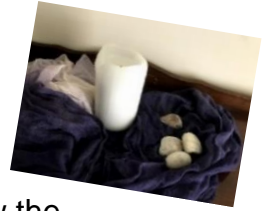




'Worship at home' Sunday March 27th 2022

This is the fourth week of Lent, as we follow Jesus in his journey towards Jerusalem and anticipate the coming events of 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

In the name of God

who created us

who holds us and the whole world in his hands

In the name of the Son

who came into the world

who reconciles us with God.

In the name of the Holy Spirit

who fills us with love and life,

who connects us with all Christians

and inspires us to peace,

we come to offer our thanks and praise.



*~ adapted from the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday
The Very Rev. Dr. Sheilagh Kesting. <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk>*

In this season of Lent, we are invited to spend time in self-examination and reflection as we seek to deepen our relationship with God, in our journey of growth and reconciliation. This is a time of repentance and renewal, as we come to know more fully our generous God of grace who always offers us another chance.

This scripture story is often entitled 'The Prodigal Son'. The word **prodigal** means 'wastefully or recklessly extravagant; living or yielding profusely; very generous; lavishly abundant.' dictionary.com

**As you read this story, reflect on
the elements of generous or extravagant abundance.**

Who is being 'prodigal' here?

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

One day when many tax collectors and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law started grumbling, "This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them!" So Jesus told them this parable: "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, "Father, give me my share of the property now." So the man divided his property between his two sons. After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. At last he came to his senses and said, "All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to

starve! I will get up and go to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers." ' So he got up and started back to his father. "He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. "Father," the son said, "I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son." ' But the father called to his servants. "Hurry!" he said. "Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so the feasting began. "In the meantime the older son was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him, "What's going 2

on?' "Your brother has come back home,' the servant answered, "and your father has killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound.' The older brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. But he spoke back to his father, "Look, all these years I have worked for you like a slave, and I have never disobeyed your orders. What have you given me? Not

even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! But this son of yours wasted all your property on prostitutes, and when he comes back home, you kill the prize calf for him!" "My son," the father answered, "you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.'" *Good News Bible*

This is a well-known and much loved story, which many of us can relate to in a variety of ways.

**Read this passage again,
and reflect on where you see yourself in the story.**

Have you known time in the far country in extravagant living, and found yourself isolated and alone?

Do you identify with the elder brother, hardworking and diligent in his responsibilities, that he might yield profusely?

Do you feel for the father, feeling the pain of disconnection and yet longing for the opportunity to lavish love and grace, and to make a new start?

We see that both sons separated themselves from the father because of their actions. We hear in this story the generous and abundant love and grace of a prodigal God who is always ready to offer another chance, seeking reconciliation and renewal. 3



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***Our prodigal God shows us generous grace,
and gracious generosity.***

**How can we show generous grace to others?
How can we show gracious generosity to others?**

Prayer

Gracious and loving God,
you have reconciled us
in Christ Jesus,
restored us to relationship
with you,
with each other,
and with ourselves.

You always offer us
another chance,

and the opportunity for new beginnings.

You call us to show love and grace to others,
and this is not always easy.

We pray for the power to forgive.

We pray for reconciliation and renewal,
in our own lives, and in our world,
that you might bring healing and peace.

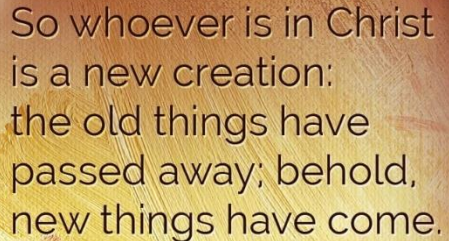
We pray for a spirit of generosity and inclusivity,
that we each might find, and offer, welcome.

We pray that we might show love and grace to each other,
in Christ.

Amen

Closing

We continue our journey of Lent,
knowing God's generous grace and gracious generosity,
finding reconciliation and renewal in Christ who travels with us,
and empowered by the Spirit
to bring love, healing and peace to those around us.



So whoever is in Christ
is a new creation:
the old things have
passed away; behold,
new things have come.

2 Corinthians 5:17