

FEBRUARY 2021

LENT @ HOME

staying connected with God,
each other, and ourselves



INSIDE:

MESSAGES FROM
NICK AND VI

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL
READINGS

A FEW WORDS FROM
THE PROPERTY TEAM

SUBMISSIONS FROM
OUR COMMUNITY

MEMORIES

We have entered into the season of Lent.

Usually when we think about Lent we think of giving up things like sugar, alcohol, or complaining, or we think of being more intentional about prayer or meditation. Those are all good things, but Lent? It's waaaaaay more than that.

Lent is that period of time before Easter where we spend some time exploring the overarching themes and underlying foundations of our faith and spirituality: repentance, transformation, lament, courage, death, change, joy, sorrow, suffering, and loss — just to name a few.

The wisdom underneath it all is that those things matter. That there's something essential about them. That practicing and embodying those things helps us experience the fullness of life and become truly and fully human.

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red deer lake
united church

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"Wait ... wait ... ," you may be thinking, "you want me to enter into and embody death, suffering, and loss? You want me to change?!"

Yup. I do. Scary, right? Lent may be the most intimidating season because it gets us to explore uncomfortable stuff.

And it's there we need to remember why we do Lent in the first place: **we do it because it's part of being human.** We do it because in order to be whole and at peace, in order to be truly transformed people, we have to deal with this stuff. We do it because it all belongs. We do it ... and get ready for this ... because we can.

We can. As in we are up for it. As in we have the capacity. As in we'll survive it ... and not only survive ... we'll actually come out better for it. There's a reason Easter follows Lent. We do the uncomfortable stuff because we trust it leads to new life. We trust that we'll rise up from it.

Maybe that's something to remember as we head into the season: **We do this for the sake of healing, transformation, and wholeness; we do it knowing we're not alone; and we do it knowing we can – knowing that while it'll be hard, sweaty, and uncomfortable, we will rise up.**

Lent @ Home is designed to help you make the most of the season. In it you'll find 35 (yes, we're starting a bit late this year) practices, reflections, art, and prayers that we invite you to do each day (maybe even several times a day!). Each one is designed to draw us towards wholeness and peace. Some are easy, some are more difficult, but all can help us do that essential work of transformation.

So as you head into Lent, remember two things: 1) You're not alone — you're doing this with the rest of your faith community and that Spirit of Life is with you. 2) The work is worth it.

grace & peace, n.



Greetings Everyone! I don't know about you, but for some reason to me the months seem to be continuing to fly by and here we are once again at the threshold of another passage in our lives as we approach Lent!

I hope you are continuing to keep safe and well and we can look forward to promises of hope with vaccinations on the horizon, despite the uncertainty which continues to swirl around us.

Once again, we join together in expressing gratitude to the many volunteers and staff who have contributed their heart and souls to bring you these care packages FILLED WITH LOVE into your homes. You will also learn about what the busy members of the Property Team have been getting up to . . . and more!

Please do continue to keep in touch with us, we love to hear from you and anything you would like to share . . . and do let us know how you are doing, if you or someone else needs anything.

In life we enter and exit many passages and chapters, some of them more significant than others. Life is filled with little losses and joys, as well as larger, more impactful ones as we journey onwards. I know some of you are experiencing significant transitions just now and as a community we join together in sending our love and support for you and for one another.

Henri Nouwen in his book *Finding My Way Home* says, "One of the most radical demands for you and me is the discovery of our lives as a series of movements or passages," within which transformation can occur.

As you enter into this, your Lenten journey, your church family is sending our love and blessings to each one of you.

Vi



DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS BEGINNING FEBRUARY 22

1

Whenever you do something hard, don't forget to breathe. This is one of those things that is profoundly simple for the profound impact it makes. Air is not only needed for our body and brain to actually function, but it's how we spiritually function too. In our tradition *breath* is associated with God — with that Divine Spirit who isn't only *with us*, but who *strengthens, empowers, and inspires us*.

Remembering to breathe is one of the most basic but important spiritual practices you can do, especially when you head into something difficult and hard. As we head into Lent, we invite you to start with a breath. As you practice this, remember what you are breathing in.

Inhale ... 1 ... 2 ... 3

Hold ... 1 ... 2 ... 3

Exhale ... 1 ... 2 ... 3

2

Lent is often called a season of repentance. It's a period of 40 days geared towards, as I've come to say, "leaving home in order to find it." It's where we do the tough but liberating work of leaving the systems, attitudes, mind-sets, dispositions, and postures that lead us out of life, and entering into new systems, attitudes, mind-sets, dispositions, and postures that lead us into life. This is why Lent is so much bigger than chocolate. It's a journey towards a new place to inhabit and call home, the place and home Jesus invites us into.

Take some time to journal/reflect: **"What home do I need to leave and what home do I need to move towards?"**

3

If you read enough Bible stories (especially the ones we get during Lent), you're bound to come across the word *wilderness*. It is an important word within Scripture. It's the same word used to describe the experience of the Exodus ... that time in between slavery and freedom. It's the same word used in Genesis to describe what existed before God created ... this grand expanse of darkness and chaos yet to be brought into order and purpose.

It's the word used when Jesus entered into the desert ... this time of searching, reflecting, and rumbling. What we talk about when we talk about wilderness is a place or time of turmoil, change, and unrest; it's a place or time of searching for that which brings coherence, meaning, connection, identity and purpose into our lives and world.

What wilderness are you needing to go into this Lent?

4

Take some time today to pray for your enemies. (To you who immediately say, 'I don't have enemies'— yes you do.) Pray for those who constantly rub you the wrong way; who believe things you are diametrically opposed to; who you are in a conflict with; who you carry resentment towards.

5

In order to do Lent well, we need to be honest with ourselves. It takes a good dose of humility to move towards healing and wholeness. Unless we can name some things that are holding us back from the life we really want, we'll never get there.

What do you need to be honest about? What things need to be named in order for you to move forward?

6



A parable for you to reflect on:

Judas, after he had betrayed Jesus, found himself at the bottom of a deep abyss. He lay there, distraught and desolate for a couple of centuries and then slowly began to stir and sit up. Looking up, he saw a faint light at the surface, miles and miles above him. The light, so familiar yet so new, seemed to be calling to him and so he began to climb.

Sometimes he would slip and fall back and spend a century or so regaining lost ground. Sometimes he rested, not moving for years on end. But he kept trying. He kept climbing. As he climbed, the light seemed to grow stronger and glow more brightly. It seemed to energize him and to call to him.

He kept climbing, his limbs gaining strength the closer he came to the light.

After a couple of millennia, he finally reached the top, his hands and body scraped and fatigued from the climb. Judas struggled to find a place to rest his hands to hold up the weight of his body as he hauled himself up through the opening at the top of the abyss.

When he did, his muscles shaking with the effort, he found himself in an Upper Room where a young rabbi was having supper with his friends. The young rabbi turned and greeted Judas, his face glowing with pleasure:

"Judas, welcome home! We have been waiting for you. We could not continue the supper without you!"

7

Whenever we encounter something difficult and hard, whenever we experience push back from others or from within ourself, whenever we feel ourselves closing up, shutting down, and turning back, here's a mantra Brene Brown invites us to repeat:

soft front, strong back, wild heart

8

Go bake something and share it with a loved one.

9

Lent isn't just about transforming ourselves, it's also about transforming the world. Take some time today to learn about human trafficking:

<http://www.endslaverynow.org/act/educate>



10

Read and reflect on Psalm 111:

Praise the Lord!

I thank the Lord with all my heart
in the company of those who do right, in the congregation.

The works of the Lord are magnificent;
they are treasured by all who desire them.

God's deeds are majestic and glorious.

God's righteousness stands forever.

God is famous for his wondrous works.

The Lord is full of mercy and compassion.

God gives food to those who honour him.

God remembers his covenant forever.

God proclaimed his powerful deeds to his people
and gave them what had belonged to other nations.

God's handiwork is honesty and justice;
all God's rules are trustworthy—
they are established always and forever:
they are fulfilled with truth and right doing.

God sent redemption for his people;
God commanded that his covenant last forever.

Holy and awesome is God's name!

Fear of the Lord is where wisdom begins;
sure knowledge is for all who keep God's laws.

God's praise lasts forever!

11

One of the biggest threats to transformation and change is cynicism. To be a cynic is to give in to the destructive resignation to saying 'no' to anything other than what we already know and already see.

What are you saying 'no' to? What can you do to say 'yes' instead?

12

One of the core characteristics of a life of peace and wholeness is gratitude. Name five things you are grateful for today and for each one, take some time to reflect on why. If it's a person or a place, go one step further and tell them.

13

Check in with yourself and set some intentions by filling in the blanks:

I am so ____ today.

I crave _____.

I am concerned about _____.

I hope for _____.

With my heart set upon ____, I will _____.

14

We are two weeks into Lent. If it's getting a bit tough, here's a prayer to remind you that you're not alone. Repeat it until you believe it:

God beneath me.

God in front of me.

God behind me.

God above me.

God within me.

15

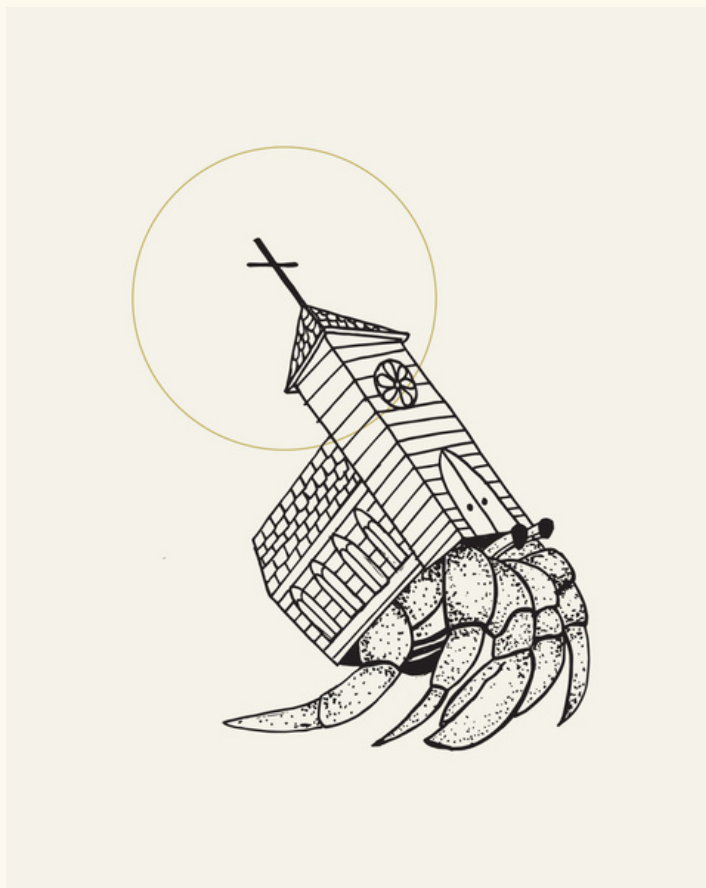
One of the practices Lent draws us into is lament — the practice of naming what is off, wrong, and unjust in our lives and world, and asking God to make it right.

What laments do you have? What should be that isn't? What injustices do you need to name?

16

An icon is a piece of art (but it can be anything, really) that acts as a symbol of something greater than itself. We often use the language of 'pointing to' with icons — they point to something bigger and beyond themselves. In that sense, icons sometimes help us see and engage with God, life, truth, and meaning.

Below is an icon from our friend Scott Erickson. Take some time today to look at this icon and let it help you see and engage with something sacred.



17

One of the hardest parts of transformation is the fact that it necessitates leaving things behind, making changes, and establishing new boundaries and practices. As we intentionally work on ourselves this Lent, here's some wisdom to sit with and journal about:

“Do not think you can be brave in your life and work and never disappoint or upset anyone. It doesn't work like that.” - Oprah

18

If you read through the Gospels, those four different accounts of who Jesus is and what God is doing through him, and if you pay attention to whenever Jesus talks about the soul and spiritual life — about how to be someone who is connected to God, other people, and ourselves — you’ll begin to notice that he always ends up talking about one thing: Gardening.

He talks about seeds — about seeds being planted, seeds sprouting, about the soil and care seeds need, and about the fruit they eventually bear. Clearly, it seems, Jesus thinks these things have something to do with each other.

I wonder if we miss out on what he’s trying to say by this because in our world and culture we’re all about switches.

We live in a fast-paced, instant-gratification, convenience-is-the-highest-value kind of world, don’t we? If we want some coffee, if we want lights, if we want to go somewhere, if we want to call someone, all we need to do is flick a switch.

Immediacy has become a huge part of how we think and experience the world to work. **And I wonder if we come to think of faith and spirituality in the same way. I wonder if we see it as just another switch.** If we want to convert and subscribe to a new belief system, if we want our prayers to be answered, if we want to understand something, we think it just takes a switch, doing this one thing that will bring quick and immediate results.

And perhaps it's at those moments that we need to go back and remember what Rob Bell points out about what Jesus says about the spiritual life: The spiritual task, authentic transformation, is less like a switch and more like seed. It's not something we can just flick on. It's a seed that needs to be planted, nourished, cultivated, attended to, and grown. It's something that needs time and cannot be uprooted too early or rushed.

There's no immediacy when it comes to becoming human. It's going to take awhile and so we must be patient.



19

Parables are these provocative and often shocking stories designed to rewire us, changing how we live, think, move, and see. Unlike other stories, you don't just read them and put them back on the shelf. These are meant to read, and be sat with, reflected upon, and rumbled with. With each one, you're invited to ask, "How does this parable challenge me?" Here's one to do just that with:

There was once this fighter pilot who was doing a training exercise and when pulling into a steep ascent went crashing into the ground.

She didn't realize she had been flying upside down.

20

Allow by *Danna Faulds*

There is no controlling life.
Try corralling a lightning bolt,
containing a tornado. Dam a
stream and it will create a new
channel. Resist, and the tide
will sweep you off your feet.

Allow, and grace will carry
you to higher ground. The only
safety lies in letting it all in —
the wild and the weak; fear,
fantasies, failures and success.

When loss rips off the doors of
the heart, or sadness veils your
vision with despair, practice
becomes simply bearing the truth.
In the choice to let go of your
known way of being, the whole
world is revealed to your new eyes.



21

“Without bravery (we) will never be able to realize the vaulting scope of our own capacities. Without bravery (we) will never know the world as richly as it longs to be known. Without bravery (our) lives remain small. far smaller than (we) probably want them to be.” - Elizabeth Gilbert, *Big Magic*

22

One of the things I've found myself saying a lot over the past few years is, "Anything good in life requires some sweat." It gets at this idea that anything good, anything worth having, anything that will leave us and our world in a better place, takes effort, struggle, and time. Sometimes, during all that sweat, it can be helpful to remember just what it is you're working towards and what all this sweat is for.

As we're halfway through Lent, what is it you are working towards? Spend some time journaling about your journey and where you want to go.

23

“It can be perfectly healthy to hate what life has given you and to insist on being a bit of a mess for a while. This takes great courage. But then, at some point, the better of two choices is to get back on your feet again.” - Anne Lamott

24

Take some time today and do something kind for a neighbour. (Don't cheat: choose one you don't know very well or who you've had a beef with.) Reflect on how you felt before, during, and after. How could you incorporate those actions into your daily life?

25

A prayer: God, just as you sent an angel to wrestle with Jacob, send one to wrestle with me. I need to be made uncomfortable, to be turned away from comfortable and convenient answers to my questions, and to be drawn into relationship with people I disagree with. As much as I don't want you to answer this prayer, please do — I know the pain of growth and transformation is worth it. Amen.

26

Breathe by Rachel Held Evans

The Spirit is like breath, as close as the lungs, the chest, the lips, the fogged canvas where little fingers draw hearts, the tide that rises and falls twenty-three thousand times a day in a rhythm so intimate we forget to notice until it enervates or until a supine yogi says *pay attention* and its fragile power awes again. Inhale. Exhale. Expand. Release. In the beginning, God breathed. And the dust breathed back enough oxygen, water, and carbon dioxide to make an atmosphere, to make a man. Job knew life as “the breath of God in my nostrils,” given and taken away. With breath, the Creator kindled the stars, parted a sea, woke a valley of dry bones, inspired a sacred text. So, too, the Spirit, inhaled and exhaled in a million quotidian ways, animates, revives, nourishes, sustains, speaks. It is as near as the nose and as everywhere as the air, so *pay attention*.

The Spirit is like fire, deceptively polite in its dance atop the wax and wick of our church candles, but wild and mercurial as a storm when unleashed. Fire holds no single shape, no single form. It can roar through a forest or fulminate in a cannon. It can glow in hot coals or flit about in embers. But it cannot be held. The living know it indirectly—through heat, through light, through tendrils of smoke snaking through the sky, through the scent of burning wood, through the itch of ash in the eye. Fire consumes. It creates in its destroying and destroys in its creating. The

furnace that smelts the ore drives off slag, and the flame that refines the metal purifies the gold. The fire that torches a centuries-old tree can crack open her cones and spill out their seeds. When God led his people through the wilderness, the Spirit blazed in a fire that rested over the tabernacle each night. And when God made the church, the Spirit blazed in little fires that rested over his people's heads. "Quench not the Spirit," the apostle wrote. It is as necessary and as dangerous as fire, so stay alert; *pay attention*.

The Spirit is like a seal, an emblem bearing the family crest, a promise of belonging, protection, favor. Like a signet ring to soft wax, the Spirit impresses the supple heart with the power and prestige of God, and no one—not kings, not presidents, not the wealthy, nor the magisterium—can take that identity away. The bond of God is made of viscous stuff. He has put his seal on us, wrote the apostle, and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee (1 Corinthians 1:22). In the rite of confirmation, which acknowledges the presence of the Spirit in a believer's life, a thumb to the forehead reminds God's children of their mark: the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. It's as invisible as your breath but as certain as your skin, so *pay attention*; don't forget who you are.

The Spirit is like wind, earth's oldest sojourner, which in one place readies a sail, in another whittles a rock, in another commands the trees to bow, in another gently lifts a bridal veil. Wind knows no perimeter. The wildest of all wild things, it travels to every corner of a cornerless world and amplifies the atmosphere. It smells like honeysuckle, curry, smoke, sea. It feels like a kiss, a breath, a burn, a sting. It can whisper or whistle or roar, bend and break and inflate. It can be harnessed, but never stopped or contained; its effects observed while its essence remains unseen. To chase the wind is folly, they say, to try and tame it the very definition of futility. "The wind blows wherever it pleases," Jesus said. "You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). We are born into a windy world, where the Spirit is steady as a breeze and as strong as a hurricane. There is no city, no village, no wilderness where you cannot find it, so *pay attention*.

The Spirit is like a bird, fragile alloy of heaven and earth, where wind and feather and flight meets breath and blood and bones. The rabbis imagined her as a pigeon, the Celts a wild goose. Like a dove, she glided over the primordial waters, hovered above Mary's womb, and descended onto Jesus' dripping wet head. She protected Israel like an eagle, and like a hen, brooded over her chicks. "Hide me in the shadow of your wings," the poet king wrote. "Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings" (Psalm 17:8, 63:7). The Spirit is as common as a cooing pigeon and transcendent as a high-flying eagle. So look up and sing back, catch the light of God in a diaphanous scrim of wing. *Pay attention.*



The Spirit is like a womb, from which the living are born again. We emerge—lashes still wet from the water, eyes unadjusted to the light—into a reanimated and freshly charged world. There are so many new things to see, so many gifts to give and receive, so many miracles to baffle and amaze, if only we *pay attention*, if only we let the Spirit surprise and God catch our breath.

27

To be curious is to be holy. It's good — divine even — to explore, learn, and grow. What's a social issue that you know you need to know more about? Maybe it's anti-racism, climate change, poverty, or gentrification. Take some time today to get curious and learn about these essential issues.

28

Part of becoming more human is becoming more loving. Pray this prayer today:

Loving God,

We pray for those in need.

The unemployed parent worried about feeding her children.

The woman who is underpaid, harassed, or abused.

The Black woman and man who fear for their lives.

The immigrant at the border longing for safety.

The homeless person looking for a meal.

The LGBTQ+ teen who is bullied and suicidal.

The one who is struggling with anxiety and depression.

The elderly who are alone.

Open our hearts, arms, and wallets to them.

Help us create a world where every life is sacred,

all people are loved, and all are welcome.

Amen.

adapted from Fr. James Martin

29

Are things getting tough? Is the momentum fading? Transformation is hard work, isn't it? As the final push begins and things get hard, here's a mantra to carry you through the hard days:

This is what it takes.

30

Transformation is tough work. While it does take resilience and perseverance, it also takes rest.

Practice rest today.

31

There's an old story about how this head of a convent was doing her rounds, and she came across a nun who was obviously in distress. Asked what was wrong, the nun replied, "I came here to figure out my life and I just can't see where God is taking me."

"Ah," replied the Mother Superior, "I've been there."

"Oh, then tell me what to do."

"Easy," she said, "just pray while standing on your tippy toes. You'll see much farther that way."

Try it. Seriously. Say a prayer about your hopes and dreams while on your tippy toes.

32

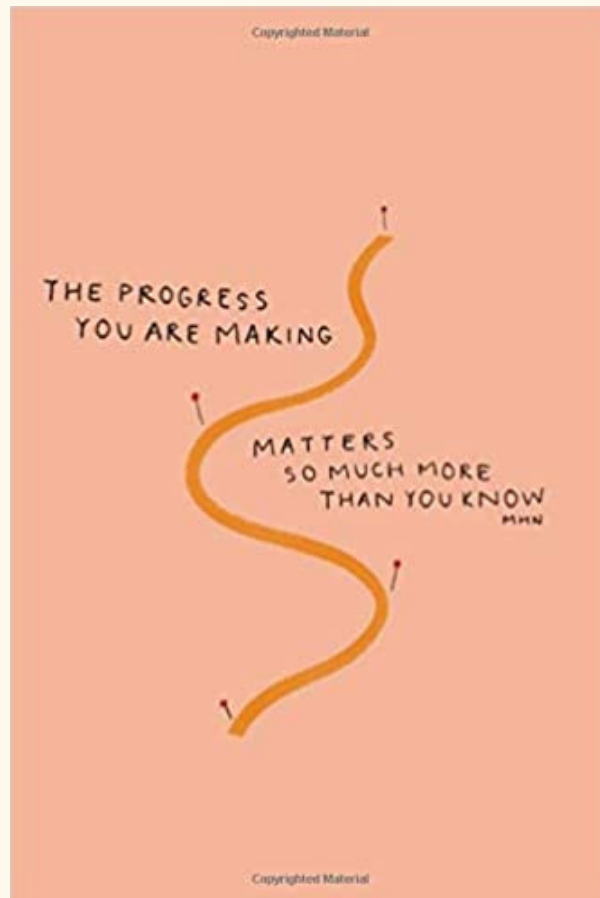
Peace isn't just a lack of noise and chaos, it's the deep reassurance that we are loved just as we are.

Read this poem by Wendell Berry and then go and find your own wild place where you can encounter that peace.

When despair grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief.

33

some art and wisdom
from Morgan Harper Nichols:



34

There's one more day of Lent. Here's a tough question to make sure you end with no regrets. On your journey towards growth, peace, transformation, and wholeness, what's the thing this season you've been putting off? What's the thing you know you need to do to make all this work count and matter?

Do it.

35

This is the last day of Lent. Holy Week begins next week. To cap off this season of transformation we're going to do the thing we must do — yes, this is an essential thing! — every time we experience growth no matter how big or small: celebrate! You are now different. You are a new person. You have done AMAZING work. Go and celebrate the movement.



A FEW WORDS FROM THE PROPERTY TEAM

Hello everyone, I would like to wish you all a better New Year than last year! It was a rough year for us all caused by a microscopic entity that became our nemesis. Thanks be to God and our scientists (no doubt guided by God) that we have a vaccine now that will help us get through this pandemic so that we will be able to get together again. We were so very relieved that our daughter and her fiancé who work at the Peter Lougheed Hospital emergency have been vaccinated. As they say hindsight is 2020 but I am sure we all want to forget last year.

At the church it has been quite busy. You may not realize maintenance still goes on even when the church is closed. The property committee has been doing wall painting, which is much easier to do when the rooms are not booked for meetings. The Multipurpose Room (MPR) and the hallway just outside received a

fresh coat of paint as did the Lower Hall (some of which had never been painted). The Quiet Room/Nursery at the back of the sanctuary was also repainted. It was a small team of painters (Bill Holman, Dave Cannon, Al Steingart, Claude Masse, and myself) so that we could do the social distancing safely. Thanks for helping guys!

Some of the other projects that we completed include: installing power door openers for the two washrooms in the Midlands Link, replacing three fire extinguishers, replacing two batteries for emergency lights, and installing two modules in the fire protection system to synchronize the strobe lights and alarms throughout the church. We have also had the HVAC system inspected and the required maintenance work completed by our contractor, including repair of the on-demand hot water heater for the dish sanitizer in the lower kitchen.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions including closure of the church we sped up our plans to livestream the Sunday services. We are now set up with a PTZ video camera and software to record the services.

Unfortunately, with our current internet service we don't have enough upload speed to livestream yet, so when we get back to holding services, we will be recording the services and uploading them later that same day.

This summer the church was vandalized and we had to replace six broken windows. This incident gave cause for us to install a security video camera and a recorder to monitor vehicles entering and leaving the church property. We can zoom in and read their license plate when they leave! We also put up signs warning people that they are being videoed and we have had no further vandalism.

Unfortunately, we had to take the elevator out of service. It was discovered during a quarterly inspection that one of the wire ropes and one of the pulleys (they call them sheeves) were worn badly and needed to be replaced. The quotes for cost of the repair were \$5,000 to \$3,200 and it was decided at the Church Board level that with the church being closed we would wait until 2021 to have the repairs completed when we can afford it. I know it will be inconvenient for anyone moving things to and from the lower hall but please use the ramp as access, we will keep it cleared of snow and safe for you.

In closing, I hope that you all stay safe and healthy!

Dave Churchill

DESERT TIMES

By Ann Brown

Since our church is experiencing some desert times with the arrival of COVID-19, I think this poem that I wrote ten years ago is worth sharing.

The desert is a going inward place
A time of oneness with our Divine.
We sit in silence, to beckon the Holy Ones' presence.
We wait to hear the Holy Ones' calling within us.
Sometimes - we must wait a very long time.

The Desert Times - the most growthful and challenging times of our earthly journey.

We know we will be tested.
Are we waiting for Your call?
Are we open to new ways?
Your Ways - O SACRED ONE

May our time in the desert strengthen our Faith - Hope - and Love.
The most important of these is of course LOVE.

Blessings of His presence
Love Ann

LENT IN A BAG

Symbols help us think about how God is with us all the time. Lent helps us CONNECT with God.

The first symbol is SAND.

Between Jesus' baptism and His adult life, Jesus went into the desert for 40 days. The desert is a dangerous place and Jesus was hungry, tired, and cold. He did NOT give up when things got tough.


I wonder: What is your desert like? What may you learn there? When things get tough, do you remember God is there for you?

The second symbol is a ROCK.

While in the desert Jesus heard a voice asking Him to change a stone into bread. He knew He was not being called to do this by God. He said No and did not change the rock into food. He said to the voice NO, to be a real human being, we need more than just bread to eat.

I wonder: Why Jesus said NO? What Jesus meant when He said we need more than bread to eat? If you would make better choices with Jesus' help?

The third symbol is a HUMAN FIGURE.

A person wearing a dark jacket and a cap stands on a sand dune, looking out over a vast desert landscape with rolling sand dunes under a hazy sky.

Because Jesus was fully human,
He gets us and understands us from inside out.
He knows we are able to do great things, Godly things.
No matter what we do He keeps on asking us to join Him in His work.
Jesus knows we can do good things on earth, just like He did.

I wonder: What we can do to be more like Jesus at home? At school? At work?



The fourth symbol is a CANDLE.

Lent begins in the cold and dark of late winter and ends in the warmth and brightness of spring. Jesus is called "The Light of the World." Jesus told His disciples to be a light in the world too and to make a difference by the things we do.

I wonder: Where do you shine? What do you think that you are good at? What are your talents? If you can encourage someone to see the good in themselves today?

Adapted by Ann Brown

BELIEVE

Start where you are

Use what you have

Do what you can

**Every accomplishment starts with
the decision to try.**

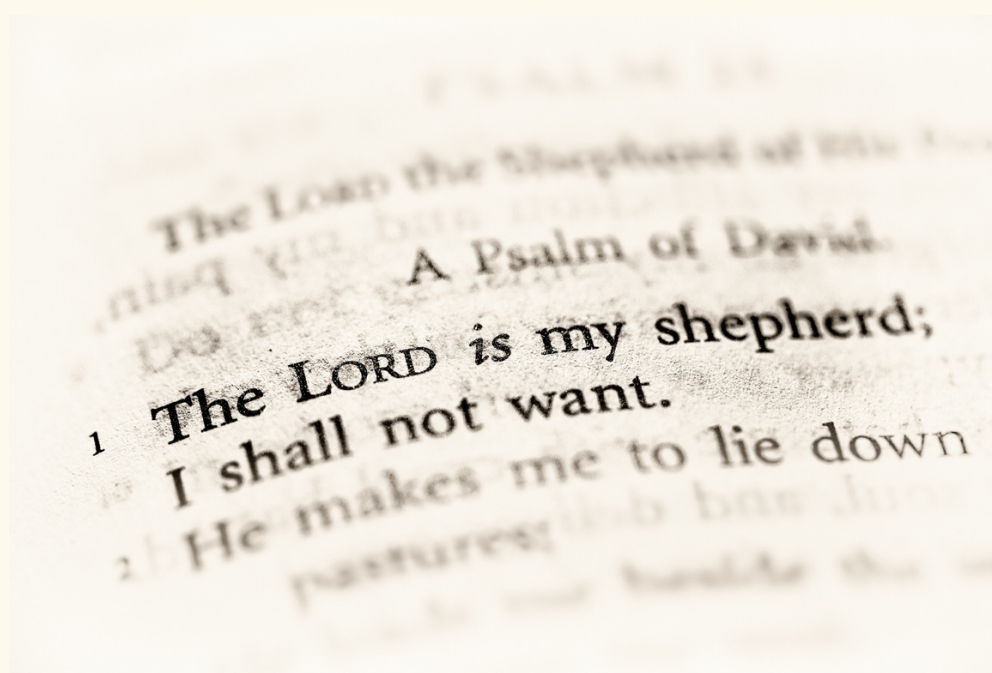
Believe in yourself!

**Now and then it is good to pause
In our pursuit of happiness
And just be happy.**

**Dwell in possibility - Emily
Dickinson**

Submitted by Wilma Clark





The Lord is my Shepherd – that's a Relationship!

I shall not want – that's Supply!

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures – that's Rest!

He leadeth me beside the still waters – that's Refreshment!

He restoreth my soul – that's Healing!

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness – that's Guidance!

For His name's sake – that's Purpose!

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death – that's Testing!

I will fear no evil – that's Protection!

For Thou art with me – that's Faithfulness!

Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me – that's Discipline!

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies – that's Hope!

Thou anointest my head with oil – that's Consecration!

My cup runneth over – that's Abundance!

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life – that's a Blessing!

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord – that's Security!

Forever – that's Eternity!

Author unknown, submitted by Wilma Clark

HELLO EVERYONE! IT'S SCUBA DAVE!

I have been asked to tell a few of my underwater adventure stories. Perhaps I may make it a series of stories if you all like what I have to share! My first story is about one of my passions, wreck diving.

When Jocelyn and I were on our trip to Australia and New Zealand in 2007, I was able to fulfill a dream of a lifetime when I dove on the Great Barrier reef. It truly is one of the most wonderful underwater environments in the world. I was also able to dive on a world-famous shipwreck which is on most wreck-divers top ten dives.



The shipwreck that I dove on was the SS Yongala. The ship was what they called a tramp steamer, which means that it carried both passengers and freight up and down the east coast of Australia from Melbourne to Cairns (pronounced Cans). The vessel was named after the small town of Yongala in South Australia, a word from the Aboriginal Ngadjuri language that means “good water.” The ship was built in England and launched in April 1903. She was 358 feet long and her tonnage was 3,664 tons. The power plant was a new design called a triple expansion steam engine that drove a single screw (propeller) to a maximum speed of 17 knots (20 miles per hour).

During one of her voyages from Brisbane to Townsville on March 24, 1911, she sank during a cyclone in a channel of water just off Upstart Bay which flows between the mainland and the Great Barrier reef. The Captain of the Yongala was William Knight and he was not aware of the storm because the new technology of the day, a Marconi radio set, had not been installed in the ship and they were too far from land to see semaphore signals warning of the storm. If Captian Knight had known that the cyclone was about to hit them, he would have put into shore. The water in the channel is quite shallow, only 95 feet at the wreck site, which caused the waves from the cyclone to be very large and powerful. No one is quite sure, but it is believed that the ship was flipped over and sank very quickly with no survivors, including a race horse named Moonshine.

The fact that the Yongala did not arrive in Townsville on time was of no big concern; they assumed that the ship had taken shelter from the storm and would arrive later. Some time later wreckage was found along the coast including the remains of Moonshine, who was probably the only living thing that was on the deck and not sheltered inside the ship when it quickly capsized. The “Authorities” searched for the ship without any success and blamed the loss on the storm with no fault to the ship’s construction/condition (she was only eight years old) or fault to Capitan Knight’s abilities. During and after the Second World War, the Royal Navy with mine detecting equipment and sonar discovered a “target” just 11 miles east of Cape Bowling Green, which is only 56 miles from the protection of the Townsville harbour. So close but too far! The Navy did not follow up on the discovery and it wasn’t until 1958 (47 years later) that it was discovered by a local diver, using maps from the Navy, who salvaged the safe out of the wreck. It must have been disappointing to the divers that whatever was in the safe did not survive the immersion in salt water for all of those years. They did however determine based on the serial number on the safe that the ship was the Yongala!

The wreck site is located within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the wreck is protected under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act of 1976. Penetration of the wreck and/or picking of artifacts is prohibited. Access to the site is by special permit only through approved dive charters. I was lucky enough to connect with one of the accredited dive charters and they had room for one more diver!

The wreck is lying on its starboard side (right as you face forward on a ship) at an ocean depth of 98 feet with the port gunwale at 50 feet. The sea floor is a flat sandy open area, with the wreck acting like an artificial reef. It's like an oasis in the middle of a desert, 11 miles from the mainland rock reefs and almost 30 miles from the Great Barrier coral reefs. The wreck has its own little ecosystem with the fish and reptiles that live there not wandering far from the protection of the wreck.

Watch for the next episode when I will tell you the best part! The dives! And what about the reptiles way out in the ocean?

Dave Churchill



**It is with deep sadness that we
announce the passing of
ISABEL GLESSING**

May 4, 1933 - February 5, 2021

Isabel Glessing of Calgary passed away on Friday, February 5 at the age of 87 years. Isabel was born at St. Walburg, Saskatchewan to Ukrainian immigrant parents. She grew up on the family farm with her eight siblings.

Isabel married Grant Glessing on July 18, 1952. They lived in Cleeves, Edam, Humboldt, Regina and Good Spirit, Sask. before moving to Calgary in 1996.

Isabel's greatest undertaking and achievement was being a devoted wife and mother. She worked very hard at raising her six children. She was a very dedicated homemaker, enjoyed cooking and everyone always loved her fresh baked bread and buns.

Isabel and Grant met at a dance in Spruce Lake, Sask. They loved to dance and continued dancing long into their retirement years. Isabel

was always at Grant's side with his many construction projects, hobbies and golfing. She was very proud of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, always checking on their wellbeing.

Besides her loving husband Grant of sixty-eight years, Isabel is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law, Alan and Anne, Doug, Dan and Bev, Ken, Tim and Michelle; daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Rob Kaminski; grandchildren, James (Leah), Michael (Sara), Mathew, Kristina, Megan, Lee (Jake), Kyle (Rosalie) and Olivia; and great-grandchildren, Brayden, Ethan, Isla and Aria. She is also survived by her twin brother William (Doreen), sisters, Anna and Olga; and sisters-in-law, Violet and Mary.

Isabel was predeceased by siblings, Rose (Steve), John, Mary (Irvine), Eva (Lyle) and Henry (Bertha); brothers-in-law, John, Leonard, Clarence and Lorne (Mary); and sisters-in-law, Kathleen and Joyce (Menow).

The family would like to thank Dr. Chuah, Dr. Longowal and staff of PLC Unit 43 for her care and keeping her comfortable in her final days. The family would also like to thank all the staff of Manor Village at Fish Creek for all their compassion and support over the last few years.

If friends so desire, memorial tributes may be made directly to the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Alberta, 200, 119 – 14th Street N.W., Calgary, AB T2N 1Z6 (403) 264-5549, heartandstroke.ca.





BELLEORAM TO BOMBAY

From her inauspicious roots on the southern shores of Newfoundland, Emma Padhi went on to touch the lives of hundreds of people in Canada and beyond

by Peter Jackson

Matilda Emma Padhi was born on Nov. 3, 1933 in what was then the independent country of Newfoundland. She was still a baby when Newfoundland gave up its independence and reverted to colonial status under Great Britain.

Such events likely mattered little in her native fishing village of Belleoram, where her father, John Whatley, owned a store and the livelihood of most residents centred around the deep, blue waters of Fortune Bay.

Belleoram harbour was sheltered by a natural breakwater, and Emma would have carried two striking images of her birthplace with her throughout her life: St. Lawrence Anglican Church, perched on a hill behind the town, and the imposing rock face of Iron Skull Mountain across the water.

Emma's mother, Irene, would later give birth to two sons.

“She used to talk about how they were poor, and they didn't have a lot of money, and they would eat a lot of wild meat,” says Sarah Railton, Emma's granddaughter, who lives in British Columbia. “She valued community, the relationships she kept. I really feel that all is rooted in the maritime energy she carried, and that kind of open-door policy that friends are always welcome.”

From such modest beginnings, Emma would go on to spread her compassion, faith and an irrepressible sense of humour from Halifax to Saskatoon and then halfway around the world to India.

When she died in Calgary on Jan. 3, she left behind an adoring legion of family and friends who will never forget her larger-than-life personality.

Leaving home

Emma moved to Halifax as soon as she graduated high school, when Newfoundland was on the cusp of voting to join Canada. There, she worked in the Moirs chocolate factory before deciding she wanted to become a nurse. She entered the Halifax infirmary School of Nursing in 1950, and lived in a dorm where she nurtured many lifelong friendships.

According to friends and former classmates, she had no fear of the doctors or the nuns and didn't hesitate to speak her mind. The nuns apparently liked her spunk, as she was the only one who had a key to the linen cupboard — a rare privilege.

In 1954, she headed west to Saskatoon, where she worked in a sanatorium, and became head nurse at St. Paul's Hospital.

It was here she met her husband-to-be, Dr. Radhakrishna (Rad) Padhi. They were married in 1956. Rad became a cardiac surgeon, but his native country soon beckoned. He left by ship in 1960 to get things settled. Emma followed in November of 1961, with two toddlers in tow and another on the way.

Passage to India

Emma flew from Halifax to London, and then to Egypt. In Cairo, the authorities took her passport and sent her to a hotel. She worried all night that she might never get her passport back.

The next day was the last leg of her journey. Boarding the inaugural United Arab Airlines flight from Cairo to Mumbai — then Bombay — she soon realized she was the only adult female on the plane.

The flight was late arriving, and Rad waited anxiously, wondering if he should even have booked her on the flight. There were no screens displaying arrivals and departures in those days.

Hours later, Emma of Belleoram finally arrived in India, where Jawaharlal Nehru— the first prime minister of the fledgling democracy — was still in power.

“My Nana’s stories of India abounded,” says Sarah. “She loved the culture, loved the people, loved the food. She would wear the kaftans.”

Their first destination in India was Wanlesswadi, southeast of Mumbai. They worked at a medical centre which also served as a TB sanatorium and a leprosy hospital, with a capacity of 500 beds.

Rad soon realized there was an acute need for heart surgery in the region.

Food and vaccines

On April 13, 1962, Emma assisted her husband by running the bypass machine for the first successful open-heart surgery in Wanlesswadi. As news grew of their successes, the hospital got busier and attracted heart surgeons from the U.S. who brought along much needed equipment. In less than a year after arriving in India, Emma was not only assisting in surgery, but also running the lab and the hospital kitchen.

“One of my fondest memories was of my mom working in a clinic she had set up in a building behind our house,” says Pam Railton, Sarah’s mother and Emma’s eldest, who lives in Saskatchewan. “Every morning, she and a nurse she hired would make porridge and mix powdered milk for the underprivileged children in the area. They would come with their tin cup and bowl and line up. It always amazed me how long the line was.”

Emma told Pam the morning meal guaranteed they had at least one meal that day.

“Once a week she would give them vitamins and, whenever possible, vaccinations.”

Pam says she asked her mother recently how she supported the project. “Turns out she bought silk scarves and linens in India and sent them to a friend in Kingston (Ontario) who would sell them and send her the money, and she would buy whatever she needed to run the clinic. Mom said the line seemed long to me because it was — there were often up to 200 children waiting.”



Emma and Rad continued to work beside each other in India for six years, but soon decided that Canada was in their future once again.

Mission to Cameroon

After six years working in India, Emma and Rad returned to Saskatchewan in 1967 to ensure their children got a solid education. In India, they would have had to pack them off to boarding school for that.

The family resumed their life in Western Canada, moving from Saskatchewan to Manitoba and eventually to Alberta. Dr. Padhi performed cardiac surgery, while Emma continued nursing. She also started selling real estate, taking a top national sales award in 1978.

Emma occasionally flew to remote Indigenous communities in northern Saskatchewan, filling in for local nurses during their time off.

“She quickly made friends with the local chiefs and always arrived home with stories of her adventures from treating patients late at night while working alone in a nursing station, to being invited by the local chief to a day of ice fishing and snowmobiling,” her daughter, Pam Railton, wrote in an email.

Emma had plenty of close friends and family in Canada to keep her happy. But she wasn’t about to stay put for long.

Off to Africa

When Emma and Rad both retired in 1987, the pair packed up again and flew to Cameroon in West Africa on a three-year medical mission. Emma taught nursing staff, assisted in the operating room and helped rebuild the hospital.

“She never shied away from a difficult task or asked anyone to do something she would not do herself,” Pam says.

When she discovered the outhouses meant for local families were locked, Emma broke the locks and opened the doors to discover they were infested with maggots. Undaunted, she bought chemical agents, doused the facilities and locked the doors again. A few days later, she returned with hot water to wash up, along with some paint.

“She tried to delegate the job, but every time she left everyone stopped working, so she ended up working with them to get the job done — and made some new friends,” says Pam.

After her husband died in 1998, Emma continued to volunteer for medical missions in Haiti, Mexico and Guatemala.

“Her religious beliefs were a guiding force in her life,” says Pam. “She loved the hymns and took great comfort in reading and reciting verses from the scriptures.”

Pam’s daughter, Sarah Railton, also recalls her Nana’s work ethic and her determination to help others. When Sarah was going to university in Edmonton, she and her Nana went to dinner at the home of a young couple from India who had just moved there and had no furniture and nothing on the walls.

“Nana took one look around, and then we went out and bought a bunch of cleaning supplies and we came back, and so what was supposed to be just a dinner party turned into Nana scrubbing out their bathroom and doing all this cleaning,” Sarah said in a phone interview, laughing at the scenario. “And then we ate this beautiful meal that the wife had worked all day to create.”

‘Beautiful memory’

Sarah’s earliest memories of her Nana were of someone she knew loved her very deeply. “I was a really squirmy sleeper, and when she would come to visit ... she would have to sleep in my bed with me and she wanted to cuddle me,” she says, “and I kept telling her I couldn’t breathe when she was cuddling me so tight, and she’d say, ‘I can hear you breathing.’”

“I’ve always kept that memory with me, that feeling of being snuggled and warm with your grandmom who loves you so much. It’s just a beautiful memory.”

Emma’s son, Des, is the middle of three children; the youngest son, Devkumar (Dev), was born in India.

“Mom had a big heart and cared about the health and well-being of everyone — family, friends and strangers,” Des wrote from California. “She had a terrific sense of humour and was always quick with a joke or a laugh, and had a way of making even the most difficult situations seem not so bad.”

Travel companion

Anne Szabo of Calgary met Emma in 2010, and became a close travelling companion. “Emma’s positivity and good sense of humour drew me to her,” Szabo wrote. “I thought she would make a good travel companion and not a prima donna. And I was right.”

The pair toured Turkey, took a riverboat cruise from Moscow to St Petersburg, and ventured to Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Seoul and the Galapagos.

“Each evening during our travels we would lie in bed laughingly reviewing our exploits of the day. Any bad experiences were blunted by finding something funny about the situation.”

Wilma Clark befriended Emma in 2014, shortly before she had a stroke. The two met at Red Deer Lake United Church, and Wilma continued to visit with Emma at her personal care home until her death on Jan. 3.

“Emma has an amazing family who loved her extravagantly and miss her intensely. They treated her like gold,” Clark wrote, adding she had one special grandson, Nathan, who would visit and massage her limbs and help cheer on her beloved Calgary Flames.

Emma was always dressed beautifully, she said, and was loved by everyone who met her. “I was privileged to offer her a last prayer over the phone minutes before she died.”

(Originally published Jan. 25 and 26, 2021 in *The Telegram*. Reprinted with permission.)

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

A memory? A poem?
A photograph? A pandemic story?
We would love to share it
in the next issue of this magazine.

Please send your submission to info@reddeerlakeuc.com
or call us at (403) 256-3181.

The next submission deadline is March 1, 2021.



Please note that the church's
mailing address has changed.

Please direct mail to:

Red Deer Lake United Church
96187 Spruce Meadows Green SW
Foothills, Alberta T1S 2R9

PERSONAL LENTEN REFLECTIONS



**We are
Red Deer Lake United Church.**

We are an inclusive and affirming community of faith – people of all ages, perspectives, and stories, who gather to connect with God, each other, and ourselves, and find in Jesus a new way of being human and alive in the world.

**you're welcome, wanted, and accepted.
join us on the journey.**

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Wednesday 9am - noon
Thursday 9am - noon