

OCBC

OLD CAMBRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH
A Progressive Peace and Justice Congregation

Grief

Mourning

Lament

**A Guide for Reflection &
Schedule of Services & Mid-Week Discussions
Through the 2020 Lenten Season**

Dear OCBC,

Because I sit with so many of you in one-on-one conversations, I know that you are holding many and varied forms of grief and loss during this season in your lives, as are we all within our collective life as a congregation. Some of you are struggling through some very debilitating health concerns with potentially long-term implications. Others of you are journeying alongside loved ones who are. Some of you have lost ones dear to you in the last year. Others are facing your own mortality with a need for meaning-making. We are all experiencing the very palpable sense of loss, mourning, and “solastalgia” (more on this term later in Lent) connected to our collapsing climate and loss of other species. And many are grieving the political environment we now inhabit as well.

The gift of the Christian liturgical calendar is that it makes intentional space for us to experience and express these affective dimensions of our lives in the pageantry and ritual of our tradition. Lent is one of those seasons – a season of darkness and shadows that can hold the most difficult experiences and emotions.

This Lenten season, we enter together into the fullness of our life together, sharing even in the mutual experiences of grief, of mourning, and of lamentation. I invite you to journey alongside one another through this season, committing to hold one another tenderly, and leaning in to listen to the messages that the “dark emotions” hold for us.

You can use this guide for weekly reflection, making the quote provided each week a short daily reading to center your focus on the themes of grief, mourning, and lament, and implementing the suggested spiritual practice that you may find help to carry you deeper into this season of shadows. Treat this booklet as a tool that you can use if it helps you, and set aside if it does not. I look forward to journeying with you through this season of shadows.

Warmly,

The Rev. Cody J. Sanders, PhD, Pastor

Lenten Schedule of Mid-Week Discussions

Thursdays at 7:15pm in the OCBC Chapel

This series of mid-week offerings intends to open space for exploration of forms and experiences of grief and loss for which there is often little space to discuss within a caring community. These are not support groups, but opportunities to discuss these varied forms and experiences of grief and loss within a supportive atmosphere with a skilled facilitator.

Thursday, March 5

Suicide and Grief after Suicide

with Kevin Henze, Ph.D.

Psychologist at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Thursday, March 12

Ambiguous Loss

with Tammy McLeod, M.A.

Tammy is a Harvard Chaplain and co-author with her husband Pat of the new book *Hit Hard: One Family's Journey of Letting Go of What Was – and Learning to Live Well with What Is*, which will be on sale this evening for \$15.00

Thursday, March 19

Traumatic Grief

with The Rev. Jenny Stuart, M.Div., LICSW

Clinical Social Worker/Therapist at the Danielsen Institute at BU
& Clinical Alliance Services in Cambridge

Thursday, March 26

Narrative Resources for Grief, Death, and Dying

with The Rev. Cody J. Sanders, Ph.D.

Pastor to Old Cambridge Baptist Church
American Baptist Chaplain, Harvard University

Lenten Schedule Worship Services & Music

Wednesday, February 26, 7:00pm – Ash Wednesday

The Music of Taizé

Andrew Price, Oboe & Beth Barefoot, Piano

Sunday, March 1, 10:30am

"Blessings" (Laura Story)

"Ave Verum" Mozart

Kathy Maskell and Holly White, Duet Soloists

The Choir of Old Cambridge Baptist Church

Sunday, March 8 – Special Prelude at 10:15am

Olivier Trevor & Xavier Trevor, Violin & Cello

Beth Barefoot, Organ/Piano

Sunday, March 15, 10:30am

"O Christ, the Lamb of God" Johannes Bruenhagens, 1528 (from
Kirchenordnung, Braunschweig)

The Choir of Old Cambridge Baptist Church; Douglas Koch, Piano

Sunday, March 22, 10:30am

"Stabat Mater" (Vivaldi) Movement I: Prelude

"Agnus Dei" (Bizet): Offertory

"Amen" (Movement IX): Benediction Response

Natalja Sticco, Mezzo-Soprano Soloist

Sunday, March 29 – Special Prelude at 10:15am

Prelude for Violin and Viola

Two settings of "Surely He Hath Borne Our Grievs" (G.F. Handel
and Victor C. Johnson)

"The Holy City" (Stephen Adams)

Robert Curtis, Violin; Bryan Tyler, Viola; Thomas Jones, Soloist

The Choir of Old Cambridge Baptist Church

Sunday, April 5 – Palm Sunday – Special Prelude at 10:15am

Crepusculum Choir from the Berklee College of Music
& The Choir of OCBC

"Ride On, King Jesus" (Fleming)

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (Gilbert Martin)

Thursday, April 9, 7:00pm – Maundy Thursday

The Music of Taizé

Andrea Bonsignore, Oboe & Beth Barefoot, Piano

Sunday, April 12 – Easter Sunday – Prelude at 10:15am

The music of Ralph Vaughan Williams,

Martin Luther,

Richard Purvis,

L.L. Fleming,

George Frederic Handel,

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and others.

With Brass and Percussion Ensemble,

The Choir of Old Cambridge Baptist Church,

Beth Barefoot, Organ/Piano,

Neva Corbo-Hudak, Soprano,

singing "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" (Handel) and

Natalja Sticco, Mezzo Soprano,

singing "Alleluia" (Mozart)

Week 1: March 1-7

A Scripture for Reflection from Psalm 44

- ²³ Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord?
Awake, do not cast us off for ever!
- ²⁴ Why do you hide your face?
Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?
- ²⁵ For we sink down to the dust;
our bodies cling to the ground.
- ²⁶ Rise up, come to our help.
Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.

A Spiritual Practice:

Lament may not come naturally to you. In times of distress, you may be more accustomed to praying prayers of supplication for comfort or praying for circumstances to change. But lament is deeply rooted in our spiritual tradition.

At some point this week when you're feeling anger and frustration and grief over the state of the world – the political climate, the *actual* climate, a pronounced injustice you witnessed or experienced – turn those feelings you hold into a lamentation. Express the grief and anger to God. Passionately call upon the Holy One for recompense for wrongs done. Decry the delay in response.

It may feel a bit strange at first, but if you read the above Psalm several times throughout the week, you'll get the rhythm of lament. Then give it a try for yourself. Write it down. Say it out loud. Recite it in the quiet of your own heart. Lament.

Your Reflections:

Week 2: March 8-14

A Prayer from Samuel Miller (OCBC Pastor 1935-1959) For One in Dire Extremity

[God] of all mercy, Shepherd of every hope, the Refuge of our bewildered hearts, steady us with thy most tender mercy lest the darkness of this hour hide the providences of a lifetime from our sight. Within the shadow of our fears thy love doth stand waiting upon the very threshold of our need. Though we cannot see the way, guide us step by step and strengthen us from each day's journey with a peace beyond our making. Wherever we walk, in sunshine or in shadow, show us the sign of Christ our Lord, who hath gone before us and suffered all things that we might be delivered from fear and in every extremity trust thee with our life. Amen.

A Spiritual Practice:

Many within our lives are living daily with experiences of pain, grief, and suffering. Often, those experiences are expressed in our communal prayer time at OCBC. This week, choose someone – *just one person* – to hold in prayer. It may be someone who expressed a deep concern on Sunday morning. It may be someone listed in the bulletin prayer list. It may be someone that you know personally in your life or in the church who is experiencing pain or grief or suffering.

Choose one person. Pray for them every day this week. It doesn't need to be an elaborate prayer like Miller's above. A simple prayer will do.

Your Reflections:

Week 3: March 15-21

A Scripture for Reflection from Psalm 63

A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.

¹ O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

A Spiritual Practice:

In the biblical text, as seen in the Psalm above, images of the land are sometimes employed to represent the grief of the human heart. In our context, we are witnessing the land itself becoming bereft. Climate collapse and species loss and human destruction of the web of life are unrelenting.

We cannot grieve losses that we do not notice. This week, practice noticing the more-than-human in your daily life. Spend time lingering around the trees you pass on your daily walk to and from work. When you're in the middle of a bustling part of the city, stand still. Look beyond the buildings and the cars and the people to notice the animals that are around you and above you. Sit in your yard or in a nearby park and just look around for a brief time, simply noticing everything that wasn't put there by human hands.

Noticing can be a prayer.

Your Reflections:

Week 4: March 22-28

A Quote for Reflection from Catholic Social Activist and Journalist Dorothy Day

“We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.”

A Spiritual Practice:

OCBC is one of possibly several communities of love and support that you belong to. Spend intentional time this week connecting personally with one person in the OCBC community. You may, for example:

- Write a letter to someone in the congregation who has meant something special to you.
- Write a letter to someone in the congregation whom you don't know very well, but have watched from afar, appreciate, and want to get to know better.
- Invite someone in the congregation to coffee or for a beer and just spend time in unhurried conversation.
- Perform a small act of service for someone in the congregation – an act that you know would be meaningfully received.

Whatever you choose, don't delay too long. Choose one person. Do something *this week* to work toward the only solution to the long loneliness that each of us feels from time to time.

Your Reflections:

Week 5: March 29-April 4

Two Quotes for Reflection from Buddhist Teacher Pema Chodron

“Someone needs to encourage us not to brush aside what we feel. Not to be ashamed of the love and grief that it arouses in us. Not to be afraid of pain. Someone needs to encourage us: that this soft spot in us could be awakened, and that to do this would change our lives.”

“We think that the point is to pass the test or overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.”

A Spiritual Practice:

Gift yourself with an hour this week to notice the love and grief and pain you are carrying. Just one hour sometime during the week when you can be alone. Make it half-an-hour if that feels more manageable. Don't try to solve anything in that period. Just notice what is coming together and falling apart within you. Make room for it, and notice. This inner noticing can also be a prayer.

Your Reflections:

Week 6: April 5-11

A Prayer from Samuel Miller (OCBC Pastor 1935-1959) In Time of Death

Thou great lord of all mystery, if in the presence of death our thoughts are startled and our words flutter in all directions like frightened birds, bring us stillness that we may cover the sorrow of our hearts with folded hands. Give us grace to wait on thee, silently and with patience. Thou art nearer to us than we know, nearer than we can think. If we cannot find thee it is because we search in far places. Before we felt the pain thou hadst suffered it; before the burden came upon us, thy strength had lifted it; before the sorrow darkened our hearts, thou wert grieved. Thou who dost walk in the valley of every shadow, be thou our Good Shepherd and sustain us while we walk with thee, lest in weakness we falter. Though the pain deepens, keep us in thy way and guide us past every danger, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Spiritual Practice:

We are deep into the season now. The shadows have grown long. We are in the thick of mystery. The presence of death is near. Pain deepens.

At times, the only appropriate response – the only prayer possible – is silence. Practice spiritual silence this week. If possible, practice silence once a day. You may only be able to hold the silence for a minute or two. If you're well practiced in silence, you may be able to hold the silence for longer. Whatever the case, don't judge yourself for the difficulties you may find in keeping silent. Just practice. And in the silence, there is prayer.

Your Reflections:



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Holy Week Services

Sunday April 5 at 10:15am

Palm Sunday

Crepusculum Choir of Berklee College
of Music with the Choir of OCBC

Thursday April 9 at 7:00pm

Maundy Thursday Taizé Service
Contemplative Music & Communion

Sunday April 12 at 10:15am

Easter Sunday

Choir, Organ, Brass, & Percussion

