

# LENTEN NEWSLETTER

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*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

*- Matthew 6:21*



A collection of common questions arise around Lent. What should I do for Lent this year? What should I read, study, give up or take on? These are good questions, but they are not Jesus' questions. Jesus wants to know what we treasure. Jesus is getting to the heart of the matter—our hearts.

Jesus reminds us that our hearts follow and give themselves to what we treasure. When we name our treasures, we find ourselves, our very hearts. When we name our treasures, we begin to see (for better or worse) the direction in which our lives are headed.

Some treasures are of lasting and eternal value. We need to let go of others regardless of how much we think we love or need them. Some treasures enrich and grow life. Other treasures hold our hearts captive and impoverish life. What do you treasure as you live life in these pandemic times? Where is your heart in the midst of the uncertainty of life these days?

In this time of pandemic and again a return to the confinement of our homes, let us approach Lent as treasure hunters, discovering what we truly value, where we spend our time and energy, and what occupies our thoughts and worries. Let us name our treasures and find our hearts.

On this Lenten journey, may you engage in a Lenten practice that fulfills your mind, soul and heart. I invite you to join the weekly Wednesday Lenten Pause that Rebecca and I will share. Perhaps you will chime into Rev. Ettie's weekly prayer or join us for worship on Sunday.

Whatever your Lenten journey, may God continue to challenge you and walk with you in these strange times.

Know that I walk with you in thought and prayer.  
Blessings on the Lenten journey,  
Rev. Pamela



# MESSAGE FROM REV. ETTIE



Hello Friends,  
It is a year now since novel coronavirus was first detected in our province – so much has happened – we became adaptable. Just as we were preparing for our annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, we likewise began to live into the unimaginable that confronted us at the beginning of last year's Lenten Season (February 26, 2020).

Communal Shrove Tuesday (pancake) suppers became quiet to stay safe, stay at home affairs. Traditional Ash Wednesday rituals and Lenten Bible studies slowly changed venue to online information packages or gatherings via zoom. Church doors were closed as leaders quickly learned the art of live-streaming.

Pastoral Care, too, took on new nuances. The public health mandate for social distancing made it a time of adjustment for pastoral care ministers and those whom they serve to adjust how their time together would continue to be meaningful. Amazingly, personal presence and attentive listening adapt well to technology – especially the telephone and on occasional FaceTime™.

With so much more knowledge, understanding, and ways of adapting our lifestyle to pandemic times a year later, together we prepare our minds and hearts to accompany Jesus and his other followers on our yearly journey to Jerusalem.

As we visit familiar places and hear well-known parts of our story (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday), let us be alert to what is taking place. Let us be watchful for new insights into Jesus' message for living. The message, that on the mountain top (at the Transfiguration), Jesus was pointing us toward another mountain – the mountain city of Jerusalem and the magnificent event of Easter Day

Let us take Easter Day's lesson – its joy and hope and apply it to our historical time. While we may not truly conceptualize the way through the murkiness that this pandemic is bringing about in our lifetime, let us trust with the conviction of the Easter Day blessing of resurrection that there will be new dawns and new beginning places.

As pandemic events unfold, may God bless us with the grace of Jesus and the first followers to go boldly toward Easter Day and the future.

Peace, love, and joy,  
Ettie  
Minister of Pastoral Care



Open Hearts • Open Minds • Open Arms



# MESSAGE FROM REBECCA

One way I practice my faith is to spend time each day in reflection, meditation and exploring different writings on faith and life. I have been working my way through *Embers* by Richard Wagamese, is a book of Ojibway's Meditations. I want to share with you one of these meditations:

*Me: What's the best way to learn to be spiritual?*

*Old Woman: Pack light.*

*Me: What do you mean?*

*Old Woman: Carry only what you need for the journey. Don't tire yourself out with unnecessary stuff.*

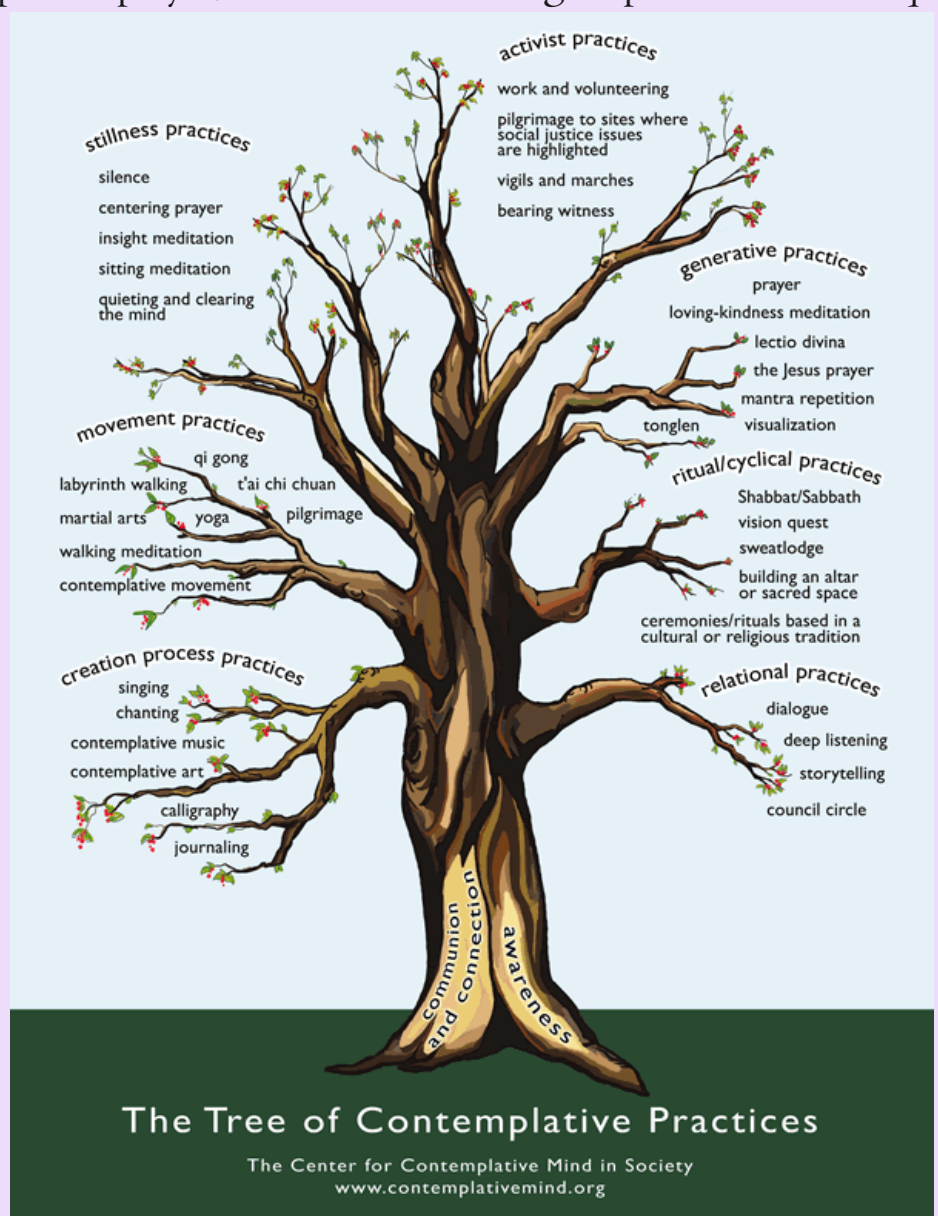
*Me: Like what?*

*Old Woman: Like your head. Like your talk. Spirituality isn't found in your head. It's found in your heart. It isn't found in big important sounding words or long speeches. It's found in silence. If you travel with your heart and your quiet, you'll find the way to spiritual.*

As we are to share Lent's journey, I invite you to reflect on what you are taking with you on this journey. How are you going to care for and explore your spirituality on your Lenten pilgrimage this year? What is in your heart? Do you leave space for quiet in your life?

As we have entered lockdown again, there may be feelings of isolation and fear; remember that even in the physical distance, we journey in this time with each other always. So pause to explore how to nurture your faith, perhaps with prayer, meditation or reading scripture. Take some quiet and listen to your heart.

Together we journey.  
Blessings,  
Rebecca



# PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

On behalf of the Prayer Shawl Group, I am happy to report that we continue to be active in our work of producing beautiful handmade shawls and bears. Like many groups within your church, Covid 19 has indeed changed the way we operate. We have not met face-to-face in over a year but keep in touch with one another with e-mails and phone calls. The baskets of shawls and bears are located in the Taite-Osmond Room, and the Pastoral Care Team at the office takes requests from those wishing to pick one up for someone. Amongst ourselves, we have also been distributing shawls and bears to those in need within our social circles. A prayer bear was given to a baby baptized during the past few months. Shipments of bears and shawls continue to St. Michael's Hospital, Spiritual Care Dept. in Toronto. They have certainly appreciated our generosity during these challenging times. We long for the day when we will be able to meet together again to chat, share a cup of tea and knit together, but until it is safe to do so, we will continue our work apart but connected in spirit. God bless and stay safe.

Marilyn Rabbitts and Marina Osborn





# A BRIEF UPDATE ON THE CHURCH FINANCES FOR 2020 AND THE FIRST THE MONTH OF 2021.

Well, 2020 was certainly an interesting year as all the big items happening in our community have an impact on how our church finances operate. While the pandemic caused a significant reduction in our ability to gather for worship and also to earn additional income from rentals, the Federal Government pandemic relief programs, along with temporary layoffs of some staff, helped us see through to not incurring a deficit for 2020, as was projected in our budget. We were on par with completing the year with a small surplus. Fortunately, a large individual donation of \$25,000 received in December 2020 helped us to end the year with a surplus of \$28,000. While this is a very positive note, we still have yet to recover from the 2019 operating deficit (\$62,854) and the 2018 deficit (\$8,675). Total givings to the operating fund for 2020 were \$228,000 compared with \$197,000 in 2019.

The winter months are always challenging, with much higher costs for utilities and maintenance, and this January was no exception. Fortunately, our congregational giving was higher in January of 2021 than the previous year (\$13,100 compared to \$10,900 in 2019). However, high utilities of \$6,200 and a \$5,000 furnace repair bill helped create a \$15,324 deficit for January.

Hopefully, congregational giving's will continue to be strong to maintain the church and its ministry at the same levels through 2021.

If anyone has specific questions, please feel free to reach out to me by email at [fredearle@live.ca](mailto:fredearle@live.ca) or call me at 738-3333.

Regards

Fred Earle  
Treasurer

## GIVING TO GOWER – HOW TO DONATE TO GOWER?

If you wish to maintain your financial support of our church, there are a few options available:

- Sign up for PAR (Pre Authorized Contributions), or if you are already on PAR, then maybe consider increasing your contribution. This can be done by leaving a message on the office voicemail (709-753-7286) or by email ([office@gowerunited.com](mailto:office@gowerunited.com))
- You can also go to our Website by clicking the DONATE below
- We also accept e-transfer. Just send it to [gsuc@nl.rogers.com](mailto:gsuc@nl.rogers.com)
- You may also send a cheque via mail or drop it in the dropbox accessible to the right of the office entrance. Our mailing address is 99 Queens Road, St. John's, NL, A1C 6M6.

# JOURNEY TO THE CROSS LENTEN EVENTS

## Sunday Worship

**February 21**  
First Sunday in Lent - Communion

**February 28**  
Second Sunday in Lent

**March 7**  
Third Sunday in Lent

**March 14**  
PIE DAY & Fourth Sunday in Lent

**March 21**  
Fifth Sunday in Lent

**March 28**  
Palm Sunday



**Book Group**  
Wednesday at 7 PM on Zoom,  
contact Rebecca for link!

**Lenten Pauses**  
Wednesday at 10 AM on Soul Food  
page of website.

**Pause for Prayer**

Join Ettie weekly each Thursday  
for a time of prayer and biblical  
reflection in a lectio divina style.

Found weekly on the Soul Food  
page of the website.





# LENT AT HOME FROM THE GO PROJECT

We will be doing Lent differently this year and focusing on how we can bring the traditions of Lent home to families. Here are a couple of options to provide families to do together for Lent.

## INSTEAD OF GIVING SOMETHING UP, TAKE SOMETHING ON

For centuries, tradition has been to give things up during Lent. This has already been a full year of giving things up! Maybe think about what you want to take on this year: eating dinner together each night; calling a loved one every day; donating to a charity in need?

## GIVING JAR

Decorate a mason jar as a family and put in coins each day. At the end of the 40-days, donate the contents to a local organization or The Mission & Service fund at your church.

## PRAYER CHAIN

Cut 40 long strips of construction paper. As a family write a short prayer on each piece every day. Connect them together like a paper chain. After the 40 days, drop your prayer chain at the church and we will make one big chain to hang in the church.

## PRETZEL MAKING

Pretzels were first baked during Lent because they can be made with minimal ingredients: water, flour and salt. The shape came from a prayer posture - with arms crossed and hands on opposite shoulders. You can get a simple recipe online :)

