**From the desk of Reverend Veronica:**

Lenten Poem

A Poem for Lent by B.J. Phillips

We each have our own cross to bear,

and who am I to say that mine is heavier than yours?

Yours looks much lighter.

I am sure I suffer more.

Now, for a moment you lay yours down, and I can see clearly the torn flesh, where it

has cut deeply into your being.

I did not know.

You always smiled and walked on bravely.

Perhaps it is not the weight of the

burden at all, but the manner in which we bear it, that is the true essence of our lives.

I will carry my cross with new strength now,

then turn my face to the sun and smile,

for in your face

I have seen the strength of God’s love, and it

made me remember that God loves me too.

**Meditation: from Macrina Wiederkehr, Abide: Keeping Vigil with the Word of God chapter 6**

Prayerfully read Psalm 84 *Be attentive to your pilgrim heart.*

The late Paschal Botz has a book on the psalms titled Runways to God. …it suggests rising with mind, heart, and body through prayer in to the great realm of God. Not to give our whole self to the Godward thrust means dragging ones feet, clinging to things less than God. Flying and praying are far more arbitrary actions. ‘Reason and science govern the one, revelation and faith the other’ (Preface,ix).

 When I meditate on the psalms, I often think of them as “runways to God.”

 Psalm 84 is a pilgrim song. There is a pilgrim in each of us. We often sense the pilgrim aspect of our lives when we experience being stirred by a memory, a word, or a story. Something awakens our yearning for purposeful living. We are drawn into a deeper search. As we become more sensitive to such moments, we may become aware that our entire life is a pilgrimage. It is not always possible to ritualize our pilgrimage in the traditional way of actually traveling to a sacred site; however, we have within out beings a pilgrim path. Every time we prayerfully walk through a Scripture passage, we can make that prayer journey, a pilgrimage. The Word of God becomes our pilgrim guide. Each time we sit down at the altar of our own lives to evaluate our growth in Christ, whether this is through spiritual direction or part of our personal rule of life, we are on pilgrimage.

 …Reflect on your stepping stones of strength along the way. As you move forward on this blessed sojourn, name your experiences of growing stronger. Do you know that with God’s help, you have the power to change your bitter valleys into springs of living water? If you are faithful to your inner pilgrimage to the promised land of God’s heart, then you also can become a pilgrim site for others on the way. Name the wisdom experiences, both painful and joyful, tha have brought you to this moment of refreshment. Name your teachers and guides. Macrina Wiederkehr

Newsletter’s ed---P.S. Maybe this time of sheltering is a time to travel from one nature sanctuary to another: a park, a nature trail, or your back yard. Design a simple pilgrimage for yourself. Or create an inner pilgrimage made of sacred moments, experiences, and memories. Pause at each sacred event, remembering the grace of that moment.

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**A Coffee Hour Spread for you! Guess who did this one?**

**Upcoming Events— Easter and Solar how-to!**

* **April 5, 2020 at 6:15 pm** The Mason Energy Commission is holding a Solar How-To presentation on the details of putting up solar for that free energy that we receive every day! This is a Virtual workshop that you can see, and can ask questions during the presentation. Don’t miss it! Join us at <https://meet.google.com/yya-fspm-izw> or you can use your phone and call in at 1-304 503-4767 and use PIN 788 037 558# Go to <http://harei.org> for more information on the presenters and the organization. Some of our Mason Energy Commission members have met the presenter, and attended a work group, and will be joining in the virtual presentation to share. Don’t wait, this is a fine time to learn more, invest, and reap the benefits of more independence from fossil fuels! You may even be able to do it yourself, or knowledgeably contract with a solar company.
* **Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter are still happening.** How will you celebrate? Share your ideas on our Facebook Page, or call or email Michelle to share ideas. 878-1680 miscott39@gmail.com Make your own Easter cards to send to our Mason Congregation.
* **Earth Day, Earth Year 2020 What does the Lord require of you?** What can you do for Planet Earth? Maybe pick up trash in Mason?
* So many people are out walking these days, take a bag and some gloves, and pick up trash!
* What about an energy audit for your home? <https://www.energy.gov/articles/home-energy-audits-making-homes-more-energy-efficient-and-comfortable>
* Reduce your plastic use. Only 9% of plastic is recycled, so first reduce your use, second recycle what you can—usually on those plastics with a 1 or 2 in the little triangle on the bottom of the plastic item.
* Refuse all Styrofoam containers. It never degrades, but becomes tiny balls that birds, insects, and sea animals mistakenly take for food, and often die due to clogging of their intestine. Ask your favorite restaurant to use paper, or better yet bring your own container when you go out. “Bento” Boxes are made just for take out, or a lunch box. Nice surprise in the Easter basket!
* Straws and grocery bags—Refuse straws, just drink from the cup like a normal adult/child, and bring your own bags to the grocery store, as well as other shopping. After the Covid crisis we can start using our own bags again.
* **Church Treasurer** Darrell notes that although we are not meeting, the expenses and work of the church continue. Please continue to fulfill your pledges. Mail to Darrell Scott, Treasurer, Mason Congregational Church, 33 Valley Road, Mason, NH 03048
* **April Community Supper –** Cancelled until at least June. Think of writing a check to Greenville Food Pantry, St Vincent DePaul instead of enjoying a meal, offer a meal! Here is their website: <https://www.foodpantries.org> and the phone number to get food or give food is 878-0518. They are open once a week, and by appointment. The address is Sacred Heart Church, Greenville Food Pantry, 15 High Street, Greenville, NH 03048. You can also give money directly to the New Hampshire Food Bank which distributes food all over NH to the many food pantries wherever they are. [www.nhfoodbank.org](http://www.nhfoodbank.org) to donate directly.
* **Nashua Soup Kitchen** Since all our volunteers are over 65, we have put this mission on hold. Understanding that the Soup Kitchen is needed as much and perhaps more than ever **consider a contribution to: Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter, Inc PO Box 3226, Nashua, NH 03061-3116 or donate at their website** <https://nsks.org/> Remember that their upcoming fundraisers are probably all cancelled! Help where you can.
* **April - Living Room Coffee House** Since no gatherings are taking place, listen to great music on your electronic device, or maybe like us, you also have old things like tapes and CDs, or **even** records that you can pull out and rattle the windows with your favorites. Dancing is great exercise!

 **Remember our church family in your prayers. Attached to this email is a list of members and friends at our church. Make a plan to keep in touch by a quick call, or email. Talk about things that will be uplifting, there’s no point in re-hashing the many news bulletins! Some topics might be crafts, closet and file cleanings, yard/plants plans, favorite stories from their past history, ask about anything they might need if they are over 60 and are staying out of any stores. If you suffer from “I don’t know what to say” go to** <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/> **to find a list of some wonderful questions. In fact you may want to interview someone in your house that you think you know! Find out more today. Reach out to neighbors by phone, or even have a chat, outside and 6-10 feet apart!**

* **Our Halbrooks family** are now at 279 Mountain Road, Jaffrey, NH 03452. They barely moved, and now are sheltering in place like the rest of us, but can’t go out to meet their new community. Beth’s parents were to come live in the in-law apartment at the new house, but their move from down South is probably on delay. Meanwhile you can send a snail mail message telling them we are keeping their pew reserved. Call or email: Jacob c: 321-2397 Beth c: 321-2527 Jhalbroo@gmail.com mehalbrooks@gmail.com
* **Curt Dunn** Curt is at the rehab center Courville, 44 West Webster Street in Manchester. Although he has trouble reading, he still loves cards, but of course, enjoys calls even more. For Curt, who is Mr. Social this time must seem like imprisonment. Give him a call: 222-3204 or Courville phone is 647-5900
* **Susan and Jim Suokko** moved to Leominster, MA last fall and will be attending a church close to their new home. Their new address is: 50 Brooks Pond Rd, Apt 104, Leominster, MA 01453. They are probably still in Florida now, but may venture north later this spring. Their Florida address is Florida: 8814 28th Ave. Palmetto, FL 34221. We miss them, and hope they will visit us this summer. Usercat2@comcast.net for email
* **Laila Washburn March 3rd was Laila’s 101st birthday.** Laila lives at Summer Hill Assisted Living in Peterborough. She loves cards. At her age every day is treasured. Laila Washburn, Summer Hill, 183 Old Dublin Rd, Peterborough, NH 03458. Call: 603-924-6238
* **Gretchen and Wally Brown** This will be a hard time for them. Wally can still go to work since he is usually socially distant as he works! They still have their caretaker who comes to stay with Gretchen. We can’t stop by but call in the evening when Wally is home, just to check in. Ask if there are any ways to help. Cards to: 421 Meetinghouse Hill Rd, Mason, NH 03048 phone: 878-1481

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 Now I wonder what we will find, right in front of us, to do with our time. How will we proceed through this time with no immediate known end, and so many questions of how this may change our lives in new ways. If you have work, there will be that, but if you are retired and used to coming and going…or if you are a parent and now you are falling over the family everywhere you turn, this may present some challenges. There is warmer weather so outside beckons most of us to walks, hikes, just wandering, biking, and maybe fishing, bird watching. There is endless entertainment available if you have internet, but we humans need more than entertainment to be fulfilled. And what if you do not have internet, or good internet? So what have you found that is fulfilling, what challenges do you face, is there some way that Mason Congregational Church can help you?

You can leave a message at the church for Reverend Veronica, 878-1684, Revpalvwd50@aol.com or reach her at home, 213-6368 or reach out to a Deacon, listed below. Share a story, or a creative way you are passing this time in our lives, and we can share these via the Mason Congregation Facebook page, or perhaps the

newsletter, all with your permission. Please let a Deacon know if you know someone who needs a prayer shawl. See list below.

**Deacons:** Ann Moser 878-3826 amoser@earthlink.net Nancy Richards 878-2190 windywych@aol.com Kathy Chapman 878-4993 Chapman.kathy@gmail.com Michelle Scott 878-1680 miscott39@gmail.com

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CVTC, the Community Volunteer Transportation Company is still operating, since their services are especially needed at this time. They are a free service, and will take people to medical appointments (routine appointments have mostly been cancelled) but cancer treatments continue for some. They also take people to the grocery store, pharmacy for prescriptions, and to bank and post office.



Please spread the word about CVTC. It’s free to riders, and the drivers can be reimbursed for gas! A win-win all around. Sign up to be a driver. It’s so simple to pick up a trip, give the ride, (make a new friend or two), and the CVTC administration is efficient and kind. Really kind!

John O'Donohue, Walking in Wonder: Eternal Wisdom for a Modern World, 21st century
"We ask that streams of Easter light might flow into the intimacy and privacy of our hearts this morning, to heal us and encourage us and enable us to make again a new beginning."

Arundhati Roy, 21st century
"Not only is another world possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."