

BUC COFFEE & CHAT

Welcome friends. The next two editions of our newsletter will focus on Lent. We hope you use these resources to deepen and enrich your Lenten experience. Pour yourself a cup of coffee and let's chat.

A MESSAGE FROM REV. RITA

The term “boot camp” originated in and around World War I when a slang term “boot” began to be used to refer to an inexperienced enlisted man. Basic training became known as boot camp. These days you don't have to join the military to experience a boot camp... you can encounter them in various areas of life.... a particularly rigorous exercise regimen, a period of training before a new job, or even an intensive retreat for personal or transformation. People often sign up for a boot camp of one sort or another as a way to change the lives they are living. By Christian tradition, the 40 days and 6 Sundays before Easter, the season of Lent is like a boot camp for the soul.... It is an intentional opportunity to reflect upon the changes we need to make in order to restart our spiritual lives and realign our words and actions more closely with the teachings of Jesus.

Whenever I read the poem “The Summer Day” by Mary Oliver.... The last lines of that poem always reminds me to pause and take a breath, and encourages me to not take anything for granted and to reflect

upon my own life and what needs to change in the way I live it.

The Summer Day

By Mary Oliver (1935-2019)



*Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the
black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean-
the one who has flung herself out
of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of
my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and*

*forth instead of up and down-
who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly
washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the
fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.*

***Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too
soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?***

Sometime we let fear, self-doubt, guilt, regrets, disappointments, or wounds tame our life. Every time we try to control life, guarantee outcomes, or live within the boundaries of what is safe and predictable we tame our lives. And when our lives are tamed, regardless of how that happens, we live less than who we truly are and what God wants us to be.

Right now, for some of us, life feels confined and quite tame in the midst of this pandemic and the current public health

restrictions.

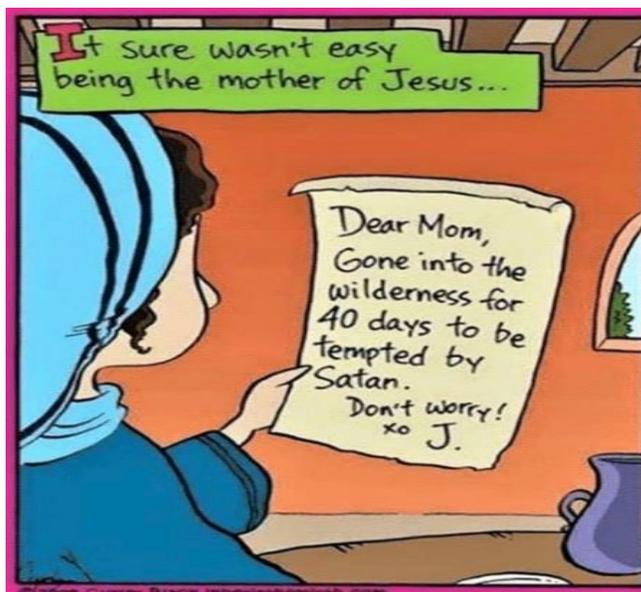
When I feel that way, I ponder Mary Oliver's question "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" You might even let that question be your Lenten discipline and practice this year. Ponder what it means to live a wild and precious life. Give up the things that domesticate and devalue your life. Recognize and recover what is of ultimate value and importance.

A Personal Devotion

If I am going to store up anything, My God,
Let it be memories of occasions when I've loved
fully,
;et it be instances when I've forgiven or asked for
forgiveness,
Let it be good times with friends and generous times
with strangers,
Let all that loving, forgiving, joyfulness and
generosity pileup;
Let the heap of it reach the heavens and me with it.
Amen

- From *Minutes for Mission*, United Church of Canada

A LITTLE HOLY HUMOUR



DIY Lenten Candle

Display & Devotional

Pictured to the right is a simple and inexpensive candle display from thelittlesandme.com that you can make yourself. Unlike Advent where a new candle is lit each week and the light slowly gets brighter, during Lent each week gets progressively darker, until there is complete darkness on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday all of the candles are lit as we celebrate the best news ever that He is risen! Isn't that such a profound visual?! As you walk through Lent and Holy week, the candles will visually remind your family of the powerful truth that "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). While it may have seemed on Good Friday that all hope was lost, Sunday is coming. *Hallelujah!*



HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 7 Candles — We used 6 purple and 1 white (to symbolize Jesus, the Light of the World), but you can use whatever candles you have
- Tray — we used this wooden tray to remind us of the cross, but any tray will do!
- Sand: I bought decorative sand at the dollar store for a few dollars.
- Rocks (Head outside on a nature walk to find some or you can also use decorative ones)
- Optional: Devotional to read each week. (I have provided one on the next few pages that I have adapted from one I found on processandfaith.org, but any that you like would work.

HOW TO ASSEMBLE YOUR LENTEN CANDLES:

Step One: Carefully pour the sand into the tray

Step Two: Use a spoon to smooth out the sand into an even layer

Step Three: Arrange the candles on top of the sand

Step Four: Add the rocks (and take a minute to marvel at the fact that if we won't praise Him, the rocks will — Luke 19:40)

Using the candles is incredibly simple. On Sunday of each week, pair lighting your Lenten candles with a short devotional.

I pray that as your family uses the Lenten Candles each week, you would encounter Jesus in a powerful way and the truth of the gospel would sink deep into your hearts.

First Sunday in Lent

Meditation:

I come this morning seeking renewal—in worship and in spirit, with my community of faith. In the past, we've greeted one another, laughed and hugged. But now the time of reflection and stillness is upon us. It is the first Sunday in Lent—the season for journeys of the heart. Close your eyes. Be still. Listen. We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and death. We do this not to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred center of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus Christ—that God is in each and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss you have endured and offers you the promise of transformation. It's an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

Second Sunday in Lent

Meditation:

On Sunday morning, for a brief space of time, we leave behind the world of home and work and school—the world where we have our lists of things to do, activities to participate in, tasks to complete. We come seeking something else. We come here seeking a shift—from the ordinary to the sacred, from doing to being. Close your eyes. Let go of your list. Recall that it is the season of Lent. Remember the parable of the sower. The sower throws the seed . . . and where it lands determines if it will grow or not grow. Think of it this way: think of the season of Lent as the sower, the time when seeds of faith are thrown with special intensity, as a time when God calls to us in a low, urgent voice. Listen. Jesus is being drawn to Jerusalem. Where is God calling you to? What is God calling you to do?

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injury done to the Earth and its ecosystems.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to your presence. Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take on the work of transforming the world. Amen.

Third Sunday in Lent

Meditation:

There is so much during the day that clamors for our attention. Friends, family, work, classes, household tasks. And the noise! We are bombarded with sound, from the clock that awakens us to the telephone, the radio, the television, the conversation that we have or overhear. Where is the time and place to listen for the still, small voice of God? Sometimes it seems that God would have to speak in a whirlwind to be heard above the clamor! Listen now. There is a place of quiet rest, and it is the place where God dwells within you. Close your eyes. Be aware of the place. In Lent we journey to the parts of ourselves known only to God, beneath the clamor. Let the story of Jesus reach us there. Let it teach us wisdom in our secret hearts.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of violence in the world and to the Earth.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: Draw us together in your love, O God. May our restless hearts not resist you, but continue to search until they find their rest in you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Meditation:

It's Sunday again. Last week, with all its demands, is over. The coming week, with yet another round of challenges and demands, is not quite here. I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment. No matter where you are in your thoughts and feelings—relieved about what you have accomplished, anxious about what's left undone, concerned about people or projects—no matter where you are in your journey this day—I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you right now, in this moment, whether it be joy or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward. When it is fully present, then listen . . . for God is present in these moments, too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely toward transformation.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain caused by the lack of basic needs—lack of food, of shelter, of education, of healthcare, of love.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray:

All: Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call upon you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise—that you are working with us in the moment-by-moment unfolding of our lives. Amen.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

When we are able to meet in the church building, we arrive and enter into the normal bustle of a church on a Sunday morning: friends greeting each other, choir members getting their robes, children bringing their energy and enthusiasm. Imagine all of us sitting together in the pews, I invite you to close your eyes . . . and consider the word, “sanctuary.” A sanctuary is a place set aside for sacred things. It is a place of refuge and protection. This room is a sanctuary. The season of Lent is a kind of sanctuary, extended in time. And one of the things Lent teaches is that you, too, are a sanctuary. There is inside you a place for sacred things, a place where God abides.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of war and oppression in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in our quiet places and then lead us into the work of justice and peace. Amen.

Sixth Sunday in Lent/ Palm Sunday

We have listened Lord, week after week, seeking a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to close your eyes and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem. How will you greet him? Will you follow him all the way to the Cross? The power of Jesus is that he lived what he taught, even when it led to his death. He lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient Judea that conspire to put it out. Where are you in this drama? What are you willing to risk to follow Jesus?

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbors; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.



Good Friday

Never doubt the meaning of Lent. It happened a long time ago, but it happened. Jesus walked on this earth. He practiced a ministry of radical inclusivity, drawing to himself all the despised and rejected members of society. He lived what he taught: a life of justice and love, of profound compassion for all people. He lived a life acceptable to you, O God. His death terrifies us, because it reveals how committed the world is to its own way, and the price the world exacts from those whose commitment is to you.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of all the children in the world who suffer in body, in mind or in spirit.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray: What we contemplate this night is beyond words, beyond understanding. May the Holy Spirit intercede for us and give voice to what, for us, is inexpressible. Amen.

Easter

Proclamation

The light which the world tried to extinguish cannot be put out. Today we light the candles again, proclaiming the transforming power of God. As the light returns, we give thanks that God's transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us. Today we celebrate: new life, new joy, new possibilities. Christ is alive and living among us!

As we light the candles, we acknowledge that there is still pain and suffering in the world, but we place our trust in God and in the way shown by Jesus Christ. In the midst of darkness, there is light. In the pain of death, there is life. In the face of what appear to us to be overwhelming odds, God is at work in us and in the world, working for justice and peace, compassion and love, and life abundant. Christ is risen; Christ is risen in us, for wherever we gather in his name, he is there.

(All candles are re-lit.)

Alleluia, Christ is risen; Christ is risen indeed!



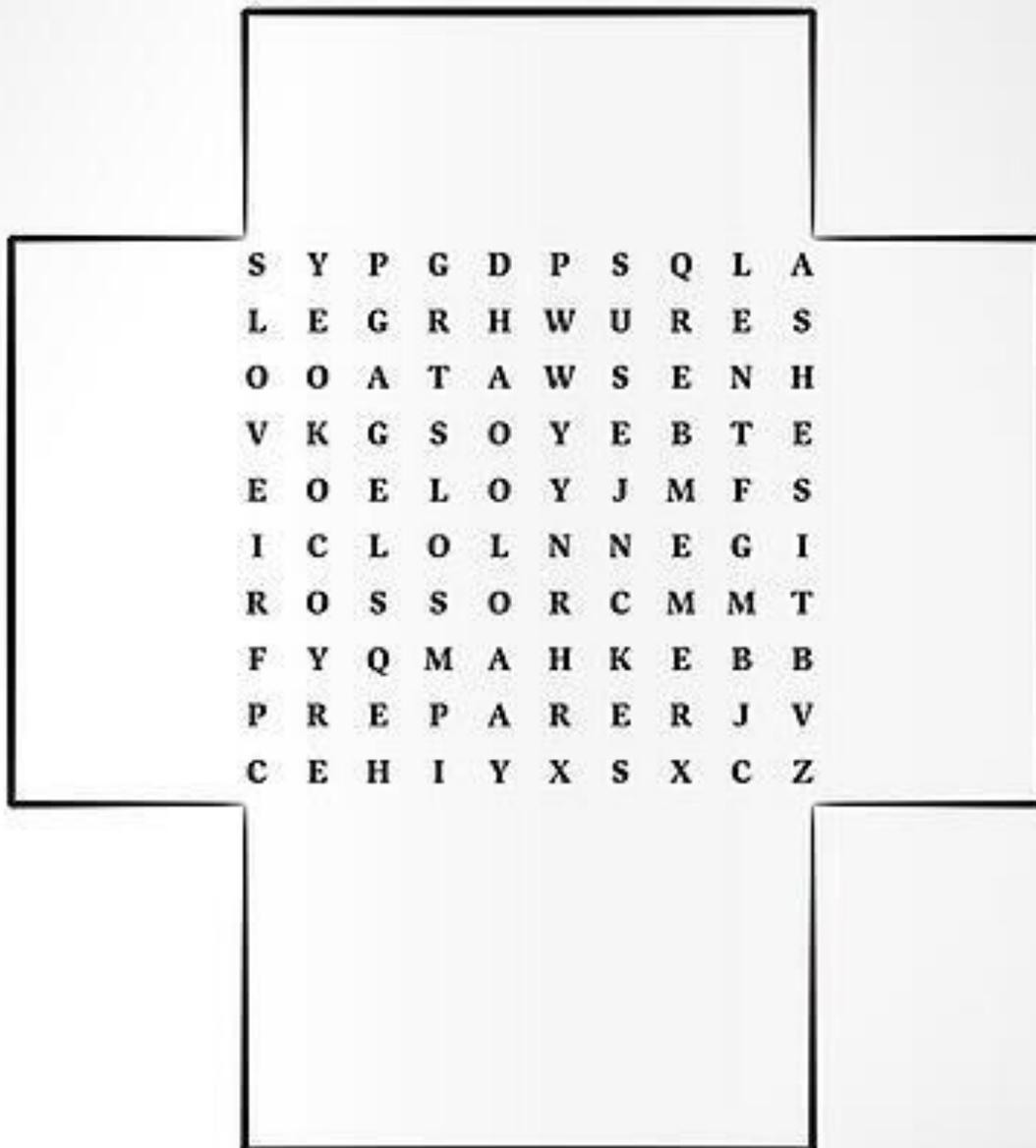
hallelujah

The word "hallelujah" is written in a vibrant, cursive script with a color gradient from orange to yellow. It is surrounded by several small, colorful dots in shades of orange, red, and yellow, scattered around the text.

Find the following words hidden in the puzzle.



Lent	remember	season	love	ashes
cross	prepare	follow	pray	Jesus



Easy Homemade Soft Pretzels
Yield: 12 pretzels



Ingredients

- 1 and 1/2 cups (360ml) warm water
- 1 packet active dry or instant yeast (2- 1/4 teaspoons)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar or granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter, melted and slightly cool
- 3 3/4 - 4 cups (460-500g) all-purpose flour, plus more for work surface
- coarse sea salt for sprinkling
- Baking Soda Bath: 1/2 cup (120g) baking soda, 9 cups (2,160ml) water

Instructions

1. Whisk the yeast into warm water. Allow to sit for 1 minute. Whisk in salt, brown sugar, and melted butter. Slowly add 3 cups of flour, 1 cup at a time. Mix with a wooden spoon (or dough hook attached to stand mixer) until dough is thick. Add 3/4 cup more flour until the dough is no longer sticky. If it is still sticky, add 1/4 – 1/2 cup more, as needed.
2. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead the dough for 3 minutes and shape into a ball. Cover lightly with a towel and allow to rest for 10 minutes. (Meanwhile, I like to get the water + baking soda boiling as instructed in step 6.)
3. Preheat oven to 400°F (204°C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Silicone baking mats are highly recommended over parchment paper. If using parchment paper, lightly spray with nonstick spray or grease with butter. Set aside.
4. With a sharp knife or pizza cutter, cut dough into 1/3 cup sections.
5. Roll the dough into a 20-22 inch rope. Take the ends and draw them together so the dough forms a circle. Twist the ends, then bring them towards yourself and press them down into a pretzel shape.
6. Bring baking soda and 9 cups of water to a boil in a large pot. Drop 1-2 pretzels into the boiling water for 20-30 seconds. Using a slotted spatula, lift the pretzel out of the water and allow as much of the excess water to drip off. Place pretzel onto prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle each with coarse sea salt. Repeat with remaining pretzels. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.
8. Remove from the oven and serve warm (with spicy nacho cheese sauce or honey mustard dip.) Pretzels may be stored in an airtight container or zipped top bag for up to 3 days (they lose a little softness).

DID YOU KNOW?

Pretzels were first baked during Lent because they can be made with only water, flour, and salt. The shape came from a posture of prayer, with arms crossed and hands on opposite shoulders. A monk made dough into this criss-crossed shape, and the pretzel was born! Try our simple and delicious

BUC COMMUNITY NEWS

Thank you to everyone for your continued prayers and financial donations

If you have news you'd like to share in the next newsletter please email the details to Angela at balzacunitedchurch@gmail.com or call her at 587-229-3878.



Peter Poohkay will be 100 years old on March 15th and we are encouraging everyone to send him a card. A few years ago, Norma and Peter moved to Lethbridge to be closer to family. Norma passed away on December 27, 2020. Peter's address is:
Room 205 2687 Garry Dr W Lethbridge, AB T1J 5A3

Our thoughts go out to the family and friends of Edith Anderson who has passed away in February. Edith would have been 102 in March.

March Dates to Remember:

March 7: 3rd Sunday in Lent

March 14: 4th Sunday in Lent; daylight savings time ***move your clock forward 1 hour.**

March 21: 5th Sunday in Lent

March 28: Palm Sunday



Below, you will find some of my favorite lesser known days, worth celebrating this March.

- March 5: World Day of Prayer
- March 8: International Women's Day
- March 21: International Day of Forests
- March 22: World Water Day
- March 31: Manatee Appreciation Day

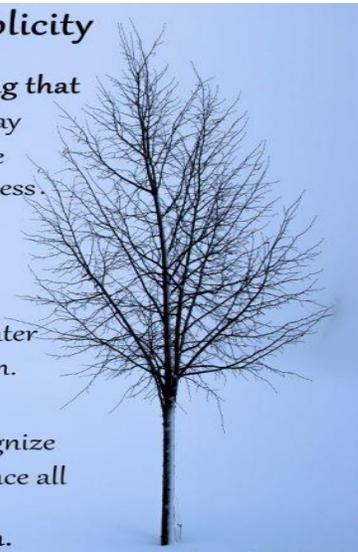
A Prayer for Lenten Simplicity

Free me, Lord Jesus, from anything that obstructs my way to you. Clear away the clutter of petty grudges. Remove smudges of resentment and bitterness. Cleanse me of thoughts filled with anger envy, or self-pity.

Create space in my life for more kindness and less spitefulness, greater generosity and stronger compassion.

Enlarge my heart with a spirit of gratitude this Lent, so that I recognize the simple gifts that lay in abundance all around me.

In your sacred name, I pray. Amen.



www.ShareCatholic.com

Color the picture below, clearing your mind of all the daily “clutter.” Notice and enjoy God’s presence in your day.

