

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH METCALFE, ON.

MARCH 20, 2022

LENT 3

Reverend Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we continue to journey from darkness to light through this Lenten season, we acknowledge that our sacred space and our family spaces lie on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin peoples.

People: **May we share this land and life in a spirit of hope, peace and reconciliation.**

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: As a pilgrimage community gathered on the journey, together we pray, Almighty God.

People: **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden.**

Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fr. Michael: Joining our voices in common praise, three times we say

People: **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal one, have mercy on us.**

Fr. Michael: Gracious and Merciful God, we fill our bodies with rich food and sweet drink yet we still hunger and thirst for more — for you. And so we praise you for taking the initiative to replenish and renew our lives. You established a new and everlasting covenant of grace in the person of Jesus Christ. Through him, we seek you and find you, O God; through him we call on you and know that we are heard. For, through him, the distance between your thoughts and our thoughts, your ways and our ways is spanned by your divine love. We praise and adore you O God as we offer this prayer and this day to you in Jesus name. Amen (Moirá Laidlaw from re:Worship 2022)

Fr. Michael: Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life, may we always thirst for you, the spring of life and source of goodness; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

Reader: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 55: 1-9) Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: We gather today, O Lord of life, seeking fullness.

People: **Not the fullness our world offers, but fullness which comes from you.**

Reader: We spend so much of our lives on things that do not count.

People: **Things that promise much and give little.**

Reader: Help us now, today, to find fulfillment in your love.

People: **May we discover all that you have to give.**

Reader: Lift us, O god, to a higher plane of living as we lift our hearts and minds and souls into your holy Presence. Amen! Make it so Lord. Amen!

PSALM 63: 1-8

Reader: I earnestly search for you, my God. My soul and my flesh faint with longing and thirst for you, as parched earth cries out for a drink of rain. People: I have seen your powerful glory and love in the house of your creation. I praise you for your steadfast love, which is better than life itself. I will bless you as long as I live, my hands uplifted in praise. My soul will feast and be satisfied as my lips sing for joy.

Reader: I remember you always, even while lying on my bed. I meditate on you through the wakeful hours of the night. You are my helper and I will sing for joy in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you and your right hand holds me fast.

People: **You destroy the forces that attack my soul; they fall because of the power of your Word. Therefore, I will rejoice in you Jehovah, trusting you to overcome all that is false.**

(from Swallow's Nest by Marchene Vroon Rienstra 1992)

Reader: A reading from the letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 10:4-10)

It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, my God.'"

First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Lord, we pray to ask for your help. When we are doubtful and weak, replace these feelings with the faith we need to trust you without hesitation. You are faithful in everything that you have promised. Help us always to cling to you and hold onto our faith, especially when trials come. Amen (from Daily Prayer Guide 2022)

Holy Gospel

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the blessed St. Luke (St. Luke 13: 1-9)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam - fell on them - do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did." Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the

gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'

Fr. Michael: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Homily - Hunger and Thirst

I just can't seem to get the words of this morning's first lesson out of my head – not only because they are among the most familiar verses in the Old Testament to me, but because they ask such a profound question.....

Think of this: you have been driven out of the land in which you and your family have lived for generations and after a long and arduous journey across desert-lands, you come to a place which is so unfamiliar, so foreign that you are at a loss as to who you are and as importantly, whose you are! You look around you – the landscape seems so sterile and flat, the rivers and streams so lifeless, the people so cold and the language spoken at you so harsh that you despair of ever being again who you once were. And so you come in your aloneness and “by the waters , the waters of Babylon , we lay down and wept and wept for thee Zion. we remember thee, remember thee, remember thee Zion”

And in the heart of the darkness in which you dwell and wander from pillar to post, a voice comes, a voice which claims to be that of the living god you once worshipped in a place which had been a home of milk and honey, a place where everything was safe and of comfort, a place in which your god was loved for his protectiveness of you, a god whose name was unpronounceable except in the hidden sanctuary of your soul. At the thought of that, you weep for the city which once stood on the great hill and which shone like gold and precious jewels and which called everyone home. Looking across the wide river, looking to the south and west, you dream of what once was and fear what is to come and you look at one another and whisper the question that you dare not ask openly, “Where is our God?”

For many people, the despair and loneliness felt by the children of Israel in the land of Babylon is the very despair and loneliness they have felt for the past two years or more – the isolation, the wariness, the supercaution, the realignment of relationships which have been tested to the breaking-point and the uncertainty of the new normal” and where they will find themselves in such an undefined future. For many, they too ask, “Where is our God?” while some have stopped asking the question because they cannot sense or feel anything divine near them or within them and so they wander, rootless in their own particular wilderness, looking for anything which will satisfy their thirst, fill their hunger...

And the Voice calls like a mother cuddling her newborn, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters...you who are penniless, come, buy and eat...listen to me...” They came from the mouth of Isaiah, one whom God had favoured., one whom God had called to be a voice in the wilderness, a voice of homecoming. He says that from the heart of the One for whom you sought comes a promise – a new covenant, a new relationship, a new understanding between the Creator and his beloved creation. All that is required, all that is asked is that you listen to the Voice, that you look for God in places both of the most brilliant colours and of the deepest black and that you hear with new ears, new hearts, that you be willing to vision God's vision, to dream God's dream., for the Voice says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts nor my ways your ways” but that you have been offered the gift of living within the heart of the Lord. The result will be a homecoming beyond your imagination: a journey of joy, a pilgrimage into peace .

As a community, as a family which has been entrusted with the glorious good news that there is sunrise after the darkest night, that there is companionship after the solitary journey, that there is hope in spite of the uncertainty of what we have been through and of what lies before us, we are called to “seek the Lord” and to listen with new ears, new hearts to the promise that, as Julian of Norwich wrote, “all will be well and all will be well”. We have already been given the news of our resurrection from the One who said, “I am the bread of life...I am the living waters” and proved this to Mary of Magdala and Mary of Nazara and Salome at an empty tomb, a tomb to which we inch closer and closer day by day.

If we faithfully strive to hear the Voice as it comes to us individually and as a family today, we, like those desolate people sitting on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers so long ago will find our way home once again – home to that place where we will “go out in joy and be led in peace with the hills and mountains bursting into song before us and all the trees of the fields clapping their hands”.

Those among us, those near us who continue to sit on the banks of the river, who continue to tremble with fear, who cry out, like Winnie-the-Pooh, “what to do, what to do?”, who weep in their aloneness need us to step up to them and for them, to offer them the bread of the gospel, the sweet water of love and hope, the gift of being companions on their journey home. It is a task which calls us to our best humanity, a call to let our light shine, a call to offer our hands and hearts and a commitment to come home together, home to love, home to hope, home to compassion, home to God. He, like the father of the prodigal is waiting – waiting to run down the road and embrace us in the dance of life, of hope, of love.

Shall we begin this Lent to come home to the Lord once again?

Fr. Michael: Faith means betting your life that something is true. For centuries, the Church and Christians have bet their lives on the truth of this statement, I believe in God,

People: **The Father Almighty creator of heaven and earth**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Reader: God of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands; you are closer to us than the air we breathe. Fill our souls with your wonderful love and light. Let us never shrink back from who we are in you or hide our light within ourselves. Renew us with a sense of joy, painting the dark shadows around us with your light, your love and your salvation. Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world. Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed. Within our darkest night,

People: **let your Light shine.**

Reader: God of power and might, your broken world cries out from the depths, a world dominated by the darkness of war terror, pain and suffering as is now being perpetrated against the peoples of Ukraine. We think of other places in the world where there is violence against innocent men, women and children and we share the pain and anguish of all those who have had to flee their hearths and homes, their countries, livelihoods and identities; those who risk their lives, desperate for a new start free from fear, terror and war. May they see your light, feel your strength and power and know the

truth of your promise that we shall not be overcome by the dark shadows of life or the dark side of human nature. Within our darkest night,

People: **let your Light shine.**

Reader: God of compassion and concern, we share with you our love and concern which you let shine through your Church and we remember especially today Christ Church, Bells Corners and their clergy The Venerable Kathryn Otley, L. Col. the Reverend Michael Gibbons, Deacon Tamara Connors and in our Companion Diocese of Jerusalem, we pray for Saviour Church, Kufr-Yasif, Israel and for all people who are in dark places today; We have on our hearts today the friends and families of those who are victims of hatred and violence and we pray that they will find your strength in the compassion and care of those who stand with them against the forces of evil which assault them. We pray for tolerance on our own country, for those whose are different from us in matters of religion, politics, orientation and cultural heritage. Let the light of your love shine through the darkness of their pain and suffering and the shortsightedness of those who cannot see beyond their own group. Within our darkest night.

People: **Let your Light shine.**

Reader: God of life, we ask for healing for those who are suffering pain and illness, especially for those we hold in our silent centre (A MOMENT FOR QUIET NAMING) and for Meredith and Mike, Sarah, Scott, Roy, Marjorie, Howard and Irene, Zachariah, Cheryl, Jeanette. We share the grief of those who mourn and pray for the eternal rest of those who love but see no longer. We know that your everlasting light and love shine within us in moments of great sorrow and in times of great joy. Within our darkest night,

People: **Let your Light shine.**

Reader: God of hope and love, renew in us a deeper sense of who we are in you. Help us to be more aware each day of your presence among us and make us instruments of your love, praise and healing. May our words, actions and lives be living examples of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love. Within our darkest night,

People: **Let your Light shine. Amen.**

(Katherine Baxter, from Worship Words 2022, adapted by RMF)

Fr. Michael: As we continue of Advent walk in the shelter of God's love, let us be truthful about our lives, about our living and about our limits. Let us offer to God and to one another that truth as we pray, first in silence and then together, Holy God

People: **hear our prayer. For the mending of our hearts, torn apart by our unkindness; for the healing of our souls, wasting away from the despair around us; for the forgiveness we seek for the sin we have allowed to persist; for the reconciliation of the world, whose divisions condemn us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen**

Fr. Michael: Friends, hear this good news: the love of God is beyond measure, and you are included in that love. Know that you are forgiven and are free to love and serve in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

And may the peace of the Lord be always with you. People: And also with you.

WE SHARE THE PEACE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSES UNDERSTANDING

Fr. Michael: Spring of life and Source of goodness, receive all that we offer you this day and bring us to the Living Water, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Fr. Michael: It is indeed right to thank you and praise you, holy and gracious God, creator of all things, ruler of heaven and earth, sustainer of life, for you are the source of all goodness, rich in mercy and abounding in love; you are faithful to your people in every generation and your word endures forever. Therefore with angels and archangels, with the fellowship of all the saints and the company of heaven, we glorify your holy name, evermore praising you and saying,

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Fr. Michael: We praise you, merciful Father, not as we ought, but as we are able, because in your tender love you gave the world your only Son, in order that the world might be saved through him. He made you known by taking the form of a servant, healing the sick, liberating the oppressed, reaching out to the lost. Betrayed, reviled and nailed to the cross, he confronted the power of sin and disarmed it forever. In his offering of himself, he became the perfect and sufficient sacrifice of the sins of the whole world. Redeemed by Christ, we have been adopted as your children; by your pardon, you have made us worthy to praise you.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus at supper with his friends took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread and gave it to them saying, "Take and eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said, "Drink this all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink this, do this in the remembrance of me."

In obedience to him and with grateful hearts, we approach your holy table, remembering our Saviour's sacrifice and, rejoicing in his victory. Confident in his sovereign purpose, we declare our faith,

People: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Fr. Michael: Send your Holy Spirit on us that as we receive this bread and this cup we may partake of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. May we be renewed in his risen life, filled with love and strengthened in our will to serve others and make our lives, we pray, a pure and holy sacrifice, acceptable to you, knitting us together as one in your Son Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Fr. Michael: And now as our Lord has gifted to his Church, so we pray, Our Father,

People: **who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: We break this bread.

People: **Communion in Christ's Body once broken.**

Fr. Michael: Let your Church be the wheat which bears its fruit in dying.

People: **If we have died with him, we shall live with him. If we hold firm, we shall reign with him.**

Fr. Michael: The gifts of God for the children of God.

WE SHARE THE GIFTS WITH ONE ANOTHER

Fr. Michael: God of mercy and forgiveness, may we who share this sacrament live together in unity and peace in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Fr. Michael: Lord God our Father, Creator: we thank you for the gift of this parish of Holy Trinity, for those who come here seeking you and for those who minister from this sacred space. Inspire us with your vision to set our roots deeply and firmly in the faith, that we may be stewards of justice in all

creation. Lord God Jesus, Saviour and Redeemer, we thank you for your continuing presence in our parish family. Inspire us to seek you in Scripture, the Sacraments and one another, that we may be faithful to your call to evangelism and love. Lord God, Holy Spirit, Sustainer and Renewer: we thank you for all the wondrous gifts you have poured upon us. Inspire us to serve you in body and in spirit; help us to share our gifts of time, talents, creativity, finances and resources; open us to your renewing life-giving power. O God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – we praise you, we love you, we seek you and we serve you in the name of Jesus, our Redeemer, Friend and Brother. Amen

Fr. Michael: Go in peace, assured that the Lord has heard and will continue to hear our prayers. Remember that no curtain separates us from the presence of the Lord. Therefore, every table at which you will sit this week be it a school desk, a work bench, a lunch counter, a meeting room table, an office desk, a board across two sawhorses, a hobby bench, your own kitchen or dining- room table will be God's altar. So boldly pray, hold fast to hope, encourage one another to put love into action and the blessing of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – be with us all this day, this week and for evermore. Amen (from the Long Green Valley Brethren Church re:Worship 2021)

Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.

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