

Lent 2022

Inspired for



Words and Images from Members & Friends of

The Church of the Holy Trinity
Manhattan

St. Stephen's, Rochester Row
Westminster

Welcome to the fifth edition of our Lent booklet. Some of us remember well those early days of the pandemic, when we first joined one another's Zoom links or Facebook live streams in order to worship and pray together. We have urged each other on and grow stronger in faith and fellowship, thanks to the comforting patters of Daily Prayer and worship on the Sabbath. There have been times when one city might be in lockdown, but we drew encouragement knowing that our sister parish elsewhere might still be open, or be open in new ways. We continue to learn from one another, to be strengthened, and to laugh. And then laugh some more.

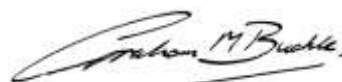
Especially in this spring of 2022, as the world is tired and worried in so many ways, it seems the gift and calling of Christians to ground ourselves in Hope, praying that God would help us extend this hope outward. Please take time to create an appropriate space in your homes or work for prayer and reflection. Take a few moments of silence before you read and pray the reflection offered to us by one of our communities. Perhaps you might like to conclude by praying the Prayer of the Week, or another special prayer for Lent. Some of us will be incorporating this devotional into our usual practice of Daily Prayer, folding these thoughts into Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, or Compline.

And can we take this opportunity to thank you to all who have contributed and help put this publication together for our spiritual journey through Lent.

John Beddingfield
The Church of the Holy Trinity



Graham Buckle
St. Stephen's, Westminster



March 2, Ash Wednesday

The Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

This Lent, as we continue to navigate a pandemic, I'm spending some deliberate time with the 16th century Spanish friar, St. John of the Cross. While many may be familiar with the term, "Dark night of the soul," some of you, like me, may have never connected the fact that John's longer treatises on the Dark Night is based upon a simple, beautiful, 8-stanza poem by the same name. Tradition says that John wrote the poem while he imprisoned by his own Carmelite brothers. They resisted the reforms that John wanted, but reading the language of his poetry, it's not hard to imagine that the religious all around him probably feared the depth and intensity of his faith. Somehow, while kept in a cold cell in Toledo, John held tightly to hope in God's ongoing love for him—no matter what.

This light led the way
More clearly than the risen sun
To where he was waiting for me
--The one I knew so intimately--
In a place where no one could find us.

O night, that guided me!
O night, sweeter than sunrise!
O night, that joined lover with Beloved!
Lover transformed in Beloved!
(excerpt from Dark Night of the Soul, trans. Mirabai Starr)

John Beddingfield, Holy Trinity (Rector)

Thursday, March 3

As we look toward this season of lent and how we can prepare to celebrate the day God's amazing rescue plan was put into action, I am reminded of my favourite bible verse.

"For I know the plans I have for declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you and hope and a future" Jeremiah 29 :11

Life is unpredictable. It is confusing and often, we don't know what is coming our way half the time. Sometimes, we can't even see what the next month looks like. But that is why it is so important to look back on this scripture and know that this promise God made is also made to us as well. God has plans for us, we just might not know what they are yet. But there is always hope Jesus Christ. That's why God sent him, so we can be reunited with Christ again. God doesn't want His people to suffer and struggle, He wants then to

have an amazing and fruitful life, working together to build His church. God knows the plans he has for us and we as His people must trust that His will is what is best for our lives and futures. Let us be reminded, this Easter, that God's plan for us is to be reunited with Him and we can hold on to the hope that he has wonderful plans over our future hopes and dreams.

Kim Phillips, St. Stephen's (Children's Apprentice)

Friday, March 4

Holding Steady
Sparks gone viral
steal our breath and flourish
in our lungs
we struggle to live..

Think of a mountain,
thrust up over
inconceivable time
a spike on a death graph.

Steady on the mountain!

Although we humans
bend in the Covid wind,
grass grows, trees leaf out,
pink roses bloom in a haze
of blue spired sage.
A promise has been kept.

Steady on Spring

Our dog, Daisy, unafraid.
runs like a tornado
through our rooms
skidding at the corners,
then curls up trustfully
between us to rest,

Steady on Daisy!

Patsy Weille, Holy Trinity (Poet & Coordinator of Trinity Cares)

Saturday, March 5

juicy stuff

During Lockdown, I was scared, scared to go outdoors, scared to do anything. But most of all, I was scared at that I would get it.

I wasn't in contact with any of my friends. I felt alone. Ah Since I am a child, I need to see, communicate and socialise with other children as part of growing up. Shutting the schools stopped me from doing that.

One day, I asked my parents if I could call one of my ~~parents~~ friends. They said yes.

Then, I started talking to my friends about how I felt, and they did the same to me. I also started to talk more to my family. It gave me hope to know I was not alone.



Anna, St. Stephen's (Junior Church Member)

March 6, First Sunday in Lent

We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul... - Hebrews 6:19

I love nautical metaphors. I love anything to do with the sea, really! And so when asked to write something on hope, this phrase from the Letter to the Hebrews immediately popped into my mind.

It is perhaps difficult now for those of us who don't sail to appreciate how vital a piece of equipment an anchor is on a ship. Especially on a ship with no motor power at all, no

ability to sail against the wind and tide, but completely at the mercy of elements that can vastly overpower us. Anchors keep you safe and snug in a sheltered bay, or help you to club-haul a ship, turning it extremely rapidly in an emergency. One use of an anchor in an ocean-going emergency has always stayed with me, however – preventing you from running into rocks on a leeward shore. A leeward shore is one of the horrors of sailing. If you are unlucky or unwise, you can find yourself in a position where the wind and the tide drive you, completely inexorably, towards the shore and disaster. Taking down the sails won't help when the tide and current still drives you on. You could try to row, or tow the ship, but your crew will tire quickly and you still may not be able to escape. It is a slow and unrelenting drive to destruction.

Or you can let down your anchor, or anchors, and stay safe until the tide turns or the wind is in your favour. That, for me, is the anchor of the soul. We may be trapped in a situation that seems to have grasped hold of us, moving us slowly and inexorably somewhere that we do not want to go, and we know will do us no good. We may feel like there is no chance of escape, but we have this sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. It may seem small, an impossibly thin rope standing between us and the cliffs, but it is there. It holds us until the wind changes, or the tide turns, and we can sail out again into the open seas of our lives.

O God,
you know us to be set
in the midst of so many and great dangers,
that by reason of the frailty of our nature
we cannot always stand upright:
grant to us such strength and protection
as may support us in all dangers
and carry us through all temptations;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Rev'd Helena Bickley-Percival, St Stephen's (Assistant Curate)

First Week in Lent

The Collect appointed for each week is taken from The 2021 Lambeth Conference Journey 'Prayers of Hope for the World', Featuring prayers from Anglican bishops and others involved in the Lambeth Conference Community and the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Loving God, look with mercy on your world and the many challenges we face - through environmental crisis, poverty and hurt. Make your church a sign of hope that we may bring your peace and justice to the world. And bound together by your love, may the churches of the Anglican Communion show people Jesus. We ask this in his name. Amen.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, Diocese of York, Primate of England

March 7, Monday in the First Week of Lent



I am a runner who has participated in the New York City Marathon several times to raise money for cancer research at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, which is not very far from Holy Trinity.

For these reasons, the word *hope* reminds me of the Canadian runner Terry Fox's 1980 *Marathon of Hope*. As a teenager, Fox was diagnosed with cancer, and while the treatment was successful, it came at the cost of his right leg. He began distance running with a prosthetic leg, and in 1980 announced that he would run a *Marathon of Hope* across Canada from east to west in order to raise money for cancer research, setting a goal of raising C\$1 for every citizen of Canada at the time - a total of C\$23 million (about \$55 million USD today).

In April of that year, Fox began his journey in Newfoundland and ran the equivalent of a marathon per day for 143 days until, outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, he fell ill and could not continue; the cancer had returned. Although he could not complete the *Marathon of Hope*, Fox had inspired Canadians and people around the world, and the donations kept pouring in. Sadly, Terry Fox passed away the following summer, but not before reaching his fundraising goal.

Terry Fox's legacy continues. The foundation started in his name has organized an annual Terry Fox Run in Canada and sixty other countries. Since 1981, millions of runners have participated, raising over C\$850 million (\$665 million USD) and counting.

Congregant, Holy Trinity

March 8, Tuesday in the First Week of Lent

The Window

Look through the window,
There is the sky, there is the outside
Everything that is or ever was,
Locked in present reality

Made present in the instant,
Is the stuff of creation,
in its dated incarnation,
Now, today

God, in creation, in time.
Hope, and anticipation

Of future present reality,
Pregnant with possibility.

For creation never stands
Still, nor we within creation.
Creation carries eternity
As it rushes on, to endless, Blessing.

The Reverend David Hobden, St. Stephen's, (Retired Hospital Chaplain)

March 9, Wednesday in the First Week of Lent

Expression of Hope

"Waking up this morning, I smile. Twenty-four brand new hours are before me. I vow to live fully in each moment and to look at all beings with compassion." Thich Nhat Hanh

Mary Jane Gocher, Holy Trinity (Church tours & environmental stewardship)

March 10, Thursday in the First Week of Lent

"What hope is there" was my immediate response to the suggestion I might write about it. What gleaming future do the young of today have to look forward to? The hotting up of the planet, exorbitant fuel costs, world threats from Russia and China, a government in disarray with very few world leaders worthy of respect, chaos in education, what encouragement and hope is there? And for me, when you are past 90 and must depend on others for any expedition beyond the front door, the hopes grow very limited except for a longing for a better future for my loved ones, and for a quiet night and a perfect end.

And then I thought how elastic hope is. There are so many long and short hopes. It is a long, long hope that the world's people will change to contain the warming of the planet to a reasonable level for life to go on, and there are short hopes that a friendly neighbour will come to tea this afternoon. For me I can no longer hope to go on expeditions to explore the world, but I can hope for some kindly friend or family member can take me to a picture gallery, or for university life to return to normal for the students in the family.

I turned to the dictionaries for a definition of hope. "Expectation and desire combined with feeling of trust : to look with expectation and desire" says the Oxford. My ancient Chambers declares it is "to cherish" a desire of good with the expectation of obtaining it, belief in the prospect of obtaining: confidence, hopeful anticipation. The Readers 'Digest offers "expectation and desire combined", and adds the archaic meaning, "feeling of trust".

All these definitions are uplifting and positive. "All our hope on God is founded" the hymn tells the believer. Then, one wonders, why God allowed the pandemic. Is it a warning to mankind that "the end is nigh" for the world that has so neglected Him? At 91 it is hard to see hope with the dictionary definitions that so depend on the confidence of expectation. And yet, and yet, life is full of short hopes: the catkins on tree, the visit of a

daughter from across the world, the success of students in the family, the neighbour coming to tea.

There are many things to hope for that I shall not live to see, so I concentrate on shorter hopes and return again to the hymn, "All my hopes on God are founded: he doth still my trust renew." That is a prayer. Do I have a long term hope of something more, or just a blacking out of all hopes and fears? Or can I cling to the hope at the ending of that hymn, "Christ doth call one and all: he who follow shall not fall."

Margaret Duggan, St. Stephen's, (Congregant, Retired Journalist for Church Times)

March 11, Friday in the First Week of Lent

What inspires me and continues to give me hope.

Most important to me is who has inspired me. I was blessed to be born to Roland and Jeanne Charbonnel and "you know they are Christians by their love" is how I remember them.

They lived through the depression, causing them never to waste, I think they were the first recyclers! They did not "build up treasures on earth".

I inherited a love for gardening from my parents. This love has rubbed off onto my husband Frank.

During Covid, gardening gave us a purpose and kept us sane for two years. Sometimes our hectic lives need us to "Be still and know that God is there". Each time we plant a seed we know God made it and it gives us hope that something wonderful will grow.

Hope is knowing this



will become THIS!



Iris Doyle, Holy Trinity (Daily Office Participant through Zoom, Vestryperson and volunteer at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Mohegan Lake, NY)

March 12, Saturday in the First Week of Lent

Open our eyes, Lord,
we want to see Jesus,
to reach out and touch him,
and say that we love him.
Open our ears, Lord,
and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord,
we want to see Jesus.

We use this beautiful little song in St Stephen's for our school worship quite often. Usually it is sung in procession, with one child singing solo first, followed by the full school choir. We watch our children grow in front of our eyes as they accept and carry out singing, reading, and serving roles and responsibilities in our worship.

Derek Carden, St. Stephen's (Music Teacher at Burdett-Coutts School)

March 13, Second Sunday in Lent

When I need to feel more hopeful about life, I turn to one of my favorite mantras from the Bible, a portion of I John 4.18: "Perfect love casts out fear."

As I say the words to myself over and over, I think of course of God's love for me: the love of God the Father who created me, and the love of God the Son who gave his life for me, and the love of God the Spirit who restores my soul when I feel darkness approaching.

Of course, *my* love is far from perfect. But my love is strengthened by the love I receive from my family and friends and church. And my imperfect love shares in the infinite divine love. That love does, indeed, cast out fear.

J. Douglas Ousley, Holy Trinity (Honorary Assistant Priest, Bishop's Chaplain to Retired Clergy, and Co-ordinator New York-London Diocesan Link Program)

Second Week in Lent

Lord Jesus Christ, when stormy waves of fear and rising tides of danger distress us, you shelter us in your strong heart, and you hold us steady with your wounded hands. From the unshakeable certainty of your love, send out a flood of peace and rivers of justice. Open up a fountain of health to cleanse, refresh and renew us. Gather the whole wide world into the safety of your embrace. Amen.

Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy, Perth, Australia

March 14, Monday in the Second Week of Lent 2

Hope is defined as the desire for something accompanied by an expectation of OR belief in the fulfillment of that something. For instance, the something, as a Christian, could be our salvation at our death or the vision of God or eternal life.

Growing up I was exposed to a belief of Faith that these would occur. As the years went by my religious knowledge grew. It became apparent that Faith alone was not enough and that there had to be something else growing too. This was what I dubbed "Religious Hope". For me this is a hope that has become more and more a positive thinking and less of a wish.

Finally, as I have moved into my later years, I noticed that I have a confidence in what the ultimate future has for me. It keeps me working on projects and doing activities that have a sole purpose in mind. It is no longer hope for the future but a sure thing.

May everyone be exposed to this transition of hope to a reality.

Frank Doyle, Holy Trinity (*Daily Office Participant through Zoom, Vestryperson and volunteer at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Mohegan Lake, NY*)

March 15, Tuesday in the Second Week of Lent

"Hope"

I was inspired in my contribution one Saturday evening as I was preparing and organising the music for the Sunday: I noticed a hymn the next morning would be "All my hope on God is founded", with words by Robert Bridges based on original German lyrics by Joachim Neander, set to a wonderful tune by one of my favourite composers Herbert Howells - and I thought it would be ideal for the theme of this year's Lent book. Not only because of the first line of the text, but also because the rest of the text is so widely-encompassing, making it one of those hymns you can turn to pretty much any time or season. It ranges from the cosmic and eternal in verses 2 and 3 - earthly human vanities come and go, but God is constant sanctuary and source of light and rebirth to whole worlds - to the everyday and personal, guiding us through times of change and uncertainty, calling '*my* heart to be his own', being '*my* temple and *my* tower', 'Daily' giving us 'Bounteous gifts'. And it all comes together in the final promise that God's way will sustain us: 'Christ doth call / One and all: / Ye who follow shall not fall'. Below are the words in full.

A great recording of the hymn to sing along to can be found at this [YouTube link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQLFd95rx_o):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQLFd95rx_o

1. All my hope on God is founded;
He doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he
guideth,
Only good and only true.
God unknown,
He alone
Calls my heart to be his own.

2. Pride of man and earthly glory,
Sword and crown betray his trust;
What with care and toil he buildeth,
Tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
Hour by hour,
Is my temple and my tower.

3. God's great goodness aye endureth,
Deep his wisdom, passing thought:
Splendour, light, and life attend him,
Beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
From his store
New-born worlds rise and adore.

4. Daily doth th'Almighty Giver
Bounteous gifts on us bestow;
His desire our soul delighteth,
Pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
At his hand;
Joy doth wait on his command.

5. Still from man to God eternal
Sacrifice of praise be done,
High above all praises praising
For the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
One and all:
Ye who follow shall not fall.

Matthew Blaiden, St. Stephen's (Musical Director)

March 16, Wednesday in the Second Week of Lent

What is serious to men is very often trivial in the sight of God. What in God may appear to us as "play" is perhaps what He Himself takes most seriously. At any rate the Lord plays and diverts Himself in the garden of His creation, and if we could let go of our own obsession of what we think is the meaning of it all, we might be able to hear His call and follow Him in His mysterious, cosmic dance. We do not have to go very far to catch echoes of that game, and of that dancing. When we are alone on a starlit night; when by chance we see the migrating birds in autumn descending on a grove of junipers to rest and eat; when we see children in a moment when they are really children; when we know love in our own hearts; or when, like the Japanese poet Basho we hear an old frog land in a quiet pond with a solitary splash—at such times the awakening, the turning inside out of all values, the "newness", the emptiness and the purity of vision that make themselves evident, provide a glimpse of the cosmic dance.

For the world and time are the dance of the Lord in emptiness. The silence of the spheres is the music of a wedding feast. The more we persist in misunderstanding the phenomena of life, the more we analyze them out into strange finalities and complex purposes of our own, the more we involve ourselves in sadness, absurdity, and despair. But it does not matter much, because no despair of ours can alter the reality of things, or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there. Indeed, we are in the midst of it, and it is in the midst of us, for it beats in our very blood, whether we want it to or not.

Yet the fact remains that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance. -- "The Cosmic Dance" Thomas Merton (New Seeds of Contemplation)

Joe Lipuma, Holy Trinity (Vestry Member, HTNC Board Member)

March 17, Thursday in the Second Week of Lent

Hope is a process. In exploring the experiences around us that we enjoy - good company, nature, reading, our practices (fitness, walking, or prayer, to name a few, you can come up with your own ideas) - we get a better feel for what excites and motivates us. Then Hope is the tilting into that enjoyment, it's the prospect of having a life ahead of us where we can experiment, play and explore. Sometimes in our own company, and maybe sometimes with others in community. In my work, as a yoga teacher, this is best explained through embodiment, bodily awareness as the starting point for everything. Then from there, as a foundation, there is greater connection with our spiritual growth and experience, and in our interpersonal relationships. Hope is a process as it's always unfolding in front of us, it is truly abundant, and also needs some love, care and nurturing to fully flourish. Hope is not an end point, nor is it something that can be owned, purchased in the capitalist or consumerist sense. We are all born intrinsically rooted in beautiful hope, we just sometimes need to lose a few layers for all the possibilities to flow out.

Charles Smith, St. Stephen's (Online Yoga Instructor)

March 18, Friday in the Second Week of Lent

Easter

Two of the fingers on his right hand
had been broken

so when he poured back into that hand it surprised
him — it hurt him at first.

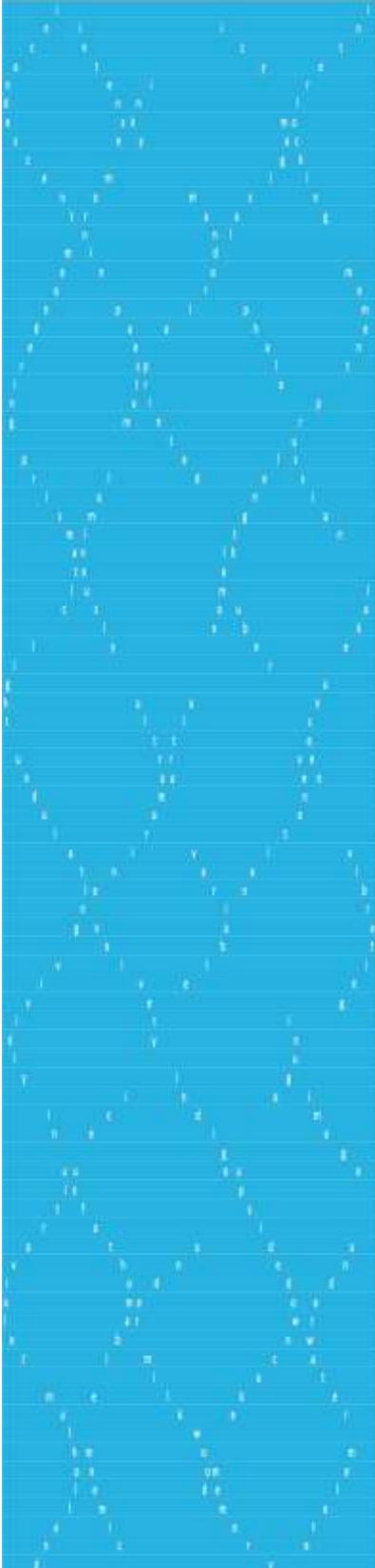
And the whole body was too small. Imagine
the sky trying to fit into a tunnel carved into a hill.

He came into it two ways:
From the outside, as we step into a pair of pants.

And from the center— suddenly, all at once.
Then he felt himself awake in the dark alone.

Marie Howe wrote about coming into the body again, and knowing oneself, and feeling the inner and outer world all at once and I think this poem especially has a quiet hope to it.

Clare McCormick, Holy Trinity (Sunday Evening Community Eucharist parishioner)



March 19, Saturday in the Second Week of Lent

It's a visual poem called "Impluvium". The poem is inspired by; water features in Ancient Pompeii, the paintings of David Hockney, and my experiences of cold water swimming in the Brockwell Lido, South London. When I am immersed in the icy cold and surrounded by the play of dancing light on the surface of the water, I feel present, connected to humanity, in an eternal moment, at the core of which is a beautiful sense of hope.

Marc Woodhead, St. Stephen's (Curator @ National Gallery & Coordinator of Slow Art St Stephen's)

March 20, Third Sunday in Lent

Some years ago, I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The trip included my first ever visit to a refugee camp, where we visited a Youth Arts project called Alrowwad. It was sobering and challenging to learn of life under occupation and we were very struck by experiencing firsthand the idea of *Beautiful Resistance*, taking the negative energy of frustration and injustice and refusing to be diminished; instead responding with nonviolence, imagination and creativity as a way of reclaiming and celebrating one's own cultural heritage. The young people we met engaged in theatre, dance, storytelling and photography as a way of coping with the significant struggles of their everyday lives in the shadow of the huge foreboding ugly concrete wall that separates Israel and Palestine. We were humbled and impressed to find such a strong sense of hope in the face of so much adversity. I first came across this image in a London exhibition. For me, although it is from a different part of the world, this painting by the Indian artist Jeroo Roy, speaks to me of Beautiful Resistance. An innocent young child, in a situation of imprisonment, has an innate instinct to create something beautiful. This is an embodiment of hope.



Revd Lindsay Meader, St. Stephen's (Lead Theatre Chaplain UK)

Third Week in Lent

Gracious and loving Father, we thank you that in spite of the hardship and devastating effects of this present pandemic, this is your world over which you have full control. We thank you for the gifts of love, hope, and resilience through the redemptive work of Christ Jesus. We pray to you to keep our faith alive, grant us the grace to live out our faith in you through loving service to all in need. Help us to live sacrificially so that we may preserve your creation for the next generation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office

March 21, Monday in the Third Week of Lent

I gain hope most of all from the courageous witness of land and water protectors in North America and around the world, who are willing to risk their personal safety and incarceration to oppose the construction of pipelines and other infrastructure of the rapacious fossil fuel industry.

Many of these land and water protectors are members of Indigenous nations. While most Indigenous peoples do not share our Christian faith tradition, all of us could learn from their deep reverence for the land, which has nourished them and their ancestors for millennia. It is to people like these that we must turn to find hope for the possibility of a habitable Earth for future generations.

Steve Knight, Holy Trinity (Environmental Stewardship)

March 22, Tuesday in the Third Week of Lent

In our household we live within two cyclical calendars that we have no control over. One of changing seasons in the natural world, and one of the church calendar. Over the last couple of years we have not cleared all of the Autumn leaves, yet we still had Spring. In 2020 we bought very few presents and didn't buy a turkey, yet we still had Christmas.

My 6 year-old has no concept of life pre-lockdown, and as adults we have lost track of time Where did those last two years go? How can we already be starting our third pandemic year?!

The cycles of the changing seasons of the natural world continue; the leaves of spring bulbs are starting to appear in the parks and the birds are making their nests. In his hymn, *Most High, Omnipotent, Good Lord*, St Francis of Assisi sings about this cyclical nature of the day and of human life – see verses 2 and 3 below - And, as one of my favourite verses for difficult times reminds us: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). That is what gives me hope.

2 My Lord be praised by brother sun
who through the skies his course doth run,
and shines in brilliant splendour;
with brightness he doth fill the day,
and signifies thy boundless sway.

3 My Lord be praised by sister moon
and all the stars, that with her soon
will point the glittering heavens.
Let wind and air and cloud and calm
and weathers all, repeat the psalm.

Jen Adam, St. Stephen's, (Ordinand, Toddler Group Coordinator at St Stephen's)

March 23, Wednesday in the Third Week of Lent



The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

Photo by Maryann E. Tyrer, Holy Trinity (Pastoral Associate-Christian Formation, Parish of St. Monica, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Stephen of Hungary)

March 24, Thursday in the Third Week of Lent

*There is one body and one spirit
There is one hope to which we were called
One Lord, one faith, one baptism
One God and Father of all
(Ephesians 4:4)*

*True happiness is only found,
Where grace and truth and love abound
(from Thomas Morrell's libretto to Handel's dramatic oratorio *Theodora*).*

Graham's request of me to write on the theme of hope was a timely one, as (although he didn't at the time know), my confirmation was imminent (one is never too old...). It took place in Westminster Abbey a few days ago and was entirely and joyously life-enhancing, not only because of the love of my dearest friends who came along in support, but because of the radiance that emanated from and to everyone present in that vast and magnificent building at that special time. As the priest and author Richard Giles says, 'the great thing to remember about a sacrament is this: that God always turns up'...

A significant part of my decision came from experience of being welcomed, for what I am, as a godmother to two small children. Every moment spent with them, and the extended godparental family that their remarkable parents have woven together, represents the culmination of everything I have ever needed – friendship, tolerance, love, understanding, community and, yes, hope. The hope that these children grow to lead fulfilling lives and that I will remain part of them for, well, for ever.

Some would say that Christians 'hope is in the existence of an afterlife, but I demur: if there were none, the earthly journey alone would be no less enriching, no less virtuous, no less worthwhile, no less full of hope.

*The raptur'd soul defies the sword,
Secure of virtue's claim,
And trusting Heav'n's unerring word,
Enjoys the circling flame.
No engine can a tyrant find,
To storm the truth-supported mind.*
(from Theodora)

Looking back at the Confirmation service, where every single word was relevant and true and resonated with emotion, the verses of the hymn come to mind. For yes, I hope for all of these, and to be loved in return.

*Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art;
Be Thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

*Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
Be Thou ever with me, and I with Thee, Lord;
Be Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son;
Be Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.*

For the full version of this cf <http://www.sswsj.org/weekly-devotion.html>

Gilly French, St. Stephen's (Congregant. Teacher at Westminster School & Musical Director of Floreat)

March 25, Friday in the Third Week of Lent

On All Saints' Sunday, I heard the names of the beloved dead from our parish and families of our parish. As I heard the names, I thought especially about my grandfather, who passed away a few years ago. He was a white "Boer" – that means farmer. He was committed to producing the best corn and milk in the northwest of South Africa. He was a man of a different time with values and actions that I deeply disagree with today. I think he could never have imagined that his name would be read out loud in an Episcopal Church, in a foreign country, in a different language. The time he lived through was more comfortable and familiar with similarity than difference. Despite all his failings, he was remembered, his name spoken by a stranger different from him, a stranger that he never knew. To me, that is a sign of Hope. Embracing our differences and hoping that acceptance becomes the new normal. I invite you to think about what gives you hope and where you can sow tiny seeds of Hope.

Christine du Toit, Holy Trinity (Vestry member, Parish Treasurer)

March 26, Saturday in the Third Week of Lent

In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'

I

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

Thomas Hardy – 1915

The title of Hardy's iconic poem is taken from Jeremiah 51:20 in the King James Bible, which reads:

Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;

Written in 1915, this poem contrasts the horrific events of the First World War with the events of everyday life. Hardy reminds the reader that, despite the ongoing war which seems to have earth-shattering consequences, normalcy continues.

The 'Breaking of Nations' referenced in the title is juxtaposed with 'Only a man' breaking-up clods of earth for agricultural purposes. In the second stanza, Hardy continues with the use agricultural imagery and assures the reader that everyday life will continue irrespective of political changes and developments in the war. The final stanza is the most explicit, plainly stating that love is timeless and will far outlast any war.

The key point of this poem, then, is to remind us that life goes on. No matter what awful things are happening in the world or in our lives, we should remind ourselves that awful things have always happened: wars, famines, and plagues are nothing new. The bad times will eventually pass, like they always do, and, even if the world is a little different afterwards, the fundamental behaviours of life and love will never change.

Francis Walsh, St. Stephens, (Congregant, Oxford Graduate & Young Adults Group)

March 27, Fourth Sunday in Lent

*I saw a stranger today
I put food for him in the eating-place
And drink in the drinking-place
And music in the listening-place.
In the Holy Name of the Trinity
He blessed myself and my house
My goods and my family.
And the lark said in her warble
Often, often, often
Goes Christ in the Stranger's guise
O, oft and oft and oft,
Goes Christ in the Stranger's guise'*

A rune of hospitality
From the Oxford book of prayer
(Ed, G. Appleton, OUP, 1985)

In the past few months my family has faced an upheaval that had to come sometime but was still unexpected in its timing. Through all this we have been blessed by the continual kindness of strangers, some professional, some out of the blue. This poem speaks to recognising Christ in those who may not speak of him but do reveal him in our weakness.

Revd Jeremy Cavanagh, (Self-Supporting Curate at St Stephens & St Saviours)

Fourth Week in Lent

Almighty God you have called many to serve you in different kinds of ministries in your church. We pray for men and women throughout the Anglican Communion, called to be evangelists. May they be inspired and strengthened by the divine power of your Holy Spirit. We pray that the mission work of the Church will continue to reach out to the world, so that, through their lives and teaching, your glory may be revealed. We pray, through the mighty name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Sister Anne Alaha, Head Sister, Community of the Sisters of Melanesia

March 28, Monday in the Fourth Week of Lent



This is the magnolia tree outside of my office window. Right now, you can only see the fuzzy bud scales, protecting the magnolia blossoms from the cold. (The buds are called “bracts.”) The bud scales last until the blossoms flower in the spring. To me, the bud scales represent what supports us in our hopes. We protect and define our desires. We work towards our hopes. We protect our hopes so that they can “blossom.” We cannot be bystanders. Our hopes are a means to reach a goal.

Erlinda Brent, Holy Trinity (Parish Secretary, Volunteer, Community Leader)

March 29, Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

The Icon of Friendship

A copy of this icon is displayed in the Church of Reconciliation at the Taizé Community. I love this icon; it inspires me and gives me hope. Until the pandemic I would visit Taizé each September, and often chose to sit close to this icon during the community worship. The Icon of Friendship dates from the 7th century and depicts Jesus putting his arm around the shoulder of a friend. This man is Menas, a Coptic Abbot who has been interpreted as symbolising ‘everyone’. Jesus does not face Menas, he walks alongside him as his friend and companion and shares his burdens. Receiving the love and friendship of Jesus, Menas is able with his right hand to bless others. Brother Jean-Marc of Taizé says that this icon illustrates one of the essential movements of the Gospel: letting ourselves be loved by Christ leads naturally and simply to transmitting blessing to other people. The love between Christ and the believer is not a closed circle, it opens out more and more widely.



Sarah Compton, St. Stephen's (Weekday Zoom Congregant)

March 30, Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Emily Dickinson

A Neighbor of Holy Trinity (Who likes to read poetry in the Church Garden)

March 31, Thursday in the Fourth Week of Lent

Experiencing the world around us gives me hope, particularly in the garden at this time of year. As the days get longer, the signs of new life are all around. The sweet box next to my front door has a wonderful honey-like scent. The camellia is covered with voluptuous blousy flowers and the bashful hellebores are emerging. The daffodils are coming through, with just one in flower now but the promise of many more. There are new shoots on the roses and clematis which will be a mass of flowers in just a few months’ time. The sound of the joyful birdsong from the trees is uplifting. I love to watch the redwings feasting on the last of the berries on the tree outside my bedroom window and the robin following me around the garden hoping I will have exposed a tasty morsel.

The circumstances in which some gardens feature in the bible do not provide signs of hope, but this cannot take away the joy of experiencing God in the world just outside the door of our homes.

As Jesus tells us: “See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.”

Alison Neilson, St. Stephen’s (Bursar)

April 1, Friday in the Fourth Week of Lent

A Fools Hope

Our culture influences us to construe hope in a certain way. Often hope equates to a manifest certainty brought about by our actions. The following two quotes remind me to reflect on hope as foolishness to the world and surprise at potentials far greater than my limited imagination and will to power.

“There never was much hope. Just a fool’s hope.” — Gandalf the White, Lord of the Rings
“May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really can make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God’s grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.” — Sr. Ruth Marlene Fox, OSB, A Non-Traditional Blessing

Calvyn du Toit, Holy Trinity (Theologian and Sunday Evening Musician)

April 2, Saturday in the Fourth Week of Lent

Moonlit Hope



Hope is a life lived among flowers
even though not all contain nectar.
Hope is the sound of anklets
on moonlit paths, even though some
remain hidden in darkness.

Hope is the song of a happy mind
the smiling face of gentle speech.
Hope is today’s joy stamping
on tomorrow’s sorrows.
Hope is sharing the laughter of
others
while searching for happiness in
your dreams.

Hope is the lotus blooming at the touch
of moonlight, fish leaping in play in
ponds.
Hope is the sight of a sleeping river
and the sound of nature’s quiet laughter.
Hope is blemish free, shining
like the full moon, or a mother’s face.

*Thursday Tamil Support Group at St
Stephen’s Church*



April 3, Fifth Sunday in Lent

Lent by Kate McIlbagga

From *Women Pray – Voices Through the Ages from Many Faiths, Cultures, and Traditions*,
edited by Monica Furlong

Dragons lurk in desert spaces
Penetrating the mind with evil claw.
Serpents' teeth seek out the chinks
Insidiously, relentlessly, gnawing on the bone;
Searching out the interstices of muscle and sinew.

Such is the pain of the wilderness
Alone, alone, alone,
Christ site
In the waste place of abandoned pleas and
 questions
until exhausted
finally
at last
the realization
comes
that in the end
there is only
God.

In the nighttime of our fears,
And in our time of questioning,
Be present, ever present God.
Be present with those
Camped out in the fields of homelessness,
With refugees and homeless,
Those who live lives of quiet desperation.
Be present until the desert places
Blossom like the rose
And hope is born again.

The Rev. Margie Tuttle, Holy Trinity (Honorary Assistant Priest, Spiritual Director & Chaplain)

Fifth Week in Lent

Loving Lord Jesus, We pray with hope for your world And for your blessing on our Anglican family; Thank you for opportunities to make real your love in a world that is filled with scarcity, prejudice, and fear We pray for a radical rediscovery of your uncompromising identification with the poor Of your deep love of and fraternal caring for all of your creation, and all who suffer; Help us to come alongside your people for whom your cross has such deep meaning So that all may share in the abundance with which you have blessed us. Amen

Bishop Allan John Kannemeyer, Pretoria, Southern Africa

April 4, Monday in the Fifth Week of Lent

Reason to Hope

On January 26 of this year, The New York Times reported a California Redwood forest was returned to native tribes who were descended from the original occupants.

In Mendocino County, 523 acres of ancient redwoods were harvested by loggers, leaving nothing but stumps. Fortunately, 200 acres remained untouched and are still filled with old-growth redwoods.

The land was the hunting, fishing and ceremonial grounds of indigenous tribes, until it was taken from them by European settlers. A redwood conservation organization, the Save the Redwoods League, purchased the land and transferred ownership of the property to the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council.

The tribes will serve as guardians of the land in partnership with the Save the Redwoods League. Sam Hodder, the chief executive of the League, said, "In this process, we have an opportunity to restore balance in the ecosystem and in the communities connected to it."

Mary Jane Gocher, Holy Trinity (Church tours & environmental stewardship)

April 5, Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent

As I grow older, and less able to get out and about, I find that listening to music, both live and on the radio, revives my spirits and gives me new hope.

At St. Stephen's, when restrictions have allowed, there have been some splendid recitals of music, and the excellent singing and playing of the choir and organ have done much to keep the church alive.

I also tune in to BBC Radio 3 to hear Choral Evensong on Sunday afternoons, broadcast from many churches, cathedrals and chapels round the country. It is an inspiration, and an ongoing source of hope, to hear so many Christians praising God!

It is not always easy to define hope, but I have been moved by this verse of a poem by Emily Dickinson:

“Hope” is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words - And never stops - at all -

Liz Witts, St. Stephen's (Poet and Long-term Member)

April 6, Wednesday in the Fifth Week of Lent



Hoy es el día más hermoso de nuestra vida,
querido Sancho...
Los obstáculos más grandes, nuestras propias
indecisiones...
Nuestros enemigos más fuertes, el miedo al
poderoso y a nosotros mismos...
La cosa más fácil, equivocarnos...
Las más destructivas, la mentira y el egoísmo...
La peor derrota, el desaliento...
Los defectos más peligrosos, la soberbia y el
rencor...
Las sensaciones más gratas, la buena
conciencia, el esfuerzo para ser mejores sin ser
perfectos, y sobre todo, la disposición para
hacer el bien y combatir las injusticias donde
quiera que estén.

Today is the most beautiful day of our life dear Sancho...
The biggest obstacles, our own indecisions...
Our strongest enemies, fear of the powerful and ourselves...
The easiest thing, to be wrong...
The most destructive, lies and selfishness...
The worst defeat, discouragement...
The most dangerous defects, pride, and resentment...
The most pleasant sensations, a good conscience, the effort to be better without being
perfect, and above all, the willingness to do good and fight injustices wherever they are.

Fragment of Don Quijote de La Mancha by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

*Lydia Colón, Holy Trinity (Vestry Member, Holy Trinity Neighborhood Center Board Member and
Volunteer)*

April 7, Thursday in the Fifth Week of Lent

The End?

Faces without
mouths or noses,
eyes unblinking,
feelings under cover,
the host of their kind.

Unbroken
they roam
ruins of cities
once alive



Looking with eyes
empty of life
for a spark of hope
in covered mouths

speaking but unseen
behind a love
lived in a future
where it grows into a tree
with outstretched arms;
a tree that turns
into a garden at first light.

On the third day
the end becomes
a new delight.

Tamara Katzenback, St. Stephens (Congregant, Reader & Poet)

April 8, Friday in the Fifth Week of Lent

God's Grandeur

Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep
down things;
And though the last lights off the black West
went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink
eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with
ah! bright wings.



Photo by Maryann E. Tyrer, Holy Trinity (Pastoral Associate-Christian Formation, Parish of St. Monica, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Stephen of Hungary)

April 9, Saturday in the Fifth Week of Lent

Contributions From Three Members of St Stephen's Monday Gardening Club



No matter how big or small gardens cannot fail to give us hope: full of life and new beginnings. Every twig coming to life, each fragile shoot stretching towards the light. Gardens are not just a shape of green they are oases, incubators of God's infinite numbers of creatures, spaces of earthy and sweet perfumes, where, if we are lucky we hear the songs of birds.

From tumbling children to gossiping oldies on benches gardens are enjoyed by all, that includes our Church gardeners drawn together to clear, plant, weed, clip and prune.

Gaze up into, and through, the branches, see what you see; dream your dreams. . . .

Sally Ricketts (Sculptor)

When at the beginning of the pandemic, the church doors were locked and bolted and the surrounding garden overgrown and with rubbish tossed over the fence, it looked as if the Christians had shut up shop and gone away. A small group of us under expert management started work and people, allowed out only for an hour's exercise, were glad

to stop and talk to us. We greeted one woman with the Islamic greeting and she came over to us and broke down in tears; she was from the Yemen and forced to flee her country when she was issued with a death threat as a journalist for supporting women's rights. She was deeply distressed at having to leave four children; the asylum system is desperately over stretched and there is no telling how long she will remain in limbo until her application is heard and she can hope to see her children again. We have maintained our friendship with her over the months and can only join her in the hope that she will be granted asylum, she will see her children again, that peace will come again to that war torn country and people the world over will not be forced by wars to flee their homes. In the face of such problems, hope is something we have to cling to or we should be overwhelmed.

Sue Wates (Social Worker & Adoptive Parent)

'Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring. ' – Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)

The green shoots of spring are coming through; in the church garden the snowdrops are nodding their heads, the mahonia and the daphne are full of fragrant flower. And the weeds, oh yes, they are coming up nicely, hoping to elude the gardeners' trowels. And this 'gardener' is hoping that current tensions in the world will be quelled without violence, that people with no place to call home will find solutions to their problems and that the blooms through the year in the Church garden will give joy to all those who walk past through the seasons.

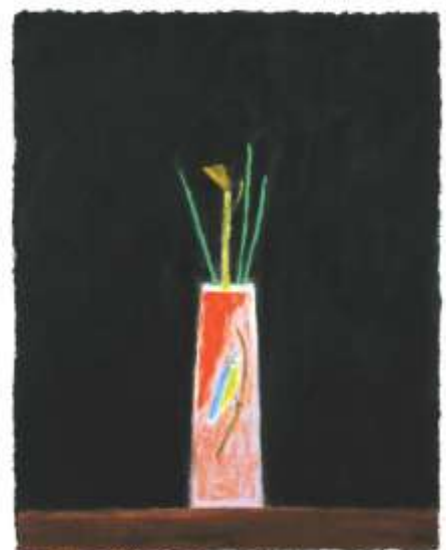
Kyle Ap Simon (Publisher)

April 10, The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday

Passion, Pain, Beauty and Hope

As a young primary teacher starting his career in central London (UK) I encountered the work of Maya Angelou (1993). Her writing about pain, passion and beauty was hugely engaging, especially in her book 'I know why the caged bird sings' which resonated deeply with me as I navigated my way in the world, in church, and in my inner life/spiritual life.

Some years later, in 2004, not long before I was to ordained 'deacon' in the Church of England, I found this picture in a London Art Fair. The image was tucked inside a book of 'Pictures' by Craigie Aitchison and this one caught my eye. As with Maya Angelou, beauty caught, held tightly, trapped – but still singing, still beautiful and whilst trapped, still spiritually free.



*Still Life with Bird Vase, 2004,
Craigie Aitchison*

As we encounter Palm Sunday once again we are called to reflect on the passion, the joy, the anger of today - the passion, the pain and the beauty of Jesus' life and our lives and how these are inter-connected – but also the hope of all that is about to unfold – and the song we all need to sing.

What is our pain and passion and our hope for this Palm Sunday?

What catches our eye as we move into Holy Week?

Do we know why the caged bird sings?

Rev. John Pearson-Hicks, St. Stephens (St. Barnabas Church)

Sixth Week of Lent: Holy Week

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of love, joy and peace. We pray for humanity and all those living in conflict and post conflict countries. May they find hope in Christ and safety in these situations. Lord transform and open the way for the global church and the Anglican Communion to reach out in love and witness to those affected and displaced by violence and civil unrest. May we know your peace in a divided and conflicted world. Strengthen the Ministry of peace and Reconciliation in your church and make this world a better place for all. Amen.

Jane Namurye, Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation Ministry

April 11, Monday in Holy Week

Hope in Frailty

Christmas morning, an elderly priest sat slumped on a chair near the altar. We visitors to this small Pretoria parish were told he had been injured during a home invasion that week. Some in the small gathering of faithful might look like those who hurt him, I thought. Yet, here he is, injured and traumatized, blessing and distributing the host. Hope. A young black man takes an old white lady up to the altar. Her weight bearing on him. They receive the body from the frail priest, and we enter the community of the Holy Trinity whose hope permeates all the world, even if we are often blind to it.

Calvyn du Toit, Holy Trinity (Theologian and Sunday Evening Musician)

April 12, Tuesday in Holy Week

The words and music to his hymn never fail to give me hope no matter what the time of year.

Hymn: Now The Green Blade Riseth

Tune: Noel Nouvelet

Words: John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)

Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid him, love whom men had slain,
Thinking that never he would wake again.
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain.
Quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Thy touch can call us back to life again;
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

My current favourite version is [this one](https://www.facebook.com/erranthieves/videos/now-the-green-blade-riseth/573584869815053/) by the "Errant Thieves" who describe their music as "Harmonious noises, borrowed and homespun"

<https://www.facebook.com/erranthieves/videos/now-the-green-blade-riseth/573584869815053/>

Ann Mills-Duggan, St. Stephen's (Congregant and Social Media Coordinator)

April 13, Wednesday in Holy Week

I first noticed the Lenten Rose (Helleborus orientalis) when I came to General Theological Seminary in New York City. The winter gardens had faded to a grayish green, with dirt showing through patches of snow and washed away mulch. But there in the midst of the mess, a Lenten rose would blossom. As



reminders that spring is coming, that Easter is around the corner, and that beauty can always be found even in the midst of death and decay-- I have loved these flowers ever since. Though I look forward to their blooming, they always take me by surprise. The photograph above is from last year, but its memory gives me hope for the days ahead.

John Beddingfield, Holy Trinity (Rector)

April 14, Maundy Thursday



A photo of sunrise in Dorset that we find very hopeful at the moment

Christina Barker (Congregant and Tour Guide at Westminster Abbey)

April 15, Good Friday

It is immensely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than to suffer in the freedom of one's own responsible deed. It is immensely easier to suffer with others than to suffer alone. It is immensely easier to suffer openly and honorable than apart and in shame. It is immensely easier to suffer through commitment of the physical life than in the spirit. Christ suffered in freedom, alone, apart, and in shame, in body and spirit, and since then many Christians have suffered with him.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer from *I Loved This People*.

April 16, Holy Saturday

In 2016 I had the opportunity to see Akhnaten at English National Opera, I was delighted to be able to see the production again when it returned to ENO in 2019. To this day, I would say it was one of the most amazing pieces of theatre I had ever witnessed. Everything from the stunning visuals and costumes to the sublime music was truly extraordinary.

Akhnaten is Philip Glass's last work in his 'portrait' opera trilogy, in which he looks into important figures of history. The opera written in 1983, explores the life and religion of the young pharaoh Akhnaten. Glass composed the titular role for the countertenor voice, after depictions and theories that the young pharaoh was sexually androgynous and perhaps even a hermaphrodite.



Anthony Roth Constanzo – Akhnaten at English National opera and Metropolitan

In the aria 'Hymn to the Sun' Akhnaten sings a private prayer to their God 'Aten' telling us their story of their visions of a new religion and hope of a new society that is now complete. This aria has always given me a sense of hope and has comforted me with my faith as a queer Christian. Akhnaten didn't fit into the masculine and male stereotype and was discovering themselves, whilst still being a leader. As a countertenor, I fell in love with this role immediately. As somebody who has struggled with finding their own identity, I related with this character, and it would be a dream to play this role one day.

Lent is a crucial time to explore these queer aspects of faith. During Lent, we pray, repent, and ponder the courage that Jesus showed us and that he demands of us. Exploring queerness of the Christian tradition, can help make church members prepare to walk with Jesus through the season of Lent, and the strenuous events of Holy Week, and emerge into a new and even more powerful understanding of what Easter means.

Knowing who you are is the first step to living a good life. God insists that we look for the spark of life, of hope, in ourselves and one another.

Alex Maltby (Weekday Verger of St Stephen's and Singer)

April 17, The Resurrection – Graham Buckle (SSSJ)

In many respects today is just the consumption of all that has gone before. For resurrection is 'Hope', our hope as Christians, which has its expression in the Liturgy we celebrate today; and we have certainly read, seen and perhaps even heard, aspects of that hope in each others contributions and offerings during our journeying together through Lent. For this we thank all those who have shared their "Hope" so that we might glimpse a little of the glory that is revealed on this day of all days.

When I asked someone, who I greatly respect, to contribute to our booklet, they initially replied that this was a really difficult task, as they saw very little hope in our world today. However, their contribution is full of the joyful resurrection hope that will all long. Yes, sometimes it is difficult to see and find.

One of the hopeful things that has affected me as vicar of St Stephens, is the gradual reopening of our spaces to the wider community, and the gathering and coming together of certain groups, including our worshipping communities. One of those groups wrote a poem and offered some of their art work as their contribution to our booklet. This art is part of their therapy to reintegrate back into a society that has treated them so badly. To see these lovely women and men returning to our church, to learn, to heal, to share and to

eat together each week is a real sign of God's hope for humanity in a broken fragile world. What we have done together during this Lent is to share and learn from each other's brokenness and experiences to see real expressions of joyful hope, on both sides of the Atalanta, and indeed world.



This painting is of a rising kingfisher is other by the art therapy group who meet in our church. I have been given permission to use it today, to which I thank them. Our bird has just caught a fish - it's being fed, and is rising into the sky of nourishment - this teaches me that we can all rise to a position of HOPE...that is true resurrection. Let us rejoice and sing with our kingfisher and with all creation that Christ is truly Risen.

Finally, let us pray together today's collect:

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity. Amen.

Graham Buckle, St Stephen's (Vicar)

Weekly prayers are taken from The Lambeth Conference Journey shares 'Prayers of Hope for the World'. Featuring prayers from Anglican bishops - and the wider Lambeth Conference Community - this journey brings prayers from around the worldwide Anglican Communion. Additional prayers and videos available at <https://www.lambethconference.org/resources/prayers/join-the-prayer-journey/>

Since 2016, St. Stephens's Church, Rochester Row, with St. John's Church (Westminster, London) has been linked with The Church of the Holy Trinity (New York City) as a part of the Diocese of London link with the Diocese of New York. Parishioners visit back and forth, priests have preached in each other's pulpits, and the two parishes have written Lenten devotionals together. During the COVID-19 pandemic, members of our parishes frequently join one another for online prayer, but whether we unite through the internet or more conventional means, we continue to pray for each other, for God's Church, and that we might always be open to ways God might strengthen us for mission and ministry.

The World Wide Covid 19 Pandemic has impacted all churches' financial standing and as we struggle to rebuild our communities and support services, we would ask that you mindfully consider our churches in your charitable giving. It costs over £180,000 a year to maintain the regular life of St. Stephen's and Holy Trinity needs \$25,000 to reach its goal of pledges. If you can help, please do keep us in mind.

To give to Holy Trinity, please click here:

<https://onrealm.org/TheChurchTheHol52360/-/give/now>

To give to St Stephen's, please click here:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/13005#!/DonationDetails>