



## **English Translation**



**Ash Wednesday**

**March 5, 2025**

**Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21**

Matthew writes of fasting. He advises that God sees our fasting and reminds us that our energy flows where our attention goes... “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” How might we fast with Earth as our treasure? What if we focused our attention and energy on nature and care for Earth?

In a recent Presbyterian for Earth Care meeting, we discussed ways to reduce our carbon footprint, and it got me thinking of ways we can fast to help the environment this Lent:

- Limit use of plastics. Avoid purchasing items made of plastic. Reuse plastic items instead of disposing or recycling them.
- Limit the use of carbon-based fuel. Avoid driving one or two days a week. Carpool with neighbors. Combine travel into one trip. Limit travel that involves airplanes and cruises. Consider ways to enjoy vacations and holidays that do not contribute to global warming.
- Meat and dairy farming accounts for around 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization. Move to a plant-based diet. You might start with one vegetarian day each week. In the process, you avoid killing animals and reduce suffering in factory farms. You might be healthier with a plant-based diet too.
- Fast from harmful pesticides and fertilizers that contaminate water sources, negatively impact non-target insects and pollinators, pollute the soil, and harm biodiversity.
- Be mindful of the use of heat and air conditioning. Take care not to waste your source of heating and cooling.

Matthew writes of fasting to please God, and he reminds us to take care of where we place our treasures and where we direct our heart and our energy. What other ways can you place your treasure in creation?

**Prayer:** Holy God, May we fast in ways that support your creation and direct our heart and energy toward loving your creation. Jesus taught us to love our neighbors, and this includes neighboring watersheds, plants, animals, elements, and all amazing and wonderful kin of creation.

**Sally Swan**

**Mendocino Presbyterian Church**

**Mendocino, CA**

## **First Sunday in Lent**

**March 9, 2025**

**Luke 4:1-13**

In our Lenten wanderings and in our lives, we always have a choice, to hate or to love, to lift up or tear down, to stand with or assume power over. In our text today, Jesus spends 40 days standing against temptation and offers of worldly power and, from all accounts, leans toward God every time. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus shows us in scripture how to love, lift up, and stand with, even when it seems like the odds are stacked against him. How can we be like Jesus, withstanding temptation, trouble, and testing when there is a legion of evildoers who surround us with false promises? How can we be like Jesus, refusing the assurances of this world and instead relying and resting on the possibilities of being filled by the Holy Spirit and following Christ? Today, we see in our world how easily humankind is pulled toward control and dominance of both people and creation. The empires of this world promise followers they will never be in want, even as they create want; the principalities promise power over, even as they take away life and livelihood, and the powers promise adoration by those who surround them, even as they denounce others. We see people get twisted up like pretzels in pursuit of the same power that the devil holds up to Christ.

In this time of Lent, Christians have an opportunity to wander in the wilderness for a bit to find another way, to eschew the pursuit of power over others, and to practice standing with and welcoming in. It is easy to be enamored by the kingdoms of this world and to think that we can have both world and God. To believe we can care for the person in the ditch, the marginalized, the widow, the orphan, the sojourner and, at the same time, work to get ahead in our material-driven culture.

Instead of being overwhelmed by the kingdoms of this world, let us spend each of these next 40 days stepping into Jesus' yes for our lives, doing the work that is ours to do, trusting God, and acting in support of those who need us. Jesus did it, and with his help, so can we.

**Prayer:** Creator of all that is good. Let us step outside into your creation and find ways to walk into your 'yes' even in the midst of the mess that is our world. We love you, we worship you, and we give you thanks for all the gifts you have given us. In this world and in your creation, help us to find the work that is ours to do and to do it with joy. Amen.

**M. Courtenay Willcox**

**Moderator, Presbyterians for Earth Care**

**Second Sunday in Lent**

**March 16, 2025**

**Philippians 3:17-4:1**

“But your citizenship is in heaven...” declares Paul in his letter to the church in Philippi. An underlying sense of urgency came from the writer’s belief that Jesus was returning soon and believers’ time on earth would be over. As the years passed without the return of the Christ, that belief in imminent return lessened, even for Paul.

Today, we who follow Jesus no longer expect his reappearance any day. But we still share a collective sense of urgency. It comes from growing evidence--not that we will be transported but that the earth itself may be nearing an end. Global warming is evidence that we human beings have fallen far short in our sacred assignment to be its stewards. It’s easy to fall into despair.

Yet all is not lost. Every day we can take actions to reverse the ominous trends and care for what the Episcopal prayer book eloquently calls “this fragile planet, our earthly home.” Just as human actions have harmed that planet, so can collective and committed human actions save it. The encouragement of Paul still rings true: “Stand firm in the Lord....”

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to rise above despair and join in a concerted effort to care for your creation which you declared good. For with you all things are possible. Amen

**Nancy Gaston**

**Elder, First Presbyterian Church**

**Vancouver, WA.**

**3rd Sunday in Lent**  
**March 23, 2025**  
**Psalm 63: 1-8**

In this third Sunday of Lent we can imagine ourselves to be with David, as the New RSV headnote to Psalm 63 announces, “when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.” Our journey since Ash Wednesday likewise has many challenges.

I believe this psalm attends to both our personal and communal sense of hope for deliverance from oppression. It begins with the anguished cry “O God, you are my God, I seek you . . . where there is no water.” Then the psalmist’s prayer for help in the sanctuary leads to a vision of God’s power and glory, praising God’s steadfast love as “better than life.” The final verses, 9-11, show the psalmist’s confidence that God will overthrow oppressions —as we now are assailed by ecological, political, and economic ones.

No matter what oppressions stalk us, I understand the import of a Lenten journey that involves a great desire for God’s help in loving ourselves as well as our world. In an Epiphany service at our church we received these words: “You are beloved. God is well pleased with you.” We were encouraged to share them with each other. As we did that, I felt relief and joy.

But I am not always able to accept these freeing words. So I follow as well as I am able the psalmist’s example to “enter the sanctuary” in prayer and, in quiet, to receive the renewal of my acceptance of God’s abiding love.

**Prayer:** Let us return again to faith in God’s persistently present love for ourselves, all we meet, and for all Creation. May God bless us to know the psalmist’s thankful praise: “in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy!” Indeed, may this song carry us through Lent and into a post-Easter world.

**Nancy Corson Carter**  
**The Church of Reconciliation**  
**Chapel Hill, NC**

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**March 30, 2025**  
**2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

<sup>17</sup> So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived! <sup>18</sup> All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

A new creation. God doing a new thing. Again and again in God's Word, there is word of the new thing that is emerging. Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, and he emphasizes that it is the fulfillment of the Law that had been given in an earlier time. God's new thing, the Kingdom of God, is entirely consistent with who God has always been, though it might not look the same.

The fruit is the fulfillment of the seed, but it doesn't look the same. And we are part of this new "becoming," this new process, that God is continually doing. We are part of the new creation—this ongoing work of God in the world.

David Orr writes that "Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up." In these times, when the world is rife with division and conflict, to be entrusted with the work of reconciliation is holy work—whether the work we engage is reconciling with other people or reconciling with the earth in the small corner where we live. Perhaps we are removing exotic plants and replacing them with native plants—that is the work of reconciliation: restoring harmony. It is good work. Perhaps we are working to build relationships with our neighbors who displayed different yard signs than we did during the election. This, too, is good work.

**Prayer:** Creator God, renew us each day with continued hope for this holy work of ongoing creation and reconciliation. Amen.

**The Rev. Dr. Susan Gilbert Zencka is retired from congregational ministry. She lives in Allentown, PA and is a member of Lehigh Presbytery, which is in the process of becoming a new thing as it merges with Lackawanna Presbytery to become, together, Mountain Laurel Presbytery.**

**Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
**April 6, 2025**  
**Isaiah 43:16-21**

Isaiah speaks of the Lord making a path in mighty waters. They not only extinguish warriors, but also give drink to the chosen people. The waters also give drink to wild animals, who honor the Lord for this exquisite gift of life.

My mind and heart keep turning towards water, especially during these Spring and Lenten seasons. Christians look towards the waters of Baptism, whether for themselves or others in their faith communities. Many more people yearn for spring rains and their warmth, which awakens life gone dormant.

We also know the destructive power of water: wind-driven floods, sea-level rise... In addition, there is a growing awareness of how human actions impact the world's waters—as well as the living things within and around those waters.

Remembering that the Lord gives water in the desert, how can we serve and work with our Creator in this season of re-birth? What is the 'desert' we experience? What is the 'water' we need? How can we amplify our gratitude towards the Creator's gift, and at the same time accept our call to steward and guard it?

**Prayer:** Loving God, enlighten my understanding and strengthen my spirit in the days ahead. Let me not wander in the desert unless it be your will. Help me act to protect your creations as best I can. Help all of us acknowledge your role as Creator, whether in our worship, our faith communities, and our public life.

**Carol Mathews**

**Stewardship of Creation Ministry Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph**



**Palm Sunday**  
**April 13, 2025**  
**Luke 19: 28-40**

A colleague shared with me that when he served a church in the southwestern part of the United States, they didn't have to order palm fronds for Palm Sunday, they just harvested some from the gardens around the church building. This was a revelation to me, as someone who grew up in and still lives in the opposite corner of the country, we are lucky if crocuses are beginning to bravely poke out of the ground by Holy Week!

Luke's version of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem also lives into this principle of using what you have on hand to praise God, or to prepare for Jesus - a donkey, clothes to spread on the road, your own voice—and in other versions of this passage, palms.

What do you have “on hand” or available this Palm Sunday? That you do not need to go to the store for, or order online? What is in nature around you, what is in your heart? That is enough to praise God and prepare for Jesus.

Sometimes, it is the everyday “stuff of life” that we notice the least. I often think it is that way with Creation. It is always there and yet we overlook it so easily. But when it is disappearing or already disappeared, or when it is raging in a storm, or it is something we can show off via social media - then we pay attention. There are beautiful gifts of Creation around you right now that can help you praise God or prepare for Jesus. I encourage you to notice them this Holy Week and even allow stones to cry out.

**Prayer:** God of palm fronds, clothing, crowds, donkeys and stones, help me to notice the sacred gift of Creation and how it is the key to connecting with you. Amen.

**Rev. Dr. Shannan Vance-Ocampo serves as the General Presbyter for the Presbytery of Southern New England and is working on a book on ecotheology and spirituality.**



## **Maundy Thursday**

**April 17, 2025**

**John 13: 1-7, 31b - 35**

There are “days” of Holy Week that we honor in their time; Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter/Resurrection Sunday. We wait for them with great anticipation and hope. However, they tend to come and go, being celebrated and then put back in the box until next year. There may be a passing reference in sermons or Bible studies, but they seem to take a backseat to our daily life with Christ.

Perhaps one of the least understood or celebrated events that are part of Holy Week, leading up to the grand celebration of Easter, is Maundy Thursday. It is the time that Jesus drew his disciples together to celebrate Passover, letting them know that their lives would again be overturned as He was going to be leaving them. Unlike the other “days” of Holy Week, it is actively reenacted throughout the entire liturgical year when we come together to celebrate and participate in the sacrament of Communion.

Jesus became an example of being a servant to all through the washing of the disciple’s feet before dinner, emphasizing the cleansing power of leadership humility and the natural element of water. In sharing the bread and wine/juice as symbols of our connection to God, He emphasized a strong connection to the natural world and our commitment to continue to care for His creation in love.

Today’s world bears striking resemblance to the Roman world of Jesus’ time. We are looking for leadership that serves God and His people, not themselves. Leadership that cares for the planet, the environment, for the welfare of all; serving with humility and kindness. The example we were given on that long ago Maundy Thursday should be the road we follow every day of our lives.

**Prayer:** Creator God, who created all things, bless your creations and restore harmony for generations to come in all areas of the world. Help us to understand that those we battle with, those that we look down upon, those that we kill saying that only we have the one right way are all children of the same God, our Creator. Give us the daily direction to be servant leaders in Your name.

**Barbara Hassall is a Ruling Elder at The Sanctuary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; current Chair of the Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network, former Presbytery Moderator of Presbytery Tropical Florida and was a commissioner to the 225th General Assembly.**

**Good Friday**  
**April 18, 2025**  
**John 18:36-38**

Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. . . .” Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”

Loneliness and fear. We live in a time of great change and dislocation. What has appeared stable has proven fragile. Homes can increasingly be destroyed in minutes because of natural disasters, even if we can find mortgages we can afford. Careers and jobs have become more tenuous through contracting and sudden layoffs. Inflation continues. Microplastics contaminate even our blood streams. Computers continue to take over our lives. We are overwhelmed. Underneath is a feeling of isolation and sadness. To whom can we turn? Good Friday offers us another direction, called “good” because it puts us on the path toward wholeness even amid a broken world. Jesus tells Pilate he has come to testify to the truth, based not on worldly merit but rather relationship. Through his own suffering and abandonment, we come closer to the truth of what we are meant to be with one another, to love one another despite all our weaknesses. Pilate asks Jesus, “What is truth?” The answer lies in Jesus himself. We are not alone. Jesus provides us with a road map toward future, future not broken by yesterday, today, or tomorrow. This does not deny the pain and fear of the present time. Good Friday is more than “good” as we know it. Good Friday is holy, and there is no Easter without passing through the depths of this day. Hold on tight to one another. Do what you can. Look to God’s kingdom even here.

**Prayer:** God of relationships, we admit we often do not live up to the whole gospel story, wanting to skip the hard parts and move instead to the glorious end. Be with us as we act--carrying out our responsibilities as well as discerning when to let go, praying for your direction. Amen.

**Rosalie Otters Ph.D., MSW, D.Min.**  
**Emerita Professor, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Social Work/Gerontology**  
**Retired--Grace Presbytery (Dallas), PCUSA.**  
**Environmental Stewardship Ministry, Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, AR**

**Holy Saturday**  
**April 19, 2025**  
**Job 14:1-14 (NRSV)**

In the wake of the recent wildfires that swept through Los Angeles, charred earth and scorched landscapes tell a story of destruction. Yet, within this devastation, signs of new life emerge. Pines begin to sprout from charred stumps; wildflowers bloom where ash once lay. For all the irreversible scars the fires have left behind, they also reveal the mystery of resurrection – a quiet rebirth in the midst of ruin.

In his lament, Job poignantly reflects on the transience of life. “A mortal, born of woman, few of days and full of trouble,” Job speaks. He recognizes the inevitable cycle of beginnings and endings – life, like nature, is fragile. Just as a flower blooms briefly and withers, so too does human life flicker and fade. Yet, even in the poet’s despair, there rests a subtle hope: “Will they live again?” Job wonders, pointing to the very longing we feel for renewal and resurrection – from death to life, from ashes to bloom.

Holy Saturday invites us into the solemn pause between sorrow and resurrection. In this sacred waiting, we are reminded that, like the earth after a fire, dormancy is not always an end. It is often a wondrous hush before a new beginning, a hallowed silence that bespeaks the endless potential of divine creativity. The very earth reflects this truth: from the ashes of grief and despair, hope may yet flower once again.

This Holy Saturday, may we find a sense of stillness in the space between mourning and hope, that sacred place where the Spirit of God is at work transforming despair into the fertile soil of resurrection.

**Prayer:** Loving Creator, in the silence of Holy Saturday, we embrace both our pain and the promise of renewal. Amid the scorched earth and our own despair, kindle in us a steadfast hope. Grant us the courage to nurture life from the ashes, and the grace to trust in your eternal resurrection. Amen.

**Jake Putich**  
**Director of Faith Formation & Creation Care**  
**Westwood Presbyterian Church**  
**Los Angeles, California**

**Easter Day**

**April 20, 2025**

**John 20:1-18**

**The Eighth Day of Creation**

It is no wonder that Easter has been referred to as the “Eighth Day of Creation.”

The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus, who was crucified, dead and buried, appeared to Mary Magdalene and then later in the evening to the Disciples. (Jn. Ch. 20) How could this be?

Standing outside on a clear night and looking up we see the moon and stars and the vastness of space. We are filled with awe and a question may go through our minds, “Why is there something instead of nothing?” The question is raised when we forget that God is The Creator God who calls all things into being and makes existence itself possible.

The Creator God is still at work as the process of creation continues, even in spite of human arrogance and folly. We are surrounded by wisdom and mystery.

There was a time when you did not exist. You have gone from being an embryo to being an adult. You are a work in process and the Spirit is still at work. God is at work in you. God is at work in the earth and in the cosmos.

When we celebrate Easter, we celebrate something that we do not understand. On that first Easter, people did not understand it either. Something had happened that they could not comprehend. Jesus was alive! The resurrection is the 8th day of Creation. God’s creative work continues in you and in the life and work of the church. We have been given gifts to be used for the common good and to the Glory of God and the fullness of Creation. Praise Be to God. Amen!

**Prayer:** Creator God, you love us beyond our understanding. Help us to look to you as our sure foundation. Amen.

**Larry A. Deyss, Pastor Emeritus**

**Delmar Presbyterian Church**

**Delmar, N.Y.**



Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC) invites individuals and congregations to participate in the growing earth care movement within the PC(USA) and beyond.

PEC is a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by connecting, equipping, and inspiring Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern in their lives and in their churches.

Presbyterians for Earth Care (then Presbyterians for Restoring Creation) was founded in 1995 as a national, grassroots organization to support people of faith working towards "environmental wholeness with social justice." PEC helps the church fulfill its current environmental policies, create new policies and practices, and energize and educate church members about eco-justice, the well-being of all humankind on a thriving earth.

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