

The Vine

February 2021



Ministry Team

Pastor

Pastor Greg Smith
403-464-8254 cell/text
pastorgreg@oursaviourchurch.ca



Office Assistant

Judy McDonald
office2@oursaviourchurch.ca

Office Hours:

The office is currently closed. Please email office2@oursaviourchurch.ca to arrange access to the building.

Our Mission:

We are an inviting and growing Christian presence, with a passion for living and sharing Jesus Christ.

Our Vision:

To be a Christ-centered community that Equips Disciples to Make Disciples.

Brent



Church Board 2020-2021

Brent Anderson

Alfred Forbrich

Kathy Gibson

Beverly Marshall

Iain McKay

Garry Mihaichuk—Chair

Bob Montgomery—Vice-Chair

Shirley Moule

Nick Perchthaler—Secretary

Brian Prunkle

Brian



Alfred



Nick



Kathy



Iain



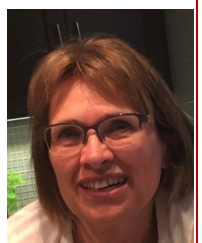
Garry



Bob



Shirley



8831 Fairmount Drive SE, Calgary T2H 0Z4

Facebook: Lutheran Church of Our Saviour

Website: www.oursaviourchurch.ca Instagram: lcos_youth



BEHOLD *I am doing* a new THING

NOW IT SPRINGS FORTH
DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT?

I will make a way
IN THE WILDERNESS
AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT.

ISAIAH 43:19

The Fertile Wilderness

The Bible is full of wilderness experiences. The children of Israel in Exodus. Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. And God's people facing the wilderness of exile in Babylon. Isaiah 43 speaks to the latter. God's people were invaded by an empire, defeated, and sent into exile. For seventy years they were away from their homeland, from everything they knew and loved. They were thrust out of their creature comforts and forced into an unknown existence. They were in a wilderness of fear and doubt. They lost their homes, homeland, and the centre of their faith life- the temple in Jerusalem. Life changed for them in ways they could never have imagined.

In the midst of their loss of what was familiar, God spoke a word of hope and comfort.

Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:18-19 NRSV)

Do not remember?

Part of their wilderness journey was to let go of the past. Don't look back. Forget.

The next part was to look forward to the future God was creating for them. He was making a way for them. He was carving a path for a new future. New life was springing forth, even as they trudged through the desert of discontent.

Fertility from futility!

What was this new life going to look like? They had no clue in the moment, but life had certainly changed. While there were many changes, I want to focus on one in particular: the way they gathered together as a worshipping community.

Until their captivity, the centre of worship was the temple. With large gatherings of people, coming together was powerful. But now, without it, what would they do? How would they gather? What grew out of this void was what we know today as the synagogue. Without the temple, no sacrifices could be made. The focus of worship was shifted from the sacrifice to the study of the Torah within smaller knessets or assemblies.

The knesset or assembly of Jesus (church) now finds itself in a pandemic exile. Unable to meet as we once did, we are forced to be the church in new ways. I believe God's words in Isaiah are as relevant today as they were during the Babylonian captivity.

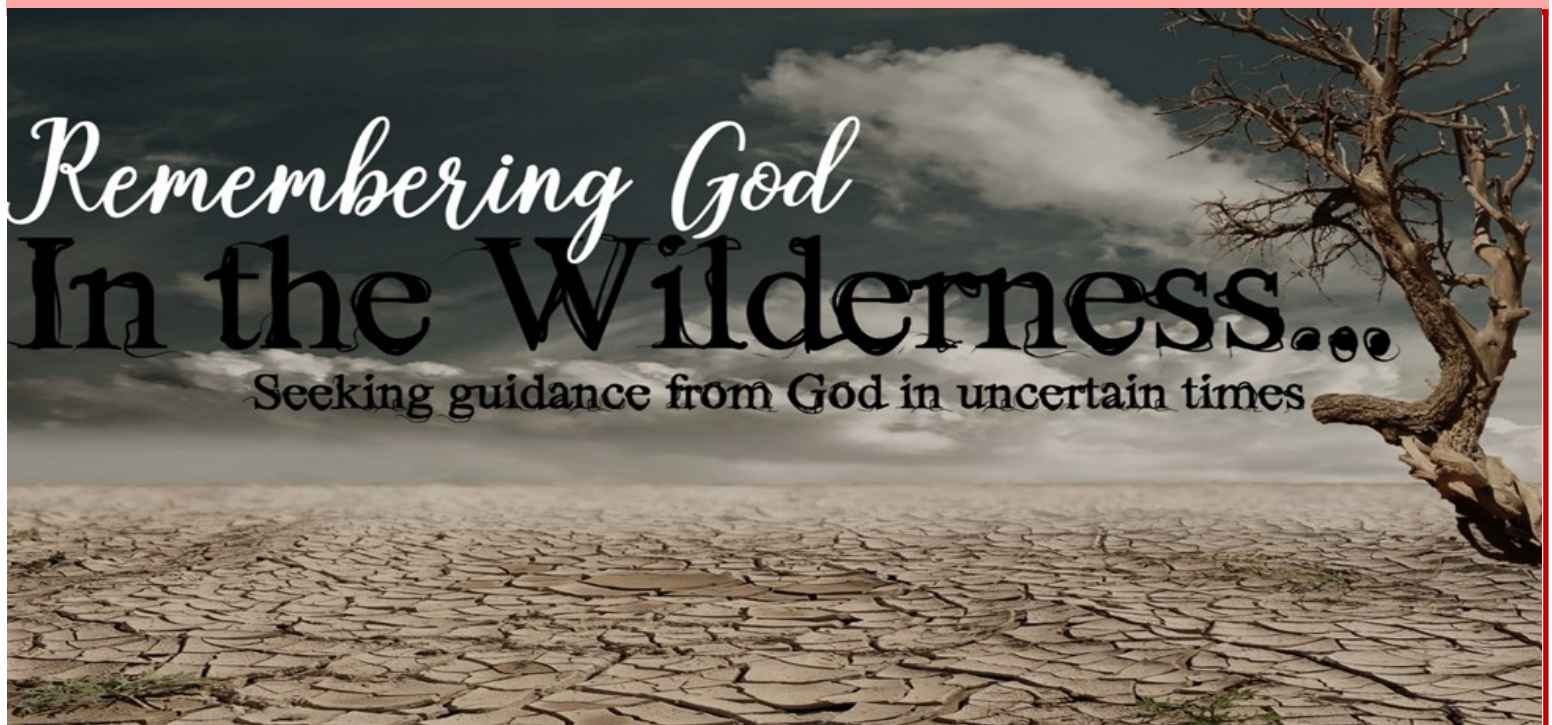
"I will make a new way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert!"

These are indeed difficult times. While we mourn what was, I invite you to look, pray and discern with me the new thing God is doing. He is providing for us a fertile wilderness!

Your fellow seeker of God's vision for tomorrow,

Pastor Greg





The Lenten Wilderness: A Season of Discernment

This Lent we will focus on seeking the Lord for guidance on our journey as a community of God's people. We will follow the lessons as guideposts for this season of seeking God during uncertain times. The readings for Sunday will be from the Old Testament. Each Wednesday, I will post online a midweek message called "CrossWords". It will be based on that week's Gospel reading.

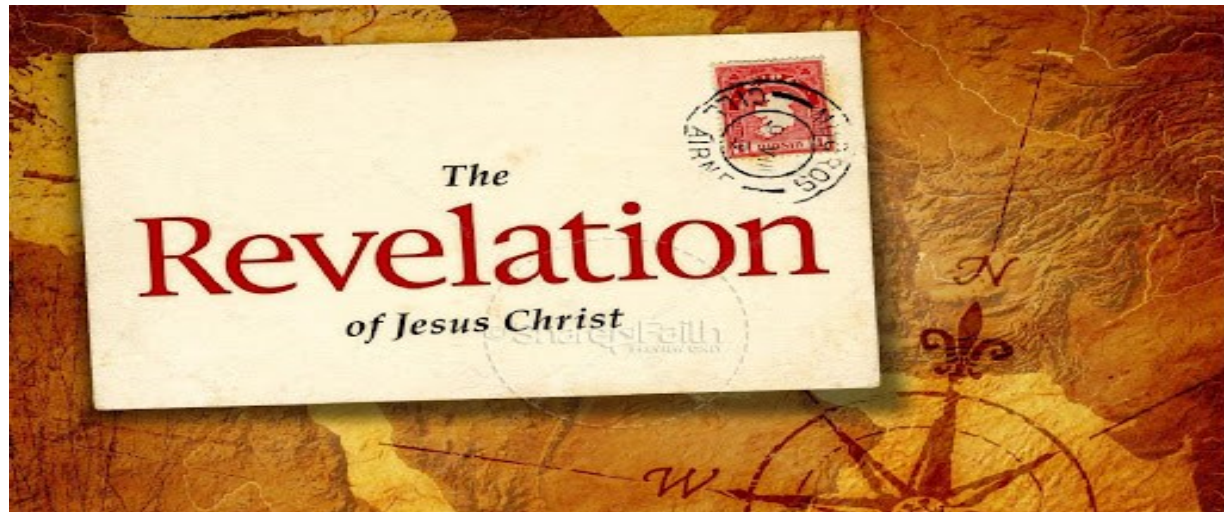
Due to COVID restrictions at the writing of this article, there will be no imposition of ashes within the sanctuary. The congregation will be invited to a livestream and drive-in service where they may simultaneously apply self-made ashes or water, making the sign of the cross on their forehead.

February 17 (Ash Wednesday)	Weeping.	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
February 21 (1st Sunday in Lent)	Water.	Genesis 9:8-17
February 28 (2nd Sunday in Lent)	Worship.	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
March 7 (3rd Sunday in Lent)	Word!	Psalms 19
March 14 (4th Sunday in Lent)	Why?!	Numbers 21:4-9
March 21 (5th Sunday in Lent)	Written.	Jeremiah 31:31-34
March 28 (Palm/Passion Sunday)	Weary.	Isaiah 50:4-9a

Taking the puzzle out of CrossWords

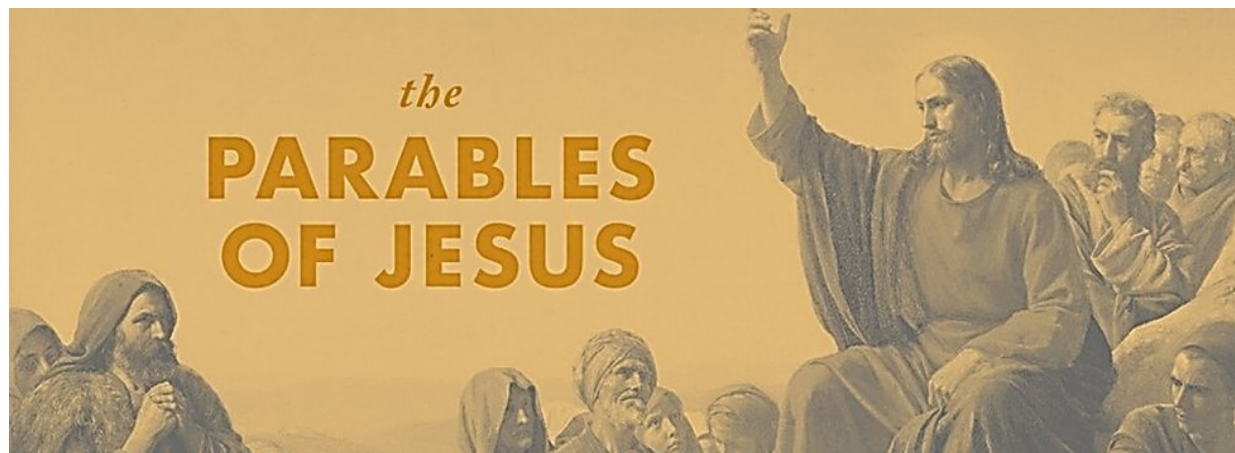
Wednesday, February 24	Wild	Mark 1:9-15
Wednesday, March 3	Wants	Mark 8:31-38
Wednesday, March 10	Whip	John 2:13-22
Wednesday, March 17	Whoever	John 3:14-21
Wednesday, March 24	Will	John 12:20-33

Revelation Bible Study



Discover this incredible book of Hope for our times. Classes meet via Zoom each Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm and Thursday morning at 10:00 am until February 11. Email office2@oursaviourchurch.ca for contact details.

Parables of Jesus Bible Study



Starting Wednesday, February 24, we will begin a new Bible study series on the Parables of Jesus. What was Jesus trying to convey in these earthly stories with heavenly meanings? Come and see as we “consider the lilies” and other stories our Lord told. As of this writing, all classes will be via Zoom only until further notice. Classes are Wednesday at 7:00 pm and Thursday at 10:00 am. We will not have Bible study during Holy Week. Email office2@oursaviourchurch.ca for contact details.

Board Report by Garry Mihaichuk

The Board continues to pray that this note finds all of you safe and healthy. We are all thankful for the start of the vaccination program for Covid and hope that you all are willing and able to receive it so we can return to some form of normal.

The Covid restrictions continued in January and has resulted in LCOS having to complete our Annual General Meeting virtually on February 7th. The congregation will receive all of the information in advance of the meeting and those that wish to vote in advance for the directors will be able to do so either by email or by paper ballots that LCOS will pick up. It is very important that all of our members be able to participate in the life of our church which is the reason for the offer to all members to vote.

We continue to live stream the services from the sanctuary and continue to broadcast over the FM 100.5 station at our 9:00 am and 11:00 am services. If there are comments on the live stream or the FM please contact Mike immediately by email at Michael.Mihaichuk@gmail.com. We also continued to provide a YouTube recording of the services when completed on Sunday afternoon. Since we are live streaming we will be able to conduct virtual communion so please be prepared with your own elements (bread and wine/juice) for that part of the service on the first and third Sundays of the month.

Pastor Greg provided some information on the outreach that our live streams and YouTube services have accomplished. The average attendance via livestream is 50 families at the 9:00 am service and 50 families at the 11:00 am service. In addition, there are an average of 50-100 families that view the recorded services on YouTube. The attendance is quite wide from Calgary to the east coast and as far away as Africa. This outreach capability was what caused Pastor Greg to recommend that the technology position is not only a Covid requirement but will be a new means of outreach after Covid. The Christmas Eve services were attended by 416 views which at an average of 2-3 people/view would result in an attendance of 832-1248 people which would put it as the highest attendances that LCOS has had on Christmas Eve!

The Annual General Meeting will provide the financial results for the year. We are very excited to announce that due to your generous donations and the great efforts to reduce our costs LCOS ended the year in a BALANCE of expenses to donations! Congratulations and thanks to all who made this happen.

With the cost reductions that Doug Drennan has put in place, we expect that our January expenses will be around \$18,181. Cliff Blumhagen reports that LCOS continued to have great support during the first half of January with donations to December 19th being approximately \$15,900. If we are able to receive an additional \$2,300 in donations during the last half of January we will end the year in a balance of expenses and donations for the month. Congratulations and thanks and please continue your support of our ministry.

The services continue to be made possible by a dedicated group of people: 1) Pastor Greg completes wonderful services in the church sanctuary; 2) the Praise Singers which you all see and hear each week from our sanctuary include: Doug and Joan Drennan, Yvonne and Beth Eberhardt, Reiko Formella, Alex and Terrylee McKay and Lisa Henderson; 3) the slide preparation by Lauren Dzikowski and Dorothea Schaab; 4) the videoing and editing of the worship services and running of the live streaming and FM by Mike Mihaichuk; 5) all decorations provided by Karen Smith and Wendy Mihaichuk and 6) Judy McDonald for her dedicated and excellent administrative work and care she takes. A large thanks to you all for providing us with essential spiritual food for our souls.

Board Report (continued)

The staff and a team from LCOS with over 50 members have ensured that every member is called each week, including Flock Care which continues to provide support on a safe and healthy basis. Pastor Greg and Judy McDonald have worked diligently to prepare the package contents and delivery and call systems. There are also volunteers who are delivering items to members when they are needed. One of the best aspects of this Covid19 situation is that we are bringing people closer together even though we are required to stay physically apart. Thanks to all those that are volunteering as it is greatly appreciated. You are a blessing to the congregation. If you do require any assistance please contact Pastor Greg at 403-464-8254 so he can co-ordinate.

Truly, 2020 became the *Tale of Two Cities* in which it was the best of times and the worst of times. Covid was the worst of times with illnesses and death steadily mounting over the year. However, at LCOS during 2020, we did not miss one Sunday service due to the pandemic. We also did not have any spread of Covid from member's participation at LCOS church services. We have technology that allows LCOS to provide a virtual service in many formats (live stream, YouTube and FM radio) which has not only maintained our attendance but has expanded it. LCOS now has viewers from across Canada and the US and even internationally! Due to the generous support of our members we have ended the year with a balance of donations and expenses! This is significant considering the budget for 2020 had a deficit planned of \$25,000. Pastor Greg and Jocelyn have been wonderful in these changing times and have been supported in the services, VBS and programs by the congregation and beyond! Thanks be to God for His answer to our many prayers for their arrival.

This has been quite a year and will be the last year of my service as the LCOS Board Chair. It has been an honour to have served in that capacity for the last 7 years of the 8 years I have been on the Board. My decision to leave was to provide renewal on the Board with a new Chair which will enable the organization to continue to evolve and grow with new ideas and leadership. I will be Past Chair in 2021 and will continue to assist Mike with virtual services by running the camera and sound system. Thanks to all the Board members and the congregation for your support over these many years.

I encourage you all to contemplate your role in God's life and your ways and means of sharing the gifts of Jesus with others. Many have provided their time and talents in the congregational life and activities and also in a diverse set of outreaches into the community and the world. I wanted to single out a few individuals who made this year possible. Pastor Greg, Mike Mihaichuk, Judy McDonald, Alex McKay and Dorothea Schaab who made the services possible, Jocelyn Smith who planned and ran a very successful virtual VBS program, Alex and Terrylee McKay who led the Praise Singers and put in endless hours on the music, Doug Drennan and Cliff Blumhagen for their financial stewardship and Nick Perchthaler who provided us with Covid processes for in-church services which kept us all safe.

The Board continues to be concerned about the health and welfare of all of you in the congregation especially during these times. We are also dedicated to continuing the viability and spiritual strength of the LCOS family. Please keep up your contacts in a healthy and medically safe manner but please continue. If you have questions for the Board please send them to Nick Perchthaler electronically at nperchthaler@shaw.ca or over the phone at 587-437-8511.

Board Report (continued)

Again, I thank each person that shared your God given talents in such a visible way to our congregation.

Our challenge is to continue to grow and be in mission to others.

May LCOS's ministry be a blessing to our community and beyond!

Please stay safe and we look forward to the day when we can again meet as a family in God's house.

God bless you all.

Yours in Christ

Garry Mihaichuk

Board Chair

Volunteer Opportunities

As we continue our ministries safely, from a distance, volunteers are often needed to drop off material to those in our congregation who do not have email access. If you feel that this might be something you would enjoy helping with kindly contact Judy at office2@oursaviourchurch.ca.



Altar Care is a special ministry that sets up the Sanctuary for Holy Communion and much more.

If you feel that this type of ministry may be for you please feel free to contact Karen Smith at 403-271-1472 or Marg Hall at 403-256-4786.

Prayers Chain Ministry is always ready to receive prayer requests.

Information is kept strictly confidential.

If you are interested in assisting with this important ministry new volunteers are welcome.

Contact Linda Joehnck at 403-279-3770 or email office2@oursaviourchurch.ca.



faiith

LAB @ HOME

Season 2



Virtual VBS was such a success, we want to offer the experience throughout the year with our Virtual Sunday School Program.

There is so much flexibility with this program. You can do it on Sunday or whenever it fits with your family's schedule. And LCOS will cover the licensing cost. It will be like VBS all year!

Contact Pastor Greg if you would like to sign up your family at
pastorgreg@oursaviourchurch.ca or 403-464-8254.

Our 2021 Worship Team

Alex



Dorothea



Mike



Jocelyn



Doug



Yvonne



Beth



Terrylee



Joan



Lauren



Scott



Reiko



Submitted by Cliff Blumhagen, Financial Secretary

If you are able to contribute to the church, the following are options for giving:

Interac e-transfer:

Donations are made to email address: donate@oursaviourchurch.ca. There is no service charge to the church for this giving method and generally there is no service charge to the giver.

PAR Program Giving:

The Pre-Authorized Remittance program (PAR) gives the option to give monthly directly from a bank or credit union account. There is a service charge of \$0.50 per transaction to the church for this giving method and generally there is no additional service charge to the giver. If you sign up by February 01, your monthly donation would begin February 20. Please contact the Financial Secretary Cliff Blumhagen (403-936-0419 or blumhagencg@gmail.com) to get a PAR sign up form and with any questions.

Cheque:

You can mail or drop off a cheque to the church. There is no service charge to the church for this giving method and the usual service charge for writing a cheque will apply to the giver. However, bank trips are limited at this time and it may take several weeks until cheques are deposited at the bank.

Online Giving (via credit or debit card **):

Donations are made via the following secure link: <https://onrealm.org/LutheranChurchofOurSaviour/give/now>. There is a service charge of \$0.50 per transaction plus 2.3% of the amount given to the church for this giving method and generally there is no service charge to the giver. When giving there is an opportunity to give an additional amount to help defray the transaction fees to the church.

****NOTE:** to give via debit card, the card must have a CVV code (on the back of the card). This is like the code on the back of a credit card. ******

Text Giving (via credit or debit card):**

Donations are made by texting LCOSGive to 73256 followed by the donation amount. There is a service charge of \$0.50 per transaction plus 2.3% of the amount given to the church for this giving method and generally there is no service charge to the giver. When giving there is an opportunity to give an additional amount to help defray the transaction fees to the church. In addition, standard text message and data rates may apply to the giver.

****NOTE:** to give via debit card, the card must have a CVV code (on the back of the card). This is like the code on the back of a credit card. ******

LCOS is using a new system called REALM to track member and friend information and giving information.

Access is via: onrealm.org/LutheranChurchofOurSaviour.

Individual logins can be set up for anyone who has an email address listed in the REALM system. An individual login allows view and update capability of personal information. As well, giving information can be viewed anytime. If you would like a login, please contact Cliff.

The quarterly giving statements for quarter 4 were generated in early January and distributed via email to givers with an email address on file.

**** NOTE:** if you have an email address and did not receive an email with your statement, check your Junk or Spam folder in the event it was directed there. ******

For givers who do not have an email address and are getting The Vine delivered to their residence, the quarterly giving statements were delivered along with The Vine.



Submitted by Cliff Blumhagen (continued)

Each giver is assigned a 'Giving Number' which appears on statements. This number is the same as your 'Envelope Number' if you had a set of offering envelopes in 2020.


If you did not have a set of offering envelopes you have been assigned a random 'Giving Number'.

For anyone who had a set of offering envelopes in 2020 and have not been assigned a set for 2021, your 'Giving Number' will be changed. Statements in 2021 will show the new 'Giving Number'.

If you received a set of 2021 offering envelopes and your envelope number for 2020 was between 126 and 200, you were assigned a new set number for 2021. Your 'Giving Number' has also changed to be the same as the new 'Envelope Number'.

If you are currently signed up for the PAR program and submitted a pledge for 2021 which is a different amount, you need to complete a PAR Amount Change form. Please contact Cliff for one.

You can contact Cliff at blumhagencg@gmail.com or 403-936-0419.



loving

These words of Isaiah 58 echo down to us across the centuries. Although the culture, language, and millenium of our time are radically different, the message is no less pertinent.

We live in a world where the problems seem overwhelming: world hunger, homelessness, epidemics--and these are just a few of the headlines on the front page. We are distressed by all the problems facing us.

Being faithful stewards of all we have been given is a loving response. Generosity is necessary for our gaps in society to be filled. Sharing our time, talents, and money empowers all of us to build paths of life. Imagining with the Holy about a future time when humanity will reflect the hospitality of God can inspire us to action, reflecting the divine image that is within each of us.



faithful
hopeful
loving

Share your food
with the hungry.

Invite the homeless
into your house.

Put clothes
on the ill-clad.

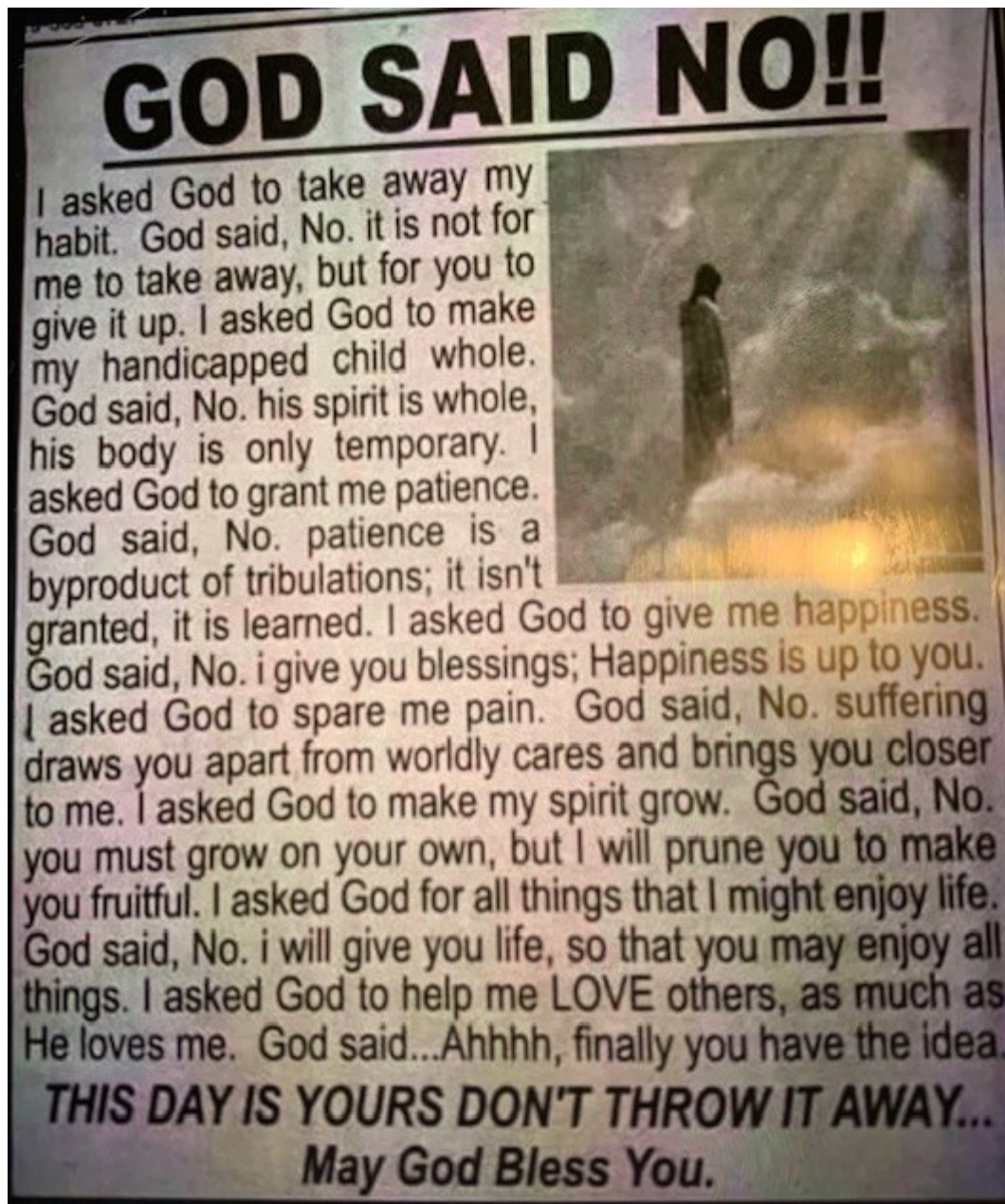
©2019 Ecumenical Stewardship Center.

I came across this reflection from GOD and have read it several times. I see myself in these situations. I ask God for help. Well the answer is NO, but a positive NO, because God has an answer to my request. The solution is up to me.

During the 40 days of Lent I plan to keep this reflection on my open Bible on the coffee table. It is God's smile speaking to me.

It is said that it takes 7 times to hear or read something before the message sinks in. Hopefully on Easter Sunday, April 4th, I will see myself more clearly and most of all, praise God for His blessings that He gives me each day thru my trials and tribulations.

I read Psalm 16 this morning during my devotional time and verse 11 came flying out at me. "You will show me the way of life, granting me the JOY of Your presence and the pleasures of living with You forever".



A quick update on James Cook in Bobcaygen, Ontario my cousin informed me that James is going to Sunnybrook Hospital in a short while to have surgery done on his disfigured face. Remember he was severally burned last year.

Also I have my sister, Margaret, and her husband, John, on our prayer list. They live in Scarborough, Ontario. John has had a rare cancer for the past 10 years. He has had surgery, radiation and chemo several times. He has 3 oncologists attending to him. Presently he is on immunotherapy. He is very positive, but very weak. On December 5th our family was informed that my sister, Margaret, has end stage cancer. It has been so very difficult for our families as Covid has restricted any visits to their home. My other sister, Mary, oversees a hot supper delivered from our families each day.

Please pray for their peace and comfort . It is a very sad story. Two of their little grandchildren live here in Calgary and their daddy, Mike, has been with his mom and dad since December 9th. The older brother, Phil, lives in Whitby but is not allowed in the home, as he sells dishwasher disinfectants and soaps to restaurants in downtown Toronto. They visit at the front door.

Patricia Kaack





**Canadian
Blood
Services**

BLOOD
PLASMA
STEM CELLS
ORGANS
& TISSUES

Your donation matters

It matters to every patient across Canada.
Because it's something we can do today to help
others wake up healthier tomorrow.

Donate blood

Delta Calgary South

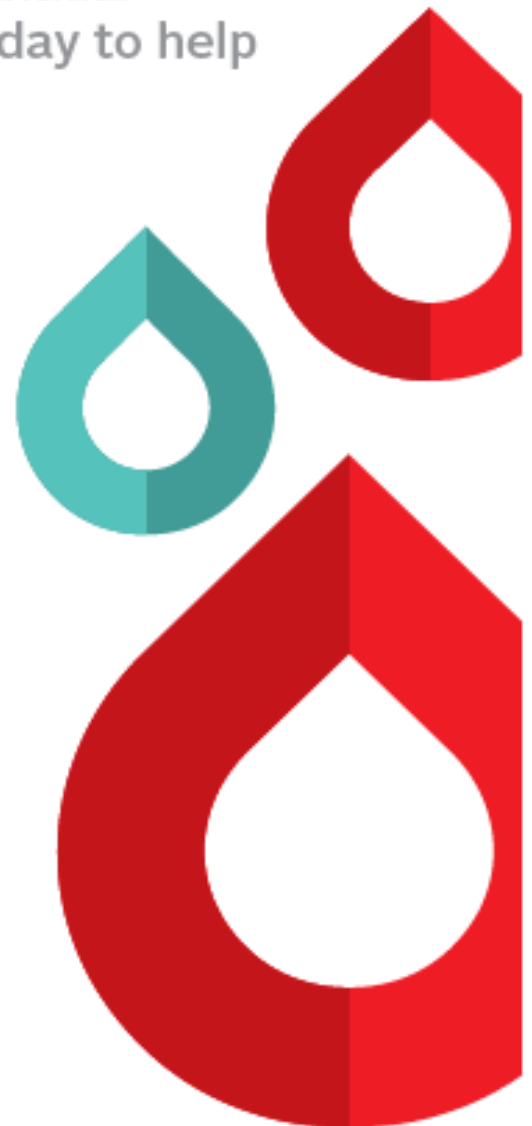
135 Southland Dr SE

Friday, February 26

3:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Internal Location: Bonavista Room
Tower Building

Donor Event - 125 donors needed
Appointments are required during Covid-19



Join **Canada's Lifeline**

Visit **blood.ca** to learn more.





The Brenda Strafford Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence has a mandate to contribute to the creation of a safe community for abused women and their children through quality services and in collaboration with community resources.

The Brenda Strafford Centre provides:

- * 34 self-contained second stage shelter apartments*
- * 51 self-contained affordable housing units*
- * Individual and group counseling for women and children*
- * Weekly support groups for women and children*
- * Basic needs support*
- * Scheduled and respite childcare*
- * Follow-up and outreach*
- * Housing referrals*
- * Child & youth programs*

Again this spring LCOS needs your donations of new pillows for the Brenda Strafford Centre. The Centre is also in need of large children's diapers, baby wipes and laundry detergent (liquid & pods).

**Pillows will be accepted at the west door of the church from
1:00 - 3:00 pm on the
following Saturdays.**

March 6, 13 & 20





February 2021 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

The Gospel according to Mark does not begin with angels, a prophetic dream, or a miraculous birth. Instead, the gospel writer hurls us, ready or not, into a lonely and barren wilderness – a desert – where everything either bites or burns or stings.

As Jesus emerges from the baptismal water, the heavens are ripped open, the Spirit descends like a dove and the voice of God proclaims, “You are my Son, the Beloved, in you I am well pleased.” And immediately, Jesus was driven out – hurled out – into the desert to be tormented by wild beasts and tempted by evil. (Mark 1:1-12)

It’s not exactly what you would expect, is it? God was pleased, even well pleased with him. And yet, he was hurled from affirmation and love into a desert-like wilderness of sand and heat and wild beasts and temptation.

Experts say deserts are formed under unique climactic conditions. Maps show that they cover about 25% of the earth’s surface. Globes indicate that they are found only between specific latitudes. That is what the experts say. But we know the truth about the wilderness, don’t we?

The truth is that sometimes – no matter where we live or how far we travel – the wilderness is all we can see. Despite weather reports or average rainfall charts, we find ourselves in the wilderness: blinded, sunburned, dying of thirst.

This desert can feel so familiar that we name every shriveled plant, every venomous snake, every blistering ray, every irritating grain of sand. Sometimes, the wilderness feels a lot like home, a lot like now, and what we’ve experienced this past year.

The single mom, stretched so thin that she almost disappears, knows the desert of exhaustion and guilt. The rejected child, watching silently outside the playground, knows the desert called loneliness. The ill, newly aware of test results and consultations, know the desert of fear and uncertainty. The grieving, now alone, know the desert of unwanted solitude. Parishioners, reeling from scandal, know the desert of a trust betrayed.

The truth is, deserts are not found only in Africa, or in Nevada, or in the Sinai Peninsula. Some of the harshest wildernesses are not marked on any map. They lie just around the corner, or in your living room, in the very heart of your life.

But there is something more about the wilderness – something more that Mark wants us to hear: Jesus has been there first. Here is the Good News of Mark’s opening scenes. No

Bishop's Message (continued)

wilderness is so remote, barren, inhospitable, or filled with danger that Jesus has not walked there first.

And Jesus' presence here reminds us something else: despite all appearances to the contrary, the wilderness is filled with life. A handful soil swirling in the hot wind can be filled with hundreds of seeds, waiting for a chance to bloom. That withered plant still has living roots deep underground. That landscape, empty in the harsh light of day, comes to life in the moonlight with reptiles and insects.

Even at its most desolate, the wilderness is ready to bloom at the first sign of life-giving water. Maybe that is why the scriptures speak of the wilderness as a place for discovery and transformation.

And there is more: the angels waited on him. Jesus is not alone. He is cared for in the wilderness, receiving sustenance and nourishment.

And this is our experience too – for in the wilderness of our 40-day Lenten journey, and over this past year – we have also been given sustenance: the Word, the Eucharist, community, family, opportunities for service and action.

This Lent finds many of us traveling through the wilderness, wrestling with demons and tempted by evil. We may feel like we have been thrown out into the wilderness. Some people might look upon this journey and despair.

But we know the truth about the wilderness, don't we?

In Christ Jesus –
Shalom,
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Communion Drive-In Worship Services 100.5 FM 9:00 & 11:00 am Live Stream Services 9:00 & 11:00 am YouTube Service 12:00 noon Virtual AGM	8	9	10 7:00 pm Revelation Bible Study via Zoom Praise Team Practice and Worship Taping	11 10:00 am Revelation Bible Study via Zoom	12	13
14  Drive-In Worship Services 100.5 FM 9:00 & 11:00 am Live Stream Services 9:00 & 11:00 am YouTube Service	15	16 7:00 pm Board Meeting	17 Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm Live Stream Service Drive-in Service	18	19 March Vine Submission Deadline	20
21 Communion Drive-In Worship Services 100.5 FM 9:00 & 11:00 am Live Stream Services 9:00 & 11:00 am YouTube Service	22	23	24 7:00 pm Bible Study via Zoom Praise Team Practice and Worship Taping	25 10:00 am Bible Study via Zoom	26	27
28 Drive-In Worship Services 100.5 FM 9:00 & 11:00 am Live Stream Services 9:00 & 11:00 am YouTube Service						