

Timing is everything, or so “they” say. Timing can certainly be beneficial, and I know that we’ve all been on the receiving end of when the time was just not right. We are marinated in time. Time for this. Time for that. No time to lose. Time is of the essence. Lost in time. Timeless. Time for a change. Time. When we look at a clock, we are allowed the illusion that time moves on. And, yet, the whole matter of time is elusive and complex and, ultimately, beyond us. We are caught in time as we seek to transcend time.

Thus, while the physicists and theologians can speculate and pontificate about time, we spend much of our time obsessing about time or trying to evade it. As noted above, there is just not enough time for all that we need to do. And, at times, we wish that the time might never end. The wonderful singer/songwriter, Bruce Cockburn, offers a wonderful image for us to contemplate regarding the incarnation and time with his classic lyric, “Like a stone on the surface of a still river, driving the ripples on forever. Redemption rips through the surface of time in the cry of a tiny babe.”

Thus, time is no longer bound to the confines of this earthly prison, but in the mystery of God, all of time and space is imbued with the holy. Certainly, this concept is something that we could all spend a little time mulling over. And, I think, the season that we are about to enter--Lent--is a wonderful time to do just that. Amidst the hustle and bustle, surrounded by all the time suck that impinges upon our life, Lent is a season that invites us to take a bit of time and to consider the holy in our midst. Far from being restrictive, Lent invites us into the openness and spaciousness of the divine presence in our midst.

This issue of time came to me, in part, because someone recently asked why Lent seemed to be falling so early this year. (If you thought this, you are not alone. Indeed, it is “early”.) The placing of Lent within the Christian calendar owes its demarcation, in part, to some old pagan rules. The timing of Easter in our tradition follows: Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. (As the former rector of St. Francis, Richard Mayberry, used to say, “Why can’t it just be on the third Sunday in April when we know there will be a good chance of sun and warmth!?!”) Alas, this year, the timing of Easter is April 1. It could be very interesting!

However, regardless of when it falls, the season prior to Easter--Lent, which means “Spring”--is a time for us to anticipate and prepare for the paschal mystery, to anticipate and prepare for the holy in our midst, to anticipate and prepare for what God might be doing with our lives right now. And sometimes we get so busy that we lose sight of this, and we need a little time to help us to see anew or see afresh or simply to see.

Thus, as the prayerbook invites us during the Ash Wednesday service, I invite you to a holy Lent. Holy not in the sense of moralism and holier-than-thou. Rather, holy in the sense of recognizing and participating in the sacredness that is life and the sacred that meets us. Perhaps you might do this by reading the “Good Book” program that is a part of the link for this week. Perhaps you may do it by reading Marilynne Robinson’s *The Givenness of Things* and joining in conversation about the text on Sundays at 11:15. Perhaps you will join in a Wednesday evening *Holden Evening Prayer* service at 7:00 PM at St. John’s Lutheran. Or maybe you will take in the concert by *New York Polyphony* (see clip) to hear another way of experiencing the mystery of grace in our midst. And you may choose not to do any of these and to take time elsewhere in prayer, or meditation, or writing, or walking, or taking in a speech that you might not otherwise do, or take in a movie, or meditate while serving someone at a shelter or volunteering at a local support agency, or simply resting amidst the rush that is time. There is no right or wrong way. The important thing, as the Nike slogan rightly expresses *Just Do It*. So, do it. For yourself. For the world. For a reclaiming of time amidst time and, hopefully, a fuller, a stronger, a richer, or a more nuanced sense of the holy who journeys with you in time.