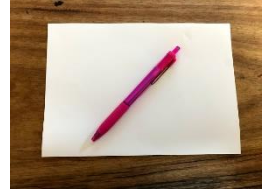




'Worship at home' March 17th 2024

This is the fifth week of **Lent**,
a time of preparation for

Easter. During this time we are invited to reflect
on our discipleship. Bring with you a **piece of paper**
and a **pen/pencil** to aid in your prayer and preparation,
as we follow Christ's journey to the cross.



Opening

The time is coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant.

The time is coming,
when you will live with my words of love
embedded in your hearts.

The time is coming,
when all will know me as God.

The time is here,
and you are loved, forgiven, and set free.

I AM your God, says the Lord,
and you are my people.



<https://prayingthelectionary.life>

Each of us is called into relationship with God, who IS love. Our Scripture today tells of God's faithfulness in this relationship, even when we as God's people stray. God's covenant of love with the world has endured from ancient times, through the generations, was fulfilled in Christ Jesus, and continues with us today.

**On your piece of paper,
draw a heart shape.**

**You might like to doodle on it as you
read the following Psalm as a
prayer of confession.**



Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12

Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love. Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins! Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin! I recognize my faults; I am always conscious of my sins. I have sinned against you - only against you - and done what you consider evil. So you are right in judging

me; you are justified in condemning me. Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me. Do not banish me from your presence; do not take your holy spirit away from me. Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

Good News Bible



What the things do you feel might separate you from God's love?

Spend some time pondering these.

Ask God to create a pure heart in you, and put a new and loyal spirit in you.

Write your own name on your heart shape, and hear God's words of grace to you:

**YOU ARE MY BELOVED:
YOU ARE FORGIVEN!**



Jeremiah 31:31-34

The Lord says, "The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although I

was like a husband to them, they did not keep that covenant. The new covenant that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. None of them

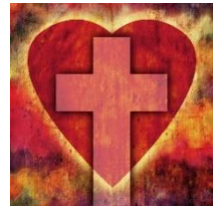
will have to teach a neighbour to know the Lord, because all will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive their

sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs. I, the Lord, have spoken."

Good News Bible

Despite the covenant of relationship made with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, God's people kept straying and going their own way. The prophet Jeremiah tells of a time when the people will live in such close relationship with God that God's way of love will be written on their hearts, embedded deep within, and they will know themselves to be a people beloved, forgiven, and empowered to walk in God's ways.

A child learning their times tables begins by rote learning the numbers; as they progress the patterns start to make sense, and soon the answers come almost automatically, even many years later. In the same way, we are to embed God's ways deep within, so that God's love is written on our hearts, and all our responses stem from this love. This involves more than simply intellectual assent for God's love, but also a living out of this love in all we say and do.



**Reflect again on your heart shape,
with your name written within with symbol of God's love.**

**In what ways do God's love within you
shape your responses and your actions?**

FOR
God so loved
THE
world that He gave
HIS ONE & ONLY Son,
THAT whosoever believes in HIM
shall NOT perish but have
eternal life.
John 3:16

As we approach Easter, we are reminded that this new covenant is fulfilled in Christ Jesus, whose teachings, life, death and resurrection express God's love and grace to all the world. In him we are invited into a loving relationship with God who is source of all life and love, who forgives all and gives us each the opportunity for new beginnings.

Reflection

This God who writes a new word on our hearts. This God who knows us and whose hope is built on a time when we will know God in turn. This God who holds onto us with such persistence and love and calls us to live into this love, yet does not keep tally of the times we have turned away. This God who knows the tally we keep in our own hearts of the occasions when we failed to live into the love that fashioned us, the times that are seared into our own memories with embarrassment or despair.

When we remember our shortcomings and sins so keenly, how do we trust in the God who graces us with forgetfulness? How would it be to take this up as a Lenten practice: to repair what we have damaged in our sin—as far as it lies within our power—and then to rest in the God who does not eternally hold against us the harm we have caused? We may not be able to forget certain memories entirely, but how might it be to cease to be bound by them—to allow God to release us from the memories that hold us hostage? What would you like to trust that God forgets?

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Pray for:

- Honesty and integrity amongst the leaders of our churches, our nation, our world
- Those who feel unloved and unworthy
- Victims of domestic and sexual violence
- Peaceful negotiations between conflicting groups
- An awareness of God's grace in our own lives
- Opportunities to show love to others in our words and actions



Closing

The love of God has been written on your heart. Dwell in that love, live into that love, show others that love, that all may come to know God, from the least to the greatest. Amen!