

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

March 20, 2022



## REPENT

*why are we so afraid to turn around?*

by Drew Downs

We have a stereotype that men don't like asking for directions. But it's actually a bit complicated. It's the stopping when we want to keep going. The admitting we've messed up. And the recognition that we need help.

The same things can be said about addiction. Leadership. Politics. Academia. All of these, and so many other areas of our lives, which, at the heart of it all, deal with changing direction *with grace*.

The thing about turning around is that we code it as *loss*. Perhaps a loss of status or sense of certainty. But we have a hard time also coding the time we spend going in the wrong direction as its own kind of loss. We don't put it on a balance sheet *as loss*.

To repent is to literally turn *toward* something else. We are actually being offered the freedom we most desire. To leave the bad junk behind and live now.

# AFTER THE EPIPHANY

*Winter 2022*

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## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

This Lent, we have begun a process of discernment I've called *What Is Our Tomorrow?* We're using the book *We shall be changed* as our guide for exploring the questions that the pandemic has brought to bear in our common life together.

In Week One, we reflected on the move into the virtual space: and with it, all the questions about what it means to be the church in the virtual realm.

Week Two invited us to "Liturgy and Longing": wrestling not only with our feelings of separation, but our very understanding of gathering beyond the in-person experience.

This week, we are discerning "Hard Choices and Helping Hands". This discussion pairs questions about finances and our future with our mission and responsibility to our community.

As we continue to reflect on what we've learned *and* what we hope to see in our tomorrow, be sure *share* with one another. Over the phone, online, or at coffee hour. Talk with each other!

If you would like to join us digitally, we will have a Meet-Up on Zoom next Wednesday, March 23 at 7:00 pm.

With love,  
Drew

# LENT

*Winter 2022*

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## FOR SUNDAY

*The Third Sunday of Lent*

March 20, 2022

### **Collect**

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **Reading**

From Luke 13:1-9

"Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?"

### **Reflection**

Some concerned people tell Jesus about a grave injustice. They bring the news to him, looking for help, for guidance, *answers*.

And what do they get for this? Something that feels like an interrogation.

When we approach this story like those people coming to Jesus with information *and a desire for answers*, shouldn't we expect the same? That Jesus isn't here to give us answers to all of our questions but to *lead us* toward a Kin-dom life?

Jesus turns the focus from a "why do bad things happen to good people" headspace to something more like "why do you think 'good people' won't ever get hurt?"

# LENT

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In turning our focus: from asking *why does **God** do this* to *why do **we** do that*. Jesus is helping us see why we're not going to get the answers we seek in the place we're looking. Because we're looking in the wrong place. And using the wrong set of tools.

We don't do this on purpose, of course. We've been taught this. From our culture and our faith tradition. Which certainly makes it hard to deal with. But culture and tradition combine to create a *way of seeing the world* that that feels normal. And difficult to change.

The concept of *merit* is part of that worldview. So doing good makes us good people. And good people *deserve* rewards. So then we apply the inverse to the bad. There certainly is some of this in Hebrew Scripture. But it also *isn't* the story. And it isn't the inherent worldview *of* the story. Lots of bad stuff happen to good people. All. The. Time.

So we ask God why does the bad stuff happen because we're *assuming* it shouldn't. It is our assumption that is wrong. Merit isn't the governing force of the universe or our faith. *AT ALL*.

We do good for the sake of good. There is no economy of good and bad. No hoarding of this wealth or expecting we deserve *anything*.

And better yet, death isn't a punishment! Now of course, we don't *celebrate* death. But neither do we *fear* it. *Or see it as justice*. There is no justice in death. Life and death is not winning and losing. There are no deserving or justified or earned or squandered. Lives are lived. With people who need us.

We live. And *that* is why we repent. Not to *gain* or because we *owe anything*, but because as long as we live, we can still do good.

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