



## Third Sunday in Lent

20 March 2021  
(Discretionary Sunday)

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio--seeking to know and serve Christ in loving service to the campus, the community, and the world.

### The Lessons

**Lessons** for the Third Sunday in Lent: Exodus 3: 1-15; Psalm 63: 1-8; I Corinthians 10: 1-13; Luke 13: 1-9.

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

### The Collect

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### The Gospel



#### Luke 13:1-9

**A**t that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them--do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

## The Sermon

### Turning to Love

The world was still very new when an angel and a demon reflected on their roles in God's plan for the world. The angel had given away his flaming sword to the man and woman who had just been banished from the paradise and security of the Garden of Eden. He hoped the sword would be a helpful tool for them as they figured out their place in the wide world. It seemed like the right thing to do. But the angel wondered, was it really? The demon comforted the angel by saying he doubted an angel could do anything wrong, because, after all, he is an angel. The demon then chuckled and pondered, wouldn't it be funny if he, the demon, had done the right thing by tempting humanity to eat the forbidden fruit, and the angel had done the wrong thing. The angel nervously replied, it would not be funny at all, especially if it was against God's plan.

This is how one of my favorite fictional books and television series on Amazon Prime *Good Omens* by Neil Gaiman and the late Terry Pratchett begins: two eternal beings trying to figure out their place in God's plan for the world. Who did the right thing? Who did the wrong? What if they both got it wrong? What would be the repercussions? Their conversation ran out of steam when they both realized God's plan is ineffable – a very religious word that means beyond knowing – so their speculation was pointless. As the story progresses, both angel and demon find themselves falling in love with the world and the people in it, so much they try to save the world when it was threatened. When those plans failed, they learned that God's ineffable plan involves trusting in the most powerful thing of all, the very thing God is, love. It's a beautiful story, one that has gotten many a person religious or not through some difficult times. Because *Good Omens* reminds us of what today's Gospel also states: that we live in a world where much is beyond our control, and one of our deep longings is to know why things, especially tragedies happen.

That longing for a satisfying answer to the question of *why* sometimes leads to the statement "it must be part of God's plan." But God's plan is ineffable, not because of what Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett wrote, but because that is the truth we find in the Bible. We can see this in today's Gospel when Jesus addressed the people who brought up a violent tragedy where people died at the hand of a political leader who used his power to keep people in fear. Some historians like to point out the specific event mentioned in Luke's Gospel is not recorded in any known historical document as a caution to us readers of scripture about taking the story literally. Other historians and biblical scholars like to remind us there are plenty of other events much like the one in today's Gospel that Pilate was responsible for that are recorded. Perhaps the point is: there are leaders who will intentionally use their power to cause harm and destruction and there is little many of us can do to stop it. This can create a feeling of powerlessness and might prompt the question of why such a horrible thing happened, and why it

happened to those particular people. In that longing for a satisfying answer, it becomes all too easy to blame the people themselves as deserving their suffering.

This tendency is what Jesus is addressing in the Gospel when he compared Pilot's act of violence with another tragedy, one no one saw coming, a building fell on innocent people. In either case, no one deserved what happened to them. Those events prove we live in world where it is difficult to predict much less control what happens. Instead of judging people as being bad and their fate as God's punishment, which also can suggest those who don't suffer are somehow favored by God or are sinless, Jesus told a parable that highlighted a different approach, the one he was calling the people listening to him and is calling all of us listening today to do.

Repent.

Repentance or repent is another very religious word like ineffable. It means to turn around, to go back. To the beginning, to home in the best sense of the word, to God's nurturing love described as the paradise of a garden that meets all needs.

Several years ago, the Episcopal Church published it's 7 Ways of Love practices for following Jesus. The 7 Ways are: Worship, Learn, Rest, Pray, Go, Bless, and Turn. The practice of turn is described as the reminder that the location of the earth's axis has nothing whatsoever to do with where any of us happen to be standing or sitting at any given moment in time. In other words: the earth does not revolve around us. There is much we cannot control, but there is still hope and there something we can control: the choices we make. We can turn away from the influences that try to tempt us into following anything other than God, putting other priorities before loving God and our neighbors. We all know the type of thing I am referring to: climbing the ladder of success, using wealth or people for personal gain, even focusing on the transgressions or sins of others in order to feel better about ourselves.

I'm not saying success is bad in and of itself, or wealth. It is when they take precedence over God and our neighbors in our lives that can be problematic. And it is easy for all of us to slip, it is easy to forget the world does not revolve around us. That is why the practice of repentance, to turn, is one of the 7 Ways of Love. Turning from the selfishness of sin to the love of God is what is at the heart of the season of Lent, a season the church observes every year because turning is a practice we all need to do over and over again.

This is why we have the practice of confession in our worship services on Sundays, not to feel bad about ourselves, but for the reminder to turn to God. To receive forgiveness not so we can go out and sin all over again without consequence. The purpose of forgiveness is to reorient ourselves toward God, to pay attention not just to the evil and suffering in the world, but to where God is present with us, and to embody God's love as best we can wherever we happen to be. That is the fruit Jesus was talking about in his parable about the fig tree in the vineyard. Turning to God, repenting, produces the fruit of healing and restoration, restoring relationships between people, groups, even people and God.

If an angel and a demon cannot know God's plan, then it stands to reason neither can we. Yet we can find hope and comfort in today's Gospel, where Jesus reminds us, knowing God's plan isn't important. What is important, what Jesus longs for, what God longs for, is our turning to God again and again, turning toward that ineffable, powerful love that gives us what we need to live lives that embody God's love in a world beyond our control.

The Third Sunday in Lent, March 20, 2022  
The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, OH



[Watch a video of Mother Deborah's Sermon HERE.](#)

## Please include in your prayers

**In our world**, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus.. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray also for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

**In our diocese**, In our diocese, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

**In our parish**, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, Rev. Katharin Foster and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community. We pray for our friends at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Merida, Mexico.

### **Those Whom our Prayers are Requested:**

Those Whom our Prayers are Requested: Belle, Bill S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Elena, Gloria R., Gordon, Jan S, Lacey, Laura, Miriam, Sharon, Bill, Annie and Kathleen, Tommy, Jeannet Barratt, Danny Cain, Douglas Campbell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Glinnis Davies, Dick Dean and Phyllis Dean, Richard DeNune, Caryl Docherty, Chris Eaton, Ben Foster, Norm Fox, Jan Gault, Jim Greer Jennifer Hall, Debbie Hunsberger, Nancy and Bob Jackson, Peter Kachenko and family, Monya Monroe, Julie Nehls, Linda Nippert, Lauren O'Brien, Doug and Michelle Parsons, Jane Patton, Dale Paul, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Ann Shelly, Michael Vaughn, Consuelo Walker and family, Benjamin Woolsey, Emily Woolsey, Zita Zolpys, and we pray for all who care for them. \*\*

**Anniversaries:** Bruce and Sirlei Martin (3/23), Ben and Caitlin Schave (3/25)

**Birthdays:** Naomi Clever (3/20), Philip Ortman (3/20)

\*\* Full names for this section are normally not published online but since there is not a printed Sunday Bulletin or in-house 10:30 service, for the time being we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or [\*\*grahammowery@aol.com\*\*](mailto:grahammowery@aol.com).

## At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams via Vimeo its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched later without having to log in.

<https://vimeo.com/event/4306>

Though the doors of the National Cathedral in Washington are, like ours, temporarily closed, there's much to explore at the the Cathedral's online portal.

<https://cathedral.org/worship/>

## Calendar

### Coming Up:

**Wednesday, March 23, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting, Julie's**

**Wednesday, March 23, 12:15 p.m. - - Noontime organ recital during Lent**

**Sunday, March 27, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Tuesday, March 29, 5:30 p.m. - - Prayer Vigil for Ukraine**

**Wednesday, March 30, 12:15 p.m. - - Noontime organ recital during Lent**

**Sunday, April 3, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Wednesday, April 6, 12:15 p.m. - - Noontime organ recital during Lent**

**Sunday, April 10, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Wednesday, April 13, 12:15 p.m. - - Noontime organ recital during Lent**

**Sunday, April 17, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist, Discretionary Sunday**

**Thursday, April 21, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting, ZOOM**

**Sunday, April 24, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**CrossRoads Café now open Sundays after church service  
and Monday - Friday 9:30 - 11:30 am.**

## Notes & Announcements

## Noontime organ recitals during Lent, 12:15 p.m.

Members of the Southeast Ohio chapter of the American Guild of Organists are presenting a series of Lenten Organ Recitals on Wednesdays at 12:15 beginning March 16 and ending on April 13.

Wednesday, March 16 Paul Barte

**Wednesday, March 23 Jan Robison and George Weckman**

**Wednesday, March 30 Tony Bruno**

**Wednesday, April 6 Kathleen Jonas**

**Wednesday, April 13 Marsha Reilly**

**The programs are free, at the Church of Good Shepherd, and open to the public.** Current masking and social distancing are required.

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## Prayer Vigil for Ukraine Tuesday, March 29 at 5:30 p.m.

Please join us to pray for peace in Ukraine and Russia. This outdoor prayer vigil will feature prayers, scripture readings, and candle lighting. When it seems like there is little an individual can do, never underestimate the power of prayer.

"We pray also for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees."



[Supporting Humanitarian Response to the Crisis in Ukraine](#)

Episcopal Relief & Development  
(Click above link for more.)

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[Life Transformed: The Way of Love in Lent](#)

-- The Episcopal Church --

Check out the above resource for Lent from The Episcopal Church. It works both

as a personal devotion or a small group. Consider inviting a friend to share it with.

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**In celebration of Spring's arrival the daffodils make their appearance in the Covid Memorial and it appears the new crabapple tree has survived winter in good shape as well.**





**Contacts, Information**

**Quick Links**

**Pandemic Notes:**

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines](#)  
and [Back Issues](#)

[Diocese S Ohio](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal  
News Service](#)

[Episcopal Café](#)

[Link to the DSO guidelines for returning  
to in-person worship](#)

As of August 5 the Diocese COVID Guidelines request all persons wear masks inside the church building regardless of vaccination status.

**Office Hours:** 10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.,  
Monday through Thursday.  
Masks are required.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but during office/CrossRoads hours the **thrift shop** and **chapel** are available for individuals.  
Masks are required.

**CrossRoads Café is only open Sundays after the service until the news school year.**

## Contact Information

**For pastoral needs**, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at [revdebwoolsey@gmail.com](mailto:revdebwoolsey@gmail.com).

**To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters**, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at [macbuck@yahoo.com](mailto:macbuck@yahoo.com).

**For maintenance matters**, please leave a note at the office or contact Dana Carlson, Junior Warden, at 740-664-2022 or by e-mail at [carlsondana@hotmail.com](mailto:carlsondana@hotmail.com). **For emergencies**, please call The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895.

**NON-emergency messages** can be left on the church's answering machine (740-593-6877). The parish office administrator is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or [barbara@chogs.org](mailto:barbara@chogs.org).

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd

## [DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

This takes you to the Parish Home page where you can donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation -- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

Check out the Church's [YouTube Channel](#).

LIKE us on Facebook [Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd 45701](#)

**Office Hours:**

64 University Terrace, Athens OH 45701  
740-593-6877  
chogs@chogs.org  
[www.chogs.org](http://www.chogs.org)

10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Monday - Thursday

Masks are required.

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