

ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2021

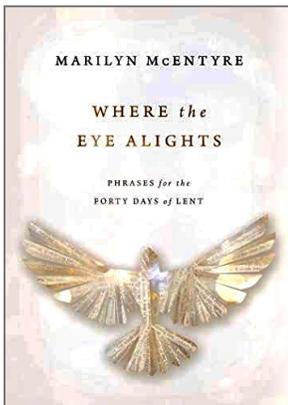
Brief **Outdoor** Services
7:30 am, Noon (12:10 pm) and 5:20 pm

What will your Lenten practice be this year?

Teachers can, at the most, point in the direction of reality. They cannot tell you what to see. You will have to walk out there, all alone, and discover for yourself.

~Anthony DeMello~

What insights and growth do you want to take with you into the post-COVID future? Is there anything you want to learn more about? What will help you consolidate the experiences, challenges, and losses of 2020? **Lent is an ideal time to focus on how you hope to see growth in our world, our community, our faith community, and in yourself** — and how you hope to respond in service to those whose economic, social, and health recovery will extend well into this year and next. How can the call for racial and social reckoning be an opportunity for each of us personally and for the communities of which we are part? What new connections or collaborations do you and we need?



Lenten Book Study/Reflection Group with The Rev. Courtney Tan: *Where the Eye Alights, Phrases for the Forty Days of Lent* by Marilyn McEntyre

You are invited to join Rev. Courtney on ***Mondays at 7 pm*** and/or ***Wednesdays at 10 am*** via Zoom (link will be provided). We will discuss the week's readings and reflect on what arises for each of us as we enter into Lent in a year when we have been stretched more than ever to find meaning, relevance, and to discern the sacred in an unsettled world.

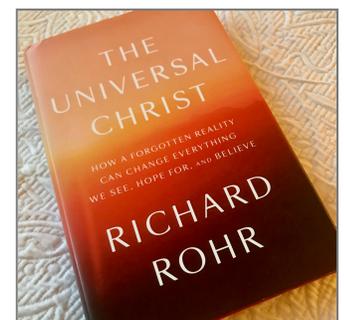
For more information, please **contact Rev. Courtney** at courtney@smitv.org, or text or call 408-431-6810.

The book may be purchased as an ebook, audiobook, or in print through local and national booksellers.

Book Discussion with The Rev. Randall Day: *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr

You are invited to join Rev. Randall on Fridays ***at 11 am*** via Zoom to discuss Richard Rohr's *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For and Believe*. For more information, please **contact Rev. Randall** at randall@smitv.org, or text or call 805-245-4921.

The book may be purchased as an ebook, audiobook, or in print through local and national booksellers.



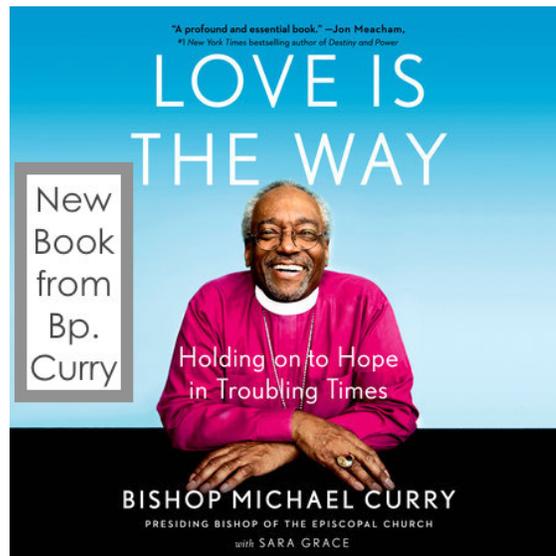
Lent is facing Reality. Reality may be another name for God, and another name for Everything and Everyone (and beyond our ability to know). In the past, Lent has often been a very small undertaking, and, truly, a distraction from Reality as it focused on tiny (and, often, annoying) undertakings that aggravated individuals while inflating their egos.

These little undertakings (not eating chocolate, exercising more) had the further negative effect of keeping people from paying attention to the larger structures and systems of sin and oppression that continue to destroy human lives and much of the natural world (God's creation).

The inter-relatedness of all human communities shown in the COVID season and the ways in which damaging social and economic disparity have been revealed at the same time, makes a more substantive Lent undeniably important.

Listening for freedom. Reality is within us. Thus, it is essential to have a contemplative practice. More importantly, Reality is **beyond the confines of our "small" selves.** We are "in" God with everyone and everything else.

In all cases, we need to listen — and what we hear is often — usually — challenging to how we may have understood ourselves and the world around us. At the same time, deep truth (the large and inter-connected essence and substance of all things) sets us free. Jesus embodied and taught this freedom not for himself, but so we can embody and express it too.



Bishop Michael Curry is the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. This new book is available as an audio book, ebook, or in print from local and national retailers.

Do you want to start a substantive core practice this Lent? One that can extend beyond 40 days?

Go to our website (smitv.org) and click on the **GROW** tab. Then click **THE WAY OF LOVE** button. You are on your way. If your household has different ages, there are **WAY OF LOVE** resources for **all ages**.

FACING REALITY IN SERVICE - is engaging in hands-on work, often with others, to benefit others... The engagement not only benefits an organization or group, but often carries one over previous boundaries and broadens one's life through new connections in God.

But, service of others does not have to be what is traditionally understood as "community service." One can serve in a very conscious way in being a friend, a neighbor, and in re-prioritizing daily activities in favor of others.

Listening for our whole selves, for Reality, God, holy freedom...

In this current age, the large listening we are invited to enter includes contemplative practice, service of others, and listening to Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, LGBTQIA and other voices — because God is present in and expressing God's Self in all human voices and lives — and in all of the many expressions of the natural world.

Listening for our whole selves, for Reality, God, holy freedom...

...in Contemplative Practice

There are a **range of approaches to contemplative practice** and a number of specific practices within each of those practices. At the same time, **the commonalities are much greater than the differences**, and all contemplative practices draw people into consciousness of both their own selves beyond their surface identities and into awareness and direct experience of God (the Sacred, the Ground of Being, Reality, Christ, Higher Power, Yahweh and all of the Holy Names of God). Most people find contemplative practice, to be, at times, a frustrating engagement that reveals their own anxiety and over-active minds. Contemplative practice does not “fix” one's life and it is not an attainment with a goal of arrival in a certain state, particularly not an emotional state or an intellectual state. Contemplative practice does not develop hidden powers, though it may allow one to be more conscious and present in day-to-day life. Contemplative practice does not ward off trouble and it is not an abdication of the responsibilities of life. Jesus often withdrew to the prayer of quiet.

Centering Prayer “Centering Prayer is a receptive method of silent prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.” See the website for Contemplative Outreach for more resources: www.contemplativeoutreach.org/ also St. Mark's has an ongoing Contemplative Prayer group that meets on Tuesdays at 4 pm. There are excellent books by Thomas Keating, Cynthia Bourgeault, and others and a variety of online resources.

More than 62 million users are subscribed to **Headspace**, which one can try for free. It is a website and an app that offers a wide range of programming from meditation basics to guided meditations and resources related to fitness, health, finances, focus, sleep, work performance, studying, the earth, and more. The subscription is around \$6 per month for the full array of programming. ***The Headspace Guide to Meditation*** on **Netflix** is another high quality introduction to contemplative practice.

Insight Timer is another highly featured app (more than 15 million users) that has a free and subscription version. Many teachers offer courses on Insight Timer including Thomas Bushlack (Christian Contemplative Prayer and Meditation for Beginners), Jonathon Stalls (guided walking meditations), and many others. The subscription version of the app is approximately \$5 per month.

...in White voices

***Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Allen**

For twenty-five years, Debby Irving sensed inexplicable racial tensions in her personal and professional relationships. As a colleague and neighbor, she worried about offending people she dearly wanted to befriend. As an arts administrator, she didn't understand why her diversity efforts lacked traction. In *Waking Up White*, Irving tells her often cringe-worthy story with such openness that readers will turn every page rooting for her — and ultimately for all of us.

***White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin Diangelo**

The *New York Times* best-selling book exploring the counterproductive reactions white people have when their assumptions about race are challenged, and how these reactions maintain racial inequality.

...in Black voices

***How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi**

Number one *New York Times* best seller, from the National Book Award-winning author of *Stamped from the Beginning* comes a “groundbreaking” (*Time*) approach to understanding and uprooting racism and inequality in our society - and in ourselves. “The most courageous book to date on the problem of race in the Western mind.” (*The New York Times*), named One of the Best Books of the Year by: *The New York Times Book Review*, *Time*, *The Washington Post Shelf Awareness*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*.

Listening for our whole selves, for Reality, God, holy freedom...

...in Black voices (continued...)

***Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates**

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Hailed by Toni Morrison as "required reading," a bold and personal literary exploration of America's racial history by "the most important essayist in a generation and a writer who changed the national political conversation about race" (*Rolling Stone*) #1 *New York Times* Bestseller, National Book Award Winner, *Time*: Ten Best Non-fiction Books of the Decade, Pulitzer Prize Finalist, National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist, One of the Most Influential Books of the Decade (CNN), One of *Paste's* Best Memoirs of the Decade, Ten Best Books of the Year by the *New York Times Book Review*, *O:The Oprah Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *People*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Vogue*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Newsday*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*.

***The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson**

In this beautifully written masterwork, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life. From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America. Fifteen years in the making, and with stunning historical detail gained from thousands of personal interviews, Wilkerson tells this story through the lives of three unique individuals. National Bestseller, National Book Critics Circle Award Winner, One of *Time's* Ten Best Nonfiction Books of the Decade, One of *Buzzfeed's* Best Books of the Decade and many other awards and recognitions. A recent work by the same author is *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, that examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America and shows how our lives today are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions.

...in Latino (Latinx) voices

***Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* by Juan Gonzalez**

The first new edition in ten years of this important study of Latinos in U.S. history, *Harvest of Empire* spans five centuries—from the first New World colonies to the first decade of the new millennium. Latinos are now the largest minority group in the United States, and their impact on American popular culture—from food to entertainment to literature—is greater than ever. Featuring family portraits of real-life immigrant Latino pioneers, as well as accounts of the events and conditions that compelled them to leave their homelands, *Harvest of Empire* is required reading for anyone wishing to understand the history and legacy of this increasingly influential group.

***The Distance Between Us: A Memoir* by Reyna Grande**

Reyna Grande's critically acclaimed memoir, *The Distance Between Us*, was a National Book Critics Circle Awards finalist. In that book, Reyna writes about her life before and after coming to the U.S. as an undocumented child immigrant. It is about what is lost and what is gained in the pursuit of a better life. Other books by Reyna Grande include *A Dream Called Home*, and *Across A Hundred Mountains*.

...in Indigenous voices

***An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz**

The first history of the United States told from the perspective of Indigenous peoples. Today in the United States, there are more than five hundred federally recognized Indigenous nations comprising nearly three million people, descendants of the fifteen million Native people who once inhabited this land. The centuries-long genocidal program of the US settler-colonial regimen has largely been omitted from history. Now, for the first time, acclaimed historian and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz offers a history of the United States told from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and reveals how Native Americans, for centuries, actively resisted expansion of the US empire.

***Chumash Life channel on YouTube* <https://www.youtube.com/user/chumashlife>**

The Chumash Life channel on YouTube offers brief, informative video windows into the life of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, grouped in topics related to culture, history, government, environment, education, and more.

<https://www.santaynezchumash.org/> website of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

The website of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians has sections related to history, government, the forthcoming museum, and other topics told first-hand by tribal leaders and members.

**MORE resources and book suggestions on our website: smitv.org
See the GROW tab and Lent resources.**