



# First Sunday of Lent

6 March 2021

**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.**

"We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine."

## The Lessons

**Lessons** for the First Sunday in Lent: Deuteronomy 26: 1-11; Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16; Romans 10: 8b-13, Luke 4: 1-13.

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

## The Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## The Gospel

### Luke 4:1-13

**A**fter his baptism, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"



Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.'"

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,  
to protect you,'

and

'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

## The Sermon

# The Long Way Around

It was one of the rare times I was silent, I was so stunned – not surprised – stunned by what I had just heard. On the other hand, my husband, normally the quiet one who has to do a lot of thinking before he responds, had a lot to say. I'll never forget that dinner table conversation, that innocently started when we asked my husband's daughter what she had learned in school that day.

*Important point of clarification:* we were not living here in Athens at the time. We were living somewhere else, so this is not a critique nor commentary on the local school. This sermon is not a critique on any school, teacher, or educational system. It's about tests and being tested.

My stepdaughter's answer to the question, what stunned and shocked my husband and me, was that she said she had learned about "the economic benefits of slavery." My husband and I were educated in very different school districts: he in the comfortable suburbs of Milwaukee, me in a small town in rural Wisconsin. Yet we were both taught in school and from our families that slavery has no benefits economic or otherwise because the practice itself is immoral, unethical, and unjust. It caused and

continues to cause harm to people and to our country economically, spiritually, socially, and politically. And my husband did not hesitate to tell his daughter this.

It took me a while to process what she had said. *Again, the point of this sermon is not to critique the school systems, so please don't be distracted by that part of my experience. This is a sermon about tests.* I told my stepdaughter that some places teach about slavery, racism, and race very differently, perspectives her father and I not only disagree with but could never condone because of what we believe as followers of Jesus and our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being. I told her all education comes through certain societal lenses, that's why its important to try and learn from other perspectives, not just what is taught in school. I also told her when it comes time to take the test, there would be more answers she could give than the one the teacher was looking for. If she chose to give the answer her father gave, it could mean she'd fail that test, but we would be as proud of her as if she got an A because she would have passed a very different kind of test.

That is the kind of test Jesus had in the wilderness in today's Gospel, where after his baptism Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit, to a place of no comfort, no food, where the devil was waiting to give him a test. Not the kind of test you are most likely to take in any education system; the devil wasn't trying to see how well Jesus knew the Bible or history or math or theory. This was a test of character, of what kind of Messiah Jesus is.

The tests, sometimes called temptations, the devil gave Jesus could be seen as shortcuts to power and authority and salvation. Want to solve the problem of hunger? No problem, just magically turn a readily available resource like rocks or stones into bread. Done. Want world peace? No problem, just give your loyalty to the devil and he'll make *you* the all-powerful leader who can tell everyone in the world what to do, think, and believe. Done. Want success? No problem, just call upon the angels to carry you, such a flashy event will make you a celebrity and people to believe you are better than they are and will follow you anywhere. Done. And easy.

These are the shortcuts of magical miracles, authoritarian power, and privilege that disdains the pain and suffering and supposed ordinariness of humanity that have been difficult for humans to avoid since the first man and first woman ate from the tree and then blamed God for their act of distrust. These are the shortcuts that lie to us and try to convince us there are people who are above others because of the color of their skin, gender, wealth, morality, orientation, physical abilities, attractiveness, celebrity, intelligence, education, or public office who don't have to follow rules that are in place for the safety and wellbeing of all people. These are the lies that lead to arrogance, ignorance, and deny the God-given dignity of all human beings. And they are lies that never live up to their promise of making the world a better place without a shared sacrifice.

These are the same lies Jesus faced in his test. I love how Jesus didn't succumb to the additional temptation to argue with the devil. Perhaps going without comforts as he fasted had something to do with his non-anxious response. Perhaps going without food and comfort was his way of showing the devil Jesus wasn't a self-sufficient wilderness survival expert who could save himself and others from the dangers of the world. Far from it. Jesus was showing the kind of Messiah he is through his complete dependence on God, to the point that not even food could distract him from God.

The temptations Jesus faced were the devil's attempts to test who Jesus is loyal to, or who Jesus is in solidarity with. Jesus showed his solidarity, his loyalty, is in every circumstance with God, which also shows us God's solidarity, God's loyalty, in every

circumstance is with humanity, especially when we suffer. That means Jesus is the Messiah for whom there is no short cut to life or what we would call “success”. For Jesus, life and death is following God through every circumstance, even when exhausted, hungry, uncertain, being persecuted or even killed. There is no shortcut to resurrection life; you only get there the long way around.

We need to mention that sometimes there are people who cause harm, to individuals or whole groups of people, and say they are doing so in the name of Jesus or God. That’s why it’s important to remember other perspectives. If someone is saying it’s God’s will to cause harm or suffering so another can feel powerful, privileged, or gain something material at the cost of the other’s suffering, then you know it isn’t really God’s will. Because that is not what Jesus showed. And whoever is trying to cause harm is showing their character, what they are made of, and it isn’t the love of God.

The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness show us Jesus is not the kind of messiah who gave in to short cuts, because they would have cut him off from the more painful or difficult parts of life and humanity. Even when tired or overwhelmed, he always followed the way of the love of God, and through this obedience to God, opened for us the liberating restoration of God’s love for all people. The temptations of Jesus can also inspire us to look at tests differently. While there are tests that just want regurgitated information, there are other tests that show us who people are, what and who they care about. There might even be times we will find ourselves tested to give allegiance to things like money or privilege or status, to take the convenient short cut that makes us feel superior even if it causes a harm to others. In those circumstances, its important to remember there are some tests where passing doesn’t translate into a letter grade.

Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness can also remind us, those short cuts are what contributes to the painful divisions in the world where God desires a restoration, a reconciliation, a return to loving God and each other. Restoration and reconciliation are at the heart of the season of Lent. While it is often the practice of many people to give up some vice for Lent or take on a spiritual discipline, in the early church Lent was a season created to make room for those who wanted to join or return to the Body of Christ, the whole church community. To do so, the entire community prayed and fasted together, acknowledged how they all had fallen short of God’s love by confessing their sins, to show solidarity with each other and God as they received and gave forgiveness and turned again, to renew their commitment to God and each other. This is how reconciliation works.

Perhaps this year as Lent begins, we can think about how we can be part of the invitation of reconciliation, to consider what in our lives we need to or are ready to return to, and how we can do so the long way around, through the heart of God and each other.

The First Sunday of Lent, March 6, 2022

The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, OH



[Watch a video of today'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:** 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, 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. \*\*

**Birthdays:** Peter Buckley (3/6), Sister Faith Margaret (3/6), Lia Knox (3/8), Richard Carlson (3/10), The Rev. Deborah Woolsey (3/10)

\*\* 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**.

## Music

### **Music for March 6, First Sunday of Lent**

**Prelude – [O man bewail thy sin so great](#)** (O mensch beweine dein sünde gross) J.S Bach

**Offertory Hymn – [Forty days and forty nights](#)** (Aus der tiefe) Hymnal 150

**[Sanctus - S124](#)**

**Communion Music -- [Now Christ thou Sun of righteousness](#)** Gerald Near

**Postlude -- [Chorale-Prelude on "If thou but trust in God to guide thee"](#)** (Hymn 635) J.S Bach



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## 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 9, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting, Julie's**

**Sunday, March 13, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Wednesday, March 16, 12:15 p.m. - - Noontime organ recital during Lent**

**Thursday, March 17, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting, ZOOM**

**Sunday, March 20, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist, Discretionary Sunday**

**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**

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

**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

Members of the Southeast Ohio chapter of the American Guild of Organists will present 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.



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

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

[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.

### Daylight Savings Begins March 13

Be sure to set your clocks ahead  
an hour next Saturday night.



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**CrossRoads Cafe will be closed during spring break.**

It will be open Sunday, March 13  
and resume hours Monday, March 14.



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**Additional Day Off for the Rector this week.**

Mother Deborah will be taking Thursday, March 10 off as an additional day of rest.

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**Cookie Bakers Take Note !!**

Today Norm Fox and Allyn Reilly announced that the Kairos Prison Christian renewal ministry is back. More information forthcoming.



## Contacts, Information

### Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

### Pandemic Notes:

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

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

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

[Diocese S Ohio](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal  
News Service](#)

[Episcopal Café](#)

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

## [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:

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

[www.chogs.org](http://www.chogs.org)

Masks are required.

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