

Back by Popular Demand: The Christ Church Lenten Meditation Series!

By John La Boone

For four years, during 2011 – 2014, the parishioners of Christ Church produced our own collections of daily meditations for Lent based on the daily office lectionary Bible readings. Our publication was closely modeled on the *Forward Day by Day* devotional booklets that have been so popular in The Episcopal Church since 1935. After a few years' hiatus, we are going to revive that ministry for Lent 2018. There will be some modifications but the concept is still the same. Each day a parishioner will offer a short, original reflection based on one of the assigned Bible readings for that day. The meditations will be delivered to all parishioners by daily emails. For anyone not using email, written copies can be provided on request. Using this devotional resource, we can all take a journey through Lent together as a parish family.

Of course all this depends on people writing for the series. We have many veterans of our previous collections but there is lots of room for new writers to be part of this adventure. Sometimes people are hesitant to take the plunge, especially if they haven't done this type of thing before, but be assured that you will have lots of support and encouragement – and, yes, you can definitely do it. This is actually an enjoyable ministry. You will be surprised at how we become a band of fellow pilgrims taking a fascinating journey together through Lent, and there will be much satisfaction with the end product.

If you are interested or just want more information, email me at savannahjohn@yahoo.com as soon as possible. Even though we are now getting into the busy holiday season, we have to get going on this ministry because Ash Wednesday is on February 14 and there is much to do to have things ready in time. When you contact me, I will assign your day during Lent with the assigned Bible readings from the lectionary. You then read them, pray and think about it and write your mediation. If you have questions or concerns or if you need some help in brainstorming, getting started, etc, I will be here for you throughout the process. I promise you will not end up stranded.

You will be asked to write one or two mediations. (The second one is actually much easier.) You can write whatever you like as long as it relates or refers to one of your assigned lectionary readings. You can use reference books or commentaries – but there is no pressure to get academic or highfaluting about it. It's much more important to just simply communicate what is in your heart. How does the Bible reading speak to you, personally? You can draw from personal experience, favorite hymns, dreams, ideas from sermons you've heard or conversations you've had. You can draw from poems or prayers that have been meaningful to you. It just needs to be your own writing, but you can make appropriate quotes within your reflection. (When quoting the Bible, please use a modern translation.)

The length should be approximately between 100 – 300 words. (The meditations in the *Forward Day by Day* run around 170 words.) Short is actually good. It leaves people with something graspable to remember and ponder. If you desire editing assistance, just let me know. My goal is support you without interfering with your message told in your authentic voice. I will also be sending out a set of writers' tips and guidelines which I hope may be helpful.

The deadline will be midnight on Wednesday, January 17 – and that is a firm deadline. I will have a lot to do once the contributions have all been sent in, so I will not be able to accept anything for publication after that date. The ministry is being expanded to be more flexible this time but the deadline is completely fixed and exceptions cannot be made. But don't worry: there is more than enough time.

There will be some new features in our program this time:

- In the past all meditations were published anonymously but this time they will be attributed unless you choose to have yours published anonymously. Either is OK; your call on that.
- We have many talented artists at Christ Church and if you prefer to contribute a piece of your original artwork instead of a written reflection, that will be fine as long as it is based on or relates to one of the lectionary readings that is assigned to you. Just know that it will be reproduced and sent out to everyone.

If your gift is more musical, you may submit a musical meditation. You can sing or

- play an instrument, again as long as it relates to one of the Bible readings that you are assigned. But it needs to be your own performance and you will have to do your own recording, and then upload it to Youtube and supply me with the link ready for use. I realize that this option will not be what most people would want to do but it is there in case it works for anyone who is so inclined and able.

I am working on some other possibilities to enrich the 2018 version of the Christ Church Lenten Meditation Series. I am excited about it. Since our last experience, I have had numerous people tell me how much it meant to them and how they miss it. The time has definitely come to bring it back. Everything will be accomplished by email. You will do the work at your convenience on your own schedule (remembering the final deadline). There will not be any meetings to attend. So if you are interested, please email me and let's get started right away. There is plenty of time but we need to get started now to have this feast of inspiration ready by Ash Wednesday. Be part of the journey with us. You will be glad that you did. Bless you.