed spaces – where we're taking risks or being let down, where we're trying something new or fumbling through it, where we're grasping for stability in unstable seasons – there is something miraculous taking shape.

Perhaps this Lent is the moment where we can walk slowly enough to see the signs of growth through eyes of hope and anticipation, where we can draw closely enough to Christ to hear him saying, "I'm already doing a new thing ... do you not perceive it?"

God of new beginnings, give me a posture of watchful waiting-ness that looks for your Kingdom with the confidence that it is already breaking through. In moments of longing, may your Spirit's voice join with mine in prayer. In moments of doubt, may your Word, who walks alongside me, uphold my faith. In moments of despair, may the steadfast love of Christ clear room within me for your hope to grow wild and free. Amen.



SonRise on Sunday

An individual with developmental disability has a small world... Family and possibly staff, teachers, and/or therapists. The desire for friends and a community are often unmet. The one place individuals with developmental disability should feel included is church.

In reality, many individuals with developmental disability have not been able to attend church. The data has been consistent over more than a decade. Children with autism are almost twice as likely as a child without a disability to have never attended church. A child with another developmental disability is 1.7 times as likely as a child without a disability to have never attended church. Subsequently, the parents/family are also not able to attend church and to have a faith community. This grim reality does not improve with age.

As a welcoming community of faith where everyone belongs, we are called to stretch, and grow, to meet this tremendously unmet need. SonRise on Sunday was started to better welcome adults with developmental disability AND their families to our church. To be inclusive and develop rich relationships, we must focus on ability and accommodate individual need. Our vision will be more Christ-like and our faith deepened.

A common and grave concern of parents of individuals with developmental disability, is who will truly care for their adult child after the parents are deceased. The individual's faith and faith community will be vitally important. With God's help, we can nurture that faith and be that community. We will be richer for it.

Worship Highlights

March 22 – Fourth Sunday of Lent

Sermon Series: A Clearing Season – Watching for Growth

1 Corinthians 3:5-10 & Isaiah 43:16-21

"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 43:18-19

Anthem: *The Rivers of the Water of Life* – Malcom Archer (b. 1952)

I saw the river of the water of life, bright as a crystal,
Flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
Through the middle of the street of the city, alleluia.

Let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.
Alleluia.

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me,
And let the one who believes in me drink.
Out of the believer's heart shall flow
Rivers of living water.

I saw the river of the water of life, bright as a crystal,
Flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb
Through the middle of the street of the city, alleluia.



A Clearing Season

Week Five (March 29-April 4)

Weathering the Storm

BY: REV. JASIEL HERNANDEZ

“In fact, we gain something by losing our way: the drive to find our way back.”

The season of Lent seems to provide us with a second chance to fulfill all those new-year resolutions that we made eight weeks ago. Perhaps we wanted to read more or exercise more frequently or create more quality time with loved ones. But somehow, we lost track along the way due to many reasons and excuses. So, now many of us are back to square one, giving it another try, feeling empowered to overcome this setback and hopefully become better than before. Lent gives us our drive back.

But we gain more than just our drive. Author Sara Parsons writes in this her fifth chapter that setbacks also provide us with two other wonderful opportunities. First, during setbacks we realize we need others. It is during these times of uneasiness and doubt that we get to express our love to our neighbor. We have the chance to extend our hand with compassion to those who are struggling to get back on their feet, and we also get to see other people’s kindness and benevolence towards us. And secondly, setbacks allow us to be true to ourselves. We have the

Worship Highlights

March 29 – Fifth Sunday of Lent

Sermon Series: A Clearing Season – Weathering Storms

Romans 8:31-39 & Jeremiah 31:31-36

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Jeremiah 31:33

Anthem: God Be in My Head – Walford Davies (1869-1941)

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
 God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
 God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
 God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
 God be at mine end, and at my departing.

opportunity to discover the raw material within ourselves that has caused us to fail. Doing that requires a certain boldness and forgiveness though. Therefore, setbacks help us to be better at forgiving ourselves—we learn how to be gracious and kind with the self that lies within us.

Friend, do not be afraid of setbacks. They are part of every great journey. Remember, while we may lose something, we gain even more wonderful opportunities for loving ourselves and neighbor. Amen.

What is Standing in Your Way?

BY DR. DAVID CHADDOCK,
 DIRECTOR OF CENTERPOINT COUNSELING

With thanks to Elsa and Taylor Swift, the themes we have heard in our culture over the last several years are “Let It Go” and “Shake It Off”. While the season of Lent might not jump to mind when you hear these phrases, they prove to be helpful thoughts when we think about our journey towards Easter. This year, our Lenten reading comes from the book, “A Clearing Season: Reflections for Lent” where we are asked to search our soul for anything that stands in the way of our drawing closer to God.

Perhaps your hurts from the past or your fears of the future distract you from experiencing God on your journey. It may be health concerns, financial stress or relationships that fill your day with worry, resentments, or melancholy. It could be your addiction or that of a friend or loved one that fills you with anxiety about today and tomorrow. Any and all of these can distract us from our journey with Jesus to the cross and Easter.

So what should we do about it?

Here are a few ideas to help us on our way...

1. Recognize what is standing in your way and write it down.
2. Do your best to stop blaming yourself or someone else for your struggle.
3. “Live in the Moment”. Practice Mindfulness and focus on the Peace of Christ.
4. Join a community or group committed to helping one another draw closer to God.
5. Transform your concerns into doing something positive for yourself and others.
6. Quiet your heart and mind and sit silently in the presence of your Creator.



CenterPoint Counseling
 AT SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



“Be still and know that I am God”.

PSALM 46:10

If you are interested in seeking professional help, contact CenterPoint Counseling, CenterPointCounseling.org, (317)-252-5518. Our licensed counselors are available to help you find more peace during this season of your life.



HOLY WEEK

A Clearing Season

HOLY WEEK

Week Six (April 5-11)

Encountering the Sacred

BY: REV. DAVID BERRY

Our Lenten journey has arrived at Holy Week, a time of sacred encounter. This is a week we gather in Holy space on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. A week filled with sacred trembling. Whenever I have asked members about a time when they have encountered the sacred and experienced a holy trembling, I hear of the time they were brought to tears when they saw the donkey enter the sanctuary. When the last candle was snuffed out and we sat in total darkness, I experienced a profound deep and complete silence. When we sat together and sang “Were You There?” and we were no longer in the pews but at the foot of the cross.

In this week of sacred encounter we belong together. Why? Because in the dangerous act of worship as Mark Labberton reminds us there is a life-altering recognition that Someone has shown up and changed the rules that our society tells us govern human existence. Worship, he says, is to be the new way of seeing and feeling that redraws boundaries, rewires connections and redistricts how we govern ourselves.

“While Jesus, emphasized the inward, individual aspects of faith, he did not leave it there, as though persons could ever be like jugs in the rain, separate receptacles that share neither their emptiness nor their abundance, Jesus bound his disciples into a fellowship. He joined their channels until, like interflowing streams, one contributed to all and the spirit of all was expressed in each. Jesus braided them into friendship with himself and with each other, so close that the community did what no isolated believer ever could have done—it survived the shock of crucifixion, the agony of sustained persecution, the frailties of its members.”

“The Meaning of Faith”, Harry Emerson Fosdick, p. 329

Worship Highlights

April 5 – Palm Sunday

Sermon Series: A Clearing Season – Encountering the Sacred

Psalm 24 & Matthew 21:1-11

“When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’”

Matthew 21:10-11

Join the children of the church in a festive parade of palms at the end of the 9:30 and the beginning of the 11 a.m. services. A live donkey leads the children through the sanctuary as they wave their palms and proclaim, “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna,” along with the singing congregation. The 8:15 a.m. traditional service, the 10:35 a.m. Wholeness and Holy Communion service, and the 5 p.m. Together@5 service meet at their normal times.

Anthem: Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates (from Messiah) – G.F. Handel

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

that the King of glory may come in.

Who is the King of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Walk Through Holy Week

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

Join all of the Children of God for a Walk through Holy Week. Wednesday, April 8, the Second Church Family is invited to accompany Jesus towards the garden of Easter. We will remember together Jesus’ words and actions. More than telling the story, we will live the story and hear the instructions for how we can live as “we instead of me” and “ours instead of mine.” Come take a family trip that will last an eternal- lifetime.



MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 9 – Maundy Thursday

8 PM: Tenebrae Communion Service

At this service of shadows, we share the Last Supper and hear the story of the last hours of the life of Jesus. The service ends in darkness.

Maundy Thursday begins the Three Days (or Triduum), remembering the new commandment that Christ gave us in word and deed as he taught us how to love one another, washing our feet as a servant. We also celebrate the Lord's Supper, remembering the meal Christ shared with his disciples before his death. Historically, this was the traditional day in which those who had undergone a period of public penance under church discipline would be restored to full communion.

HOLY WEEK



HOLY WEEK

GOOD FRIDAY

April 10 – Good Friday

12-3 PM: Meditations will be held in the chapel on the Seven Last Words of Christ. Please feel free to come and go as you are able. This service features hymns, vocal and instrumental music interpreting each word.

Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus' crucifixion. The hours of noon to 3 p.m. are particularly significant as these commemorate the time Jesus hung on the cross. It is an especially important time to pray for the church and the world for whom Christ gave his life.

EASTER SUNDAY

April 12 – Easter Sunday

Sermon: Tell the Truth

Isaiah 25:6-9 & Mark 16:1-8

The festival of the Resurrection of the Lord (or Easter Sunday) is the center of the Christian year. On this occasion, the church joyfully proclaims the good news that is at the very heart of the gospel: that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

Morning worship services: 8, 9:30 and 11:15 a.m., Sanctuary
Prelude begins 20 minutes prior to each service.

Evening worship service: Together@5; 5 p.m., McFarland Hall



Share your faith

Snap a family picture in McFarland Hall on Easter Sunday and post it on the church facebook page! #EasterAtSecond

Families serving families together

“Faith is caught not taught,” is a truism of Christian Education. Families are teaming up to show the children of Second Church that Sunday School’s Bible stories are lifelong companions. Mother-sons, father-daughters, father-sons, mother-daughters...teaching teams come in all types of duos! All are dynamic; all are being mentors and role models for our youngest disciples. All are living Jesus’ call to “let the little children come unto me.”

As members of the church, we make promises when an infant is baptized. Volunteering in Children’s Sunday School allows both Bradley and I the opportunity to fulfill those promises.

When Bradley was in the 5th grade, he asked about volunteering in the nursery. The following year we started volunteering together in the nursery once a month. That was over five years ago! It has been an awesome journey. We love babies and look forward to our time with them. Bradley has a gift to make them smile and laugh. They love to crawl on him when lays on the floor. It has been a great joy to watch Bradley be silly with the babies.

Katrina Getts

When it comes to volunteering, there is nothing I would rather do than work with babies in the nursery. Not to mention the fact that my mom is there, making it even better. The time we spend together in the nursery is something I will hold onto for the rest of my life. We both enjoy working with children, and volunteering with them in the Lord’s house is really something special.

Bradley Getts

It is a privilege and joy to work in the toddler room, and to do it with my teenage son makes it a gift to me. Thomas and I volunteer two Sundays a month during the 11 a.m. hour and have enjoyed getting to know all the kids and their families. I love the sheer joy and excitement of their play, and sometimes even their conversation. (Yes, they do have things to say!) They always manage to make me laugh. It’s amazing how they these little ones teach me so much about the wonder of things around us, our emotions, and the importance of helping one another.

Being a part of their faith foundation is an honor. There have been times when Thomas walks in to the room and immediately hears his name from an excited toddler ready to play. Knowing he is a part of their journey warms my heart, and Thomas is able to

give back and mentors those coming after him. It’s so important that they have a place to play and learn, a place that is like home, their “Second” home. Thank you for the gift of your children and for allowing me to be a small part of their week!

Wendy Drook

I started volunteering in the Second Pres toddler room in about the 6th grade. I was always interested in entertaining kids and enjoyed it as well, so I decided to try it out. I quickly found it is something that can make my Sunday just that much better. Seeing the look on a child’s face when they’re truly having a great time is something that’s hard to get out of your head, because it’s so reassuring that you are making an impact on the next generation. Something Second Pres does is integrate a story time, with an easy to follow set up, including a picture and the story being read aloud. I found this to be quite a unique strategy and makes us different from other rooms. For these reasons and more, I love working in the toddler room!

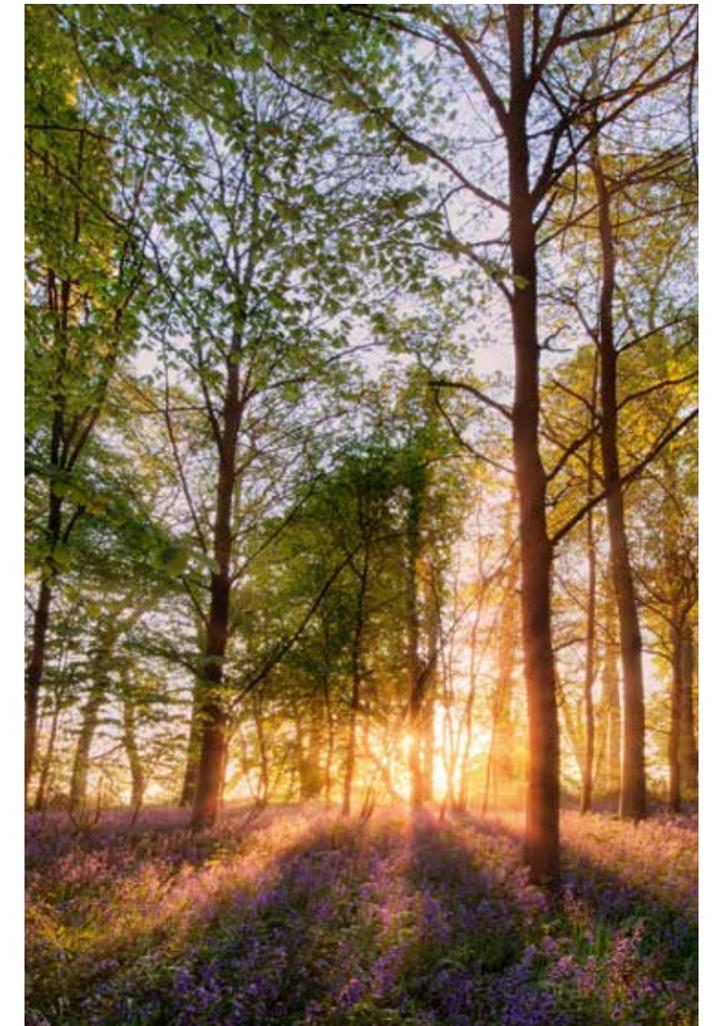
Thomas Drook



Other parent/child teams volunteering on Sunday morning include:

- ❖ Heather, Alexandra and Sophia Warhurst
- ❖ Hilary and Emma Barrett
- ❖ Ellen Gullett and Caroline Steiner
- ❖ Jill and Maxwell Carrell
- ❖ Courtney, Mark and Prescott Naaman
- ❖ Kate Pedersen, Jeremy Prather and baby Penelope (teacher in training)

Contact Ann VanMeter (AVanMeter@SecondChurch.org) or Kat Green (KGreen@SecondChurch.org) to find your place with the children of Second.



Blessed Messiness: A Clearing Season

SUNDAYS, 9:30 AM (THROUGH APRIL 5)

Have you ever been praying or conversing with a group of people and felt your lungs fill with air again, as if for the first time? Like you had suddenly discovered a spaciousness within yourself, where you want to rest and stay awhile? Blessed Messiness, our Sunday morning gathering, is a place where weary people come to reconnect with God, others, and themselves. You’re invited to join us on this journey to Easter Sunday.

We’re looking for a group of honest, curious, and committed individuals who are willing to dive deep into questions of life, Lent, family, and faith for seven weeks starting February 23. All you need to bring is yourself. We’ll be going deeper with the themes in our Lenten series, *A Clearing Season*, and using Sarah Parsons’ book as an additional companion. The group will be led by Kate Pederson LCSW MSW, Rev. Jasiel Hernandez, Rev. Kelley Jepsen, Rev. Chris Palmer, and Rev. Gracie Payne. Sponsored by Young Adults, Children & Family Ministry, and CenterPoint Counseling.

A Strong Rhythm Section

BY BRIANNA HOLT

Confidence. Patience. Teamwork. Commitment.

Did you just zoom through reading those four words? If so, try reading them again. Only this time, slow down. Let the words sink in.

Confidence. Patience. Teamwork. Commitment.

Thank you for taking a bit more time to read these words again. Now if it isn't too much to ask, read them one more time. Yet this time, create a rhythm to pair with the words. Make it fast, make it slow. Perhaps you already developed a rhythm subconsciously when reading through the first or second time.

Confidence. Patience. Teamwork. Commitment.

Unfortunately for you, if you developed a catchy rhythm for yourself, these words will be repeating over and over again in your head for who knows how long. Since these words may be with you for a while, answer these questions: What do these words mean? What thoughts or feelings did each word provoke in you? Where do you experience these words playing out in your life?

For three families at our church, these words are products of growth that have been enhanced through Children's Choir. The Children's Choir at Second Presbyterian Church offers a music curriculum nurturing the spiritual and artistic growth of children age four through fifth grade. Children receive instruction in music reading, notation, rhythmic and vocal training, and ensemble skills like part-singing, tuning, and blending. In addition, children deepen their familiarity with scripture and worship.



The Bolton family has been involved in the choir program for nine years and still counting! Children's Choir set the stage for Chas and Taryn's two oldest children, Alex and Ashley, to find interest in music outside of church. Alex, who has since graduated from the choir program, plays in his school band and Ashley has taken up piano. Gained confidence through choir has propelled them to branch out into other roles in the church, such as being acolytes. Their youngest, Andrew, enjoys performing with his siblings at home in their pretend band and dressing up in the choir robes! Chas shared, "Choir has helped in expanding their maturity and confidence and allows them to worship God in a childlike, expressive way."

Emma and Charlotte Eckerle are in their second year of Children's Choir. Emma loves choir because "she has improved her singing and she is learning how to read music." Charlotte's favorite part is "learning

new songs." Emma sings in the Carol Choir, directed by Brianna Holt, and Charlotte sings in the Cherub Choir, directed by Carol Baker. Both girls have formed relationships with their leaders as well as other children in the group. Stephanie expressed the biggest impact Children's Choir has had on her daughters is that "Emma and Charlotte are excited to attend church every Sunday morning!"



The Thomas family has been in the Children's Choir rhythm for three years now. Max and Morgan both sing in the Cherub Choir. Their parents, Matt and Mary, shared, "We always had such peace knowing that choir was a positive, loving, grace-filled, growth-oriented environment." The children have experienced support and encouragement not only on Sunday mornings, but also in areas outside of the music room. "Choir has made the kids feel a part of the church in a much deeper way. They identify church as a community to them primarily because of choir."

What rhythms keep you going day to day? Do these rhythms harvest spiritual growth and help weather the storms of life? The Bolton, Eckerle, and Thomas families have found a constant rhythm at Second through Children's Choir – a rhythm that provides confidence, patience, teamwork, and commitment.

As the season of Lent is upon us, let us slow down, clear space, and develop new rhythms in life. Rhythms that will set us free from our old, unwanted ways and allow for renewed growth. For God is about to do a new thing and we all need a strong rhythm section to see it.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." ISAIAH 43:18-19 (NIV)

Children's Choir meets on Sunday mornings during the 11 a.m. service following the "Time with Children." If you or your child would like to get involved, please contact **Brianna Holt**, BHolt@SecondChurch.org.

Other MFA Opportunities:

On **Sunday, April 19 at 9:30 and 11 a.m. services**, we welcome worship music by Second's Handbell Ensemble and St. Luke's UMC Wesleyan Ringers. Please join us as we celebrate in music and collaboration the unity we have in Jesus Christ.

The **Second Winds Ensemble** invites you to join in their "Spring Pops" performance in McFarland Hall on April 26. Attend rehearsals on Wednesdays, 8-9 p.m. – April 8, 15, 22. Perform during coffee hour on April 26.



Iris Olinger: Bible Stories Quilt

On January 12, 2010, friends gathered in the Church Library to dedicate a quilt, on display in the children's literature area. Donated in honor of the Children of Second, the quilt was lovingly made by Iris Olinger, longtime member of Second Presbyterian, and features 12 Biblical stories. Iris was joined by her daughter, two grandchildren, members of the Fine Arts Advisory Team, Reverend Madison VanVeelan and many friends. We thank Iris Olinger, her family, and her friends Sherri and Michael Sells for coordinating this special dedication.

A Clearing Season: Ultimate Stewardship



Luke 12:13-21 records Jesus' parable about a farmer whose harvest was so great that he had to build extra storage barns for all of his crops and other goods. Smugly, the farmer says to himself, "I have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

To this thought, God replies: "This very night your life is being required of you. And those things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

The parable's question points to the folly of a life devoted to being rich in earthly treasures for ourselves, rather than being rich toward God. Examining priorities has always been good for Christians to do.

In our day, this is also an extremely practical question. What does happen to all our stuff when we die?

If we do not make provisions through an estate plan, assignment of benefits, drafting a trust or a will, Indiana laws will determine how our stuff is distributed—without any regard for our personal values and preferences.

By planning in advance, our assets can be used to support all those people, causes, institutions, and programs that are important to us while we are alive—including our church.

Last year, members who have died and left legacy gifts to Second provided over \$2 million to our annual operating budget, CenterPoint Counseling, Northside Mission Ministries, Music and Fine Arts Ministry, Footsteps of Faith, Lake Fellow Ministry, Children's Circle Preschool, and more.

To learn more about making a legacy gift and to view an informational video, go to SecondChurch.org/Give and click on "Legacy Giving." "Planned Giving Navigator" provides very helpful and easy-to-understand articles to guide your thoughts in making a planned gift. On the website, you can also download a form to tell us of your legacy gift plans. Click on "Endowment" to learn about specific different endowment funds that will continue to support our ministries for years to come. Contact JKoppitch@SecondChurch.org for more information.

Before making any final decisions, be sure to speak with your family, financial advisor, attorney, estate executor, and anyone else involved with your financial affairs.

Kelly's story

First, I want to say that when I was younger, I got an eviction on my record. I had signed a lease to pay rent. Things happened, and I didn't pay the rent. The landlord evicted me, and I don't think I even went to court. I made mistakes, and the law worked like it's supposed to. Though the apartment wasn't perfect, I don't fault that landlord at all. I made an agreement, and I didn't honor my part.

But second... is that since my kids started growing, I've been working hard to put my life together. My partner Brian works in landscaping. I work in home healthcare and am two months away from a Bachelor's degree in Business Management. Home health care is hard work, caring for the sick and elderly, but I know it has a purpose.

About three years ago, my partner Brian and I were renting a house with our children. Our rent was up to date, and we paid the landlord a set amount to cover all utilities.

When the utility bill was high in the middle of the lease, the landlord demanded more money of us that we didn't agree to. He filed an eviction.

We got the notice and went to court. It was dismissed because he had filed in the wrong township.

He filed again in the right township. We got the notice and went to court. We made our case, and the judge dismissed it all.

The landlord then turned the utilities off. It's not just uncomfortable to be in a house without heat or air conditioning, but it's also illegal if you have kids. We didn't want to catch a case with DCS [Department of Child Services].

We left the house—leaving the appliances we had bought behind—and stayed with family. While we were out, the landlord changed the locks. We knew that was wrong, but we were busy getting the kids to school from where we were staying, trying to find a new place to live, all while working.

Why are there so many homeless people here?

It has been hard to get back on our feet ever since, though we have had some apartments. It is always hard to find one, though, and we didn't know why until a couple months ago. We found out that someone was trying to garnish Brian's wages from his landscaping job. Turns out it was that landlord from three years ago.

After we had moved out of the house and he changed the locks, he filed an eviction on us for a third time. The notice from the court we think was mailed to the house, but we had left there. We had checked the mail occasionally, but it was always empty—we suspect someone was collecting the mail before we got there. Now, if you go to a public site called mycase.in.gov, you'll see that the judge awarded that landlord \$3,500 from our pocket, and there is a pending order to garnish our wages for it.

It was a judgment for \$3,500 made against us at an eviction hearing that we didn't know anything about.

Now when we are looking for housing, new potential landlords see that judgment. They also see that he filed on us three times—they don't read that it was in the wrong township, that it was then dismissed, then that we weren't even there. And they don't want to take a chance on renting to us.

We are going to make it, I'm going to finish school, and my kids aren't going to go through this again. But any help each of you can be to change the system and make the eviction cases more balanced for people like my family, well, it's very important.

New York City had the most evictions in the country in 2016, the only year for which comprehensive data has been analyzed.

Indianapolis was second.

Indianapolis had more evictions than Chicago, Los Angeles, and Topeka combined.

Source: Eviction Lab at Princeton University (EvictionLab.org)



Of major large cities, Indianapolis is second highest in the country, for the number of evictions occurring in a year—only New York City had a higher number of evictions.

In a comparison to cities of a similar size, with similar poverty rates, and similar African American populations, Indianapolis has almost double their eviction rates.

In Indiana, tenants have extremely limited consumer rights under Indiana/Landlord Tenant Law. Although our city has many responsible landlords, some unscrupulous ones benefit from a legal system, which is invariably stacked against tenants, especially those who may be teetering on the edge of homelessness.

Tenants can be evicted at any time for any reason and have no leverage when utilities are cut off or a home is in dire need of repair.

Organizations like Family Promise (formerly known as Interfaith Hospitality Network or IHN) are working to change the underlying systems that contribute to high rates of homelessness for families and individuals. You can follow progress by visiting fpgi.org and signing up for the newsletter.

Second partners with Family Promise to help meet the needs of particular families, with temporary shelter and meals, while also working to address the broader factors affecting homelessness in our city.

You can lend your voice to help people like Kelly find and keep stable housing.



Did you notice?

A single, young lady in her thirties suddenly finding five children under 15 living with her because her sister died and the sister's husband is in prison

A former teacher with her own health problems, whose husband recently died after an extended illness, which obliterated all their savings

A successful businessman from Afghanistan, who came here to escape religious persecution and can't get a business started due to a language barrier and who actually distributed food to the poor when he was in his former country

A retired couple, both with extreme health issues and no family, who have difficulty paying rent and all the bills they're facing for prescriptions and surgeries

A middle-aged woman with nine children, one of whom is severely disabled, and an abusive husband forbidding her to go to a food pantry, still sneaks here to get more food

A large family from another country living with another family while trying to get settled here and find work, and whose husband already is working two jobs

A twenty-five-year old man just released from prison working on his GED and trying to find a job, who keeps being turned away because he's an ex-con without a high school diploma

A doctor in his sixties from Egypt, who can't practice here due to trying to support his family and difficulty getting his certifications renewed to American requirements

A young couple just getting started in a new city, who need food to tie them over while they find work and settle in

And on and on.

Characters in a Dickens' novel? No, these are neighbors of this church, who visit here two times a month needing food! They come here for help! Sometimes they come not only for food but also for someone perhaps to just listen, hold their hand, welcome them, laugh with them, cry with them, pay attention to them, and let them know that others care about them. Often those little conversations can mean the world to someone in need. The needy have always been around, and financial help is so important—but meeting with someone

in person, holding their hand, and trying to understand their pain is worth a million dollars!

Do you have an hour you can spare in your busy schedule to sit with someone and talk in the waiting room at the Food Pantry, to try to be a friend, a confidant, a source of comfort...a disciple of Christ?

Sign up to be a Food Pantry Greeter.
Signed, A Pantry Greeter

*Prefer to work behind the scenes?
We need delivery drivers.*

Local stores donate products for use at our pantry. We have recently added additional partners to our list and are looking for individuals who can pick up during the week and deliver these items to the church. There is some lifting involved, and you would use your own vehicle. Please contact Lisa Enright (LEnright@SecondChurch.org) if you are interested or need additional information.

We are collecting hats, gloves, and scarves to give out to our Pantry Families during the winter months. Your donations can be left in the atrium shopping carts and will be a blessing to our neighbors in Washington Township.



CHILDREN AND FAMILY LENTEN DEVOTION GUIDE



An invitation to the desert...Under God's Good Care.

BY KATHRYN GREEN-ROSS

From Ash Wednesday to Easter—we are going to remember that God sent Jesus, and gave us the scriptures in the Bible, and calls us all together because we all live under God's good care!

WELCOME

Peace, friends, and may you have a blessed Lenten journey through the desert. This family practice runs from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. It reminds us that Jesus is with us even in the desert... Jesus is always with us. Why? Because we all live under God's good care.

Each week you have a suggested "at home together" practice in four parts that consists of:

Remember- *This is a time to hear a Bible story about God taking care of God's people. Read from whatever Bible is appropriate for your family or retell it together.*

Wonder- *This is a time to celebrate for the Wonder of the Bible. There are questions to connect with the story and try to see what the story looked like or felt like. Add your own questions as you wonder together at the wonder of the Bible.*

Know- *This is a reflection and question. You reflect on part of the story. Then, you are encouraged to find a personal connection between the story and your life.*

To Do- *Every week, there is an activity to interact with the desert. Everyone's desert will be a little different, but they are all Under God's Good Care. Close with the suggested prayer, or make up your own.*

I pray that this practice is a blessing to you and your family.

PREPARATION

Gather together the resources you will need.

- Spark Story Bible, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN; 2009. OR another Bible appropriate for your family members.
- A shallow tray, box top, or other item for the Desert Box Option: or a large piece of paper/newsprint if drawing the desert
- A stone for each person Option: or a rock shape for each person
- Paint pens or permanent markers for stones Option: or crayons, markers, pencils
- A leaf or small plant or pipe cleaner
- Attached resources: Labyrinth directions –see Drawings by Jeff S. Paper or cloth for "coats"

ASH WEDNESDAY: We go into the desert.

Remember: Jesus was baptized, then he went into the desert. Read or tell the story of Matthew 4:1-4.

Wonder: How would it feel to be alone and hungry? When you are in a different place, what helps you remember that you are safe?

Know: Jesus was baptized right before he went into the desert. God reminded all of the people AND Jesus that he is God's son, and that he is beloved, and that God is very pleased with him. So when Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread, Jesus remembered that it is maybe even more important to know who and whose we are. We are claimed as God's children at our baptism. When we are alone or sad or scared, maybe we can remember that...even when we are in a desert.

To Do: Find out more about what makes somewhere a "desert?" Have a grown up help you find more information about deserts. Hint: they can be very cold!

Find a box or a tray or a bowl to make a desert scene wherever you eat your meals. This way you can remember that we need food and we need God. Set it out where you can see it most days of your week. Now read MATTHEW 4: 5-11 or a paraphrase:

Since this temptation did not work, the Tempter who is called Satan tried again. He took Jesus to the very top of a very big temple. He wanted Jesus to prove that God loved him. He said, "IF you are the son of God, well then, jump off of this tall place. After all, God promised to protect you." The Tempter wanted to make Jesus doubt who he is. Jesus didn't need to test God. Jesus knew that he was God's son. God loves him. God was very pleased with him. So Jesus said, "The holy scriptures say not to test God."

One more time, The Tempter who is called Satan tried to tempt Jesus to forget who he is. The Tempter said he would give Jesus every kingdom and every wonder in the world, IF Jesus would worship him. Jesus would never do this! Jesus knows that the whole world is God's! God made everything! He told the Tempter, "I will worship the Lord who is my God, and I will serve only him." Jesus didn't have to prove anything! Jesus knew whose he was. He was God's son!

After all of this tempting, Jesus told the Tempter to leave him! So the devil did leave...and just then angels came and waited on Jesus. It had been 40 days and 40 nights—now Jesus was ready to begin his ministry. He could tell everyone the good news that THEY are loved by God. He would tell everyone that God will take care of them and to believe that Jesus is the son of God.

You might conclude by saying: From Ash Wednesday to Easter—we are going to remember that God sent Jesus, and gave us the scriptures in the Bible, and calls us all together because God cares about us!

**Dear God, we know that Jesus listened with all of his might
For 40 days and 40 nights.
Jesus fasted in a desert;
Jesus wondered, and Jesus prayed.
Help us to remember that God was with Jesus then;
God is with us every day. Amen.**

Week 1- God is in the desert.

At home together gather around your shallow dish or box or pan or some paper. Create a desert scene by filling it with sand (works best), or fine gravel, or another substance. Leave your "desert" out. We will visit it every week.

Remember: Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus being tempted in the desert. Can you retell the story with the help of the children? Spark Bible pages 242-243 and 248-251.

Wonder: What would that look like? Can we act it out? (Don't worry if everyone wants to be the Tempter; they will realize that Jesus is more powerful!)

Know: Deserts can be beautiful, and deserts can be scary. There is a hot, HOT sun in some deserts. In other deserts, there is a cold, COLD wind. Whether a desert is beautiful or scary can depend on if you feel alone or sad. What kind of desert did you make with your family? Even in the desert, we are always under God's good care.

To do: After you create your desert, you might say together:

Dear God, let's walk through the desert together this Lent- a place that is empty and bare. We will remember together Jesus is with us, and that we all are Under God's Good Care. Amen.

Draw a picture of a desert:

Week 2 - Jacob gets a new name.

Remember: God tells us who we are! Read: Genesis 32:22-32. Page 45 & 47 of the Spark Bible.

Wonder: I wonder what it would be like to wrestle an angel?!

Know: God will give us a blessing and tell us who we are. Ask each person, or yourself, "Who are you?" Each person answers, "I am a Child of God." We are always God's children and Under God's Good Care.

To do: Sometimes people in the Bible marked important events and places with stones. Decorate the BOTTOM of a rock. Put on it how God blesses you. Place it in your desert scene. Be sure the writing is not visible. (Put either "Alleluia" or "Jesus is Alive" on one of the stones.) You might say:

Dear God, the desert we are walking together can be a place that is wild! It's not tame. We will remember that Jacob wrestled with an angel; YOU call Jacob and each of us by name. AMEN.

Draw a picture Jacob wrestling with an angel:

Week 3 - Jonah needs some shade.

Remember: Jonah was told to tell the people of Nineveh to change their ways! Jonah didn't really want to do this, but God was able to change Jonah's heart AND the people of Nineveh. Find the story in the book of Jonah; in the Spark Bible, the Jonah story is 190-193.

Wonder: What is it like to have to tell someone something they won't like? I wonder what it feels like if someone tells you that YOU are WRONG? When you are mad, how does that feel? It almost feels like you are in a desert!

Know: Sometimes a "desert feeling" inside of us can make us feel alone. A desert feeling can make us feel scared. We might feel mad or angry. When we are mad or angry, it can be very hard to change directions and behave the way God wants us to. Can you remember a time when you were angry? How did you feel? When we are able to tell God how we feel and remember that God loves everyone, it is like a beautiful shade tree comes up in the desert! God takes away the anger and reminds us that we are never alone. God is always with us. We are always under God's good care.

To do: Put a leaf, a small plant or other item (pipe cleaner palm trees or fir trees are amazing!)

Water the plant with an eyedropper. Let everyone have a turn. After everyone has a turn you might say:

Dear God, sometimes the desert is deep inside us; so deep that no one else can see. But YOU know my heart, God. You will help me when I'm angry. YOU will always take care of me. Amen.

Draw a picture of a time when you were angry:

Week 4 in Lent - Moses wandered in the desert.

Remember: Moses and the children of Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years. That was a lifetime for them. Some people were born who never even remembered that they used to be slaves in Egypt. Read the story of God taking care of the children of Israel in the desert. Find the story in the Spark Bible pages 90-93 or Exodus 16.

Wonder: I WONDER would it be like to WANDER all of the time. Moses and the children of Israel didn't have maps or smart phones. How did they know where to go? Who knew the way? (God knew the way.)

Know: Sometimes we don't know where to go or how we will get through our days, nights, or weeks. We have to remember that God is with us. Have you ever been lost? How does that feel? How do you find a way home? Is it easier to be wandering if you are not alone? God will be with us, even when we wander in the wilderness for a long, LONG time. We are always under God's good care.

To do: Draw a path through the sand leading from one side of the box to the other. Take turns.

You might say:

Dear God, Moses and all of the descendants of Joseph wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. You gave them water; YOU gave them food. God, you will help them and us, and calm our fears. AMEN.

Draw a picture of something that makes you feel safe:

Week 5 - Jesus' ministry reminds the people that God cares about them, loves them, and will help them.

Remember: After Jesus left the desert, he travelled all over! He stayed with family and friends. He told stories! He healed people! He showed the people how to live together. Read the story of Jesus telling his disciples that this way of living, this path, is one that everyone can follow. Everyone can tell people about Jesus and teach about God's love. Read about sharing God's love in the Spark Bible pages 326-327 or Mark 9:38-41.

Wonder: I wonder how it feels to feel special. Who makes you feel special? What do you do to make other people feel special?

Know: Some of the disciples thought they were the most special because they were the ones who knew Jesus and could tell people about him. Well, you know what? We are all special to God. We know Jesus, too, and anyone can! Telling others about God's love is a path we can take, too. We can tell people about Jesus and all of the wonderful things he has done. We can tell them that Jesus is still with us and doing great things. Who do you want to tell that God loves them and is with them? Help your family or friends know that we are all special and under God's good care.

To do: Smooth out the sand or gravel of your box. Draw a labyrinth in it. Let everyone take turns following the labyrinth. (OR Take the labyrinth paper and draw a labyrinth on plain paper as large as you can. Follow the lines with glue. Sprinkle some sand on the glue. Let it dry, then gently knock the sand back into the desert box. You can close your eyes and follow along the labyrinth path with your finger.) When you get to the middle of labyrinth, pause and remember that God takes care of us. Then, move back along the path until you get to the start/end.

You might end by saying:

Dear God, telling friends about Jesus is a wonderful thing! It is the greatest story to share. Help us to tell them about how YOU love us all. We are all special and under GOD's good care. AMEN.

Draw a labyrinth (see the instructions in the back of this booklet):

Week 6 - Jesus heads back to Jerusalem.

Remember: After Jesus had lived and worked with his family and friends, he had one more very important thing to do. Jesus headed back to Jerusalem. He entered as a king! Can you retell the Palm Sunday story from church? If you need a reminder, see pages 454-459 in the Spark Bible. Or, read the Bible, Matthew 21: 1-9.

Wonder: I wonder how it feels to have everyone looking at you! Has that ever happened to you? Were you scared? After walking from town to town, what would it be like to have a donkey to ride? How would it feel to have people wave palm branches and shout "Hosanna! Praise God!"?

Know: Most people will be so very excited to see Jesus. How would you celebrate Jesus coming to your town or house?

To do: Smooth out the sand in your desert box. Add a palm leaf, or small coats cut out from paper (see resources). Do this along a path. You might say:

Dear God, The people greeted Jesus with palm branches And laid down the coats they would wear! We should shout "Hosanna" with them; For we are all children Under God's Good Care. Amen.

Draw a picture of party to welcome Jesus:

Easter - Jesus is Alive!

Remember: When Jesus entered Jerusalem people shouted "Hosanna" and celebrated. Some people were so excited to see him! Some people were scared. They were afraid of Jesus. It is almost like they are back in the desert! The people who were afraid, well, they killed Jesus. They thought that they could destroy him! His friends put his body in a dark cave with a stone closing the entrance to keep his body safe. It was late on the Sabbath, and they couldn't do any work. On Sunday, they thought, they could come back and take care of his body. But

when they came back on Sunday morning—they couldn't find Jesus' body. The stone was rolled away, and Jesus' body was gone. What had happened? Read the Easter Story: Spark Bible p. 482-487 or Matthew 28:1-8.

Wonder: I wonder how Mary and her friends felt when they walked to the garden. What do you think that looked like? Now, I wonder how Mary and her friends felt when they left the garden to go tell the disciples what they saw? What do you think that looked like?

Know: At Easter we celebrate by saying "Alleluia!" We are so excited to know that Jesus is alive! Nothing can keep Jesus from being with us. We can be like Mary and her friends and run tell our friends that Jesus is alive! Look around you at the trees and flowers. In the winter some things can look like they are dead. Do you see any new growth? Do you see any birds? Do you see any flowers coming up out of the ground? Easter Sunday usually has flowers and feels like everything is new! Spring can help remind us that Jesus did not stay in a dark cave. Jesus is alive! Jesus will never leave us alone in a desert, or in a dark place, or in a sad time. Jesus will make sure that we are always under God's good care.

To do: Gather around the desert box. How can you make your desert bloom? Take turns being the angel and roll over the stones/rocks. Read the messages of Good News. See the beauty of the desert. Your rocks are so beautiful!

You might say:

Dear God, The cave that was dark, was desert-sad. It was lonely and very bare. Alleluia! It is now a beautiful garden. Jesus is alive! Now that's good news to share! Amen.

Draw a picture of a desert in bloom:

Just like Jesus' friends we want to tell everyone:

Alleluia! The whole world is alive Under God's Good Care.

Thank you for taking this desert journey from emptiness of a desert to the emptiness of the tomb. Through it all, we know

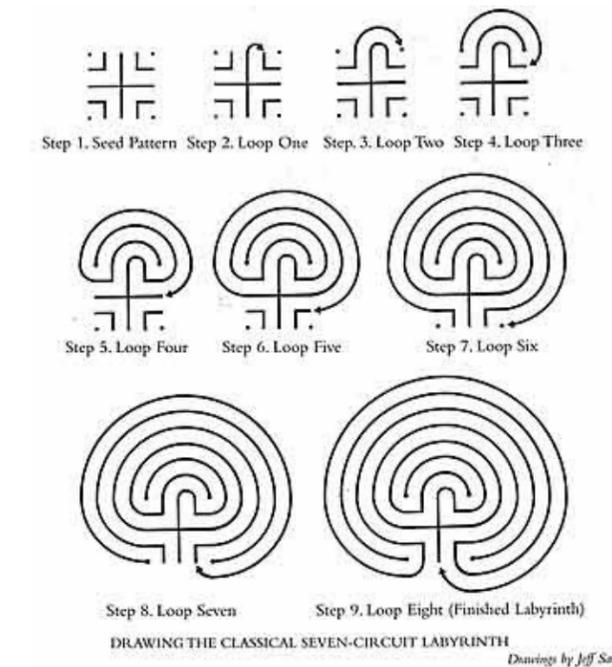
that when we go into the desert, God is with us, God knows us, God takes care of us, God leads us, God gives us Jesus, we celebrate Jesus coming to Jerusalem, and then Jesus and the people have a different kind of desert experience. It doesn't end there! On Easter we discover that Jesus is Alive. Through Jesus, God teaches us that even scary things cannot separate us from God's love.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SEED LABYRINTH drawing instructions

From <http://www.geomancy.org/images/labyseedgrow.jpg>

Video: <https://youtu.be/dnDGvaNIHNI>



Coat Pattern



Faith, Family and Football

Until November 17, I didn't know the three F's of Christianity. I might have guessed Faith or Family, but not Football! Several from Second gathered at the Colts/Jaguars game on Faith, Family, and Football day created by the Colts and sponsored by Men@Second. The festivities began with tailgating and a time to meet or reacquaint. Game time brought an entertaining victory for the Colts. Finally, we enjoyed some great testimonials and Q&A from Colts players, coaches, and a cheerleader. The food and game were good, but the time spent with friends was great. We experienced the Lord at work in the lives of people through football.

Reflecting on this event reminded me of my anxious anticipation some Sundays when I can barely wait to get home to watch a game. It can be easy to get caught up in or distracted by the world outside the walls of the church and diminish or subordinate my time in worship. I think God wants both for us, entertainment and worship, and they don't always have to be mutually exclusive. There is certainly the need for my Sunday time in church with my fellow Christians, where we come together to learn, sing, confess, receive forgiveness, give, grow, and be still. Once I depart, my time with God doesn't end, and my worship doesn't need to either.

Faith, Family, and Football was a great reminder that God wants to join us where we are. He desires that we come to Him throughout our week. "Come near to God and he will come near to you." (James 4:8) The event was refreshing on many levels. Second brought Faith and Family. The Colts brought Football and Faith. The common denominator was Faith, and we are all enriched. Stay tuned for future events. I hope to see you there.

Peace, Steve Johnson



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