

ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

LENT – EASTER NEWSLETTER, 2025

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

March 21

As we continue to remember and cherish the gift and blessing John Rossiter was to our community, all are challenged to once again wear creative socks in honour of World Down Syndrome Day.

Send photos of you wearing your creative socks to Rev. Chris via text, messenger, or email by Mar. 20th for inclusion on our social media and you could win a prize!



WASHING FEET (METAPHORICALLY) A LENTEN INVITATION

The story is powerful. Jesus, the Master and Lord of the group, does the work expected of the lowliest member. He humbly, gently, and lovingly, washes feet. While an important act of community and hospitality for that time, it is not a custom that is a part of our practices today, and yet, it is a vital metaphor for how we are called to live as people of faith, and how we are called to love as Jesus loved.

In what ways do we regularly humble ourselves and care for others? To what extent do we engage in acts that are beyond the norms and expectations of our everyday living? What more might we do to show God's beloved that we love them too?

Jesus, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. Jn 13:3-5

There are a lot of people who could use some love at this moment, us included. There seems to be so much negativity right now. Paying attention to the news can hurt hearts. We need hope more than ever. We need love more than ever. But we may feel powerless, like we alone can't make a big difference. We may not be able to change the world, but we can change someone's world. We can wash feet.

Throughout Lent, we can metaphorically wash feet. Every day we are challenged to find a way to make a difference. These actions can be directed towards the community; a friend, coworker, or neighbour; a stranger; someone in need; ourselves; or creation. Included with this newsletter are suggested activities. You may also come up with your own. The goal is to do whatever you can to make a difference, to wash feet, and love as Jesus loved throughout this season.

With each act, may you find yourself growing closer to God and to God's beloved world. Each night you are encouraged to remember the act as you pray and open yourself to God's prodding for the next day. Who knows what the Spirit might stir in you.

For those on social media, we will share ideas alongside our friends at Balanced Life Wellness Centre who have a group engaging in a similar practice. You are encouraged to react, comment, and share these posts to spread the love and perhaps inspire others to make a difference.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP



(Washing feet continued...)

Carrying this journey with us, when we gather for Maundy Thursday to hear the story of the night Jesus washed feet, we will have the opportunity to share our stories, our moments of metaphorically washing feet. What did this journey mean for us? How did this challenge and encourage us? What did our experiences of washing feet teach us about what it means to love as Jesus loved? May the possibilities create spaces for metanoia, a change of heart as we seek to observe a holy Lent by self-examination, penitence, prayer fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God.



The diversity of worship provided during Holy Week offers meaningful opportunities to invite family, friends, neighbours, coworkers, and strangers to experience the creative ways in which we open ourselves to God working in and through us via scripture, prayers, reflection, activities, music, candles, Communion, and more. Cards will be available to support invitation.

Palm Sunday of the Passion, Apr. 13, 11am: *Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'* Remembering Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem signals the beginning of our journey into Holy Week. This is our opportunity to wave palm branches and recognise that the journey is filled with betrayal, pain, and death. These are not the end of the story. We walk together through the entirety of the story through this week to know the fullness of God's grace, forgiveness, and love.

Taizé – style worship, Tuesday, Apr. 15, 7pm: We gather for a Compline service, set in the evening with simple music, scriptures, reflection, prayers, and candles. The service mimics what is offered in Taizé France to create space for quiet contemplation that works across denominations.

Maundy Thursday upper room worship, Thursday, Apr. 17, 6pm: We are told that Jesus and the disciples gathered in an upper room to celebrate the last supper. In honour of this moment, let us gather in our upper room around a table that nurtured a family that cared for the community to the point of creating the Essex Food Bank. We will start with a potluck meal and conversation about our journey through the Lenten season. From that meal, bread and wine will become body and blood, Communion shared together. Come. Let us worship.

Good Friday Family, Friday, Apr. 18, 11am: We continue our wonky worship version of our Good Friday celebration. This is a hands on, engaging, appropriate for all ages, exploration of the Good Friday story.

Good Friday Traditional, Friday, Apr. 18, 3pm: Remembering that the world became dark as Jesus breathed his last around 3pm, we gather in quiet contemplation, listening to the story, engaging in prayer, and reflecting on the cross.

Easter Sunday, Apr. 20, 11am: Come and celebrate the resurrection with scripture, prayer, reflection, music, and Communion. There will be an Easter egg hunt following worship.

Dear Siblings in Christ;

The call to observe a holy Lent by self-examination, penitence, prayer fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God applies to clergy as well. So, I will be engaging in practices that will include efforts to metaphorically wash feet throughout the Lenten season. To further uplift and support each other in our efforts on this journey, I would like to add a weekly rector's invitation and/or challenge. These are offered as things we can do together or at least in tandem as we navigate this Lenten journey.

Specifically, I offer the following opportunities:

- Mar. 7: following from the challenge to attend a community fundraiser, I acknowledge that our pasta dinner is a great opportunity to invite the community and meet the community. I plan to be there. Will you have pasta with me?
- Mar. 10-14: The schools are on March break and so I am taking a break. I will be engaging in activities that focus on self-care and nurturing my relationship with Mr. Chris. I encourage everyone to make time for themselves and someone special during this week in tandem with me.
- Mar. 21: The University Community Church will be showing *1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture*. This documentary explores how the term 'homosexuality' found its way into the Bible and the implications. I will be part of a panel discussion that will follow. This is a great opportunity to learn more about our faith and its intersection with the Queer and Trans community.
- Mar. 23: Bettie has mentioned making tie blankets from time to time. Most recently, she suggested she might start one and leave it in the choir loft to enable folks to contribute to the blanket. To further support this possibility, I think it would be interesting if we could make tie blankets as we gather for our council meeting following worship. These blankets will be donated to those in need. Thank you to Bettie for teaching us, donating the resources, and inspiring this activity.
- Apr. 6: Support a newer, local business with me and come buy some cheesecake from Big Daddy's Cheesecake following worship this Sunday. What flavour will you get? Thank you to Megan for the suggestion.
- Apr. 13: As we prepare to move into Holy Week we begin to anticipate gathering for Easter festivities. To what extent can we imagine what it is like to prepare for Easter when we are struggling? I challenge folks to work with me to provide special support for our friends at Made to Move Mountains. They are looking for 8 large hams. Can't manage a ham, grocery cards are appreciated. Thank you to Andrew for the suggestion.

Lent offers an important opportunity to engage in reflection and activities that help us deepen our faith. May we challenge and support one another in this shared journey and may these efforts further inspire our engagement beyond our celebration of Easter.

May the blessings of these seasons, Lent and Easter, be with us all.

Chris.



Thank you to everyone who participated in our recent puzzle race. It was a fun night. Clearly interest is growing. Watch for more events in which we seek to put the fun in fundraiser!

Coming soon: Vendors markets will be returning soon. Watch for dates! We will also be holding our annual Yard Sale! Donations and volunteers are welcome. Thank you for your support!

ENCOUNTERING THE RESURRECTED CHRIST: AN EXPLORATION THROUGH ART AND STORY

A sermon series Apr. 27 – June 1

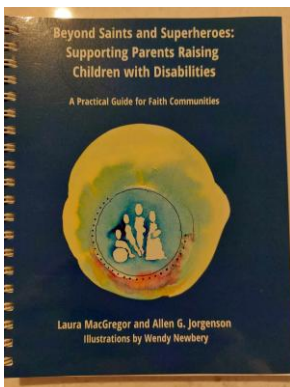
As Jesus reveals himself to the world in resurrected form, one of the things he does is to show the wounds on his hands and his side, proof that the crucifixion had happened and had bodily implications. Although he has been raised from death, he remains wounded by the world.

In Jesus, God holds the wounds of the world – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. God knows whatever struggles we may carry. God knows whatever struggles any of God’s Beloved children carry.

To further engage with this truth, throughout the season of Easter, we will explore the tools offered by Laura MacGregor and Allen G. Jorgenson in “Beyond Saints and Superheroes: Supporting Parents Raising Children with Disabilities”. This includes beautiful artwork by Wendy Newbery that illustrates the stories of families and their encounters with Church.

The hope is to use these resources to facilitate reflection and conversation about relationships. What can we learn from the stories of others, especially the stories of parents navigating Church and children with disabilities? How might we better acknowledge and embrace the gifts of

diverse individuals? What is needed to ensure that we continually offer a safe space for those with differing gifts and abilities to share who they are as they are willing and able?



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Mar. 5 – **Ash Wednesday worship**. Independent worship resources are available beginning Sunday, Mar. 2. There will also be an online video available on our website and Facebook page on Mar. 5.

Mar. 7 – **Pasta Dinner**, 5-6:30pm. Come and enjoy good food and good fellowship with meat and vegetarian pasta dishes, salad, rolls, and cake. Dine in and take out available.

Mar. 9 – **Traditional Style worship**, 11am. We worship in the style of the Book of Common prayer using older hymns in support of those who find this style meaningful.

Mar. 21 – **World Down Syndrome Day**, wear creative socks in memory of our Beloved John Rossiter. Send a photo to Rev. Chris for inclusion on our social media and for a chance at a prize.

Apr. 4 – **Pasta Dinner**, 5-6:30pm. Come and enjoy good food and good fellowship with meat and vegetarian pasta dishes, salad, rolls, and cake. Dine in and take out available.

Apr. 13 – **Palm Sunday of the Passion**, 11am, with dramatic reading of the Gospel

Apr. 15 – **Taizé-style worship**, 7pm

Apr. 17 – **Maundy Thursday upper room worship**, 6pm with potluck

Apr. 18 – **Good Friday family**, 11am; **Good Friday Traditional**, 3pm

Apr. 20 – **Easter Sunday**, 11am with an Easter egg hunt following worship.

Apr. 27 – **Easter 2**, 11am, the sermon series “Encountering the Resurrected Christ: an exploration through art and story” begins.

Suggestions for washing feet (metaphorically)

Yourself	Family/friend/coworker/neighbour
Be with people who make you happy	Get them a favourite beverage, treat, or meal
Give yourself permission to rest	Send them a message letting them know you are thinking of them
Remind yourself you are doing your best	Celebrate exciting moments and/or triumphs
Get yourself a favourite beverage and/or treat	Do something unexpected – send a note, a gift, or reach out, just because
Give yourself grace when you don't get things done	Send a thank you note to someone who has helped you
Do something you really enjoy	Offer support if they are struggling or need help
Strangers	People in need
Smile, be polite, and patient. We don't know other people's stories	Have snacks to give to those on the streets
Buy a hot beverage for someone who is cold	Period products and toiletries are a vital and rarely available at food banks, donations are appreciated.
Tip generously, so often it can make a difference in the lives of minimum wage workers	Donate money or gently used clothing to the clothing cupboard
Help when you can: Hold the door. Help carry a load. Pick up something that has been dropped.	When shopping, pick up an extra item and donate it to the food bank. Donation bins are available in many stores.
Make space for people – in traffic, in lines, while walking. You never know who will appreciate the gesture.	Show support for marginalised groups. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."
Be nice to minimum wage workers. They are often undervalued and poorly treated.	Remember, there is no one we can meet that God doesn't already love. Then interact.
Community	Creation
Attend a community fundraiser, like the pasta dinner, and meet the community	Wait to clean up your yard to allow insects and bees to wake from hibernation
Donate blood if you are able	Use a reusable water bottle and/or thermos
Support local businesses, cafes, and restaurants	Use what you buy to eliminate waste
Support local charities	Avoid single use plastics, bring a reusable straw and cutlery when getting take out or fast food
Start a pay-it-forward next time you are getting a beverage	Carpool, walk, bike, or use transit. Go with a friend and make the ride even more special
Post messages of hope in the community	Pick up litter when you see it