

Rector's Column

*"I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace.
In the world you face persecution but take courage: I have conquered the world!"*
John 16:33

Dear Friends,

The month of February continues to highlight the pathway of our Lenten journey. The journey includes self-reflection on mortality, how we understand and express identity, and how God's grace and Christ's teachings call to live more deeply in the world from the Divine love we bear within us. These are not small topics but ideas that form our spiritual life and inform how we show up in the world grounded in Spirit.

Like cultivating a garden or farm, cultivating the Spirit of God in our lives requires certain mindfulness, such as: 1) keeping an eye on the weather (the emotional climate around us), 2) keeping stock of whether we have the supplies and functional tools for the job at hand (being emotionally and mentally equipped to address challenges/needs), 3) being sure not to stretch ourselves beyond our limits (respecting our boundaries around health, time and available personal energy), and 4) having a wisdom community of support (family, friends, groups and people to whom to turn with questions, and to seek out for advice and help).

Belonging to a congregational community can be an especially important source of support as we experience the socio-political climate of our times, or if we are on a healing journey of any kind, or if we are experiencing important growth and exploration within our spiritual life and personal identity. The Journey of Lent often asks us a focus on how we are using the gift of our mortal life (which at times may not feel like a gift). We are invited to focus on gratitude – to consider what we appreciate in our lives or about our lives; from being grateful for sunlight and star shine to being grateful for those we love and the unexpected joys that can pop up in a given day that make us smile or laugh. Sometimes, even hardships and grief remind us of the gifts we mourn in losing but which bring us to a deeper appreciation of the time we have to spend together upon this good earth.

Lent teaches us how much we depend on others – including those people we will never meet; those who have sewn our clothes, harvested the food we enjoy, ship and stock the goods on our market shelves; those who clean our facilities, hospital rooms, and streets. We depend on others in our lives to hold us when we are hurting, feed us when we are hungry, help maintain our homes, and care for us when we are sick or injured. This mortal life teaches us the fundamentals of interdependence, appreciation of others, and the central purpose of service. In the shadow of death, we discover our utter reliance on God's light as revealed in Christ - the need to come to terms with our own vulnerability and limitations, our fears and hopes, the hunger we have for love, to really know that we are Beloved. In Lent we learn that we must hold onto the value of love with more passion than gold and with the reverence and sincere tears of our prayers spoken in the silent watches of the night. Like roses and crops, we ought never to take love for granted – it is at the heart of the Spirit as Divine presence, and the Spirit requires our cultivation, our participation in its growth, spread, and harvest.

In Lent we are reminded that love illuminates the true meaning and purpose of our lives and that love never dies. Rather, love rises from the grave as our Messiah and reigns through eternity, seated beside the Source from which all love flows into the world through the Spirit – One God forever and ever. This mortal life we share brings us – like Lent – on a journey to our Easter sunrise.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Rachel+
The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, Rector

Associate's Report

Looking at the Liturgical calendar for this month, March, 2026, we could be totally justified by calling this a Holy Month. We enter the month already on our Lenten journey and the whole month is part of the season of Lent, finally culminating with the last week of the month being Holy Week. This is a special month for Christians that leads us into the Paschal Mystery that is Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I encourage you to partake of the opportunity that Lent symbolizes for us. It is a time of reflection, reconciliation, and atonement on the lives we are living. A time of deliberate, thoughtful and prayerful reflection. It is a good and positive experience to be able to sit and honestly consider who you are, where you have been, what you have done, and most importantly – who do you want to be for the rest of your life. There is no prescribed method of doing this 'living inventory'. You're kind of on your own. So, in the times when you are in a quiet mode, take a few minutes each day to ponder life, the life journey you have been on, and an honest appraisal of who you are!

And, this is not a time to beat yourself up with all types of guilt trips and the coulda/shoulda trappings. Yeah, we've all made mistakes in life and wish we had done things better. That's the value of hindsight. Isn't that great? The value of those mistakes is that we have learned from them, hopefully, so they did serve a useful purpose even if it was hard to see at the time. As those of you who know me can attest, one of my biggest hot buttons that I will repeatedly talk about is the declaration that all of life is about relationships. Relationships are why we are here on this planet earth. Nothing else – no other reason. It is in how we treat one another that the value of our life will be remembered. It is in how we treat the stranger. It is in how we treat our family members. It is in how we view that person who doesn't quite look like us, and thus how we will treat that person. It is in how we treat those who have different opinions than those we value. It is not only what we say but how we say it. Be kind to others and be kind to yourself. There is nothing more than that.

Peace be with you now and always,

Fr. Allen