

## The Pornography of Pessimism



It's terribly hard work to persuade people to hope. Especially in bleak times, but even in good times, we hide our broken hearts, failures, losses, believing in the power of evil and not wanting to be hurt again.

Lent is a growing season, an aspirational journey, and a walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Hope draws us on.

Jesus, preaching hope on the road, urges people to work for the vision of God, for a new world. But he runs into our resistance everywhere.

Luke recounts a time when some who came to listen to Jesus spoke up about Galileans who had been killed by Pilate while making sacrifices at the Temple altar. Pilate had mingled their blood with their sacrifices. Defiling them in death, as if murder alone were not enough. And Jesus asked them, *Do you think their suffering means they were worse sinners than anyone else?*

Jesus reminded them about another terrible situation: the fall of the Tower of Siloam, a remnant of the old Temple, a place where men who didn't like Roman rule worshiped in protest against the great Temple where Pilate and Herod held sway. Most folks blamed Pilate for the Tower's fall. Eighteen people died in there. *Do you think they were worse than all the others in Jerusalem?* Jesus asked.

We all do. We have that deep fear in us when trouble comes – *oh God, oh God, why are we being punished* – when pain comes, we do not feel held in God's love, but caught in God's anger.

When the Pilates of this world show us their cruelty, we are intimidated by the power of their hate. Even though we know they are evil, even though we know hope is divine, we are more impressed by their evil than by God's good.

Hope gives birth to life. Hope creates, using imagination and playfulness – and time. The thing about hope is, it takes time.

Hope does not create in response to pressure, or the insistence of the clock saying *Hurry up! We're out of time.*

Evil, on the other hand, screams *Time's Up!* into unexpected moments, even into bright days.

David Brooks, conservative political columnist for the New York Times and the PBS Newshour, laments a lack of optimism in the current primary campaigns. *'To hear Sanders or Trump, Cruz and Ben Carson campaign,'* Brooks wrote, *'is to wallow in the pornography of pessimism, to conclude that this country is on the verge of complete collapse. That's simply not true. We have problems, but they are less serious than those faced by just about any other nation on earth.'*

Merriam-Webster defines pornography as *the depiction of acts in a sensational manner so as to arouse a quick intense emotional reaction.* It is this kind of arousal Brooks decries in American politics. Brooks writes, *'People are motivated to make wise choices more by hope and opportunity than by fear, cynicism, hatred and despair.* Brooks praises Barack Obama for being a leader who never appeals to those passions, which bar the door to hope and opportunity.

Nor does Jesus appeal to those passions, not even as he enters Jerusalem, not even on Good Friday. Along the road of his life, Jesus dispels fear wherever he encounters it, and he challenges our cynicism and despair, urging us to give hatred no room.

When Jesus sees people knotted up and tense at the mention of the murdered Galileans and the Tower of Siloam, Jesus responds with a playful tale, creating a space in time where hope can rise:

*A man comes to check on his fig tree (and everyone knows the fig tree is Israel's symbol, the tree that lives for centuries, the tree that has many fruiting times each year, the tree that gives fruit and oil and shade and holds onto life.) But this fig tree has no fruit. Impatiently the man says to the gardener, 'It's been three years, and no fruit! Cut it down.' But the gardener says, 'Give it another year, and I'll fertilize it and hoe around it, and then come and see.'*

And who would this patient gardener be, if not God?

And what is this tale about, if it is not about growing hope?

Pessimism is pornographic in its curt declaration, *Time's Up!*, and in its decision that fear, cynicism, hatred and despair are the order of the day.

Aroused to these reactions, we prodigal sons and daughters find ourselves living in a place unfit for human habitation. And we know we are a long way from home, and far off from Easter, a destination that opens to sorrow and to love, but never to cynicism, hatred, or fear.

Nancy Rockwell

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/biteintheapple/the-pornography-of-pessimism/?repeat=w3tc>

## This Week at Inca



[Click here to learn more about Lent Event](#)

The season of Lent is now upon us. As we travel through this season, Incarnation will be participating in something that is referred to as **the Lent Event**. This is a season that we are invited to *Reflect, Connect, and Act*- our theme for the Lenten Season.

As such our Lent Event is 40 days to help us explore ways to:

- live more simply,
- reflect on our faith
- and support people struggling to free themselves from poverty and injustice.

Similarly, we are invited to participate in an expression of God's mercy and grace by giving up something we can do without. To accompany us on the journey, Lent Event offers a new **GUIDE TO LIVING LENT** plus a full range of resources to provide spiritual enrichment. These include a bible study, written daily prayers, worship resources for Sunday services and children's activities. All are available free on [www.lentevent.com](http://www.lentevent.com) where you can also subscribe to the Lent Event Daily Prayers. You can also get the prayers delivered each day to your phone by downloading the Lent Event app.



Welcome!

### Syrian Refugee Family

Inca is excited to announce we have been matched with a Syrian family living in Turkey. We expect to welcome a 27-year old mom, a 3-year old boy and a 20-month old girl within the next two months. If you would like to make donations to this family, that would be greatly appreciated. Gently used household items, clothing and children's things (toys, books, stroller, car seats) will be collected each Sunday. We do not know sizes at this time. Please donate clothing in a size that is your best guess. Any donations in excess of what our family needs will be donated to another charity in our community.

If you have furniture to donate, please contact Mary Loeffler (905) 825-0982. She can pick up in her minivan and will be storing all furniture in her basement until we need it.

These items will be collected each Sunday by the following people:

Household items - Lesley Hickey

Clothing - Jean Grieve and Judy Vanderwater

Toys, books, car seats (forward facing and booster type) - Lynne Jenkins

Attached to the email is a list of pantry items for our sponsored family:

Let's all get together to fill the kitchen and pantry for our family. If you would like to help, choose an item{s} from your birth month. Most of the items can be found at your local store, but the ones marked with an asterisk may be found at a Middle Eastern grocery store such as Adonis, 1240 Eglinton Ave W, Mississauga.

Our family will have many adjustments to make to life in Canada. It is important that they have some of the comforts of home, including familiar food, during this time.

It's fine if there are multiples of staples, like rice and beans.

You can bring your donations to church, or arrange to deliver them to Leslie Hickey.



### Choir Practice –

The choir rehearses every Wednesday **at 7:30**. Share your voice, all welcome. Rehearsals for Easter begin this week, 7:30-8:30 PM.



### 2105 Tax Receipts are ready!

Help us save the postage and pick yours up after service on Sunday.

Many thanks and blessings for your support throughout the year.



### Easter Flowers:

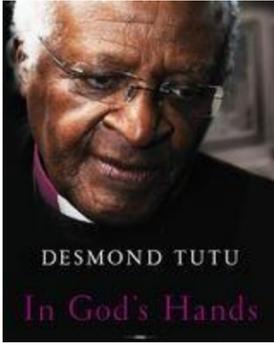
Donation envelopes are now available at the greeter's table. Please make sure to fill out the front of the envelope and hand it to one of the counters.



### Wing and a Prayer – Thursday, March 24, 2016!

We meet at 6:30pm at Monaghan's. Cost: \$25 per person including food and drink. RSVP Rob Moniuk ([Robert@Moniuk.ca](mailto:Robert@Moniuk.ca)).

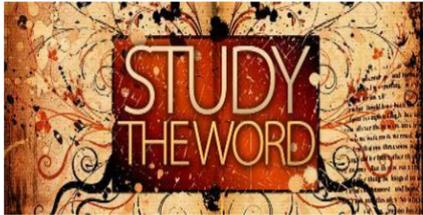
Everyone is welcome!



### In God's Hands by Desmond Tutu – book study

Tuesdays, 11-12:30, for 6 weeks ending March 22

Archbishop Tutu has produced a meditation on the infinite love of God and the infinite value of the human individual. Not only are we in God's hands, he says, our names are engraved on his palms. Led by Karen Pitt and Michael.



### Lenten Bible Study –Thursdays, ending March 10

Four weeks, 1:30-3:00pm in the chapel. The focus will be the arrest, trial and execution of Jesus, chapters 18 and 19 of St. John's Gospel. Anyone and everyone is invited. No previous knowledge of the bible is required. To obtain a study guide, or to find out more, contact Mervyn Russell at [mervicia@gmail.com](mailto:mervicia@gmail.com)



### Contemplative Fire – Sunday, March 20, 8:00pm.

Are you looking for time to reflect, meditate and recharge your spiritual life? Each meeting begins with a communal sharing of food followed by quiet and intentional reflection in the gathering area. The response to this has been very encouraging. We continue to see new faces at each meeting and look forward to growing this community.

For more information, please speak to Michael. All are welcome.

### LOVE LIVES



### Love Lives: A Refugee Sponsorship Concert

Saturday, February 27, 7:p.m., Church of the Incarnation

The love lives of several great composers will be celebrated in song featuring solo performances by Charlene Pauls, soprano and Norine Burgess, mezzo-soprano, with special guest Mervyn Russell and the Oakville Children's Choir. Tickets are \$30 available at the door. Cash bar.



### Go for the Gold –Fundraising event for Incarnation

Gather up your broken and unwanted gold items, coins, paper money, donate them to the church by putting them in the envelopes provided, and receive a tax receipt for the value once the items have been sold. Doug Froom will be at church on Sunday to discuss how the program works.

For larger items, or more valuable items, please bring them to the worship area on one of our appraisal dates:

Thursday, March 10, 2-4pm, and Saturday, March 19 3-5



### Youth Group Events-

For info contact Phil Carver at [incayouthprogram@gmail.com](mailto:incayouthprogram@gmail.com)

## Community News



### The Choir of St. Jude's Church

Palm Sunday, March 20, 4:00pm, St. Jude's Church

"Olivet to Calvary", A Victorian Sacred Cantata recalling the scenes which mark the last days of the Saviour's life on earth

### Puttin' on the Ritz, The Talisker Players Quartet

Friday, April 8, 2016 8:00pm, St. Jude's Church

Featuring music from the Irving Berlin Songbook including: Top Hat, Cheek to Cheek, Heat Wave, Always, and Puttin' on the Ritz. Form more information call 905-844-3972. Tickets \$30



**Halton Green Screens at FILM.CA cinemas**  
**7pm, second Thursday of the month**

Mar 10 – *Bottled Life* - the truth about Nestle’s business with water

**This & That**



**Looking to volunteer?**

We have lots of way you can get involved. Positions include: altar prep, greeters, readers, hosts and coffee preparation.

Youth can gain some volunteer high school hours. Training will be provided.

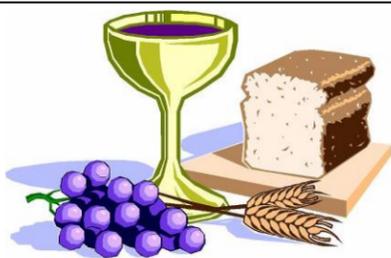
Contact Claudine Boulert, at [boulert@rogers.com](mailto:boulert@rogers.com) for more information, or call 905-825-2851.



**Changes to Order of Service or Bulletin News** - Any changes need to be sent to the office by Tuesday, noon. [office@incarnationchurch.ca](mailto:office@incarnationchurch.ca)

**Nametags** let people know who you are and make it helpful for people to put names to faces, especially for newcomers

**NEW ENVELOPES** – we’re implementing a new weekly donation envelope system. Those currently using envelopes will be contacted in the next few weeks about making the switch. If you’re ready for a new set, contact Margot at [office@incarnationchurch.ca](mailto:office@incarnationchurch.ca). Have you considered pre-authorized payments? A safe convenient way to ensure the church has consistent funding. See office for more details if you’d like to sign up



**Receiving Communion**

All people at Incarnation are invited to receive the bread and wine at communion. The bread is received from the priest who stands between the servers who offer wine from the common cup; choose whatever side is free. You may choose to receive from an individual wine cups available to the left of the altar. Take one, consume the wine and replace the empty cup in the same spot. We hope this provides an inclusive approach to communion where .....ALL are welcome.

| VOLUNTEER!          | February 28      | March 6        |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
|                     |                  |                |
| <b>Bread Making</b> | B. Gowing        | J. Lockhart    |
| <b>Altar Prep</b>   | W. MacDougall    | A. MacNaughton |
| <b>Coffee</b>       | Wilson           | U. Andensamer  |
| <b>Coffee</b>       | J. Smith         | Bowden         |
| <b>Host</b>         | B. Gowing        | S. Hutchinson  |
| <b>Reader 1</b>     | G. Chambers      | C. Boulert     |
| <b>Gospel</b>       | A. Turner-Sommer | D. Lusby       |
| <b>Prayers</b>      | J. Bowden        | K. Pitt        |
| <b>Server 1</b>     | W. Burk          | D. Bold        |
| <b>Server 2</b>     | T. Burk          | L. Hickey      |
| <b>Wine Cups</b>    | Z. Boulert       | E. Lorimer     |
| <b>Counting</b>     | J. Lockhart      | J. Lockhart    |