



THE UNITY MESSENGER

Unity of Santa Rosa
4857 Old Redwood Highway
Santa Rosa, California 95403



What Does Lent Mean to Me?

By Harker Brautighan

Lent is the period of forty days plus six Sundays from Ash Wednesday to Easter. I first became aware of the Lenten tradition of fasting or abstaining from something when I was growing up in a suburb with quite a few Catholic families. Our school cafeteria didn't serve meat on Fridays during Lent, opting instead for fish. I was also aware that some of my friends gave up other things, besides meat on Fridays, during the period of Lent.

In 1999, I suffered an injury that left me in chronic pain, but which opened me up to new spiritual possibilities. Shortly after my injury, my live-in boyfriend left me, citing, in part, an unwillingness to deal with someone with a chronic condition. I had a physical therapy appointment one day, and the only place I could find parking was in Grace Cathedral's public lot. Feeling desperate and devastated, I stumbled into the cathedral to look around before collecting my car and going home. As soon as I entered the sanctuary, all thoughts of going home evaporated. I was home. I carefully walked around the entire space, looking at the artwork and stained glass, reading the information that was posted. Like the hush that exists in that holy sanctuary, there was a hush in my soul. Before long, I went to Grace for Sunday service. I was hooked. While not everything about the Episcopal tradition fit just perfectly, it was enough for me when I heard, "All who seek God are welcome at God's table."

Attending Grace Cathedral was part of the path that brought me to Unity. During my time at Grace, I began to observe Lent. At first, I gave something up—usually something I was compulsive about. One year it was dessert. Another year, it was the audiobooks I compulsively listened to till all hours of the morning. Other years, I have tried to add something in, such as a daily walk, or more vegetables. Always, though, I am laying the foundation for the resurrection. As I think about the item I have temporarily forsaken, or the healthier alternative I have committed to, I am preparing the way for something. There is always the sense that what I have chosen is hard, that there will be part of the journey that is difficult. It would be so much easier to give up something easy or to ignore Lent altogether, so why do I choose this bit of self-exile?

It is exactly so that I, like Jesus, may enter the spiritual tomb. It may be dark and quiet in the tomb, but it is fecund, a place ripe for rebirth and reawakening. As I walk whatever path I have chosen to follow during Lent, I try to be mindful, present to the possibilities that are unfolding for me spiritually. As I think about what I have given up and what I have embraced, I imagine planting a seed in my consciousness. Better, I imagine burying my spiritual dead so that something spiritually new may emerge, risen in glory. Did Jesus literally rise from the dead? To me, that's not the question that needs answering. What resonates most with me is the metaphysical promise of the resurrection. We can all turn inward, dig deep, reflect, and reawaken. We can all be resurrected into the glory of God, for God is everywhere present, in and as each of us. Sometimes, what it takes to reawaken is a period of seeming dormancy, a period of abstinence and reflection, of releasing and waiting, and faith in the glory of the Christ within, which in every moment we can choose to manifest.

Upcoming Events

March 2020

- Sunday the 15th: Rev. Dr. Patricia Keel; Music by Momo
- Friday the 20th: Vernal Equinox Sound Healing with René Jenkins and Janet Janay Cipriani from 7:00-9:00 p.m. (doors open at 6:00 p.m.)
- Sunday the 22nd: René Jenkins; Friendship Sunday; Music by René Jenkins
- Sunday the 29th: Rev. Margaret Flick; Music by Star Tom



April 2020

- Wednesday the 1st: Prayer & Meditation Circle from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m.
- Sunday the 5th: Rev. Sonya Milton; Palm Sunday; Birthday and Prosperity Sunday; Music by Cricket
- Sunday the 5th: Writing Group from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday the 12th: Rev. Larry Schneider; Easter Sunday; Music by Heartsounds Choir
- Sunday the 19th: Rev. Dr. Patricia Keel; Music by Star Tom; workshop follows social time
- Sunday the 26th: TBA; Friendship Sunday; Music by Star Tom

Notes from the Writer's Group

By Tye Ellinwood

Five people attended the March 1st Writer's Group meeting.

We welcomed Mary Fahey as a first time attendee. Mary shared her well received writing with the group. Mary has recently relocated from Pismo Beach, where she was a long-time participant in a Writer's Group.

Jane Rinaldi returned and shared her colorful poetry. She read a crow/vulture imagery work that richly described her impressions of a flock of these avian beings in motion in the sky. She also read a work on hummingbirds that richly described the movements of those creatures. Also, Jane announced that one of her poems was going to be published in a poetry anthology called *And Yet*, which will be coming out in June.

Talmadge offered a reading based on the tag-line "All right, you have convinced me that..." The work was an entertaining dialog between two friends who had differing views on the existence of UFOs and aliens.

El read most of her chapter on Step 7 of the 12-step approach to recovery for *Adults Abused As Children*, which should see publication this year.

Tye read the first chapter of the sequel to the soon-to-be-published story, *The Pondstown Rescue*, which follows the efforts of frogs, toads, turtles, newts, and salamanders as they band together to rescue their mayor, "Mr. Hopper," who had been frog-napped by a mysterious Twoleg. The chapter read was titled "Not Even a Trickle."

All are welcome at the Writer's Group, which is generally held on the first Sunday of the month, and we hope to see you there.