



'Worship at home' Sunday April 3rd 2022

This is the fifth week of Lent, as we prepare for the events of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. You might like to keep a **prayer space** with a **candle** and **cross** set up for the duration of Lent, as we reflect on how the **light of Christ** shines in the shadows of our lives.



Opening

God is always doing a new thing;

Let us rejoice and be glad!

When the way before us is shadowy and uncertain;

God gives strength for our journey and lights our path.

When we experience times of drought or wilderness;

God gives streams of living water, and the hope of new life.

When we feel we are not enough;

God lavishly pours love and grace into our lives.

God is always doing a new thing;

Let us rejoice and be glad!



In this season of Lent, we are invited to spend time in self-examination and reflection as we seek to grow in our faith, becoming more like Jesus Christ in who we are and in what we do. We open ourselves to the renewing and transforming work of the Spirit in our lives.

Isaiah 43:16-21

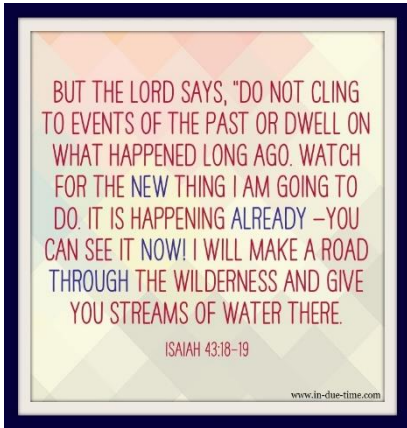
Long ago the Lord made a road through the sea, a path through the swirling waters. He led a mighty army to destruction, an army of chariots and horses. Down they fell, never to rise, snuffed out like the flame of a

lamp! But the Lord says, "Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already - you can see it now! I will make a road through the wilderness and I

give you streams of water there. Even the wild animals will honour me; jackals and ostriches will praise me when I make rivers flow in the

desert to give water to my chosen people. They are the people I made for myself, and they will sing my praises!"

Good News Bible



There is a lot going on in the world at this time, and it is easy to become despondent. It can sometimes seem like we, or our world, are in a dry and bleak wilderness. The shadows of uncertainty and anguish press down on us. In this Scripture we are reminded that the Spirit of God is always at work, renewing and restoring. God brings the promise of hope and new ways of being.

Reflect on some of the positive things you see happening in the world around you?

Give thanks to God for signs of hope and new beginnings.

One of the ways we experience the Spirit of God at work in our world is through the expression of love to others. As we know God's extravagant love and generous grace, we offer love and grace to those around us.

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, the man he had raised from death. They table with Jesus. Then Mary took a whole pint of a very expensive perfume made of pure nard, poured it on Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The sweet smell of the

prepared a dinner for him there, which Martha helped serve; Lazarus was one of those who were sitting at the perfume filled the whole house. One of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot - the one who was going to betray him - said, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three

hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. He carried the money bag and would help himself from

it. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone! Let her keep what she has for the day of my burial. You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me."

Good News Bible

Do aspects of this story make you feel uncomfortable?

What do you think prompted Mary's actions?

In what ways do you agree or disagree with Judas' response?



Mary's expression of love was lavishly extravagant: almost a year's wages. Judas' response was practical, and not unreasonable: was she being wasteful? It may make us feel uncomfortable. We don't always see ourselves as deserving of such love. We may not feel able to offer such a sacrificial gift to others. We realise again how God's abundant love and generous grace goes far beyond what is practical and reasonable. It is unmerited and undeserved, and beyond our comprehension. We are soon to see the culmination and fulfillment of such sacrificial love in the events of Easter.

What might this story say to you about your own discipleship?

When have you experienced God's abundant love and generous grace?

When have you been called to offer sacrificial love to another?



An Affirmation

We believe in the debonaire God
who clothes the wild flowers
dressing them so superbly
that they outdo Solomon in all his glory;
who is the true Friend of all creatures great and small

who feeds magpies and laughing kookaburras,
and even doleful ravens and drongos.

We believe in the God of Christ Jesus
the Source of abundance, full of grace and truth.

We believe in the extravagant God
who turns the other cheek,
goes the second mile,
turns water into the best wine,
brings healing with his every touch,
and who welcomes a woman's of love
as she fills the house with unforgettable fragrance.

We believe in the faith-full God of Jesus Christ,
who sweated blood in an Olive Grove,
and kept the faith to the very end.

We believe in the redeeming God who spared no cost,
forgave even his brutal crucifiers,
had time for a dying thief at his side,
and who on the third day did a thing so prodigious
that even his friends were dismayed with joy.

We believe in the God of Jesus Christ,
the Source of abundance wherever we turn
and no matter what we do. Amen

~ Bruce Prewer, <http://www.bruceprewer.com>

Closing

Creator God,
you prepare a new way in the wilderness
and water the desert.
Help us to recognize your hand
working miracles beyond our imagining.
Open our hearts to be transformed
by the new thing you are doing,
so that our lives may proclaim
the extravagance of your love for all,
and its presence in Jesus Christ. Amen. ~ Revised Common Lectionary

Prayers 2002 Anglican Church of Canada <http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Trial-Use-Collects-Lent-1C-through-Lent-5C.pdf>

