



Second Sunday in Lent

Holy Eucharist IIA

5 March 2023

**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.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons

Lessons for the Second Sunday in Lent

Old Testament – Genesis 12: 1-4a

Psalm – 121 (Sung)

New Testament – Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

Gospel – John 3: 1-17



<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

O GOD, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel



John 3:1-17

THERE WAS A PHARISEE named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Gospel Engagement Questions:

What do you think of when you see the word "pharisee"?
Where do you get that idea?

How does Nicodemus fit your definition of a pharisee?
How is he different?

The Sermon

School of Jesus

Did you hear about the professor who got schooled? That is one way to interpret today's Gospel featuring a pharisee named Nicodemus. Today we are taking a break from Matthew's Gospel and dipping into John's Gospel. The two are different, so it's important to notice which Gospel we are in. One of the differences is John's Gospel features several remarkable people like the woman at the well whose name we never learn and Nicodemus the pharisee who doesn't fit the stereotype of the disgruntled religious leader threatened by Jesus' presence and message. Instead of plotting against Jesus, like we hear the unnamed pharisees doing, Nicodemus went directly to Jesus.

This was an unusual move for a pharisee. Pharisees in Jesus' time were the experts on religious law and practices. They worked hard to follow the law because they knew most people couldn't, either because they didn't have the resources, time, or work schedule to accommodate the demanding lifestyle the law required. So, the pharisees did it on behalf of God's people. This gave them status and prestige and the perception of being an expert, like how many people view University or College professors. Like most experts in their field, the pharisees were aware of the people who claimed to have a different view, or experience, and were quick to respond, usually by offering proof of how that different view or experience was inaccurate or incorrect or illegitimate. In a way, that was their job.

So, we might wonder why Nicodemus went to see Jesus. Maybe he went to investigate Jesus, to find some information the pharisees could use against him. Maybe he was curious and wanted to learn more. Maybe he did it out of concern for Jesus' well-being and went to inform Jesus of the proper channels he needed to go through if he wanted to become a teacher without upsetting the status quo. We can't know for sure what motivated Nicodemus to visit Jesus. The only clue the author of John's Gospel gives us is that Nicodemus visited Jesus at night.

This could be taken literally. And we also need to take into consideration that the author of John's Gospel wrote in a sometimes

beautifully symbolic style. Which means the word *night* could also mean in secret, without any of the other pharisees or even the disciples knowing about it. It could mean Nicodemus did not yet understand who Jesus is; he was, you might say, “in the dark” but was about to experience the light of revelation. It could also mean all of the above.

Whatever the reason for his visit, Jesus seems to have had a transformational effect on Nicodemus that began with the conversation in today’s Gospel. A lot of teachers and preachers like to break down this conversation, but I’m not going to do that today. Instead, we’re going to step back and look at how Jesus schooled a pharisee on who he is and the nature of God.

The entire conversation features Jesus opening up commonly held beliefs or stories Nicodemus would know well to reveal there is more to them. That God is still present and up to something new. But it is nearly impossible to recognize God in your midst if you are not able to notice God because you are stuck in assumptions or certain of what you think you know.

One of the ways Jesus illustrates this lesson is with a story from the Book in the Hebrew Bible called Numbers. In chapter 21, there is a brief account of a time God saved God’s people from poisonous snakes. Perhaps you are familiar with it. The story takes place while God’s people were on their 40-year adventure wandering in the wilderness. It was not an easy journey. The people often got tired, frustrated, and impatient. During one of those times, the people did what people seem to enjoy doing best: they complained. They complained against Moses and God. Their main complaint was they didn’t like the food. They hated it so much they said there wasn’t any food to eat. They blamed Moses for their suffering caused by poor service by claiming he was leading them into the middle of nowhere, and they blamed God for food they did not like.

As the story goes, God sent them punishment in the form of poisonous snakes. The snakes bit the people who then got seriously ill and died. Which seems an appropriate punishment for people who were spreading poison with their words. It also got their attention and they repented, confessed it was wrong to blame God and Moses, and asked Moses to ask God to get rid of the snakes, which Moses did. But God didn’t answer Moses’ prayer by removing the snakes. Instead, God instructed Moses to make a replica of a snake and put it high up on a pole so people could see it. When the people who were bitten looked at the snake on the pole, they were healed.

That’s all there is to the story, but when Jesus mentioned it to Nicodemus, he indicated there was more to it because the Son of Man will be lifted up in the same way – not to punish or remind people of our

tendency toward complaining, anger, violence and selfishness, but to show us God's love is so powerful God is willing to suffer the same as all humans, even when we harm each other. Despite that suffering God is compassionate, not vengeful. God is not a God who causes harm, God heals the results of harm, even the harm we cause ourselves. God heals and restores us to relationship because God loves us and, despite its flaws or dangers, God loves the whole world, even the snakes.

We are reminded of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus during the season of Lent because the pharisee who we will see again speaking up for Jesus at his trial and caring for him at his burial, sets a good example for us. To follow Jesus means to return to what we might call the School of Jesus time and again to be open to learning, to humbly acknowledge no matter our age, or how much education we have, or experience we have, God always has something new for us. This doesn't necessarily mean everything we ever believed is now wrong. It just means there is more to it, and part of growing is learning to receive what God has for us. It's true there are plenty of voices that want to poison our hearts and minds against each other and perhaps even God, which is why it is helpful to remember to look to Jesus when approaching the new and remember God loves not just you and me, but all people, even the ones we might not like, and God loves the world. When we look at any change through the perception of that love, it can help us discern where God is and how to adapt to the change in a loving way.

This can be especially helpful when going through changes that don't feel good and can make us long for the way things used to be. As comforting as nostalgia seems, it makes it difficult to pay attention to what is going on and where God is present. When we remember that God loves us and is with us, it can help us recognize how the Holy Spirit can lead us through change into something that might not be what it was before but is a bit more like God's kingdom here and now. That doesn't mean whatever was before was wrong or bad, it just means the Holy Spirit is always blowing, like the wind, calling us a little closer to God through what we learn, what we do, and what we say.

A sermon by The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, , 5 March 2023, at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio.

Sermon Engagement Questions:

Read Numbers 21:5-9 (story Jesus referred to in today's Gospel).
What surprised you in that story?

Why do you think God refused to destroy the snakes even though they caused harm?

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 all families and law enforcement affected by gun violence. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and we pray for 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, 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, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community.

THOSE WHOM OUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED: Al S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Connie D., Gloria R., Jean R., Lia, Miriam, Sharon, R.C., Ann Carswell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Richard DeNune, Roy DePue, Norm Fox, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, John Jefferson, Peter Kachenko and family, Ann Lloyd, Christine McGinn, Jeff Maiden, Julie Nehls, Betty Oltorf, Donald Oney, Sandy Oney, Rev. Ed Payne, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Flo and Jack Roach, Katyana Sayrs, Annette Secoy, Dale Showman, Michael Vaughn, Mary-Anna Welch, and we pray for all who care for them. **

BIRTHDAY: Jim Walker (3/5), Peter Buckley (3/6), Sister Faith Margaret (3/6), Lia Knox (3/8), Richard Carlson (3/10), Rev. Deborah Woolsey (3/10)

** Full names are normally not published online. However for the Sunday 10:30 service 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

A request from the Diocese -- Rev. Ed Payne



Prayers Requested

Prayers have been requested for the retired Rev. Edward (Ed) Payne who has been battling some serious health issues. Please keep Ed and his family in your prayers during this difficult time.

If you would like to contact the Rev. Payne:

Phone: 216-938-7955

Email: gailapayne@aol.com

Address: 4823 Hartley Dr.

Lyndhurst, OH 44124-1021

Lord Jesus, when your disciples were tossed and tormented by a terrifying storm, you came to them with great calm, and they were safe. Speak peace, we pray to you, to those who are in agony of mind or body; that even when pain and fatigue threatens to overwhelm them, they may find rest to their souls and to their bodies; grant them to drink deeply of the fountain of life that is in you and that gives hope and healing evermore. Amen.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccj/join-online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

Wednesday, March 8, 12:30 p.m. -- Compassion and Listening (Nehls)

Sunday, March 12, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, March 12, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, March 14, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting (Nehls Hall)

Wednesday, March 15, 12:30 p.m. -- Compassion and Prayer (Nehls)

Thursday, March 16, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Sunday, March 19, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, March 19, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Discretionary Sunday)

Wednesday, March 22, 12:30 p.m. -- Compassion and Mercy (Nehls)

Sunday, March 26, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, March 26, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, March 26, 3:00 p.m. - - AGO concert 1st Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, March 28, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Meeting (Nehls Hall)

Wednesday, March 29, 12:30 p.m. -- Compassion/Well-Being (Nehls)

Coffee Hour Schedule

March 12	Lynn Graham
March 19	Alex Buckley
March 26	Dana Carlson

Taken Dates for Altar Flowers

During Lent there are no flowers and for Easter we will have an announcement for lilies.

[To Altar Flower Procedure](#)

Notes & Announcements (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

Lenten Lunch Discussion Series on Compassion

We started our discussion series last week with an excellent discussion of Compassion and Faith. If you forgot or didn't make it, you can still join us Wednesdays at 12:30 pm in Nehls Hall. We begin with the brief service of Noonday Prayer followed by discussion from the Lenten Devotional *Practicing Compassion with Your Whole Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength*. Bring your own lunch.

Next week we will discuss Compassion and Listening.

[To more about the Lenten Series.](#)

Lenten Devotionals

There are only a few book versions of the FREE Lenten Devotional left. If you missed out, visit www.livingcompass.org to download a free copy. You can also follow Living Compass on Facebook. They post the daily devotionals there.

The beauty of our Book of Common prayer are the options we have for marking the changes in the seasons of the church year.

Lent - some liturgical changes

In our Book of Common Prayer we have various options for marking the changes in the seasons of the church year. The liturgies for the Lent – Easter cycle are especially rich in resources for creating meaningful worship experiences. On Ash Wednesday, for instance, we marked the day with a silent procession, the Imposition of ashes, the reading of Psalm 51, the Litany of Penitence and Eucharist.

Then on the first Sunday of Lent we marked the beginning of this season of reflection and penitence by singing “The Great Litany” You may have noticed that the words we sang were a bit revised from those in the Book of Common Prayer. That is because we used a more modern text found in another of our resources “Enriching our Worship”.

Now on the Second Sunday in Lent we make one more change that will continue through the Fifth Sunday in Lent. Notice that the rubric on page 355

says “a hymn, psalm or canticle” may be sung. So, instead of a hymn we will sing the “Song of Penitence” - (S237 in the hymnal) each of the next five Sundays. This canticle is derived from several verses of the Prayer of Manassah . In this penitential prayer Manasseh repents his idolatrous worship of other gods. It is found as an extension of Chronicles 33:11-13.

Following this entrance canticle, the service continues with the Penitential Order BCP351. This order includes the Decalogue (BCP350) and the confession. The singing of the Kyrie (S86) concludes this opening portion of the liturgy.

I encourage you to fully enter into this season and reflect on the words and music that are special to this season.

Marsha Reilly

Music Director

Additional Day Off for Mother Deborah this Friday

To celebrate her birthday on Friday, Mother Deborah is taking the day off. She is still available Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Enjoy your birthday Mother Deborah!

Organ Celebration Concert II, Feb 27, 2023

In case you missed it here is a [link to the YouTube video](#).

Here is a [link to the soundtrack](#) from the YouTube video (mp3, 60 minutes).

Marsha Reilly, organ; Maira Urbana Nieto, flute; Kailey Klimkowski, soprano; Kearsten Miller, alto; Benjamin South, tenor; Doug Grimm, baritone

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

If you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world (including Ukraine) please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.



I am not sure what these trees are. Very redbud like, and they come out very early, like the daffodils. I thought the trees were budding, but on closer inspection the 'buds' are small rather complex-looking flowers. (Ted)





Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

Pandemic Notes:

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

In light of local conditions we request all persons wear masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

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

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

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 hours the thrift shop and chapel are available for individuals. Masks are required.

CrossRoads Café is temporarily closed.

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.

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.

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.

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).

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the Parish page where you can find instructions or 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 parish office administrator is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or barbara@chogs.org.

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 64 University Terrace, Athens OH 45701

740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

[the Good Shepherd](#)
[45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks are required.

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

Church of the Good Shepherd | 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701

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