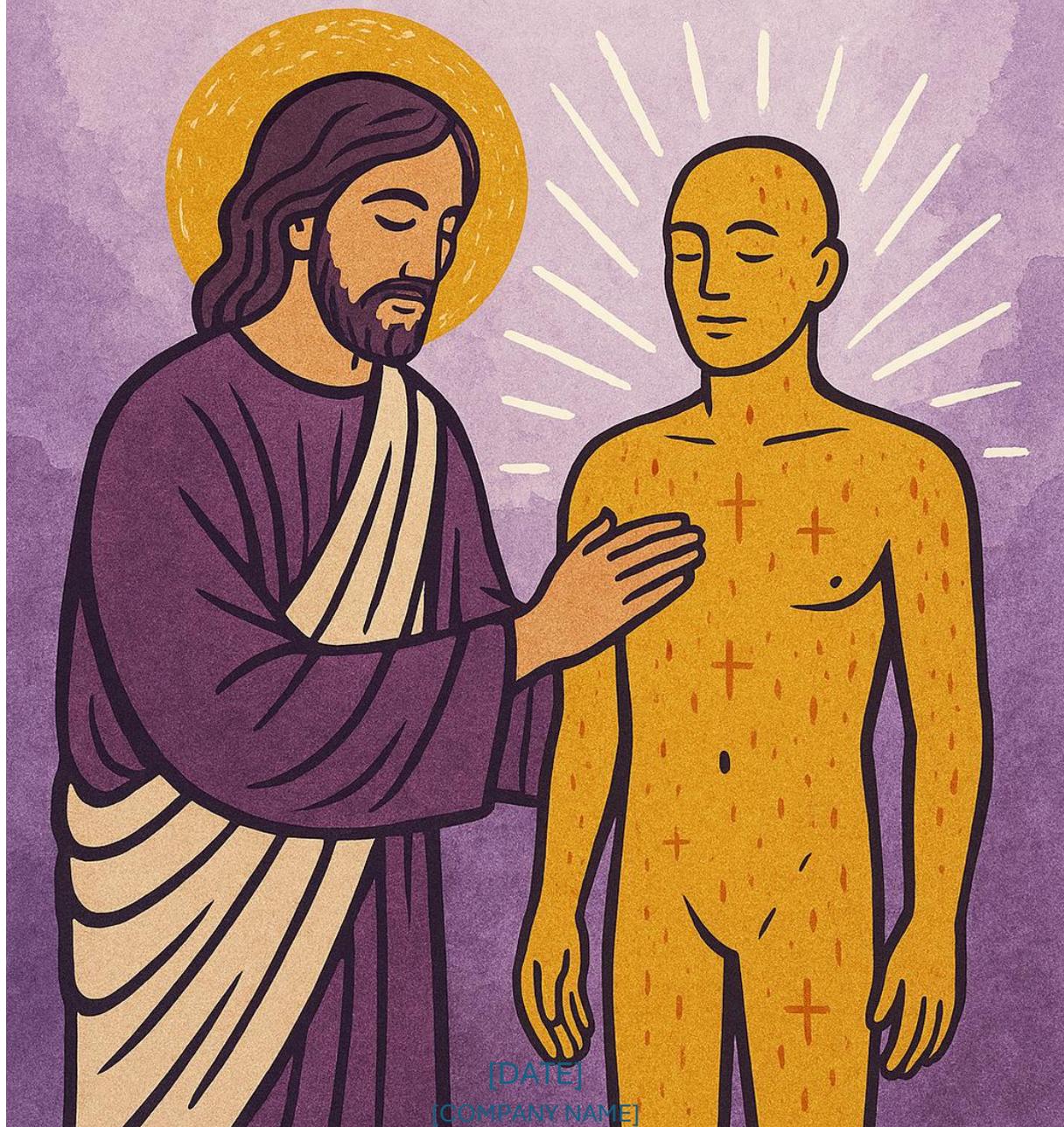


LENTEN SEASON RESOURCES
2026

GOD RECREATING HUMANITY



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LENTEN RESOURCES 2026

GOD RECREATING HUMANITY

Navigating Together as One Ocean Family

We embark on this Lenten journey as a church – responding to the Archbishop’s Charge to the 42nd Diocesan Synod – called to navigate and discern a way forward together. Hence Lent should not only be a liturgical observance—it must become a *Kairos* moment, a sacred window of time in which God invites us to pause, reflect, and allow His Spirit to reshape us as individuals and as a Diocese.

Under the theme **“God Recreating Humanity,”** we journey as penitents united in prayer, Scripture study, reflection, meditation, fasting, and acts of charity. Lent

Lent traditionally has been a wilderness journey, but we are invited to see that wilderness through the lens of our Ocean Spiritualities. In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God hovers over the deep, consecrating the waters and transforming chaos into creation. That same Spirit now calls us into the vastness of our oceanic identity—an identity that transcends borders, boundaries, and colonial definitions of smallness. Lent becomes an invitation to step into sacred ocean spaces where the Spirit flows freely, dissolving the limits we have inherited or imposed upon ourselves to realise our true potential as a church and people of the ocean.

We are not five separate churches scattered across five island nations.

We are one Ocean family, navigating the same waters—sometimes turbulent, sometimes calm—yet always moving toward the promised horizon where resurrection meets us like the place where ocean touches sky and earth meets heaven.

Our theme this year is inspired by the prayer of King David in Psalm 51:10–12:

*“Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”*

David’s cry becomes our collective prayer. Lent calls us to examine our lives and ministries with honesty and humility—to acknowledge where faith has grown thin, where fear has replaced courage, where we have resisted risk, and where we have ignored the Spirit’s prompting. It is a time to allow God to break open what has become rigid, to heal what has been wounded, and to reshape what has lost its purpose.

This season challenges us to draw deeply from our *Ancient Intelligence (AI)*—the wisdom of our ancestors, our stories, our oceanic worldview, and the spiritual knowledge embedded in

our cultures. With the Spirit of God, we are invited to deconstruct the boundaries and borders that have defined us, to reject colonial perceptions that diminish us, and to reclaim our true identity as a people of the Ocean—vast, fluid, interconnected, and resilient.

Lent becomes a journey of re-creation:

- where our human nature is exposed and renewed,
- where our identities are clarified and strengthened,
- where our characteristics and values are reshaped,
- where our ministries are re-envisioned,
- and where our collective purpose as a Diocese is rediscovered.

As we travel together across the ocean of this Lenten season, may we allow God to recreate us—individually and communally—so that we may emerge as a church that is relevant, responsive, courageous, and united. A church that reflects the vastness of the ocean that shapes us. A church that moves with the Spirit who hovers over the waters. A church that journeys together toward resurrection, where new life awaits.

May this Lent be a season of deep transformation as God recreates humanity—beginning with us.

ASH WEDNESDAY REFLECTION

*“remember, you are dust,
and to dust you shall return”*



Sentence of the Day

Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

Collect of the Day

Almighty and merciful God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all who are penitent;
create in us new and contrite hearts,
so that when we turn to you and confess our sins
we may receive your full and perfect forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Amen.

Ash Wednesday has a way of unsettling us. It speaks with a bluntness that Scripture rarely softens: *“Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*

At first hearing, it can feel like a reduction—almost an insult. Human value, human complexity, human longing, human brilliance... all collapsed into a heap of ash.

And yet, the story that gives rise to this declaration tells a far more layered truth.

Adam—*humanity*—is shaped and formed from the **adamah**, the earth, the soil, the ground. We are not merely *from* the earth; we are literally *of* the earth, earth shaped by God’s own hands in His **tselem** (image) and **demut** (likeness, resemblance, and similarity in function).

We are molded from the soil to be vessels of God’s divine breath, created to share in His dominion as custodians and caretakers of the earth. Our calling is to emulate the very functions of the ground from which we were formed—ground that nourishes, births, sustains, and enables life to flourish.



The Dean of the Holy Trinity Cathedral imposes ashes on students at the Holy Trinity Primary School in Suva

We are of the ground and formed from the ground so that we might become conduits of blessing for the whole of creation. This vocation is clearly spelled out in Genesis 1:15 and the instructions of verses 16–17—commands we failed to keep, resulting in the cursing of creation itself.

Ash Wednesday's declaration is not a dismissal of human worth. It is a reminder that our worth has always been God-given, never self-generated.

We are dust, but we are not *merely* dust.

We are dust infused with the breath of God.

Lent invites us back into the sacred moment of Genesis 2, to the place where God formed us with intention. Back to the **adamah**,

where His fingerprints first shaped us.

During Lent, God does again what He did in the beginning:

- He reshapes what has become rigid, numb, or indifferent to others.
- He reforms what has been distorted.
- He recreates what has been broken.
- He breathes life into what has grown lifeless.

Marking our foreheads with ash in the shape of a cross and hearing the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return," does not make us less human. Through prayer, reading and study of scripture, reflection, meditation, fasting, and acts of charity, we allow ourselves to be recreated into the *Adam*—the humanity—God intended. A people whose values, character, and nature reflect God's original purpose.

The paradox of being told we are nothing but dust becomes an invitation into humility. Because we are breathed into, we are called to hope and to bring hope to the poor and the marginalised, the least and the last in the family of creation. Because we will return to dust, we are urged to live wisely and encouraged to surrender our wills to the hands that formed us, that He may shape us once more.

Dust is not the end of the story.

Dust is the very fabric or material God delights to work with.

May we use this season of Lent to invite our creator to kneel once again beside the earth of our lives, place His hands upon us, and begin the holy work of forming us anew.

Readings: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 / Psalm 51:1-17 / 2 Corinthians 5:20b - 6:10
 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

1st SUNDAY IN LENT REFLECTION

Sentence of the Day

We do not live b bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God,

Matthew 4:4

Collect of the Day

God, you know better than we the temptations that will bring us down. Grant that our love for you may protect us all foolish and corrupt desire. Praise to you our God; you answer prayer.

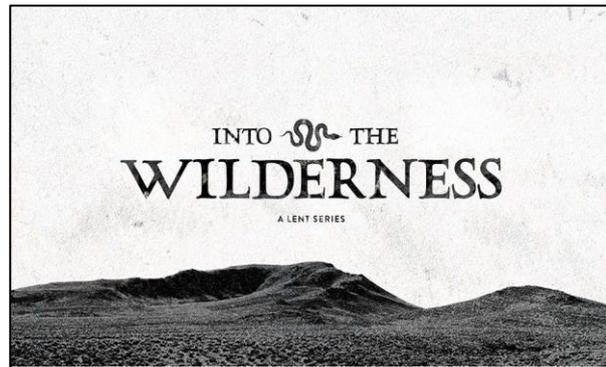
Amen.

Here we are again, embarking on another Lenten journey that traditionally began on Ash Wednesday, but involves penitential prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Christians who observe Lent focus on repenting of their failures and sins, acknowledging their need for God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. The call is more than just for the individual, but a call for the whole Church or the community of faith to repent and seek God's face. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Lent is also a time for preparations of candidates to be baptized. It is a time when instructions of Godly living are to be instilled in the hearts of those who are going to be admitted into the family of God, the Church. This brings Baptism as part of the Great Vigil on Easter Eve, which ended with the sprinkling of the worshippers as a reminder of their Baptism.

It is really a time of deep reflection, and we are led to be very uncomfortable as a test of our faithfulness to God, and we must take note and learn to realize the areas where we are most vulnerable. Many times, we fall into temptations and fail ourselves, and especially fail God in our lives. The question/s we should be considering seriously have to do with our faithfulness to God and our need of God so that we say no to the temptations that test our allegiance to God in Jesus.

Today's readings put before us images of humanity and the areas of human weaknesses. We saw that in the story from Genesis, when Adam and Eve fell when they believed the devil. They wanted to be like God. They have lost their innocence and hid from God; they began the blame game, only to blame someone else for their failure and disobedience. The Psalm puts before us the inner feeling when we hide our sins from God; instruct us on the way forward to restore the favor of God and the mere joy of relief when we receive God's Forgiveness. The Epistle is clear that our Hope is in Jesus, whom God sent that we may have



READINGS: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Psalms 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11

life, and in Jesus we are restored to our rightful place with God if we genuinely believe and trust in HIM.

The Gospel is Matthew's version of the Temptation of Jesus. Here, Jesus is never free from temptation. We learned that these three experiences of Jesus in the wilderness are no ordinary individual human temptations. They are very similar or, in fact, drawn from the experiences and the temptations of Israel in the Old Testament.

- a. We see that Israel was allowed to starve in order to learn complete dependence on God, but fails to do so. (Deuteronomy 8: 1 – 9:22)
- b. Israel is commanded to keep its special relationship with God, serving him alone in driving out the heathens and in not compromising with their idolatry, but once again it fails to do so. (Deuteronomy 6: 13; 7:5)
- c. Israel doubts the power of God, putting him to the test by compelling Moses to force his hand (Deuteronomy 6:16), for which Moses is then refused to enter the Promised Land. (Deuteronomy 32: 48 – 52).

We come to realize in these Old Testament passages that God tested the faithfulness of His people. Temptation does not come from God. Temptation always comes from the devil. The first two temptations play on the very strength that Jesus has just received at his baptism: "You are my son, my beloved one", was the voice from God at Jesus baptism. The devil uses the idea very well, whispers the demonic voice; if you really are God's son, surely, he can't want you to go hungry when you have the power to get food for yourself? Surely you want people to see who you are? Why not do something spectacular? Notice then, dropping the apparent logic, the devil comes out very boldly: forget your heavenly father. Just bow down and worship me, and I'll give you power, greatness like no one else has.

Jesus sees through the trap. He answered the devil directly, quoting from the scripture. Jesus is committed to living off God's word; trusting God completely without giving the devil any opportunity to put God on the spot. He is committed to loving and serving God alone. The biblical texts Jesus used as his key weapons help us to see how this remarkable story fits into Matthew's gospel. As alluded to above, they were all taken from the story of Israel in the wilderness. Mathew is saying that Jesus has come to do what God had always wanted Israel to do – to bring light to the world.

We all face temptations, day by day and at critical moments of decision and vocation in our lives, which may be different from those that Jesus faced, but they have the same point. They are trying to entice us into sinning. The enemy will do everything possible to distract us and thwart God's purpose.

As God's children, we are to use the same defense as the Son of God used. Keep the scripture close in our hearts, and know how to use it with confidence. Keep our eyes on God,

and trust him for everything. Remember our calling, to bring God's light into the world, and declare "NO" to the voices that lure you back into the darkness.

Guiding Questions for Reflection, Discussion and Meditation

1. *How can you cultivate a similar reliance on God's Word and a deep trust in him in the time of your own temptations and challenges?*
2. *How do the temptations of you encounter distract you from your calling and purpose as a follower of Jesus*
3. *Considering the third temptation, "Bow down and worship me." How often do you find yourself in those situations?*

You may bring some other question/s and continue to ponder and deeply reflect on them. Think of ways in which we should equip ourselves with the word of God that we wear as armor of God to withstand the temptations and challenges that we face daily.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy".

2nd SUNDAY IN LENT REFLECTIONS

Faith and Obedience Allows God's Re-Creating Works in Our Life



Lent session is a journey, a journey away from the familiar world or from all our comfortable zone which surround us. It is about deepen our faith, turn away from our un-believing practice and move forward with trust and believe in Gods'

1. He was called to leave his country and go to the land that will be given to him; (vs. 1). For 75 years in a place and been call to a totally unknown; what could that mean to us today?
2. He will be blessed and sources of blessing to others (vs. 2). Trusting the promise of God and obedience to his command

Abraham left his home, family, and security based only on a promise, not knowing where he was going. We are called to trust God even when the future is uncertain. Like Abraham, we are called to leave old, comfortable ways of life and follow, regardless of age or circumstances allowing re-creation in our spiritual journey.

The story of Nicodemus in John's gospel is also a story of a journey begins with faith and obedience. Although his (Nicodemus) roles and position in his community, he visited Jesus at night and having a desire on Jesus's teachings and principles. His action is an indication of a beginning of a transformation in his life although his knowledge concerning laws and his Jews belief. In responding to his visitation, BORN AGAIN, Nicodemus heard something that confuse him and at the same time drive him to explore more about his faith journey. While he may have been timid, this visit represented the beginning of his new journey towards faith in Jesus and prepared to live a life which Jesus has been demonstrated as he has witness and believe.

providence. In this Lenten journey we as the church are all invited to take our spiritual life seriously and allow God's word to re-create us.

Our readings, Old and New Testament (Genesis & Gospel of John) show us that God's call can come in the most surprising places, and at the most surprising times. And how people respond to that call has consequences far beyond their expectations and imaginations.

In the book of Genesis chapter 4, the calling of Abram was a calling trying to testing whether he loved his place, friends and families or whether he could willingly leave all, to go along with God. At the age of 75,

The stories of Abraham and Nicodemus, though separated by thousands of years, both offer profound lessons on faith, obedience, surrender, the necessity of divine intervention, and stepping out of comfort zones to follow God. Both as an adult, stepping out of comfort zone and rely on God's provision can be a challenge in this Lenten session.

We are challenged to consider the faith of Abraham and Nicodemus; from fearful safety to faithful risk and from rigid understanding to spiritual rebirth. Together, they offer a message of trusting God's promises over human logic and leaving comfortable, fruitless habits to follow Jesus.

The words of the Psalmist can be a good reminder and the foundation in relation to the life of Abraham and Nicodemus. It's a reminder for our decision to follow Christ whom our help come from and who made heaven and earth. If we seek Him, He will guide our steps, keeps us from danger and preserve our soul from the temptation of evil. What is great news for us in this lent journey that would be?

Like Abraham and Nicodemus, we do not know why we have been called, where we were being called to, and what the consequences were of responding to that call, even when the future looks uncertain or insecure, no matter what age we are. All we are asked to do is to respond in faith and to be faithful. And in our faithfulness, we can pray that the God who has called us, the God we respond to, will use that call and response for his own great purposes for the Church, for humanity, for the world, and for His kingdom.

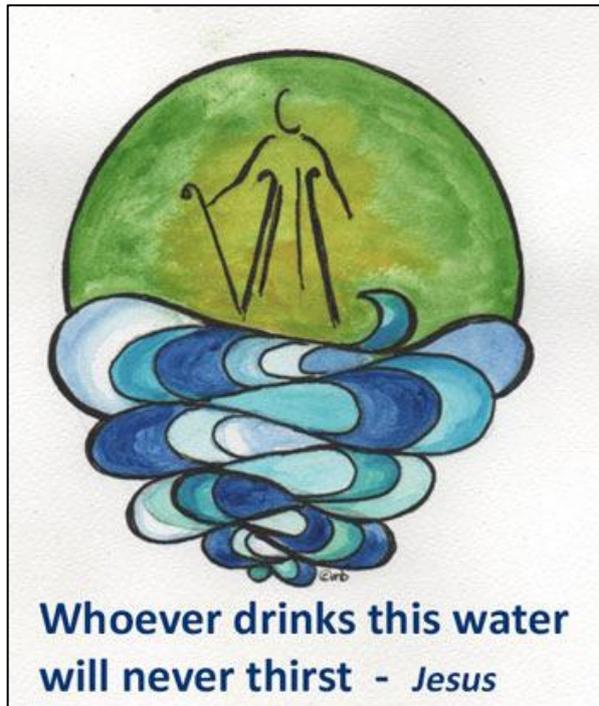
May this Lenten journey allow us to make more space for self examination and reflection so that we can stand before God, ask for forgiveness, trust and obey his command and wait for direction recognising that it is a journey of grace that leads to the joy of Easter. Amen

Reflection of the week

- *Prayerfully reflect on our own faith. Consider what it has/may cost you to be faithful followers of Christ*
- *Consider your comfortable zone which you need to come out with as hindrance to your spiritual journey.*

3rd SUNDAY IN LENT REFLECTIONS

“God’s Living Water: Re-creation in the Wilderness.”



Sentence of the Day

‘The water that I will give,’ says the Lord,
‘will become in you a spring of water
welling up to eternal life.’

John 4:14

Collect of the Day

Give us grace and courage to hope, and to
risk disappointment.

Teach us to pray expectantly,
and when our prayers seem to fail,
bring us to pray again and again;
for you are our God,
who acts, and will act again.

Hear this prayer for your love’s sake.

Amen.

Lent and indeed our life together as the Church invites us into a deeper truth that “God is not merely sustaining us but rather God is re-creating us.” What does that mean?

From the very beginning, life begins not on dry land, but in water. In Genesis 1:1-2, the Spirit of God hovers over the face of the deep, bringing order, meaning, and life from what is formless and chaotic. This is the first pattern of God’s work: creation begins in the midst of emptiness, and life emerges when God draws near.

This same pattern unfolds in the wilderness with the Israelites. In Exodus 17:1-7, the people stand at Rephidim (v.1), recently freed from slavery in Egypt, yet not yet transformed. They have crossed the Red Sea and walked away from oppression, but their hearts are still shaped by fear, memory, and mistrust. When the water runs out, their confidence falters, and they cry out, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (v.7) Their thirst exposes what lies beneath the surface: vulnerability, doubt, and physically, they are free, but their hearts and minds are still shaped by years of oppression.

God does not respond with anger or judgment. Water flows from the rock, not because they have earned it, but because God is forming a new people (vv.5-6). This is re-creation in its earliest form: God patiently reshaping a community that is free in body but still learning to live in trust. Just as God’s Spirit once moved over the deep in Genesis, so now God’s presence moves through the wilderness, transforming emptiness into life.

This theme of re-creation finds its most intimate expression in John 4:5-42. The Samaritan woman comes to Jacob's well at midday (vv.5-6), burdened by the shame of broken relationships (v.17), social exclusion (v.9), and a life marked by unmet longing. She comes for water, but she encounters something more profound. Jesus speaks to her thirst, offering living water that will not only quench but transform (vv.10, 14). Jesus sees her truth, not to condemn her, but to re-form her desire and her identity. In this encounter, she moves from isolation and avoidance to connection and mission. God's re-creating work begins within her and flows outward, just as the Spirit in Genesis brought life from the waters.

Both of these stories in Exodus 17 and John 4, reveal a God who does not wait for perfection, who does not demand achievement before offering life. In the wilderness, in the well, God meets people where they are, in thirst and uncertainty, and patiently shapes them into a new humanity. Creation is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing movement, repeated whenever God restores life where chaos or emptiness threatens.

Lent calls us into this same pattern. It leads us into wilderness and thirst, not to punish us, but to make us open to God's re-creating presence. Just as the Israelites were formed by water flowing from the rock, and just as the Samaritan woman was re-formed by the living water Jesus offered, we too are called to allow God to shape us anew. God meets us in our vulnerabilities, our doubts, our brokenness, and invites us to trust, to surrender, and to be made whole.

As people in the Pacific where ocean surrounds us and it is our living waters, carrying life, shaping our identity, and connecting us across islands and generations. To say "we are the ocean" is to acknowledge that we are made for movement, for trust, for relationship, and for abundance. Just as God hovered over the waters at creation, just as God brought life from the rock in the wilderness, just as God offered living water at the well, God continues to move in our lives today, restoring, re-forming, and re-creating us in ways we cannot fully see.

Creation did not end in Genesis. It continues in the wilderness, takes flesh in Christ, and flows still in our own lives. Lent invites us to return to the deep, to admit our thirst, and to trust in the God who makes life emerge from emptiness and scarcity, to the abundance of life and new humanity from hearts still learning to trust. God is still creating, still re-creating, still offering living water, and we are called to immerse ourselves in it, to let it reshape and recreate us, and to share it with the world around us.

Questions for Reflections and Bible Studies

1. In both Exodus 17 and John 4, God meets people in moments of thirst, emptiness, or uncertainty. How might this invitation to honesty and openness change the way we live in our communities?
2. Looking at both stories from Exodus 17 and John 4, how do these stories help you understand the difference between God sustaining us and God actively re-creating us? Where in your own life might God be calling you to let go of control and trust in this ongoing re-creation?
3. How can we, as a church and as a community, embody this "ocean spirituality," allowing God's re-creating work to flow through us for the renewal of our relationships, our environment, and our mission?

4th SUNDAY IN LENT REFLECTIONS

Sentence of the Day

'I am the light of the world,' says the Lord; 'those who follow me will have the light of life.'
John 8:12

Collect of the Day

God of unchangeable power,
when you fashioned the world
the morning stars sang together
and the host of heaven shouted for joy;
open our eyes to the wonders of creation
and teach us to see all things for good,
to the honour of your glorious name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Amen.

Reflection: Christ Our Light and the Season of Re-Creation

Lent always begins with a call to return—return to God, return to truth, return to the deepest purpose for which we were created. Yet this return is never made in darkness. Scripture reminds us that we journey through Lent under the radiance of Christ, the One who proclaims, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” His light does not simply illuminate our path; it reveals who we are meant to become.

Light in Scripture is never passive. It exposes, clarifies, purifies, and transforms. When Jesus declares Himself the Light of the World, He is not offering a gentle glow for comfort alone. He is announcing a divine force that confronts the shadows within us—our distorted desires, our harmful habits, our misplaced priorities—and invites us into a new way of being. Lent, then, becomes the season in which we willingly step into that light so that God may reshape, reform, and recreate us.

From the beginning, God has been a God who forms and reforms. In Genesis, He bends toward the earth, shaping humanity from the dust and breathing His life into us. That same creative breath continues to move through the world, and Lent is the sacred time when we allow that breath to move through us again. It is the season when God takes the raw material of our lives—our routines, our values, our relationships, our inner landscapes—and begins the holy work of refashioning them according to the likeness of Christ.

To follow Jesus, the Light of the World, is to allow His radiance to redefine our norms and values. His light reveals what we have ignored, neglected, or justified. It exposes the places

where we have settled for less than the fullness of life God intends. But His light does not shame; it heals. It does not condemn; it calls. It does not destroy; it recreates.

Lent invites us to stand honestly in that light. Through prayer, fasting, generosity, and reflection, we make space for God to reshape our character—softening what has grown rigid, cleansing what has become polluted, and strengthening what has grown weak. We allow Christ’s light to reorder our desires, so that what we seek, love, and pursue aligns more closely with the heart of God.

To be reshaped by Christ’s light is also to become light for others. Jesus does not only declare Himself the Light of the World; He tells His disciples, “You are the light of the world.” Lent is not merely about personal transformation. It is about becoming people whose lives illuminate hope, justice, compassion, and truth in a world that often prefers shadows. When Christ reshapes our values, we become bearers of His radiance—people whose presence brings clarity, warmth, and direction to those around us.

This season, we are invited to let the light of Christ shine into every corner of our being. We are invited to let God recreate our nature, redefine our norms, and renew our values so that we may reflect His brilliance more faithfully. Lent is not a journey into darkness but a pilgrimage toward deeper light.

May this season be for us a time of holy re-creation. May Christ, the Light of the World, illuminate our path, transform our hearts, and make us radiant with His life, so that we may shine with His love in a world longing for light.

LENTEN DISCUSSION GUIDE

Walking in the Light of Christ

This guide is designed to help individuals or groups move more deeply into the themes of transformation, re-creation, and illumination during Lent. Each section includes a brief prompt, the reflection question, and guiding points to help spark meaningful conversation or personal insight.

1. Stepping Out of the Shadows

Reflection Question:

Where in my life am I still choosing to walk in shadows—habits, attitudes, or patterns I avoid bringing into the light of Christ—and what might God be inviting me to see, heal, or release during this Lenten season?

Discussion Prompts:

- Consider the difference between *unintentional darkness* (things we are unaware of) and *chosen shadows* (things we avoid confronting).
- Reflect on how Jesus' light is not harsh or condemning but healing and revealing.
- Share (as comfortably as you wish) areas where God may be nudging you toward honesty, courage, or surrender.
- Explore how stepping into the light can feel vulnerable, yet ultimately freeing.
- Discuss practical ways to invite Christ's light into daily life—through prayer, Scripture, silence, accountability, or spiritual practices.

Guiding Insight:

Lent is not about shame; it is about clarity. Christ's light reveals not to wound but to restore.

2. Allowing Christ's Light to Reshape Us

Reflection Question:

How is Christ's light reshaping my values, priorities, and ways of relating to others so that my life becomes a clearer reflection of His compassion, justice, and truth in the world?

Discussion Prompts:

- Identify values or priorities that may have drifted from the way of Christ—busyness, self-protection, comfort, or cultural norms.
- Reflect on moments when Christ's light has challenged your assumptions or invited you to see others differently.
- Discuss how being "light to the world" is less about perfection and more about presence, integrity, and compassion.
- Explore how Lent can be a season of re-ordering—placing God's desires above our own preferences.
- Consider what Christ-shaped values look like in your home, workplace, relationships, or community.

Guiding Insight:

Transformation is not only internal; it radiates outward. Christ reshapes us so that His light may shine through us.

3. Participating in God's Work of Re-Creation

Reflection Question:

In what concrete ways is God calling me to participate in His ongoing work of re-creation—allowing Him to reform my character, renew my nature, and redefine my norms so that I may become a source of light for those around me?

Discussion Prompts:

- Reflect on the Genesis image of God forming humanity from the earth—what does it mean for God to “reshape” you today?
- Consider which aspects of your character God may be refining: patience, humility, courage, forgiveness, generosity, or compassion.
- Discuss how spiritual disciplines (fasting, prayer, almsgiving, Scripture reading) open space for God's creative work.
- Explore how being “re-created” equips you to bring light into places of darkness—family tensions, injustice, loneliness, or despair.
- Share one concrete step you feel called to take this Lent to cooperate with God's forming hands.

Guiding Insight:

Lent is not self-improvement; it is divine craftsmanship. God reshapes us so we may carry His light into the world.

5th SUNDAY IN LENT REFLECTIONS

“God’s Season of Re-creation Amid Death and Loss”

Sentence of the Day

‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ says the Lord;
‘whoever lives and believes in me shall never
die.’ *John 1:25-26*

Collect of the Day

God in Trinity, Creator,
Saviour, Giver of life and truth,
reveal the possibilities within us,
that we may attain to the fullness of our
humanity.

Hear this prayer for your love’s sake.

Amen.

READINGS: Ezekiel 37:1-14 / Psalm 130 / Romans 8: 6-11 / John 11: 1-45

Lent unfolds within the larger biblical story of a God who recreates humanity. From the first breath given to dust in Genesis 2:7, to breath returned to dry bones (Ez 37:1-14), to the Spirit dwelling within human bodies (Rom 8:6-11), God’s response to death has never been abandonment but renewed creation (Jn 11:1-45). Again and again, God does not simply repair what is broken or restore what was lost. God creates again. Lent slows us down enough to see that recreating work, not by avoiding death or rushing past loss, but by standing honestly where life feels absent and trusting that God is already at work there, is at the heart of God’s action in the world.

The slowing down leads us into places we would rather avoid: silence, failure, grief, and the unsettling awareness of our humanity. Lent refuses to soften death or explain it away. Instead, it places us right in its presence and asks us to stay and fully attentive. In that exposed space, the biblical witness speaks with one voice: God recreates humanity precisely where death appears most complete. This is the rhythm of Lent and it is what our readings reveal so clearly of a God who brings life out of what seems utterly lifeless.

Our first reading from Ezekiel 37:1-14 shows this most powerfully. The prophet is carried by the Spirit into a valley filled with bones (v.1). Not recently dead, not mourned, but forgotten, very, very dry (v.2). The bones are named as the whole house of Israel, a people shaped by exile and convinced their hope is gone and their future cut off (v.11). This is not simply physical death; it is the death of identity, purpose, and belonging. God does not ask Ezekiel to diagnose the problem or imagine solutions. God asks a single question that remains through Lent: Can these bones live? (v.3) Ezekiel does not answer with confidence or



despair, but with surrender (v.4). Life returns only when God's word is spoken and God's breath enters what was lifeless (vv.9-10, 12). Creation begins again the same way it did in the beginning, not through human effort, but through divine breath. What appeared beyond recovery becomes the very place where God starts over, revealing that God's recreating work transforms even the most desolate valleys into new life.

Psalm 130 gives voice to what it feels like to stand in that valley. "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord" (v.1). This is the prayer of a people who know what it means to be overwhelmed, by guilt, by consequences, by waiting that feels endless. The psalm does not rush toward comfort. It remains in confession and longing yet refuses silence. Waiting itself becomes an act of faith. The psalmist trusts not because rescue is visible, but because forgiveness is possible. Relationship with God is not severed by the depths. Lent teaches us that lament is not the opposite of faith, but the language of those who believe God can recreate what feels lost.

Paul in Romans 8:6-11 moves the story inward, from communal despair to the orientation of everyday life. Paul speaks to a community living between resurrection and mortality, learning how to inhabit fragile bodies with renewed hope. He names the problem not only as death, but as a way of living turned inward, shaped by fear and self-preservation. To live according to the flesh is to live closed off from God and others, even while still breathing. Against this, Paul proclaims that the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now dwells within human bodies. Resurrection is not only a future promise but a present reality already reshaping human life from the inside out. God's recreating work is underway now, in lives that are still unfinished, still vulnerable, still learning how to trust the Spirit's presence.

That recreating power reaches its most personal and painful expression in John's account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11: 1-45). The death in view is not an idea, a concept, or a theological problem to be solved. It is not death in general, or death at a distance. It is personal, concrete, and painful because it breaks relationships. Someone who was loved is gone. A household is changed forever. Grief is experienced in the body, in memory, in absence (v.19). Jesus does not arrive in time to prevent it. By the time he comes, Lazarus has been dead four days (v.17), long enough for hope to expire. Martha and Mary speak from within real grief, holding faith and disappointment together (vv. 32-33). Jesus does not correct their sorrow or explain it away. He stands before the tomb and weeps (v.35). Divine power does not bypass suffering, but it enters fully into it.

Then Jesus speaks "Lazarus come out!" (v.43). The voice that once called creation into being (Gen 1) calls a dead man by name. Lazarus comes out alive but still bound (v.44). Resurrection has begun, but freedom is not yet complete. The final command is given to the community to "unbind him and let him go" (v.44). God restores life, but humanity is invited to participate in releasing one another from what still constricts and limits. Re-creation is never solitary. God recreates a people.

As we continue to reflect on these readings and Lent not as a season of spiritual achievement, but as a journey into truth, about death, dependence, recreating relationship and hope. From the valley of dry bones to the depths of lament, from the Spirit dwelling within mortal bodies to the opening of a sealed tomb, God is not abandoning humanity. God is recreating it. Lent trains us to remain where life feels absent long enough to receive God's breath, trusting that the God who once spoke life into dust is still speaking today, patiently recreating a people who can live, love, and hope again.

Questions for Reflection and Bible Study?

1. How do the "dry bones" in Ezekiel's vision reflect areas of your own life or community that feel lifeless, hopeless, or beyond repair? How might God be inviting you to surrender these to God's recreating breath rather than trying to fix them yourself?
2. In what ways does Lent call you to stay in your own grief, guilt, or fear, trusting that God's Spirit is already at work reshaping your heart, even when transformation feels slow or invisible?
3. Lazarus came out of the tomb bound, and the community was invited to unbind him. How does this story challenge you to participate in God's recreating work, not just for yourself, but in helping others experience freedom, restoration, or renewed hope?

PALM SUNDAY REFLECTIONS

Sentence of the Day

At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

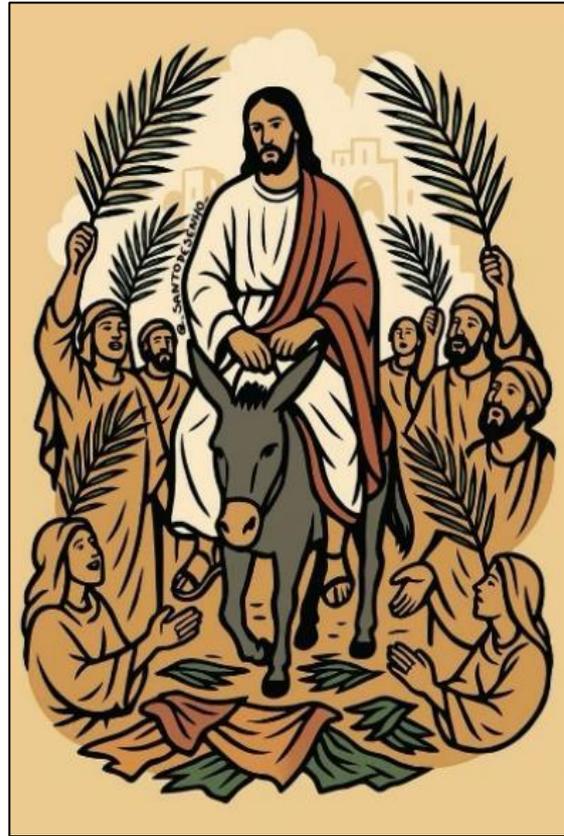
Philippians 2:10-11

Collect of the Day

Jesus, when you rode into Jerusalem
the people waved palms
with shouts of acclamation.
Grant that when the shouting dies
we may still walk beside you even to a cross;
for the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

Readings: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Matthew 21:1-11



Theme: God Recreating Humanity

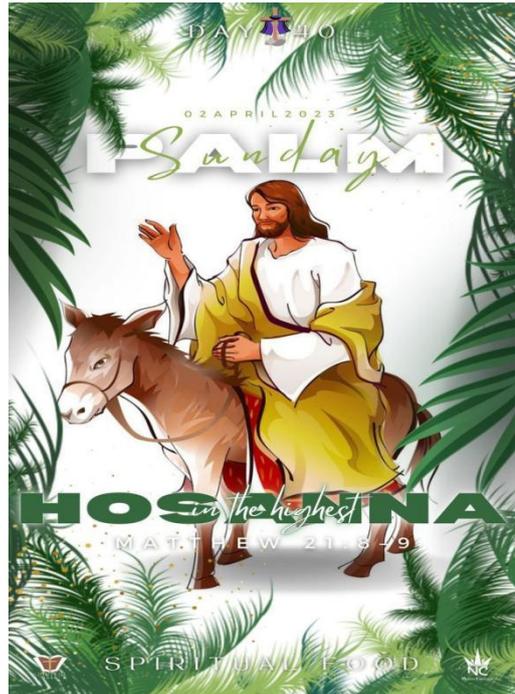
Palm Sunday ushers us into the most sacred week of the Christian calendar. The psalmist's cry, "*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever*" (Psalm 118:1), sets the tone for a celebration that is both triumphant and sobering. The gates of righteousness are opened, and the faithful are invited to enter, not merely as spectators but as participants in God's ongoing work of recreating humanity.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey, greeted by crowds waving palm branches and shouting "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" (Matthew 21:9). This humble procession contrasts sharply with the grandeur of earthly kings. Here is a Messiah who comes not with military might but with gentleness, fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy of a king who brings peace. The wilderness journey of Lent culminates in this paradox: triumph through humility, glory through surrender, and recreation through sacrifice.

The spirituality of the wilderness reminds us that transformation often comes through testing, breaking, and remoulding. Just as Israel wandered in the desert, and Jesus fasted in the wilderness, we too are invited to confront our own struggles. Lent is not about avoiding hardship but about allowing God to reshape our hearts. The Archbishop's call to discern together resonates here: Palm Sunday is not only about waving branches but about asking how God is recreating us as a community—stretching us beyond comfort, melting away pride, and remoulding us into vessels of grace.

Palm Sunday also confronts us with the fickleness of human hearts. The same crowd that shouted “Hosanna” would later cry “Crucify him!” This tension reminds us that recreation is not a one-time event but a continual process. God recreates humanity by exposing our inconsistencies and inviting us into steadfastness. Psalm 51’s plea—*“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me”*—becomes our prayer as we walk with Christ toward the cross.

The wilderness of Lent teaches us that renewal is not easy. It stretches our will, breaks our pride, and melts our resistance. Yet it also opens us to abundance. Palm Sunday is a doorway: through it we enter Holy Week, where suffering and glory meet, and where humanity is recreated through the cross and resurrection.



As we wave our palms and cry “Hosanna,” we are not merely recalling history—we are declaring our hope that God is still at work, recreating us, our communities, and our world. The humble King invites us to follow him, not into triumphalism, but into the wilderness of surrender, where true renewal begins.

Reflection Questions

1. Palm Sunday shows the contrast between human expectations of power and God’s way of humility. How might God be inviting us to embrace humility in our own lives and communities?
2. The crowd’s shifting voices remind us of our own inconsistencies. In what ways do we cry “Hosanna” on Sunday but live “Crucify him” during the week?
3. Lent is a wilderness journey of breaking and remoulding. Where in your life do you sense God stretching or recreating you today?