

Lent Event 2016
Bible Studies

lentevent

Six Bible Studies
for the Lenten
Journey by
Rev Dr Tony Floyd

Prayers from
our multicultural
communities and
Rev Jon Humphries

**GUIDED BY THE LIGHT
GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT**



UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

lentevent



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connecting communities for life

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ABOUT UNITINGWORLD

UnitingWorld is a national agency of the Uniting Church in Australia. Our vision is to see transformed communities who honour God, experience hope and wellbeing and live free from poverty and injustice. We achieve this through genuine and vibrant partnerships between people and communities here in Australia, Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

We believe this is what it means to partner in God's mission.

Connecting Australian church communities with this mission is a big part of what we do. We achieve this by helping our church here in Australia - individuals, congregations, youth groups, schools - to be effective global partners who are passionate about God's mission in the world and their role in it. It's all about developing real connections on a global level.

For over a decade, Lent Event has invited Australian congregations to a deeper understanding of what poverty is and highlighted the imperative for the Church today to embrace those on the margins, to seek justice and to share resources.

Bible Studies, worship resources, activities for children and daily prayers provide a catalyst for people and communities across Australia to connect with the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world, to listen to their voices and learn from their experiences.

Lent Event is just one way you can engage with UnitingWorld and connect with the Uniting Church in Australia's overseas partners. Our prayer is that along the way you will be challenged and motivated to pray, act and connect on a deeper, more engaged level.

ABOUT THIS BIBLE STUDY

by Rev Dr Tony Floyd

Stories are central to human life. They locate us in place and among people. They speak of experiences, hopes, longings, imaginings and life's mysteries. Stories provide tools by which to enter the unimaginable, and to tell of the holy and almost unknowable. An old Jewish story about God and faith ends with the assertion: "God made (humanity) because God loves stories!"

The focus for these Bible studies come from those stories shared in common across world Christianity for the six Sundays through Lent. The focus passage for study is the Gospel for each Sunday. The background passage, usually from the Hebrew Scriptures, provides additional insight into the crossroads at which Jesus, the reader, and the community find themselves on their journey. They invite quiet reflection, thoughtful discussion, careful listening, and the sharing and receiving of one another's stories, experiences and struggles.

The process for these studies is simple, inclusive, respectful and proven. Leadership does not require formal training but simply willingness to enter into a setting of trust in one another and the wisdom of God to speak in that space.

Here is place and space where it is reasonable to expect new insights that come when we trust the ever-present Holy Spirit to guide and lead into truth (John 16.13-15). We might well heed the advice given to the pilgrims when they left Plymouth for the New World, early in the 17th century: *"God has yet more light and truth to break forth from God's Word"*.

Each of these six studies follows a similar pattern and include hearing the primary scripture story three times. After each reading, time for personal reflection and sharing of insights will follow. The pattern is based on materials from the Appendices in Rev Eric Law's book *"The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb"* (Chalice Press, St. Louis, Missouri 1993). Eric is an ordained Episcopal priest and International consultant

in multicultural leadership and he encourages the use of these models in ministry contexts. I use them frequently, and find them inclusive, energising, and liberating.

PREPARATION FOR THE LEADER/FACILITATOR

The leader for these studies comes to the role as a facilitator. Your goal is to get some input from biblical scholarship that will enrich the reflection by members of the group. It is not your role (or mine) to give the impression that he or she is an expert.

This study group is a fellowship of those who will share our insights, experiences, hopes and prayers as the Bible stories inspire us. The stories come to us from contexts and cultures very different from our own, and sometimes are addressed to specific communities. Therefore, we are invited to explore something of those contexts as well as our own time and place.

SOME GROUND RULES TO CONSIDER

As leader, it's a good idea to remind participants of these at the beginning of each study, inviting the group to give their assent to them each time.

The Bible story is the focus of this study, not the group or the leader.

We are here to read the Scripture stories together and share insights – not to debate a right or wrong interpretation.

Through our sharing in the company of the Holy Spirit, the inspiration from Scripture can be shared and celebrated. While the leader may bring some additional historical, literary or other background materials, these are to assist the group better understand the text.

Everyone is equal before the Scripture stories. All are invited to listen as if hearing the stories for the very first time.

Because we trust the living Word, Jesus, to speak to us through our shared insights into the written word, it is essential for everyone to have opportunity to join in.

Any personal stories shared in the discussions should be held in confidence – What happens in the group, stays in the group! This means participants can feel confident to share what is in their hearts and minds.

WHAT IS MUTUAL INVITATION?

Some people find it very difficult to participate in group discussions. For some this is cultural, a person does not speak unless invited to do so. Others need time to think through what they want to say, or only discover what they want to contribute after hearing the insights and thoughts of others.

‘Mutual Invitation’ is a simple process that ensures everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak at a time when they are ready. This process also means that no one person can dominate a conversation because everyone only speaks when they are invited!

The process goes like this:

- The leader/facilitator shares first.
- After this person has spoken, he or she then invites another person to share. This does not need to be the person next to you.
- If the invited person does not want to share, they simply say “Pass”, or if they are not ready yet, but might want to share later, then they simply say “Pass for now!”

- Whether they share, pass or pass for now, that person (not the leader/facilitator) invites the next person to share. This affirms the importance, place and equality of everyone in the group. This happens until everyone has been invited – including those who “Passed for now”.

If someone speaks and forgets to invite someone else – simply remind them. The process may seem awkward at first and there is always the pressure to go back to the first-in-first-speak, way. It is the process that is encouraged to be used throughout these Bible Studies.

*Source: Adapted from
Rev Eric H. F. Law – various
publications and workshops*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

FOR EIGHT YEARS
REV DR TONY FLOYD SERVED
AS THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR
FOR MULTICULTURAL AND
CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY
IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN
AUSTRALIA BEFORE RETIRING
IN APRIL 2015.



**Tony and his wife Shirley collecting thanks,
prayers and best wishes at his Closing
Ministry, April 2015.**

A passionate advocate of cross cultural ministry, Rev Dr Floyd has a deep appreciation of the gifts and leadership brought to the UCA through our vibrant, multicultural diaspora communities. In his Closure of Ministry service Rev Dr Floyd recalled:

“One of the things that overwhelms me is the profound trust that has been placed in me, and therefore the Church, by people and communities - especially as a person who cannot speak their language, who has not grown up in their culture. I’ve always been included as if there were other things that made us belong together.”

STUDY I

GOD'S ABUNDANCE – OURS ONLY TO SHARE!

READINGS FOR SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14TH 2016

BACKGROUND STORY: DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11

FOCUS STORY: LUKE 4:1-13

GATHERING TIME, SHARED
INTRODUCTIONS AND
CATCHING UP

BRIEF PRAYER

God you take infinite risks with
people just like us.

Let your Spirit overflow
in our lives and hearts
as in faith and hope we journey
together through this season of
Lent.

In the wise mystery of the Holy
Spirit, through the loving kindness
of the Creator God,

Nurture us on this journey in the
way of Jesus. Amen.

INTRODUCING OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

This chapter in Deuteronomy has
long been a favourite of mine
because it mixes up times and
personal pronouns. It was our
ancestor who went down into
Egypt, where it was we/our/us who
were treated harshly, cried to God,
were heard, and given this land
generations later (Deuteronomy
26:4b-9).

What we have and who we are
now are connected seamlessly
through history to God and God's
unexpected, undeserved, amazing
acts of creativity and grace. For
me, there is a profound sense that
this story and its strong affirmation
is humanity's version of Jesus'
genealogy in Luke's Gospel. Here
all peoples' can connect the
beginning of creation when the Holy
Spirit brooded over chaotic waters

bringing order, life, wonder, and God's blessing: *'God saw everything that (he) had made, and indeed, it was very good.'* (Genesis 1:31).

One of the characteristics that has come to dominate much Christian thinking about Lent is giving up something for the season – chocolate, coffee, and so on. However, the stories of this season are actually about deepening our discipleship through denying ourselves. Perhaps these stories profoundly challenge that self-centred, individualism of western Christianity: that Lent is not about 'giving up', but of being 'led by the Holy Spirit'.

In Deuteronomy the journey through Joseph and his family (father Jacob), is into Egypt, a foreign place of safety in time of desperate famine and drought, a place of freedom and privilege. Yet this same Egypt became a place of slavery, pain and lost freedom and identity. Cries of pain and bewilderment are heard by God, who calls Moses in a desert place to lead a mob of slaves and descendants of Jacob out of Egypt through all kinds of challenges, difficulties and wildernesses to this new place, this fruitful land. Here the people can recognise and celebrate the long journey of God's guidance.

LISTENING TO OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE DEUTERONOMY 26.1-11

Read the story aloud, slowly.

What is the focus of this passage of Scripture?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your responses with each other.

INTRODUCING OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Luke and Acts are written to fill out instruction already given to Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4 & Acts 1:1-2). Luke was a Gentile (non-Jew) Christian with a profound interest in Jesus' relationships with non-Jews and outsiders. It was probably written in the years after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Following stories surrounding the birth of Jesus and John, his cousin, John's story is brief. Part one ends with baptisms, including that of Jesus. In prayer afterwards, an action often equated with receptivity to God, Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:1-22). All this locates Jesus in time and place.

Then follows a family tree for Jesus all the way back to Adam, 'son of God' (Luke 3:23-38), locating Jesus among God's created peoples.

Immediately after Jesus' baptism and family tree, and 'full of the Holy Spirit', the same Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted: for 40 days. 40 connects backwards to the years the escaped mob of slaves spent in the wilderness being reshaped into God's people, and forwards to the season of preparation we call Lent.

Perhaps Jesus' journey here is a mirror of that same journey in the Background Scripture? Is Jesus reliving his peoples' history, being victorious where they failed?

Jesus goes from here into his own community and then others with a set of priorities that challenge all his religious, social and political contexts, much like the 'Hear, O Israel' of our background text challenges generations of God's people

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE FIRST READING OF LUKE 4.1-13

Read the story aloud, slowly.

As the story is read, listen for a *word, phrase or image* that speaks to you.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your word, phrase or image with others in your group, but refrain from discussion at this time.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE SECOND READING OF LUKE 4.1-13

Invite another member of your group to read the story for a second time, slowly.

What does the story say to you about the work of the Holy Spirit?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your responses with each other.

DISCUSSION

How is God's 'abundance' as reflected in the bountiful harvest in the Deuteronomy reading and through God's sustaining of Jesus in the desert a gift to be shared?

How do you believe God's abundance is best expressed?

How does this shape our personal and community attitudes to sharing abundance in Australia – including homeless people, people who are victims of domestic violence, children, people seeking refuge and safety?

In your experience, how has the Church's use of its own resources served people or communities who have very little?

CONNECTING WITH OVERSEAS CHURCH PARTNERS: SHARING GOD'S ABUNDANCE?

UnitingWorld is the international partnerships agency of the Uniting Church in Australia. Out of the conviction that we belong to a global church, partnerships are born that change not only people around the world, but people who worship in Uniting Church congregations here in Australia. As we stand beside our partners building their local community, we're each transformed by the experience.

UnitingWorld helps provide resources in communities where fresh water is scarce and children need extra help to get to school. We support the work of creative enterprises to generate income when drought destroys crops. We help train leaders to nurture the fast growing Christian church.

And we've known our partners for many, many years. When we share in God's abundance, we share with friends. Christian leaders have visited churches here in Australia to learn, to teach and to fellowship. Members of Australian congregations have visited our partners to share skills, to learn and to spend time among fellow

Christians living in a different culture. Our sense is that together, no matter what our relative wealth and resources, we have gifts to share with one another.

Patricia and David Mileham are serving with UnitingWorld in Kupang, West Timor. As long-standing volunteers, they've been a part of the community in West Timor since 2012. Their main roles are working alongside the leaders of TLM (which is a microfinance community development organisation of the Evangelical Christian Church in Timor) acting as mentors, assisting with project management, strategic planning and staff development.

They are well aware of the many strengths of the people with whom they work and have developed lasting relationships with the whole community. In long letters home they speak of the perseverance of their friends and colleagues, their patience, humour, faith and love. For the Milehams, sharing God's abundance is truly a two-way street.

"I am enriched by this experience in so many ways" Patricia says. "Faith, friendships, understanding of community and just loving people. Working with, sharing and listening to partners is, for me, the best way we can make a difference."



Patricia and David Mileham serving with UnitingWorld in Kupang, West Timor

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: GOD'S ABUNDANCE – OURS TO SHARE.

When you think about sharing God's abundance with people who live in poverty, how often do you think about this being a mutual sharing, recognising the strengths of the people with whom we share?

Why do you think we sometimes see people 'in need' in only one way? What might be some of the strengths of people who face daily challenges of poverty or homelessness?

What is one practical step you could take through Lent to better understand the strengths of people in need? Can you see an opportunity to 'share your abundance' with someone while also appreciating what they have to share with you?

CLOSING PRAYERS

Invite each member of your group to complete this prayer sentence:

I thank God today

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I ask God today

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STUDY 2

UNSEEN PROMISES OR PRESENT REALITIES?

READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 21ST 2016

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 15:1-12, 17-18 PROMISE AND UNCERTAINTY (COVENANT WITH ABRAM)

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 13:31-35

GATHERING TIME AND
CATCHING UP

BRIEF PRAYER

Jesus, you invited your disciples to journey with you on the way of the cross.

Since then, people without number have journeyed your way.

In all that we think and do as your disciples, save us from assuming familiarity with your journey.

May we never presume to step into your shoes, but make us fit for our own, and able to walk in obedient love and wonder with you. In your Spirit may this time of listening together guide us further on that way. Amen.

INTRODUCING OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

In ancient Middle Eastern countries, the idea of Covenant/Promise/commitment was widespread. As we might enter into an agreement by a hand shake, sharing time and intentions together, or signing some kind of document, in ancient times an expression used for entering into a covenant was to 'cut a covenant'. This story is an illustration of such an act (verses 10-11).

This book of ancient stories was gathered into its present form during the Exile of many Israelites in Babylon (modern Iraq) in the 6th century BCE. Here questions of a 'peoples' origins, of how it could possibly be that an old man and his old wife could be the ancestors of a whole collection of peoples and tribes find answers shaped by ancient stories from oral traditions.

Here the unimaginable wonder and yet complex unfairness of God's choice of one among many, one people among many are focussed. In exile in a foreign land among their conquerors, the stories are gathered together into a complex interweaving of the journeys of family, tribes and nation over many centuries.

This particular story highlights a mystery often experienced in life and communities – the relationship between unseen promises/hopes and present realities. It grounds the God who is beyond understanding into realities of life and history: from personal to communal to global. A childless old man and his wife are promised descendants – like the numbers of stars or grains of sand. Promise and hope stand in stark contrast to the present reality. This unlikely story of promise and present reality speaks again into this place of exile, where the present is determined by others, and there seems no future possible. Yet the long-ago promises remain in place!

The covenant/agreement is sealed with symbols that reappear years later in the desert place of wandering. When the escapees from Egypt are being reshaped in

the wilderness they are guided by columns of smoke and fire as signs of God's presence on their journey (Exodus 13:21-22).

LISTENING TO OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE GENESIS 15:1-12, 17-18

Read the story aloud, slowly.

Does this story touch your life story? How? Where?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your response with others in your group.

INTRODUCING OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE

In the section 12:54 to 14:35 Luke has Jesus the Prophet continuing on his journey to Jerusalem. First there are a series of warnings to the crowd (12:54-13:30), and then the story returns to the theme of hospitality – in our section it is inhospitality that is highlighted (For detailed insights in the Gospel of Luke, Fr Brenden Byrne's book *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* [St Paul's Publications, Strathfield NSW, 2000] is an excellent resource).

Remember, all of the events of this Gospel happened about 50 years prior to the time Luke sends his Good News. They are reflective as much as narrative, remembering with hindsight and decades of thoughtful consideration within Luke's Christian community. They also draw on widely distributed sources included in both Mark and Matthew.

For the journey on which Jesus has now entered, not even death can deter him. Such is his trust in God and in Jesus' deep love for humanity. This reminds and greatly encourages us in our own faith journeys because Jesus is the example of our faith and not just the object of our faith as God's Son. In my younger days as a disciple of Jesus, all that I remember being preached was the language of sacrifice and pre-determination, where God's 'will', 'plan', 'purpose', and even 'anger' needed to be appeased as Jesus moved closer and closer to all that awaited him in Jerusalem. Jesus' free will and ours to follow him are deeply embedded in this reading.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE FIRST READING OF LUKE 13.31-35

Read the story aloud, slowly.

As the story is read, listen for a *word, phrase or image* that speaks to you.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your word, phrase or image with others in your group – but don't discuss it at this time.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE SECOND READING OF LUKE 13.31-353

Ask another member of your group and read the story for a second time, slowly.

What does the story say to you about the work of the Spirit of God?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your responses with others in your group.

DISCUSSION

What stories can you share that bring or have brought hope or promise when present realities seem to deny that possibility?

Can you share any insights about what keeps such hopes and promises alive?

How is that different from 'wishful thinking'?

CONNECTING WITH OUR OVERSEAS CHURCH PARTNERS: REALITIES AND PROMISES.

The Methodist Church Sri Lanka, with whom the Uniting Church shares a partnership, has a deep faith in the promise of God's transforming work in the world. But the promise of transformation stands in the face of present realities that are almost overwhelming.

Sri Lanka has suffered through one of the world's longest lasting and most bloody conflicts of recent times, with many civilians killed and driven from their homes. One of the lasting impacts of the war is disability, often caused by landmines and war wounds. We've begun a partnership with the Church to support people,

particularly children and young people with disabilities by giving them access to schooling and vocational training so they gain the skills to earn a living. We're also supporting the Church's groundbreaking work with different faith and ethnic groups bringing lasting peace in this beautiful and fragile country.

One minister in our partner church spent twelve months knocking on the doors of schools in his region attempting to persuade them to include children with disabilities, including hearing loss, in their classes. Time and again he was told that the schools, many destroyed by war, were struggling to re-open and barely had the resources for their own students. He persevered, and today the Uniting Church in Australia through UnitingWorld supports children with disabilities to attend school in the Kilinochi region. Our faithful minister continues to believe the future for these children can be bright, in spite of the fact that people with disabilities make up a massive 20% of the world's poorest people.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: UNSEEN PROMISES OR PRESENT REALITIES?

What promises or convictions do you think guides the work of the Methodist Church Sri Lanka as they create opportunities for children and young people with disabilities? Are these the same promises and convictions that guide your own life?

If our journeys are guided by the same convictions as the wider Church in the world, how are we called to help each other along the way? (consider the personal, communal and global).

What opportunities does Lent provide for creating connected, hospitable and hopeful communities across the world? Can you think of practical ways to ensure our journeys are walked in parallel and not in isolation?

CLOSING PRAYERS

Invite each member of your group to complete this prayer sentence:

I thank God today

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I ask God today

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STUDY 3

LOOKING BACK – LIVING FORWARD

READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 28TH 2016

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: PSALM 63:1-8 COMFORT
& ASSURANCE IN GOD'S PRESENCE

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 13:1-9

GATHERING TIME AND
CATCHING UP

BRIEF PRAYER

In our journey together today:
God direct us!

In our listening and speaking:
God bless us!

In any anxieties or concerns:
God sustain us!

In facing new things and insights
with anticipation: God strengthen
us! Amen.

INTRODUCING OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

The actual authors of the Psalms are unknown. However, many are attributed to King David the singer and musician. As such they reflect the extraordinary highs and almost unfathomable lows of the life of this very human king. Those so human characteristics, illustrate the crushing and raising up of the one whom the people had put in the place of God: a king like the nations'. Because of this they speak powerfully to ordinary human lives. They have been a source of hope and encouragement for generations, and continue to be so today.

David is in a place familiar to all readers of Scriptures stories, and to the geography of the land Australia – desert wilderness. A place seemingly totally hostile to those unfamiliar with it. A place

often described as being ‘godless’ because it was so alien or different to anything they had previously experienced.

Yet in that place David remembers and rediscovers God’s gracious presence and power. In this place his memories and dreams reconnect him with the God who is “Also in this place” (Jacob’s discovery at Bethel – Genesis 29:16).

Being surprised to discover God present in such an alien and unfamiliar environment, as if somehow we have to take God to such places, is quite unfamiliar to many of Australia’s first peoples. Countless stories of the diverse communities of First Peoples of this land speak out of their own experience of the sacred in traditional Custom and Law. The new Preamble to the Constitution of the UCA recognises this sacred Creative presence in these words:

The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and

gave them particular insights into God’s ways.).

LISTENING TO OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE PSALM 63:1-8

Read the background psalm aloud, slowly.

What are the stories or memories to which you turn when your life is overwhelmed or turned upside down?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your response with others in your group.

INTRODUCING OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE

We noted in the last study (12:54 - 14:35) that Luke has Jesus the Prophet continuing on his journey to Jerusalem.

First in this section there are a series of warnings to the crowd (12:54-13:30), which begin with a question: If people are so good at reading or interpreting the weather patterns, why are they so bad at reading or interpreting the work of God’s spirit in the present time?

Two disasters, neither of which is noted anywhere else in contemporary historical sources, are mentioned. Jesus challenges religious instinct then and now, which is prone to blame the victims: 'They must have done something wrong or awful to have that happen to them!' Yet the events are what they are, unforeseeable reminders of life's frailty and unpredictability.

The parable of the fig tree invites consideration that opportunity for change in order to become a fruitful disciple exists; but it is not unlimited.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE FIRST READING OF LUKE 13:1-9

Read the story aloud, slowly.

As the story is read, listen for a *word, phrase or image* that speaks to you.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your word, phrase or image with others in your group – but don't discuss it at this time.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE SECOND READING OF LUKE 13:1-9

Invite another member of your group to read the story for a second time, slowly.

Imagine yourself as one of the characters in this story and consider the question: How do you feel as this character as the story is read?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your reflection with your group.

DISCUSSION

Looking back – living forward is concerned with building forward, or even re-orientating your journey.

Take two or three minutes to consider: What are the memories, dreams or stories to which you turn when experiencing difficult phases of your life? What are your sources of hope and encouragement?

CONNECTING WITH OUR OVERSEAS CHURCH PARTNERS: LOOKING BACK – LIVING FORWARD.

The Church in the Pacific is an influential body – widespread and well respected. More than 90% of Pacific Islanders claim Christianity as their faith. Christianity is deeply bound up with culture, family and tradition and as a result, Christian leaders have a major impact on the future not only of society, but politics as well. For many Christians in Australia, where the Scriptures are not seen as influential in society, this is a surprising truth.

But in order to move forward, Christians in the Pacific need to look back to the Scriptures. But back with fresh eyes, eyes that allow them to discern the truth. Some biblical teachings, especially in regards to gender and approaches to the environment, have fed into longstanding cultural practices and led to problems that make it difficult to move forward. This can have major consequences for the future of women and children, as well as the development of environmental policy.



STUDY 4

MY PLACE – HOME PLACE

READINGS FOR MARCH 6TH 2016

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: JOSHUA 5:9-12

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

GATHERING TIME AND
CATCHING UP

BRIEF PRAYER

*(Based on a prayer of St Fulgentius
of Ruspe 467 to 533 CE)*

God of all Truth, teach us what is
true.

When we know Truth, may we keep
it holy.

May our conversation together
and our sharing of truths
lead us to discover your Truths
which lead to life. Amen.

INTRODUCING OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament books from Exodus to Joshua contain some confronting images and stories. Moses dies in sight of, but outside the promised land. God then calls Joshua to lead the people into that land. Even in the context of ancient nations and their practices of war, that invitation and the ensuing actions, are very difficult to deal with. Conquest and wholesale slaughter, the total destruction of towns and villages as marks of success and the fulfilment of God's promise to neither forsake or fail the people, is very different to how we may see God at work in the world.

Joshua sends spies to check out the land and its resources, then leads the peoples to the Jordan river. Carrying the Ark, a sign of the presence of God among the people, the priests walk to the edge of the river. When their feet

touch the water, it parts – like the Reed Sea. At God’s bidding, 12 stones representing the 12 tribes, are carried into the middle of the river and piled up there so they will be seen above the restored water. These ‘12 stones’ are a physical reminder or a trigger so the remarkable story of God’s actions in delivering people from slavery can be told and retold to every generation of believers.

Now they are a new people, in a new land. Circumcision is carried out as one mark of their communal identity, and the Passover is celebrated for the first time as symbol and ceremonial marking of this new identity as God’s chosen and delivered people.

With a home, the manna of the wilderness journey ends, and the crops of their new homeland now provide their food.

LISTENING TO OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE JOSHUA 5:9-12

Read the background story aloud, slowly.

Note: For additional reading, Rev Dr Chris Budden has written an interesting book entitled “*Living in Invaded space*” about living in

modern Australia in the lands of its first peoples.

As ‘second peoples’, what does it mean that ‘my place’, my ‘home’ is built on someone else’s place and home?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your response with others in your group.

INTRODUCING OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Parables are stories. Stories about life, stories easily recognised in their contexts but which invite imagination and surprise with unexpected meanings especially as they help in our understanding of how and in whom God is at work. These middle chapters of Luke contain stories that are very well-known and much loved.

Key among the themes in Luke is that of ‘salvation’. It comes most copiously and effectively to those who feel their need of it (or their total unsuitability). Most strongly, it comes to those on the margins who have no other resource except God – a hungry, homeless, squandering and thankless son living with the pigs, for example.

For those not marginalised, a shattering of treasured assumptions about how God acts or will act, is inevitable. A reliable, older brother with his own set of assumptions, for example, where there is a chasm between what was previously hoped for or anticipated and the reality that has occurred.

The experience of salvation is often accompanied by joy, wonder, praise and celebration – in personal lives and in communities. The longing, hope-filled, anticipation and love of the father, for example.

As with many ‘meal time’ or ‘party’ stories in the gospels, in this celebration, readers are reminded of the hospitality of God - here and now through the banquet of life, the Eucharist.

All of these characteristics are present in this parable, which some consider should more aptly be named the Parable of the Loving Father.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE FIRST READING OF LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

Read the story aloud, slowly.

As the story is read, listen for a *word, phrase or image* that speaks to you.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share that word, phrase, or image with your group but refrain from further discussion at this time.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE SECOND READING OF LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

Invite another member of your group to read the story for a second time, slowly.

Imagine yourself as one of the characters in this story and consider the question: How do you feel as this character (or a relative of a character) as the story is read?

Take a few moments for silent reflection

Share your responses.

DISCUSSION

The notes above speak of some of the reactions to salvation, release and new life in the Gospel of Luke.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

What are your responses from your personal faith journey to this story of salvation, and how do you feel about sharing those stories with others?

Spend some time with each of the characters in this parable/story in turn:

How are you like them? Why?

How are you different from them? Why?

CONNECTING WITH OVERSEAS CHURCH PARTNERS: HOME AND SALVATION.

“She was so helpful to me I will call my baby by her name: Deborah.”

In a refugee camp in Kenya, near the border of South Sudan, a young mother survives an emergency operation to give birth to her daughter. Under difficult conditions, both lives are saved. In the chaos, she is comforted in her own language by a student midwife - herself now a refugee - from a training program supported by the Uniting Church in Australia. Both understand what it means to find



salvation. Both understand what it means to try to make a life in a country not their own. But neither are invaders: rather, they are the displaced. And their salvation is still being played out – they've escaped the immediate threat of death, but they live in limbo, unsure when it will be safe to return to their homeland.

UnitingWorld is supporting the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan to train midwives in the world's newest nation, torn apart by sectarian violence and still hoping for peace. In this context, the Midwife Training School has re-located to Lokochoggio in Kenya, close to Kakuma Refugee Camp where the midwives are now completing their practical placements in the Kakuma International Rescue Committee hospital. Kakuma is home to 640,000 refugees from neighbouring Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Many of the midwives have a strong personal faith that drives their commitment to practically serve their sisters. They aren't evangelists but their faith is part of their desire to train, even if it means being separated from their own families.

How do you imagine it might feel to bring a message of spiritual salvation in a place where physical salvation is never assured?

Does one have priority over the other? How much physical security do you think people need before they can begin to really consider questions of spiritual significance?

What sort of things do you feel deeply committed to? Is that a reflection of your personal faith or some other conviction? Have you found any new way to express that commitment this Lent?

A PRAYERFUL RESPONSE

Like the water – falling:
let your grace fall on us.
Like the wind – blowing:
let your Spirit breath over us.
Like the dawn – breaking:
let your love break into our dark places.
Like the sun – setting:
let our minds enter into their rest.

CLOSING PRAYERS

Invite the group to complete this prayer sentence:

I thank God today

I ask God today

STUDY 5

OLD THINGS – NEW THINGS

READINGS FOR MARCH 13TH 2016

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 43:16-21 A NEW
THING SPRINGS FORTH – ANOTHER WAY

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOHN 12:1-8

GATHERING TIME AND
CATCHING UP

BRIEF PRAYER

God, you loved us before the
mountains were strong.

From long ago you anointed us
and saw our place in your creative
purposes.

We are your works of old, before
the fountain of water had spouted
strongly.

In Jesus you offer living water,
he speaks to us afresh on the
mountain top:
in him is new and full life.
May our sharing in this time be
blessed,
and the insights and questions we
share piece together new images of
your place and purpose. Amen.

INTRODUCING OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

The tiny nation of Judah straddled
the highway between Egypt and
the other great powers Assyria and
Babylon. After a few decades of
trying to pick winners or potential
winners and siding with them,
Judah under King Zedekiah
revolted. The penalty was harsh.
In 587-586 BCE the nation was
conquered and significant numbers
of inhabitants taken into exile in
Babylon.

It is difficult to number those
actually taken into exile, but some
points are clear from evidence:
Jerusalem was in ruins, the Temple
destroyed with no prospects of
rebuilding; upper and influential
classes were deported along with
significant numbers of craftsmen
and the cities of Judah were largely
destroyed. This was the period of
the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah,

and both stories are worthy of time and reflection.

Up until the 18th century, European scholars generally accepted that Isaiah was the work of one author in the last decades of the 8th century BCE. After 250 years of further study and research, scholars generally agree that the book as we know it is in 3 parts:

1st Isaiah: 1-39 - the 8th century BCE, attributed to a prophet whose name the book now carries.

2nd Isaiah: 40-55 - the period of the exile about 540 BCE.

3rd Isaiah: 56-66 sometime after the return from exile, probably about 520 BCE though some put it as late as the 2nd century BCE.

Our background scripture proclaims salvation similar to 41:17-20 and 42:14-17. The first verses are clear references to the Exodus, the ancient history of Israel. The prophet is telling the exiles to look back with hope and expectancy, not sorrow and despair. The One who delivered them from Egypt never stops working and will work something anew. The people went through a desert before and they will now go through one again. The 'new' is unexpected and its shape unforeseeable. However, it does

not replace the old - that is the foundation for confidence in the newness that will come. Memory of God's faithfulness in the past builds hope for the future to give life in the present.

LISTENING TO OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE ISAIAH 43:16-21

Read the background story aloud, slowly.

What place does memory of the 'old' have in giving hope for the 'new'?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your responses with other members of your group.

INTRODUCING OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE

The Gospel of John is written approximately 60 years after the life of Jesus. A lot happened in that time. The small Jerusalem community has become many scattered communities across the Roman Empire. There has been a lot of thinking about and reflection on the events, encounters, sayings and actions of Jesus and those around him – from both friends and foes.

What did they mean? How did the actions and responses of others play out? What could have brought about such a savage response as crucifixion on one whose ministry and message was about life, healing and wholeness?

This Gospel is quite different in language, form and structure to the other three. Its author brings to the task scholarly insights, images, and complex language and thoughts of the Greek philosophers. Central questions in this Gospel are more about Jesus' divinity than his humanity. Yet alongside the strong focus on the divinity of Jesus, every now and then the writer reminds us of Jesus' humanity: he is thirsty (4:7), sad (11:35), angry (2:13-16).

Jesus' travels are bringing him

closer to Jerusalem. He was threatened with stoning because he 'made himself God' (10:33), and went away to a safe place for a while. The illness and then death of his friend Lazarus leads to Jesus' return. Discussions about life and death, who is life and what that might mean, follow along with the raising of Lazarus.

Authorities immediately identify the power shown here as a threat to social order and their own authority. The plan to kill Jesus begins here for this Gospel.

The story of Mary and the ointment is both beautiful in its act and cost, and disturbing in the enigmatic comment about the poor. It would seem that the complex story of Mary's extravagant devotion and its financial cost must simply be held in tension.

**LISTENING TO OUR
FOCUS SCRIPTURE
FIRST READING OF
JOHN 12:1-8**

Read the story aloud, slowly.

Listen for a *word, phrase or image* that speaks to you.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your word, phrase, or image – but refrain from discussion it further at this time...

**LISTENING TO OUR
FOCUS SCRIPTURE
SECOND READING OF
JOHN 12:1-8**

Invite another member of your group to read the story for a second time, slowly.

Mary used a bottle of perfume as a sign of her commitment. What might be your 'gift of costly ointment', your commitment as a disciple of Jesus journeying on his way? Where might that be put to use in loving service?

DISCUSSION

Looking back on to what is bound and buried can sink us in despair: the spirit dies! Here Jesus commands Lazarus to 'come out!', and in the thinking of the writer of this Gospel, Lazarus no longer belongs in the place of binding and death, but is given a gift of life.

What are we called to 'come out' from, to leave behind, to be set free from?

Who can help us be freed from the bandages that bind us in whatever 'death' we experience?

CONNECTING WITH OUR OVERSEAS CHURCH PARTNERS: LIFE FROM DEATH.

“Even my own brothers died of AIDS. In my country of Botswana, we made mistakes when the epidemic came. From that experience, from those deaths, we take what we learned and correct them here in West Papua. When I was asked to come here and practise in the Clinic I thought okay yes, now is my chance.”

Agnella is the co-ordinator of the Walihole TB and HIV Clinic in West Papua. The Church here lacks resources, particularly in remote

areas, to get medical resources to populations who experience disease at very high rates. Agnella is using her experience from her homeland to bring the best in knowledge and practise to this tiny outpost. She’s bringing new life from death. The clinic has a newly built TB clinic with high ceilings, open spaces and windows through which patients and visitors can communicate without fear of spreading disease. The Clinic is desperate to open a new ward and is seeking funding from the UCA.

For Agnella, the post is a personal one. She is determined not to see West Papua repeat the mistakes that took the lives of so many



friends and family. She helps care for a child abandoned by her family when the diagnosis of HIV was received. "A diagnosis of HIV is not the end." Agnella declares. "There is so much more to live for."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What do you think creates or makes possible, people like Agnella – people who are able to take death experiences and turn them into life-giving opportunities rather than simply giving up?

Do you think people who've experienced trauma or challenging situations have particular qualities that we can learn from as we attempt to face the challenges of our own lives?

CLOSING PRAYERS

Invite the group to complete this prayer sentence:

I thank God today

I ask God today

NOTES

STUDY 6

PALM SUNDAY OLD ROAD – NEW UNDERSTANDING

READINGS FOR MARCH 20TH 2016
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 50:4-9A
HUMILIATION - VINDICATION
FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOHN 12:12-16

GATHERING TIME AND
CATCHING UP

BRIEF PRAYER

Rainbow God, your gifts to humanity are differences of colour, language, culture and story. Give us right words, trust and patience in this time. Immerse us in wisdom so that your image might be rightly painted and in the stories and insights we share we might properly recognise you in each other – and be thankful for your gifts. Amen.

INTRODUCING OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

It is useful to read again the notes on Isaiah in Study 5.

This story also comes from 2nd Isaiah: chapters 40-55. Within that collection are writings that have become known as the Servant Songs 42:1-4; 49:1-6, 7; 50:4-9; and 52:13 to 53:12. Just who this 'servant' might be continues to be the subject of widely diverse views among scholars. Some believe Isaiah was the prophet, others that it was another individual entirely, (and now with the eyes of hindsight), many believe Jesus in his suffering and death fulfils the role. There are also 14 instances in Isaiah where the people of Israel are identified as the servant when they truly live out God's calling on their communal life.

Whoever the prophet may be, the mover behind this song is God. God gives a disciples' tongue (4a), opens the ear (5a), and helps (7a and 9a). Called to this office of the word, the prophet is confident of God's presence. Through opposition, that presence and confidence have produced faithfulness in words and tasks.

The prophet is a disciple and a witness: a disciple of God and of God's Word, and witness to personal faith. In this 'song' the witness is that there can be no discouragement when God calls and when God helps.

LISTENING TO OUR BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE ISAIAH 50:4-9A

Read the background story aloud, slowly.

When you remember your own life journey, what verbs and actions would you use to describe God's presence in your journey? How have you experienced them?

Take a few moments for silent reflection.

Share your responses with your group.

INTRODUCING OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Locating the Scripture – context, background and style of the text

In this Gospel, there is no background story about the disciples finding a donkey, Jesus finds his own! Nor is there a story about a landlord and an upper room. That takes place later in this Gospel. Some of the crowd had clearly heard about the episode with Lazarus, and they came to see Jesus and Lazarus. This movement is understood by the authorities as 'desertion', 'everyone is following Jesus' and so they decide to kill both Jesus and Lazarus (12:9-11).

Remember this Gospel is steeped in over 70 years of growth of 'followers of the Way' – the name first given to Jesus' followers. There had been many years of reflecting on events and thinking deeply about the rejection of Jesus by the religious authorities.

Verse 16 of our reading provides a clue about this process and how memory and history, scripture and events come together in the minds and hearts of followers: "*The disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written*

of him (scripture) and had been done to him. In this story rejection and death are placed side by side with resurrection and new life. This reality experienced by the early church continued to help it reveal more and more of all that Jesus' coming came to represent.

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE FIRST READING OF JOHN 12:12-16

Read the story aloud, slowly.

Listen for a *word, phrase or image* that speaks to you.

Take a few moments to reflect in silence.

Share your word, phrase, or image – but refrain from discussion it further at this time...

LISTENING TO OUR FOCUS SCRIPTURE SECOND READING OF JOHN 12:12-16

Invite another member of your group to read the story for a second time, slowly.

Reflect on an experience you might have had when something very different from what you expected, caused you to rethink or revalue your hopes. How did that change your faith or life?

Take a few moments to reflect in silence

Share your responses with your group.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How has God invited you to change and act through these studies?

CONNECTING WITH OUR OVERSEAS CHURCH PARTNERS: NEW UNDERSTANDINGS.

We have often thought of our global brothers and sisters as being people ‘in need’ in practical ways – lacking resources like clean water, access to education and emergency assistance after natural disaster. Yet we know this isn’t the complete story. They often live in some of the most spiritually dynamic places in the world and have insights into God’s mission to share with us, as well as incredible hospitality to offer as we serve together.

What insights have you gained about our overseas church partners through this study? What strengths do you believe our partners have that you could tap into, and how might you go about doing that?

Have you any new insights into your own attitude toward giving and serving? How might you apply these insights beyond Lent?



GOD'S WAY

I asked the Lord for a bunch of fresh flowers
but instead (He) gave me an ugly cactus with many thorns.
I asked the Lord for some beautiful butterflies
but instead (He) gave me many ugly and dreadful worms.
I was threatened,
I was disappointed,
I mourned.
But after many days,
Suddenly,
 saw the cactus bloom with many beautiful flowers
And those worms became beautiful butterflies flying in the Spring wind.
God's way is the best way.

(This was written by Rev C M Kao, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church, Taiwan, when in prison).

CLOSING PRAYERS

Invite the group to complete this prayer sentence:

I thank God today

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.....

I ask God today

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Thank you for journeying together during Lent. I encourage you to continue your journey of inquiry, discipleship and discovery with Jesus.

*God Bless You,
Rev Dr Tony Floyd*

PRAYERS FOR LENT EVENT 2016

The National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, meeting in Adelaide 2012, adopted a set of characteristics to reflect our genuinely multicultural church. These built on a journey that was first declared in 1985. Part of those characteristics included living our faith and life cross culturally – both in worship and response to the creator God, celebrating, confessing and acting out our faith in one sovereign God who through Jesus Christ binds faithful people of all races, ethnicities, cultures and languages.

The characteristics include receiving cultural and linguistic diversity as a gift of God, rejoicing in the variety of God's grace, and living out our life and witness cross-culturally as a sign and promise of hope within multicultural, multiracial and multifaith Australia in the 21st century.

This collection of prayers honours and celebrates those characteristics! They follow the overall theme for Lent Event 2016 and the focus Scriptures for each week.

The people who gave the gift of these prayers come from some of the cultural and linguistic communities who now characterise this Church for all God's people. They were written in the first languages of the contributors who also provided the English translations.

For many of you, these prayers will not be in your first language, or reflect your local community.

You are invited to do as these contributors have done joining with Jesus on his journey to the cross.

- Write some simple prayers in your first language
- Show others what they look like in the characters of your own language
- Invite others to listen, to pray with their hearts, individually and together
- Add them to your local congregation news sheet
- Use them in the Sunday worship

***Blessings,
Rev Dr Tony Floyd***

THANKS TO THE AUTHORS OF THE DAILY PRAYERS FOR LENT

Indonesian/English -

Rev Dr Apwee Ting, National Director, Multi/Cross-cultural Ministry (MCM),
UCA Assembly

Fijian/English –

Rev Eseta Meneilly, Past Chair and current member of the National Reference
Committee for MCM

Spanish/English -

Rev Estevan Liévano, UCA Minister of the Word in Hallett Cove, South
Australia

Tongan/English –

Rev Charissa Suli, UCA Minister of the Word in Dapto, NSW, and Team leader
Second Generation Network of the Tongan National Conference

Arabic/English –

Rev Gaby Kobrossi, UCA Minister of the Word, Bankstown, NSW

Samoan/English –

Rev Temukisa Amituana'i-Vaeluaga, UCA Minister in Traralgon, Victoria, and
Rev Sani Vaeluaga, Presbytery Minister, Gippsland Presbytery, Victoria

Prayers for each Sunday of Lent

Written by Rev Jon Humphries, Chaplain, Ravenswood School for Girls, NSW

DAY 1

**February 10th 2016
Ash Wednesday**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Old heart – new heart
Tuhan sumber segala kebaikan
Kebaikan Mu memelihara dan menghidupkan kami
Tatkala kami melewati padang belantara kehidupan
Engkau terus beserta kami
Tidak ada hal yang terlupakan oleh Mu
Tubuh, jiwa dan roh tetap Engkau pelihara.

God the source of all goodness
Your goodness sustaining and reviving us
When we walked through the wilderness of life
You continue to be with us
Nothing is forgotten by You
You always feed our body, soul and spirit.

DAY 2

**Thursday
February 11th**

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

A masu ni vakatutusa:
Oi Kemuni na Kalou Tabu, sa nomuni na ka kecega, ko vuravura kei na kenai yau taucoko. E na vuqa na gauna keimami nanuma ni neimami kaukauwa ga keimami rawa ka kina. E na vuqa na gauna keimami guilecava ni o ni kauti keimami me bula e na tiki ni qele keimami sa bula kina. Ke tiko mai Viti, se Ositerelia, se loma ni veikau, sa vanua ga e na drodro e na sucu kei na oni ni sa soli me neimami mai na lololo vinaka ni lomamuni. E na vuqa na gauna keimami guilecava me vakacabora lesu vei kemuni nai sevuni vuata e tubu mai e na qele o ni sa solia me neimami. Ni vosota na neimami talaidredre kei na yalowai. Ni vakavulici keimami me dau nanumi kemuni ka vakaliuci kemuni e na veigauna kece keimami raica kina nai yau kei vuravura. Ni vakavulici keimami me keimami vakacabora vei kemuni

nai sevu ni vei ka vinaka kece o ni solia me neimami. Keimami masu e na yaca ni Luvevuni o Jisu Karisito. Emeni.

A prayer of confession:

Holy God, everything is yours, the world and all its glory. Many times we think everything we possess is from the works of our hands. Many times we forget that you have led us to the land where we live. Whether in Fiji or Australia, or in the wilderness, it is a place that will drip with milk and honey, given to us from the abundance of your heart. Many times we forget to present back to you the first of the fruits of the land you have given us. Forgive us our disobedience and childishness. Teach us to always remember you and put you first when we see your glory in your creation. Teach us to present to you the first fruits of all good things you provide us with. We pray in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

DAY 3

Friday
February 12th

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Dios, reconocemos que eres el provisor para todas nuestras necesidades.

Que solamente tú Dios, sabes el numero de los cabellos en mi cabeza,

Y sabes todo lo que requerimos en nuestras vidas.

Te rogamos, Señor, que en temporadas de hambruna podremos enfocarnos en ti.

Que podremos traer nuestros afanes ante ti, Sabiendo, Señor, que nos sostienes en la palma de sus manos.

DAY 4

**Saturday
February 13th**

Tongan/English prayer
by Rev Charissa Suli.

God, we recognise that you are the one who provides for all our needs.
That only you God, know the number of the hairs on my head,
And you know all that we require in our lives.
We beseech you, Lord, that in seasons of famine we may focus on you.
That we can bring our burdens before you,
Know, Lord, that you sustain us in the palm of your hands.

Fakafonu kimautolu 'aki ho Laumalie
Ma'oni'oni
Ke mau 'ilo 'oku 'ikai mo'ui 'a e tangata 'i he ma pe
Pea ke mau tauhi koe ke hoko ko homau 'Otua
'O ilo ai koe 'ofa 'ae 'afiona 'oku lave ki he tokotaha kotoa pe
Malo Sisu ho'o tali kiamutolu, Emeni.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit
To know that man does not live on bread alone
So that we may faithfully serve you and worship you as our God
In this we will know that your love oh God flows out to all of humanity
Thank you Jesus for accepting us as we are,
Amen.

LENT FIRST SUNDAY

February 14th

Prayer by Rev
Jon Humphries.

Listen Up
Lord of the journey of life,
Help us to listen up.
Tune our attention to your call.
May we not be distracted by the noise of life
and the constant appeal to satisfy our wants
Lead us to the wild places where we might be
challenged by competing voices,
but may we listen to our hearts
and know who you are
and who we are to you
and thus who we are to be.
In the hard places, may we hear the
affirmation of your love and presence with us.
Summon us again to your way.
Beckon us on the journey to the cross
For you are our Christ.
Amen

DAY 5

**Monday
February 15th**

Arabic/English prayer
by Rev Gaby Kobrossi.

أعطيني يارب مع التجربة المنفذ
حسب وعودك لأستطيع أن أحتمل
وهبني نعمتك لأحمل الصليب وأتبعك
و أحيأ من جديد بسيرة مقدسة نقية
تليق بإسمك القدوس ، أمين

Lord give me faith to trust your promises so I
can face all kind of temptation and grant me
your grace to carry the cross and follow you to
be restored to a Holy, pure and worthy life for
your holy name. Amen

DAY 6

**Tuesday
February 16th.**

Le Atua e, e viia ma faafetaia le matalasi o lou alofa ma lou tamaoaiga i le ola ma mea uma na e faia. Alofa mai e ala ia Keriso Iesu ina ia aua nei o matou naunau ma faamuamua le malosi ma le tamaoaiga mo i matou lava. I le mana o le Agaga Paia, ia e taitai ma tausi lo matou ola ma le faatuatua i aso uma lava. Amene

O God, we offer praise and thanksgiving for the abundance of your love in all of creation, offering life in all its fullness. Through Christ, have mercy on us when our appetite and pursuit of power become our priorities. In the power of the Holy Spirit, lead and sustain us in our daily life and faith. Amen.

DAY 7

**Wednesday
February 17th**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Tuhan pengatur kehidupan
Tidak ada yang tersembunyi dimata Mu
Engkau berjanji dan Engkau yang
melakukannya
Ditengah kebutaan mata manusia
Yang sering tidak melihat tangan karya Mu
Engkau tetap bekerja untuk memenuhi janji
Mu

God the author of life
Nothing is hidden in Your eyes
You promised and you delivered it
Amid the human blindness
Who often do not see the work of Your hands
You keep working to fulfill Your promises

DAY 8

**Thursday
February 18th**

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

A masu ni vakavinavinaka:

Kemuni na Kalou ni Veibuli, mo ni vakasoqoni keimami mada me keimami vakarurugi dina e na ruku ni tabamuni. E dina sara ni vaka nai wiliwili ni kalokalo na keimami wiliwili na vakabauti kemuni, ia sa rabailevu na tabamuni me vaka na rabailevu ni nomuni loloma vei keimami. Keimami reki ni keimami sa ovici tu e na nomuni vakacegu. Ni bolei keimami me keimami muria vakadoudou na sala ni kauveilatai ka kila dina na duidui ni fokise sa matai e na kana butako e na bogi kei na laione sa kila na nonai kanakana ka sega ni rerevaka e dua na ka. Na nomuni loloma sa vakadeitaka vei keimami me vakanamata tiko ga ki Jerusalemi, na nomuni tikotiko tabu vakayalo, me vaka sa vakavulici keimami kina o Jisu Karisito. "Oi kemuni na neimami vunivuni. O ni na maroroi keimami mai na rarawa. O ni na vakavolivoliti keimami e na sere ni bula." (Same 32:7). Emeni.

A prayer of thanksgiving:

Creator God, gather us together under your wings. It is true that we who believe in you are numbered as the stars, but your wing span is as wide as your love. We rejoice to gather in your peace. Challenge us to walk boldly in the way of the cross so to experience the difference between the fox that steals food in the night and the lion that knows his/her place to eat and is not afraid. Your love affirms in us to set our face towards Jerusalem, your spiritual holy place, as Jesus has shown us. "You are our shelter. You protect us from trouble. You cover us with glad songs of freedom." (Psalm 32: 7) Amen.

DAY 9

Friday February 19th

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Padre Dios, nosotros somos un pueblo de pecadores,
Y sabemos que no merecemos el amor que nos ofrece a través de la cruz.
A través que Jesucristo, redención y gracia fueron derramados
Pero la humanidad le sigue rechazando.
Te pedimos, Dios de Gracia, enséñanos ser fiel, creyendo tus promesas,
Que podremos reconocer el mundo como está, que gime como una,
Pero tener la esperanza que mandaste tu Hijo,
Para el perdón, y por la restauración del mundo a ti

Father God, we are a sinful people,
And we know that we do not deserve the love you have offered us at the cross.
Through Jesus Christ, redemption and grace were poured out
But humanity continues to reject him.
We ask, God of Grace, teach us to be faithful, believing in your promises,
May we recognise the world as it is, that it is groaning.
But have hope in the fact that you sent your Son,
For forgiveness, and for the restoration of the world unto you.

DAY 10

**Saturday
February 20th**

Tongan/English prayer
by Rev Charissa Suli.

Hoto 'ofa kiate ia 'oku hoko mai 'i he huafa 'o
e 'Eiki
Malo ho'ò fakakakato 'a e palomesi 'a e 'Otua
ma'a hono kakai
Fakamolemole'i kimautolu 'i he 'emau fiu
ngofua
Ngaohi kimautolu ke mau tui ka mai mo'ui
Hoko mai ko homau paletu'a
Ke mau falala ma'u ai pe ki ho palomesi,
Emeni

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord
Thank you for fulfilling God's promises for
your people
Forgive us when we have given up without
even trying
Mould us to be a people who believe and live
in you
Be our shield so that we can trust in your
promises, Amen.

LENT SECOND SUNDAY

February 21st

Prayer by Rev
Jon Humphries.

Meet up
Word of God,
Come and meet with us.
Surprise us and fill us with wonder.
Shock us into new understandings of who you
are and what you want of us.
May we meet you in our comings.
May we meet you in our goings.
May we encounter you when we least expect
it.
May we encounter in you unseen promises
and hopes.
May we connect with your vision and plan for
our lives and our world.

DAY 11

**Monday
February 22nd**

Arabic/English prayer
by Rev Gaby Kobrossi.

May we meet with you in the wilderness of our living and find you leading us to right places.

Christ be our way.

Call us to your purpose.

May this ever be so.

Amen

يارب يسوع فاديّ الحبيب،

إني اهدي لك قلبي وأشكرك من أجل وعودك الصادقة
والأمانة، لك المجد والاكرام الى الأبد، أمين

Lord Jesus, my saviour! I give you my heart and thank you for your genuine and honest promises, for yours is the glory and honour forever. Amen

DAY 12

**Tuesday
February 23rd**

Samoan/English prayer
by Rev Temukisa
Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
and Rev Sani Vaeluaga.

Le Atua e, o le tausī faatina, o lau tausiga e ala mai ai le faamagaloga, filemu ma le ola; matou te viia Oe. I le malosi o Keriso o le na te valauina le au faatuatua i lea tupulaga ma lea tupulaga; faamagalō i matou pe afai e avea faosoosoga ma pa pupuni i lo matou taumafai mo lau feau ma lau galuega i le lalolagi atoa. Ia avea le Agaga Paia e aoao ma taitai lau Ekalesia i le taimi nei atoa ma taimi o le le mautonu, ma fesoasoani mai ina ia matou faatuatua i au poloaiga. Amene

DAY 13

**Wednesday
February 24th**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Mothering God, your nurturing presence offers forgiveness, peace and life, we adore you. In the power of Christ who calls the faithful in every generation; forgive us when intimidation clouds our discernment for ministry and mission in the world. Let the Holy Spirit, equip and lead your church in the midst of great uncertainty; and help us to put our trust in your promises. Amen.

Tuhan empunya sejarah
Empunya masa lalu, masa kini dan masa depan
Telah terbukti kesabaran Mu
Memberikan banyak kesempatan buat kami
Untuk bertumbuh dan berbuah
Tatkala kami gagal, Engkau membangkitkan kami
Kesabaran Mu mendorong kami untuk menjadi lebih baik.

God of history
Owner of the past, present and future
Your patience has been proven
By providing many opportunities for us
To grow and bear fruits
When we fail, you raised us
Your patience encourages us to be better.

DAY 14

Thursday February 25th

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

A masu ni vakavinavinaka:

Oi kemuni na Kalou dauloloma, keimami vakavinavinaka na nomuni vosa, ni sega sara ni rawa ni dua na ka e yaco vei keimami me tawasei keimami mai na nomuni loloma. Keimami tamata daurawai rawarawa ka vuqa na gauna keimami guilecava me qaravi qaravi kemuni. Sa sega ni laurai e na neimami bula na vuata o ni nanuma me keimami vuataka e na yacamuni. Keimami vakavinavinaka ni o ni sega ni guilecavi keimami ka solia tiko ga mai na veivakauqeti ki na bula vata kei kemuni. Keimami vakavinavinaka ni kila ni o ni cukiraka tiko ga na tikina keimami sa tiko kina, ka sovaraka tiko kina na vosa ni bula. Me nomuni tiko ga na rokovi kei na dokai e vuravura kei lomalagi. Emeni.

A prayer of thanksgiving:

Loving God, we thank you for your word that nothing that happens to us can separate us from your love. We sometimes give in to the temptations of the world and many times forget to worship you. The fruit you plan for us to bear in your name is not easily seen in us. We give thanks that you never forget us and continue to encourage us to live life with you. Thank you for continually giving us chances to grow to fruition, pouring to our soul the word of life. All glory and honour belong to you, on earth and on high. Amen.

DAY 15

**Friday
February 26th**

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Dios de Gracia, venimos ante ti tal como
somos, sin méritos;
Con nuestros fracasos, nuestras envicias,
nuestros perjuicios.
Que tu, oh Dios, nos perdones cuando
venimos a ti en confesión.
Que el testimonio de nuestros labios, y
nuestros corazones recatados,
son suficientes ante ti,
Te pedimos que el Espíritu de Paz calma
nuestros corazones inquietos,
Y podremos venir ante ti, un pueblo redimido.

God of Grace, we come before you as we are,
without merit;
With our failings, our short-comings, our
prejudices.
That you, oh God, forgive us when we come
before you in confession.
That the testimony of our lips and our humble
hearts,
Are sufficient before you,
We ask that the Spirit of Peace will calm our
agitated hearts,
And we may come before you as a redeemed
people.

DAY 16

**Saturday
February 27th**

Tongan/English prayer
by Rev Charissa Suli.

Otua 'o e Fakamo'ui
Otua 'o e Melino
Sivi kimautolu 'o ta'aki 'a e ngaahi fiki 'oku 'ikai fua
Kae lava ke mo'ui homau sino, atamai moe
laumalie
Ke mau ilo'i koe afiona, ko homau Otua mo
'emau fakanonga
Malo Sisu ho'o 'ofa, pukepuke kimautolu ke
molomolo muiva'e 'atu
'o a'u kihe ngata'anga 'emau mo'ui, Emeni

LENT THIRD SUNDAY

February 28th

Prayer by Rev
Jon Humphries.

God of healing,
God of Peace
Search us oh God
Cut down those figs in our lives
that do not bear fruit
So that our body, mind and soul
are healed from it's brokenness
So that we can come to know that you are
our God
and our comfort and assurance
Thank you Jesus for your eternal love
Hold us so that we may follow you all the
days of our lives, Amen.

Give up
Yet more we ask of you, Lord,
Help us to give up:
Give up doing things our way and repent and
seek yours.
Help us to give up our pride and arrogance
and humbly call upon you.
Help us to repent of our selfish ways, so that
real change might come within us and our
living.
Help us to give up our comfort with our
familiar habits and routines.
Take us and reform us so that we may be,
and make, the disciples that you need.
Lord, we hand you our hearts,
Take them and unlock them,
Open them with your compassion
so that we might let the real world in, along
with your healing presence and call to
justice.
Take us, Lord,
Use us and make us usable.
May we lay down our past, letting it be what

DAY 17

**Monday
February 29th**

Arabic/English prayer
by Rev Gaby Kobrossi.

it was.

May we lay down our future, letting it be what
you would make of it.

So, may our giving not be token.

May our longing for your way be real.

May this be truly so, Christ.

Amen.

يارب يسوع ليكن قلبي هيكلًا لحبك
ولتكن حياتي مثمرة بالفرح والسلام
لمجد اسمك المبارك، آمين

Lord Jesus, let my heart be structured for your
love and my life be fruitful and full of joy and
peace to the glory of your name. Amen

DAY 18

**Tuesday
March 1st**

ASamoan/English
prayer by Rev Temukisa
Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
and Rev Sani Vaeluaga.

Le Atua alofa e, ua e valaauina i matou e ala ia
Keriso Iesu, ina ia matou salamo ma alofa atu;
ae i lo matou faataliga tuli ua matou faamasino
atu ae le faasoa atu mea taua ua e au mai e
fesoasoani i le ola. Faamagalalo i matou i lou
alofa tunoa. Amene.

Merciful God, in Christ you called us to
repentance and love; yet in our arrogance,
we become judgmental instead of offering
nourishment that sustains and nurtures life. In
your mercy, forgive us. Amen

DAY 19

**Wednesday
March 2nd**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Tuhan yang kami sebut Bapa didalam Kristus
Jesus

Kami adalah anak anak Mu yang rindu tinggal
dikediaman Mu

Rumah kediaman Mu disediakan untuk kami
semua

Kami yang jauh, letih karena keinginan kami
sendiri

Rindu pulang ke kampung halaman

Kampung halaman yang adalah Rumah Mu

Menjadi rumah kami kembali

God in whom we call the Father in Christ
Jesus

We are Your children who long to live in Your
dwelling

Your dwelling house provided for all of us

When we are far away from You, exhausted
by our own desires

We long to return home

A home place that is Your house

Becoming our home again.

DAY 20

**Thursday
March 3rd**

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

Na taro levu:

Sa balavu ka sukusukura na gaunisala. Au sa sega ni raica rawa na noqu gaunisala. Au sa yali tu. Au sa via gunu ka via kana. Sa sega ni dua au kila. E dua ga au sa kila! Na tamaqu! O koya ka solia vei au ni sa era na noqu gauna! E na tauri au lesu tale o koya! Ia au sa na sega tale ni luvena. Sa yali vei au nai tutu ko ya. Au na kerea vua me'u nona tamata cakacaka. Kevaka e via tauri au tale. Au yacova vakacava na vanua au Sa tu kina 'qo? Au sa vaka e dua na gone yalawai. Isa na tamaqu. E na tauri au lesu tale o koya. Au kila ni na kitaka me vaka kina. E dina beka?

The big question:

The way is long and rough. I cannot see my way home. I am lost. I am thirsty and hungry. I know no one. Yes, I do! My father! He who gave me before my time! He will take me back! Not as a son though. I have lost that privilege. To be his servant is all I ask. If he will have me back. How did I get to this place? How like an immature child I have been! My father. He will take me back. I know he will. Will he....?

DAY 21

**Friday
March 4th**

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Nuestro Padre, somos tus hijos e hijas*,
Pero Señor, perdónanos por la ocasiones
cuando nos olvidamos de ti.

Somos hijas e hijos prodígales, perdidos,
confundidos y alejados de ti.

Mas tu Señor, eres el padre que nos recibe
aun que estuvimos lejos,

Aun que te habíamos rechazado, aun que
hemos pecado contra ti.

Queremos regresar a ti Señor, con corazones
penitentes,

Dispuestos a ser hijos e hijas sensibles a tu
voluntad.

Our Father, we are your sons and daughters,
But Lord, forgive us for those times where we
forget you.

We are prodigal daughters and sons, lost,
confused and distant.

But you Lord, you are the father who receives
us although we were far from you,

Although we had rejected you, although we
have sinned against you,

We desire to return to you Lord, with penitent
hearts,

Ready to be sons and daughters who are
sensitive to your will.

**Spanish lacks the term children, rather we
use 'sons' in a gender ambiguous way. Thus
to reflect the genders we use 'sons and
daughters' and 'daughters and sons'.*

DAY 22

**Saturday
March 5th**

Tongan/English prayer
by Rev Charissa Suli.

Ke Ke meesi kiate au 'e Otua 'o Sisu Kalaisi
Malo ho'o pusiaki'i kimautilo ke hoko ko ho'o
ngaahi foha moe 'ofefine
Fakamolemole'i kimautilo 'i he 'emau fai
angahala mo tafoki meiate koe
Malo ho'o kei tali fiefia kimautilo
Tokoni'i kimautilo ke tali fiefia 'a e kakai kotoa
pe 'oku nau hu atu ki he afiona, Emeni.

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on
me a sinner
Thank you for adopting us as your sons and
daughters
Forgive us for the times we sin and run away
from you
Thank you for always welcoming us back
Help us to welcome other people who come to
you too, Amen.

LENT FOURTH SUNDAY

March 6th

Prayer by Rev
Jon Humphries.

Speak up
Lord Jesus,
Word of God,
Voice of reason and hope,
May we not be silent in our praise of you.
May we give voice in witness to your love and
grace not only in our words, but in our living,
too.
Roll away from us the shame of that which has
held us back.
Shake us off from our fear and anxiety.
May we cry with a deep longing for your
salvation and redemption.
May we call into the world your message of
hope and renewal.
May we speak out against injustice and
suffering.

DAY 23

**Monday
March 7th**

Arabic/English prayer
by Rev Gaby Kobrossi.

May we have the courage to take action through politics and avenues of power. Fill our voices with your Word That you may be heard by all who need you. Christ, may this be so. Amen.

أبانا السماوي، يامن أنعمت علينا بمنازل
نحتمي بها ونشعر بالأمان والأطمئنان
فيها، هبنا يا قدير ان نجعل منها معابد
نقترب فيها منك، آمين

Our Heavenly Father, you gave us homes as refuges so we can feel safe and secure, enable us to offer them and make them temples for your Holy Spirit where we can live close to you. Amen

DAY 24

**Tuesday
March 8th**

Samoan/English prayer
by Rev Temukisa
Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
and Rev Sani Vaeluaga.

Le Atua o le leleiga, o lou alofa tunoa na liutino tagata ai Keriso ma afio mai i le lalolagi, ma avea ma tagata e pei o i matou. Na afio mai i o matou aiga ma nofoaga ma avea ma tagata valaaulia faapea foi ona avea ma tagata tali malo; ua ia faailoa mai le uiga loloto o le talimalo lelei ma luitauina i matou ma a matou tu ma aga masani. Matou te vivii ma tapuai ia te Oe.

I lo matou manatu faapito ia i matou lava,
alofa mai le Alii e,
I lo matou le amanaia o manaoga o isi tagata,
alofa mai Keriso e,
I lo matou le talia o nisi tagata, alofa mai le Alii
e, Amene.

DAY 25

**Wednesday
March 9th**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Reconciling God, by your grace the incarnate Christ entered our world, became one of us. He entered our homes as both guest and host; offering radical hospitality and challenged our norms. We worship and adore you.

For self-centeredness, Lord have mercy.
For neglecting the need of others, Christ have mercy.
For lack of acceptance, Lord have mercy.
Amen

Tuhan Sang jembatan waktu
Tiada masa lalu dan tiada masa depan
Semua ada di jembatan waktu, kekal dan sekarang
Waktu adalah milik Mu, yang indah dan agung
Yang lama tiada, yang baru memberi kehidupan

Lord of the bridge time
There is no past and no future
All are on the bridge of time, eternal and now
Time is owned by You, beautiful and noble
The past has long gone and the now gives a new life

DAY 26

**Thursday
March 10th**

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

A masu ni qoroqoro:

Au taura na tavaya waiwai ka voroka,
sa lalata na veitikina na kena i boi totoka.
Waiwai lagakali dau vakamareqeti sara
sa sovaraki me lumuti kina na yavana.

Na noqu bula e sotava na voravora,
au vosacataki mai na veiyasana kecega.
Sa duabau e qai ciqoma na noqu masu,
sa lakotikivi au ka tuberi au e na ligana tabu

Jisu, noqu Kalou kai vakavuvuli dina,
au na muri kemuni voli e na noqu veisiga.
Na noqu vakavinavinaka e kilai mai lagi,
na nodaru veiwekani e na sega sara ni yali.

Na nomuni veiciqomi sa kilai raraba,
e robota na lagi, na bulu kei na wasawasa.
O ni lomani ira na luveniyali kei na
dravudravua,
sa bibi vei kemuni na marama e bula duadua.

Sa lovari e yavamuni na waiwai sa
vakarautaki,
me i vakananumi ni nomuni na lesu tale ki
lagi.
Oqo ga au sa kitaka me'u vakatabuya kina
na Kalou sa tiko kei au e na bogi kei na siga.
(Eseta Meneilly)

A prayer of praise (A translation)

I took the bottle of oil and broke it.
Its fragrance fills the whole place!
(Coconut) oil cooked with Meliaceae, a rare
flower perfume,
is poured over your feet.

My life was full of controversies,
I am rejected from everywhere.
Only One received my prayers -
walks beside me and leads me by his holy
hand.

Jesus, my God and teacher true,
I will follow you for the rest of my days.
My gratitude is heard from on high;
I will remember our friendship forever.

Your acceptance of everyone is widely known,
in the heavens, in the deep and across the
oceans.
You love the orphans and the poor,
and treat the widows as special.

Prepared oil is poured over your feet
To serve as memory when you return to
heaven.
It is the only thing I can do, to remember
the God who stays with me night and day.

DAY 27

**Friday
March 11th**

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Cristo Redentor, él que se nombro «...el camino, la verdad y la vida.»
Clamamos a ti ahora porque necesitamos un otro camino,
Necesitamos Señor, un camino nuevo, un camino mejor,
Te pedimos que sea un camino irreconocible al mundo pecador,
Un camino que no se preocupa con gastos pero con intento,
Un camino que no se enfoca en lo que no puede,
Pero que aumenta lo que se puede,
Que no sea un camino con un destino visible, sino un camino que nos trae así a ti.

Christ Redeemer, he that called himself "...the way the truth and the life."
We come to you because we need another way,
We need Lord, a new way, a better way,
We ask you that it be a way unrecognisable to the sinful world,
A way that is not concerned with expense but with intent,
A way that is not focused in what cannot be achieved,
But that increases what can be achieved,
That it no be a way with a visible destination, but a way that brings us to you.

DAY 28

**Saturday
March 12th**

Tongan/English prayer
by Rev Charissa Suli.

'E Otua 'oku ke ngaahi 'a e me'a kotoa pe
meihe efu ke faka'ofu'ofa
Pea 'oku tala 'e he 'univesi 'a e kololia moe
fakamalo 'a e 'afiona
'Oku ke ngaahi 'a e me'a motu'a ke fo'ou
Ngaohi au ke fo'ou
Ngaohi au ke fo'ou 'eku 'ofa kiate koe
Ngaohi au ke fo'ou 'eku 'ofa kihe masiva
Ngaohi 'au ke fo'ou 'eku mamata kihe 'afiona
Ngaohi 'au ke fo'ou keu tali koe ki hoku loto,
Emeni.

Lord You make beautiful things right from the
dust
And Creation tells of your glory and praise
You are making the old things new
Make me New
Make me New to love you
Make me New to love the poor
Make me New to see you
Make me New to receive you, Amen.

LENT FIFTH SUNDAY

March 13th

Prayer by Rev
Jon Humphries.

Gather up
Lord of Community,
Gather us as your people.
Awaken in us your gifts and passion.
May we collect together a sense of your
working in our past and the pasts of people
before us.
May we draw around your promises and listen
for your call.
Bring us together and build us up, that we may
be your people – your Church.
Rally us to your Word, so that we might be
once again inspired to do your will.
Send us into the world that we may then
release your love, truth and good news into the

DAY 29

Monday
March 14th

Arabic/English prayer
by Rev Gaby Kobrossi.

lives of all who need it.

Send us to be and make disciples, following the way of the cross, that your Kingdom may come.

Steel us and strengthen us to bear the burden of the journey.

Fill us with your vision.

Christ, who always goes before us.

This we pray.

Amen

يارب، اشكرك من اجل رحمتك
ومحبتك التي تفوق كل إدراك، أعطني
يارب ان ابدأ معك من جديد وأتمتع
بعلاقة تفوح منها رائحة المسيح الذكية
، آمين

Lord, thank you for your mercy and love that surpasses all perception, give me grace, Lord, to begin a new relationship like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God.
Amen

DAY 30

**Tuesday
March 15th**

Samoan/English prayer
by Rev Temukisa
Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
and Rev Sani Vaeluaga.

Le Atua alofa e, matou te fa'afetai atu i lau meaalofa o le suauu manogi sa uuina ai aao o Iesu ma faatumulia ai le fale o Lasalo ma ona tuafafine o Malia ma Mareta I le manogi; o se meaalofa na faaalua ai le amanaia o lau galuega faamalolo ma le fa'amoemoe ola. Faamagalalo i matou pe a mua ona pupu o matou loto i mea o le olaga nei, ae faatuatuanai i le iloa o lou finagalo mo mea uma na e faia. Agaga Paia e, o le liua ma faafouina i matou, faamalosi ma faalototele i lau Ekalesia i lona valaauina e tapuai, molimau ma tautua i le Atua e ala ia Iesu Keriso. Amene

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of fragrance that filled Mary, Martha and Lazarus' home in the act of anointing, an offering of gratitude and love for your ministry of healing and living hope. Forgive us, when our priorities are based on material things, instead of understanding the will of God for all creation. Transforming Spirit, empower and inspire your church in their calling to worship, witness and serve God in the name of Christ. Amen.

DAY 31

**Wednesday
March 16th**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Tuhan Sang pelayan sejati
Engkau datang memberikan contoh kehidupan
Kehidupan yang dilandasi oleh pengabdian
Sehingga kami mengerti bahwa melayani
Merupakan suatu bentuk ketaatan dan iman
Kepada Tuhan yang sudah terlebih dulu
melayani kami.

God the true servant
You came to give an example of life
Life guided by devotion

DAY 32

Thursday
March 17th

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

So we understand that serving
Is a form of obedience and faith
To God who has first served us.

Na vakabauta:
Jisu, noqu Kalou kei na noqu Tui,

sucu mai vakatamata e na vale ca ni sa sega
tale e dua na tikina,
vakavuqa me sega na nomuni i mocemoce ni
sa bogi na vanua,
kerea e dua na i lavo siliva ni lala na nomuni
taga,
tiko mai na lekutu me vasagavulu na siga kei
na bogi ka sega ni kana se gunu,
nanumi ni o ni sa lialia ni o ni vabulai ira na
curumi tevoro,
kau me biligi e na barinisavu ni o ni tukuna na
dina sa sega ni kilai,
vakasalataki iratou na nomuni tisaipeli me
ratou kau i lavo ka cola i wau me wili kina
mo ni sa sega ni muria na vunau,
soli yani mai vei koya na tisaipeli sa bibi vua
nai lavo ka lailai na vakabauta,
cakitaki mai vei koya sa yaco e muri me
yavu ni vakavuvuli dina me vaka o ni a
yalataka vua, lewai, vakararawataki sara
ka rube e na kauveilatai, ni tukuni ni o ni sa
vosavakacacataka na Kalou,

Oi Kemuni na noqu Kalou kei na noqu Tui.
Au sa vakabauta.

Mesaia. Luve ni Kalou.
Imanueli, na Kalou sa tiko kei keda.
Au sa vakabauta. Emeni.

A creed:

Jesus, my Lord and my King,

born of human in a shed because there was
no other room,
often with no place to lie down at the end of
the day,
asked for a coin because you did not have
one in your pocket,
stayed forty days and forty nights in the bush
without food and water
thought to be mad when you released people
of their demons,
taken to be pushed off a cliff because you
spoke a truth not understood,
instructed your disciples to travel with money
and carry a sword so you could be counted
as lawless,
betrayed by a disciple who placed money
above faith,
denied by another who became a cornerstone
as you promised him.
taken through court, tortured terribly and
hung on a cross for claiming you are the
Messiah, Son of God.

You are my Lord and King.

I believe.

Messiah,
Son of God,
Emmanuel,
God with us,

I believe.

Amen.

DAY 33

**Friday
March 18th**

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Con el pueblo de Israel cantamos a ti Señor –
«¡Hosanna al Hijo de David! ¡Bendito el que
viene en el nombre del Señor!»
No entras con un ejercito ni juzgamientos,
Pero entras un príncipe humilde con clama del
pueblo.
Entrad Cristo Jesús, tras las puertas de
nuestras vidas,
Las puertas de nuestras ciudades, nuestros
países, nuestras hogares.
Que te recibiremos Señor, proclamando tu
realidad, tu divinidad y tu poder.

With the people of Israel we sing to you Lord –
“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he
who comes in the name of the Lord!”
You do not enter with an army nor judgements,
But you enter as a humble prince on the
proclamations of the people.
Enter in Christ Jesus, through the gates of our
lives,
The gates of our cities, our countries, our
homes.
Let us welcome you Lord, proclaiming your
royalty, your divinity and your power.

DAY 34

**Saturday
March 19th**

Tongan/English prayer
by Rev Charissa Suli.

‘Eiki lelei tuku ke hoko ‘a e pekia ‘o Sisu
Kalaisi
koe fakama’ama’a ki he ‘emau mo’ui popula
Tataki kimautolu kihe hala ‘o e kolosi
ke mau kai ‘a e mamahi ‘o e kolosi fakataha
mo Kalaisi
Ka mau a’usia ‘a e toetu’u fo’ou, ‘a e mo’ui
moe hala fo’ou ke fononga ai
Pea tokoni’i ai pe kimautolu ke mau ma’u ‘a e
loto na’e ‘ia Kalaisi

**PASSION
LENT
SIXTH
SUNDAY**

March 20th

Prayer by Rev Jon
Humphries and Arabic/
English prayer by
Rev Gaby Kobrossi

‘o a’u kihe ngata’anga ‘o ‘emau mo’ui, Emeni.

Loving God may the suffering and death of
Jesus
take away the burdens in our lives
Lead us in the way of the cross
so that we may suffer with Jesus
and experience a new resurrection of life, a
new path of living
Help us Lord to always have the same mindset
and heart as Christ
All the days of our lives, Amen.

Rest up
Our Lord of our life,
Teach us the art of ‘not doing.’
Help us not to do religion out of habit or
routine.
Help us stop buying into consumerism and the
injustice it creates.
Help us stop the cycle of waste and
degradation that afflicts our planning.
May we never just go along unthinkingly with
what others are doing or where they might be
leading.
May we not tire of doing good and may we
break from being precious about our self-time,
but seek to gain by giving, just as you did in
your ministry of service.
May we rest from idle busyness, and engage
with doing what matters.
Teach us the way of balance and focus, that we
might live well and live abundantly.
Remind us to stop and smell the roses.
Rest us in your Sabbath.
Hold us in your will.

Speak to us your way.
This we pause to pray.
This we ask in the name of the Christ who
teaches us.
Amen

يا الهي المحبوب اني اهدي ذاتي بجملتها
وكل ما انا حاصل عليه واملكه اي
حياتي و موتي وعقلي وتمييزي
و ضميري ومخيلتي وارادتي ولا سيما
قلبي مع جميع حركاته واشواقه، اهدي
لك جسدي وحواسي واقوالي واعمالي
و جميع اشغالي وافراحي والامي،
وبالنتيجة اني اهدي ذاتي واكرسها
بجملتها من الآن وحتى الأبد، أمين

My beloved God, I offer myself and everything
I have and I own of my life and death, my mind
and conscience, and especially my heart with
all its movements and longings. I give you my
body and my senses, my speech, and all of
my work and my joys, and I dedicate them to
you, now and forever. Amen

DAY 35

Monday
March 21st

Arabic/English prayer
by Rev Gaby Kobrossi.

يارب يسوع، علمني ان اوجه انظاري
تحو ارادتك و علمني ان افرح بك أولاً
، وأعطني عمق العلاقة معك ، آمين

Lord Jesus, teach me to focus my sight towards your will and teach me to be happy in the depth of my relationship with you. Amen

DAY 36

Tuesday
March 22nd

Samoan/English prayer
by Rev Temukisa
Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
and Rev Sani Vaeluaga.

Le Atua alofa e, o lu'i o le taumafai e fetuutuunai
le tele o le lavelave o galuega fou
faa-misiona, e tele lava ina faasino ma
taotaomia ai i matou i tu ma aga tuai ma mea ua
matou masani ai, ma le tala e fai: Ou te le iloa
poo ai ete fai mai ai?

Faamagalo lo matou vaivai.

Faamagalo lo matou le talitonu.

Faamagalo lo matou faatuatua iti.

Ua faamagaloina I tatou e ala ia Iesu Keriso, o le
mea, ia tatou salamo. Amene.

Gracious God; the challenges of navigating the intricacies of the new mission tapestry often points us to the old and familiar responses – “I do not know who you are talking about!”

Forgive our weariness.

Forgive our doubt.

Forgive our lack of faith.

In Christ, we have forgiveness – therefore repent! Amen.

DAY 37

**Wednesday
March 23rd**

Indonesian/English prayer
by Rev Dr Apwee Ting.

Tuhan pembawa damai
Kedatangan Mu mengobarkan semangat
kehidupan
Memberi harapan dan suka cita bagi yang
membutuhkan
Kami berteriak dan berjoget di jalanan
Menebar kain dan dedaunan
Menyambut Raja yang datang didalam nama
Tuhan.

God the peacemaker
Your arrival rekindled the spirit of life
You gave hope and joy for the needy
We were shouting and dancing in the streets
Spreading fabrics and palm branches
Welcoming the King that comes in the name
of the Lord

DAY 38

**Thursday
March 24th**

Fijian/English prayer
by Rev Eseta Meneilly.

A masu:

Kemuni na Kalou Dina ka Kaukauwa, sa volai vakaitalanoa me neimami na i tukutuku kece sara me baleti kemuni. Era sa kacivaka na parofita ni veigauna nai tukutuku vinaka me baleta na nomuni lako mai ka bula e vuravura. Nai tukutuku vinska qo e sa kacivaki tiko ga me yacova mai na siga ni kua. Oi kemuni na i Vakabula sa talai mai vua na Kalou mo ni mai vakavulici keimami me keimami vakabauta ka me curu rawa kina e na bula keimami a buli kina. Ni talai keimami yani me cakava na cakacaka o ni a talai mai kina vei keimami. Ni vakavulici keimami tale mada me keimami dau vakarorogo me vaka o ni sa vakarorogo vei Jiova. Me keimami vakaukauwataka na matai keimami me vaka na qiwa ka lako tiko ga ki liu, ni keimami kila ni sa lako vata tiko kei keimami ko Jiova.

Oqo na neimami masu.

Emeni.

A prayer.

True and Mighty God, your stories about us and for us are written in full. Prophets over time have proclaimed the good news of your coming and living on earth. This good news is still proclaimed today. You are the Saviour sent by God to teach us to have faith so to enter into the life for which we were created. Send us to do the same work that you were sent to us for. Teach us again to listen as you listened to Jehovah. Give us strength to be able to set our face like a flint and continue to move forward knowing that Jehovah walks with us.

This is our prayer.

Amen.

DAY 39

**Friday
March 25th**

Spanish/English prayer
by Rev Estevan Liévano.

Cristo el Anfitrión, que nos ha invitado a su mesa de propiciación.
Nosotros, sus huéspedes, humillados por su bondad en ofrecer la Pascua perfecta.
Nos acordamos lo que dijiste a sus discípulos,
«He tenido muchísimos deseos de comer esta Pascua* con ustedes...»
Y ahora con ellos reconocemos que fuiste tú quien preparo la mesa para nosotros,
Fuiste tú quien llevo nuestros pecados a la cruz,
Fuiste tú que derramo el sangre y agua en hecho de redención.
Te agradecemos Cristo, por invitarnos a participar en esta cena de santidad.

Christ the Host, who has invited us to his table of atonement.
We, his guests, are humbled by his bounty in offering the perfect Passover.
We remember what you said to your disciples,
“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you...”
It was you who took our sins to the cross,
It was you who poured out the blood and water in an act of redemption.
We thank you Christ, for inviting us to participate in this supper of holiness.

DAY 40

**Saturday
March 26th**

Samoan/English prayer
by Rev Temukisa
Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
and Rev Sani Vaeluaga.

I le loto maualalo ma le alofa, na ulufale ai
Iesu i Ierusalem ae alalaga tagata fai mai: la
manuia le tupu o le afio mai I le suafa o le Alii!
O le filemu ma le mamalu silisili ese I le lagi.

O lea foi le tatou pese fa'afetai, viiga ma le
faatoesega: la manuia le tupu o le afio mai I le
suafa o le Alii! O le filemu ma le mamalu silisili
ese I le lagi.

Foai mai le malamalama fou e uiga i le mea
lilo I le soifua, maliu, ma le toe tu o Iesu,
ina ia matou maua ai le manuia ma le ola
tamaoaiga. Amene.

In humility and love, Jesus entered Jerusalem
and the gathered community shout: "Blessed
is the king who comes in the name of the
Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the
highest heaven!"

We too offer our praise and thanksgiving
singing & confessing: "Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in
heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

Grant us new understandings of the mystery
of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that we
might have abundant life. Amen.

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