

Cultivating and Nurturing New Life **LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES**

Fifth Sunday of Lent, April 6, 2025

Isaiah 43.16-21 Philippians 3.4b-14 John 12.1-8

Though they seem diverse and were, of course, written centuries apart, all three of our Scripture readings for this Fifth Sunday in the Lenten season speak of something new. In Isaiah's words to the Hebrew people, God declares that a "new thing" is about to be done. Not only for humans but also for animals, God promises to take care of us all. The words of prophet proclaim that we will be refreshed and renewed.

In his words to the Philippians, the apostle Paul explains that, while he has gained much in his life, he is more than ready to let it go in order to gain the gift of new life in Christ Jesus. As he does so, he presses on toward the goal of a renewed life of grace and peace that God promises to us all.

This week we read from John's gospel and hear the story of Mary and Martha hosting a meal for Jesus in their home. As they share this time together, Mary takes a very expensive ointment – which has been saved for Jesus' anointing at the time of his burial. However, despite that, she feels compelled to use it right then and there to anoint his feet and wipe them with her hair. When Judas questions Mary's use of such an expensive ointment, Jesus comes to her defense and proclaims that she is right for caring for him in the here and now. "You will always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." Such a new way of thinking for those who follow Jesus.

As our Lenten journey continues, we are called to seek those places in our lives which need to be made new. What is it that God wants you to review? Replenish? Renew? How can you, like Paul, press on toward the goal of new life in our Savior, Jesus Christ?

