



'Worship at home' Sunday March 5th 2023

This is the second week of Lent, the time of reflection and preparation leading up to Easter. You might like to keep a **prayer space** with a **candle** and **cross** set up for the duration of Lent, for your own prayer and reflection. **Light the candle** to remind you of the light of Christ, with you always.



Opening

We come this day seeking Christ.
We come with our joys and our burdens;
with our questions and our affirmations.
May we open our hearts and lives to the Spirit
who blows where she wills
and who strengthens and empowers us,
and who lifts us up, in love.



In this season of Lent, we make time to pray and reflect; to explore who we are and who God is; to deepen our relationship with God. For many people, Lent and Easter are full of questions, some of which do not have easy answers.



Are there aspects of your faith about which you have questions and uncertainties?

Which aspects of your faith do you hold firmly?

As you consider these, know yourself to be held in the truth of God's love and grace.



JESUS MAFA. Nicodemus
<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-image/imagelink.pl?RC=48385>

Nicodemus was a Jewish leader who intentionally sought out Jesus as he explored his own faith. Nicodemus too had questions, some of which Jesus did not directly answer. In Jesus' response we are reminded that faith is a mystery, but that the Holy Spirit opens our eyes and helps us to know the truth of God's love and grace.

John 3:1-17

There was a Jewish leader named Nicodemus, who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. One night he went to Jesus and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him." Jesus answered, "I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again." "How can a grown man be born again?" Nicodemus asked. "He certainly cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time!" "I am telling you the truth," replied Jesus, "that no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the

Spirit. A person is born physically of human parents, but is born spiritually of the Spirit. Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again. The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" asked Nicodemus. Jesus answered, "You are a great teacher in Israel, and you don't know this? I am telling you the truth: we speak of what we know and report what we have seen, yet none of you is willing to accept our message. You do not believe me when I tell you about 2

the things of this world; how will you ever believe me, then, when I tell you about the things of heaven? And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from heaven." As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that

everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour. Good News Bible

There is a story told about a woman who set out to discover the meaning of life. First, she read everything she could get her hands on – history, philosophy, psychology, religion. While she became very smart, nothing gave her the answer. She went to lectures and met with people and had long, wonderful conversations but from each, she received different answers.

Finally she put all of her possessions in storage and set off to far off places to find the meaning of life. She finally found someone who could help her. He lived deep in the Himalayas, up on the side of a mountain. She climbed up the mountain and finally reached his small hut. She knocked on the door and when the man opened it, she said, "I have come halfway around the world to ask you one question. What is the meaning of life?"

"Please come in and have some tea," the man said. She resisted, saying that she didn't want tea, she wanted an answer. He insisted and she gave up and sat down.

As he was brewing the tea, she started to tell him about all of the places she'd seen and the people she'd met and the books she'd read. While she was telling him all of this, he put a cup in her hand and started to pour. She was so busy talking that she didn't notice when the cup was full, so the man kept pouring the tea, until it rolled over the edge of the cup and spilled on her. 3



“What are you doing?” she yelled as the tea burned her hand. “It’s full, can’t you see that? Stop. There’s no more room.”

“Just so” the man told her patiently and wisely. “You’ve come here wanting something from me, but what am I to do? There’s no more room in your cup. Come back when it’s empty and we’ll talk.”

- adapted from Barbara Brown Taylor

“Stay for Tea, Nicodemus, John 3:1-17.” *Christian Century*, February 21, 1996

LENT
WALKING WITH CHRIST

**Do you come with a full cup
or an empty cup?**

How might you empty your cup?

What might it be filled with?

Sometimes we are full of knowledge. Sometimes we are full of questions. If we are not empty and open enough to hear, and to listen with the ears of the Holy Spirit, we risk remaining in the dark. When we seek to grow in faith, we may find times of struggle and uncertainty. We can trust that God will lead us through to new understandings and perspectives, and to new life in Christ, that we might experience for ourselves the truth of God’s love and grace.

Prayer

Loving and gracious God, empty us. Let us stand before you: open, vulnerable, questioning; let us come before you just as we are. And once you have emptied us, then we ask you to fill us; to fill us with your goodness and love; to fill us with your very self; that we are ready for you to lead us into whatever future you hold for us, even into unknown places with all their uncertainties. Let us travel with you, in faith, we pray. Amen



Closing

This week – take time for a conversation with Christ Jesus. Bring an empty cup, that you might hear the invitation to life and love and wholeness, and be filled with grace and truth.