

CALLED TO COMMUNITY  
...  
THE LENTEN WALK  
...  
IS NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF  
PRIVATE SPIRITUALITY AND  
PRAYER  
...  
BUT A COMMUNAL WALK  
...  
AND AN OPPORTUNITY  
FOR COMMUNAL REFLECTION



Common Lectionary

Gospel readings

for Lent 2011

First Sunday in Lent – March 13

Matthew 4:1–11

Second Sunday in Lent - March 20

John 3:1–17 or Matthew 17:1–9

Third Sunday in Lent - March 27

John 4:5–42

Fourth Sunday in Lent - April 3

John 9:1–41

Fifth Sunday in Lent - April 10

John 11:1–4

## Resources:

*The Open Door: free access audio resources for the Spiritual Journey*

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/index.php?t=audios>

Thich Nhat Hanh on living fully in the present moment through mindfulness

John O'Donohue on honoring the great mystery in the familiar and the ordinary

Pema Chodron on the practice of happiness and sharing the wealth

Thomas Moore on work that is chosen by your soul

Stephen Levine on opening our heart to our own pain

Wayne Muller on how you are the light of the world

Lenten Resources Outside the box:

<http://liturgyoutside.net/LentA.html>

From- [explorefaith.org](http://www.explorefaith.org)



A Lenten Toolbox

[http://www.explorefaith.org/faith/explore\\_christianity/holy\\_days/lent/lenten\\_toolbox.php](http://www.explorefaith.org/faith/explore_christianity/holy_days/lent/lenten_toolbox.php)

Lenten Blessings

[http://www.explorefaith.org/faith/explore\\_christianity/holy\\_days/lent/lenten\\_blessings.php](http://www.explorefaith.org/faith/explore_christianity/holy_days/lent/lenten_blessings.php)

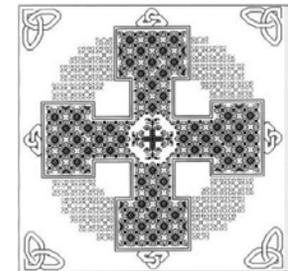
# Toward Daring Discipleship



HAMILTON  
CONFERENCE  
The United Church of Canada

February 2011

## Journeying through Lent As a faith community



He came singing love and he lived  
singing love,  
He died singing love,  
He arose in silence,  
For the love to go on we must make it  
our song;  
You and I be the singers.

Colin Gison, 1972 VU 359 vs. 1



## Vocational Temptation

The First Sunday in Lent offers to us Matthew's version of the Temptation of Jesus. Vocational Temptation. Jesus needs to address pivotal questions before he can take up his ministry. What model of ministry will he follow? Whose power will sustain his ministry? What kind of power will this be and how will it be used? He needs to ask himself questions about God's will and questions of what he, then, is about. What is his calling about... really?

These are the questions that face the church... vocational questions and vocational temptations.

What model of ministry will we follow? What are the temptations that most afflict us today? Whose power will sustain our ministry? In a postmodern world, the power of the church has changed and this raises challenges for us. What kind of power shall we have and how shall we use it? What really is our calling about as a church community, the living body of the One tempted in the wilderness?

## A new approach

The Lent 2 reading from John records Jesus calling Nicodemus to be 'born from above' or 'born again'. Could it be that the church is likewise needing to take a new approach to faith? Open ourselves to a new kind of seeing, knowing and 'being' as church? Could this have a word for our Lenten reflection as church community?

For God so loved the world... "The focus is life. The means is relationship. The motive is love. This is the emphasis of 3:16." (William Loader <http://www.staff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/MkTrinity.htm>)



## Radical Hospitality

The Lent 3 reading from John writes of the encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. This passage holds elements of 'radical hospitality': The hospitality of the woman ready to enter into conversation with, and contemplate extending hospitality to, this Jewish male. The radical hospitality of the Reign of God in Jesus' interaction with, and acceptance of this woman.

How do we live this out as church in more than simple friendliness?

"True Christian hospitality is not a recruitment strategy... it is a central practice of the Christian faith... Christians welcome strangers as we ourselves have been welcomed into God through the love of Jesus Christ. ... It stands at the heart of a Christian way of life, a living icon of wholeness in God." (Bass, Diana. *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. New York: Harper Collins, 2006)

## accepting healing

The Lent 4 reading from John records Jesus breaking theological connection between sin and illness, working outside the Sabbath commandments, and challenging religious law and religious authority. He does so as he heals a man who is blind. One cannot help but ask ... who are blind, really, in this story? And are we among them?

In what ways are we ourselves blind with our dismissal of others in need as unworthy, in our religious intolerance, self-righteousness, or bureaucracy? Is our community also in need of healing?

The healed man's integrity in witness is a witness to us. The pressure to change his story is considerable. He will not. He speaks the truth as he knows it with courage, in spite of the consequences.

## Resurrection Community

The Lent 5 reading from John places us with Mary and Martha at the grave of Lazarus. Do we really believe that through Jesus the power of resurrection is in the midst of us? Do we really believe that God can bring life out of death? The scent of decay in the church challenges our faith sometimes. But ...

Jesus says:

**"Take away the stone."**

**"... come out!"**

**"Unbind ... and let ... go."**

What does this mean to a church in crisis that truly believes in the resurrection power of God?

