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# Contributors

## INTERIM PUBLISHER

Ven. Simon Blaikie

## EDITOR

Cinna Baran

## ACCOUNTING

Joy Valencerina

## LAYOUT & DESIGN

[cityfolkcreative.ca](http://cityfolkcreative.ca)

# JESUS WEPT

Rupert's Land News is published 10 times per year (September - June) by the Diocese of Rupert's Land, in the Anglican Church in Canada. It connects churches and communities from Portage la Prairie, MB, to Atikokan, ON, by offering news, events, opinions, and ideas to 4,000 readers per month. RLN is available in a variety of formats: [Website](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#)

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## EDITORIAL OFFICES

Anglican Lutheran Centre  
935 Nesbitt Bay  
Winnipeg Manitoba, R3T 1W6

RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese.

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please email the editor.

Cover: [Henrick Dønnestad](#)



# Jesus Wept

Photo: [Yi ZhU](#)

Lent can feel like a heavy time. It can feel long, arduous, exhausting, and like Easter can never come soon enough. Jesus reminds us that we must be like little children in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and while I can think of many wonderful ways which we would benefit from this (such as asking many questions, having sincere intentions, and not being afraid to admit when we need help), there are also many ways in which we are *already* like children. Impatience is one of them. We are Easter people, and we often cannot *wait* for Easter to be upon us again.

Lent offers a chance for us to slow down, take some time, and sit with Jesus. We are encouraged to sit in discomfort but not be overcome by it. How can we do better as people? In what ways can we strengthen our relationship with God? When do we fall short in loving our neighbour as ourselves? Lent may feel long, but it is a chance to evaluate our shortcomings and ask God what we can do to better ourselves and the world.

In the Gospels, Jesus reminds us of His humanity and His sacrifice. During this Lenten season, people often give things up which would be beneficial for strengthening their relationship with God while preparing for the glory of the Resurrection. Great rewards require sacrifices; Jesus demonstrates this time and time again, and one of the purposes of Lent is to remind us of this. It allows us to reflect on our great exemplar, role model, and saviour, and the unlimited lessons He has to teach us. This Lent, may we sit patiently with our God, be open to His teachings, and remember that there is always a faithful and loving God who is always with us.

To begin this issue, Rev. Di Panting and the Diocesan Search Committee have provided a brief description of what the role of a bishop is. These are important things to keep in mind as we seek a new leader for this Diocese. Please reflect on these things and keep the Search Committee in your prayers.

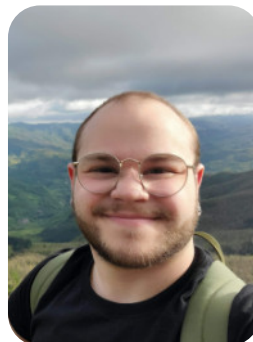
Next, Rev. Theo Robinson writes on the hardships of grief, and what our fully divine and fully *human* saviour, Jesus Christ, can teach us about it. Grief is a difficult but inevitable part of being a person, but as long as we have our faith, we never have to bear it alone.

Following this, Rev. Edmund Laldin explores the relationship between Nehemiah weeping over the state of Jerusalem and Jesus weeping at the death of Lazarus. These events, he says, can inform us about the current state of our Diocese, and how we can proceed towards a hopeful future.

Finally, Zoe Matties examines lament in a time of crisis regarding our planet's climate. She reminds us that we are God's creatures and inherently a part of God's creation. As God's creation, our faith can be a path to action, and our grief can kindle our hope.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Peace be with you; I hope you enjoy.



**CINNA BARAN**

Editor of Rupert's Land News

# The Role of the Bishop in the Diocese of Rupert's Land

PREPARED BY REV. DI PANTING ON BEHALF OF THE DIOCESAN SEARCH COMMITTEE

## SUMMARY

Our Bishop serves as the chief pastor, spiritual, administrative, and organizational leader of the Diocese, providing oversight, guidance, encouragement, and support to our people including clergy, leaders, parishes, Diocesan staff, ministries, and missions. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and rooted in Anglican tradition and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Bishop models Christ-like leadership, nurtures faith, hope, joy love, peace, spiritual growth and living our Baptismal Promises. Our Bishop leads and serves collaboratively with clergy and laity to inspire and advance the sustainable mission and ministry of the Church within the Diocese and beyond.

## KEY LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITIES INCLUDE

- 1. Spiritual:** *Primary spiritual leader and pastor to clergy and laity within the Diocese.*
- 2. Liturgical:** *Sacramental oversight aligned to Anglican liturgical traditions, beliefs, values, and practices.*
- 3. Governance and Administration:** *Oversight for Diocesan governance, administration, organizational and financial stewardship, aligned with the Constitution, Canons, policies, practices, and goals of the Diocese within the context of the Province of Northern Lights and the Anglican Church of Canada.*
- 4. Clergy and Laity Care and Support:** *Champions pastoral care, wellness, learning, and development for the people of the Diocese.*
- 5. Ministry and Mission:** *Oversees the Diocese in discerning and implementing its ministry and mission priorities encompassing Truth and Reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, and belonging imperatives.*
- 6. Communication and Relationship Building:** *Nurtures positive relationships through open and effective communication and collaboration with clergy, parishes, and laity, Diocesan team members and leaders, the broader Church, related communities, partners, and interested parties.*



Photo: [James Coleman](#)

# A Reflection on Mission and Transition

## *The Prayer of St. Oscar Romero*

BISHOP KEN UNTENER

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that should be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,

Ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future that is not our own. Amen.

(Taken from the [Prayers and Litanies for a time of transition and the election of a new diocesan bishop](#))



Photo: [Daniel Hajdacki](#)



## Even Jesus Mourns

THEO ROBINSON

Photo: [Sam Badmaeva](#)

On the whole, we can spend a lot of time pondering the divinity of Christ. Our weekly lectionary is full of scriptures that display the miracles which Jesus performs as a way to reveal to everyone who He is. In Bible studies, there is plenty of discussion about the Trinity and how Jesus is the one and only Son of God, sent to us for our salvation. And as we head into Lent and Holy Week, we have our eyes and hearts focused on Christ's resurrection on Easter morning. The divinity of Jesus is an extremely important piece of our Christian faith, but we often miss out on dwelling in Jesus' humanity.

"Jesus wept"<sup>1</sup> just before He raises Lazarus from the dead. Despite being moments away from performing this miracle, Jesus weeps for the loss of Lazarus and is "greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved"<sup>2</sup> by those who mourn Lazarus.

Jesus knows that He will be able to raise Lazarus from the dead. Even so, He takes a moment to sit in grief and mourning for His friend, for His loss, and for those around Him who are also grieving Lazarus' death. Jesus' humanity is so overwhelming that you can't help but shed tears with Him and for Him.

In Jesus' most famous sermon, He also talks about the human emotion of grieving. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."<sup>3</sup> How hard is it to feel blessed when you are mourning? Did Jesus feel blessed to be mourning His friend?

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<sup>1</sup> John 11:35

<sup>2</sup> John 11:33

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:4

Grief is a difficult emotion. You can experience grief over anything from the discontinuation of your favourite chocolate bar to the death of a loved one and everything in between. To grieve is difficult but it is also natural. It is only human to be sad when something changes in your life that you didn't want to change. The difficulty with grief is that you don't know how it is going to affect you. Will it be a single tear? Will it be uncontrollable sobbing? Will it be deafeningly silent? The other difficulty of grief is that you never know when it will hit. You could feel it immediately, or in a few hours, or a few days. Maybe you thought you finished grieving and then a picture, a smell, or a song comes along and punches you right in the gut and slams you back to the beginning of the grief process. Grief is a difficult emotion that throws you for loops for your entire life. So how could you possibly feel blessed while you're grieving?

There are many reasons why people grieve, why they mourn. It could be a small thing, or it could be a big thing, and the size perspective is personal. But no matter what they are mourning or why they are grieving, there is still a blessing to be had. And that is the blessing of the ever-loving presence of God. Even in the times we feel nothing will ever make us happy again, God is there for us. Even in the darkest of valleys, God will be there for us. It makes me think of Psalm 23, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." As well, the Poem Footprints in the Sand says, "I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints. ... 'My precious child, I love you and will never leave you — never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.'"

To mourn means that your heart has been broken. The blessing is that God will be your comforter through it all. God's blessing through a time of mourning is something to which I can personally attest. Not only did I receive the blessing of comfort, but also the blessing of saying goodbye.

One of the hardest things you can do is watch someone you care for lying in a hospital bed with nothing for you to do but wait. Wait for the breathing to slow, wait for the heart to stop, wait for the person to decide it is time for them to go. As hard as that waiting is, though, it gives ample time for you to say goodbye.



## Our name has changed. Our work stays the same.

### PWRDF is now **Alongside Hope**

After two years of discernment and consultation, PWRDF's members\* have approved a new name. **Alongside Hope** emphasizes themes of partnership, accompaniment, community and teamwork that have always exemplified the way we work.

With its tagline — **Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world** — **Alongside Hope** honours the legacy of PWRDF as an agency of the Anglican Church of Canada, and it will carry us forward into the future.

As we walk alongside our partners and many supporters, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.



Scan the QR code to view a video about our new name and read our list of Frequently Asked Questions, or visit [pwrdf.org/our-new-name](http://pwrdf.org/our-new-name).

\* The PWRDF Board of Directors, Diocesan Representatives and Youth Council comprise the voting membership.



**Alongside Hope**

Anglicans and partners working for change  
in Canada and around the world



**Après de l'espoir**

Anglicans et partenaires œuvrant pour le changement  
au Canada et à travers le monde

What feels like only moments ago, I sat next to my friend as he lay in a hospital bed. I listened to his ragged breathing as the cancer that had eradicated his body began to take away his final moments. I could feel inside of me the wails of Mary, both the mother of Jesus and of Magdalene, as they clung to Jesus' feet as He died on the cross. Those wails were their goodbyes to Jesus. My wails to my friend were much more silent than those of these women, but I still appreciated the chance to say goodbye to him. I have had missed opportunities for proper goodbyes with other friends who have died. I was grateful that things were different this time. Having that chance to sit with him over his last few days seemed to make his death easier to take and attending his funeral a little easier to do.

Saying goodbye is never easy. And some goodbyes are harder than others. But no matter how painful, saying goodbye is important. A lack of a goodbye can feel like unfinished business while the opportunity to say goodbye can be extremely healing.



Photo: [Allef Vinicius](#)

During His final days, Jesus was trying to say goodbye to His apostles. But each time He was met with disbelief and an unwillingness to let go. However, that is what goodbye is — a way to let go of the person. Not to forget them, but to allow them to leave this earth. Saying goodbye reminds us of how precious time is and how we shouldn't take for granted the time we have together. When you miss out on that chance to say goodbye, it can leave something hanging in the air. Whenever you have the chance to say goodbye to someone who matters to you, do so. Do not hesitate. No matter what type of goodbye you make, it can be extremely healing.

When I attended my friend's funeral, I expected so many more tears than I shed, and I assumed it would be extremely difficult to preside over his burial. However, all I felt was

peace, which I thought was odd. However, thinking back on it now, I truly believe that because I had such profound moments of saying goodbye to him throughout his final weeks, all I had left to feel at the end was a sense of gratefulness that his pain had come to an end.

Are you avoiding visiting someone because you are scared to say goodbye?

Don't wait until it is too late. In the moment, there will be sadness. But in the end, there will be peace and comfort in the arms of God and in the knowledge that we share the human emotions of grief and mourning right alongside Jesus.

Are there times in your life where you missed the chance to say goodbye?



Photo: [Priscilla Du Preez](#)

I had a friend who I'd met in one of my theological classes. We connected quickly and were fast friends. Near the end of her degree program, she found out that she was terminally ill with cancer. She wasn't in any of my classes in my last year and I pondered if it was because she was too sick to attend. As time went by, we lost touch. There were brief encounters on Facebook and once at a Pride Parade, where there were big hugs all around.

One day, I realized that it had been a long time since her last Facebook post, which she had tended to do three or four times a week. I reached out, with no answer. A member of her family finally reached out and let me know that my friend had passed away a few weeks prior. I had missed my chance to give my friend a proper goodbye.

As Christians, we have hope in eternal life after death because of Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross and his

resurrection, showing us his defeat of death. Therefore, if you feel you've missed your chance to say goodbye, take heart. Your loved one can still hear you through prayer because they, too, have defeated death. For in this manner, we share in the divinity of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.



**THEO ROBINSON**

The Reverend Theo Robinson is an Anglican priest serving as a Pastor in the Interlake Regional Shared Ministry with the Lutheran Church of the MNO Synod. He is an openly transgender priest who wants to be a visible example that God loves all of creation. You can follow his [blog](#) or look him up on Facebook (@revtheorobinson) and Instagram (@theconversepriest).

# Now I was Cupbearer to the King

EDMUND LALDIN



Photo: [Jamelene Reskp](#)

The title of this article is Nehemiah's job description. Nehemiah was a prisoner of war who lived in Susa. Susa was an ancient city in the lower Zagros Mountains about 250 km (160 mi) east of the Tigris, between the Karkheh and Dez Rivers in Iran. One of the most important cities of the Ancient Near East, Susa served as the capital of Elam and the winter capital of the Achaemenid Empire, and remained a strategic centre during the Parthian and Sasanian periods. Susa is mentioned in the Ketuvim of the

Hebrew Bible by the name Shushan, mainly in the Book of Esther, but also once each in the books of Ezra (Ezra 4:9), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1) and Daniel (Daniel 8:2). According to these texts, Nehemiah lived in Susa during the Babylonian captivity of the 6th century BC (Daniel mentions it in a prophetic vision). At the same time, Esther became queen there, married to King Ahasuerus, and saved the Jews from genocide. A tomb presumed to be that of Daniel is located in the area, known as Shush-Daniel.

Certain community members told Nehemiah about the state of Jerusalem and the hopelessness of God's people after the siege. Nehemiah remembered God's covenant with God's people, Moses' leadership, his people's sinfulness, and Jerusalem's destruction. However, after a barrage of emotional thoughts, Nehemiah realised his status in the king's court and finished the lament by saying, "Now I was cupbearer to the king".<sup>1</sup> The cupbearer was a person of trust and confidence. The king was confident that the wine would be of the highest quality and would not harm the king. Despite being a prisoner of war, Nehemiah became trusted in the king's court because of his loyalty. Nehemiah used his privilege and influence to help rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. He did not wallow in his sorrow or rejoice in his status in the king's court; instead, he rose to the occasion and used his influence for his people's benefit and the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem.

The shortest verse in the English translation of the Gospels is, "Jesus wept", and it is mentioned when Martha and Mary, Lazarus' sisters, sent Jesus the news of his death. Jesus came to visit them, and he wept at Lazarus' tomb. Regardless of the emotions and sadness, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in the presence of many bystanders and Lazarus' family members. The point to notice is the bystanders' protest and condemnation of Jesus' order to remove the stone from the tomb. They were not expecting Lazarus to walk out from the grave; they were concerned about the decomposed body and unbearable stench. One cannot blame their disbelief as the dead didn't usually walk out of their tomb. But, Jesus the Son of God changed their doubts and denial into thanksgiving for the God of miracles' mighty acts.

These examples of crying over the state of the holy city and weeping at Lazarus' tomb assure us that miracles happen when humans rely on God's love and mercy through concrete actions to change circumstances. They also highlight the importance of perseverance, faith, patience, and proactive engagement. We must thank and acknowledge the faith of those who believed Nehemiah and those who rolled the tomb's stone away.

The current state of the Anglican Church of Canada in general, and the Diocese of Rupert's Land, can metaphorically be presented as the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Although we still have some faithful members in the pews, the future looks bleak because of the average age of the congregants and the dwindling finances.

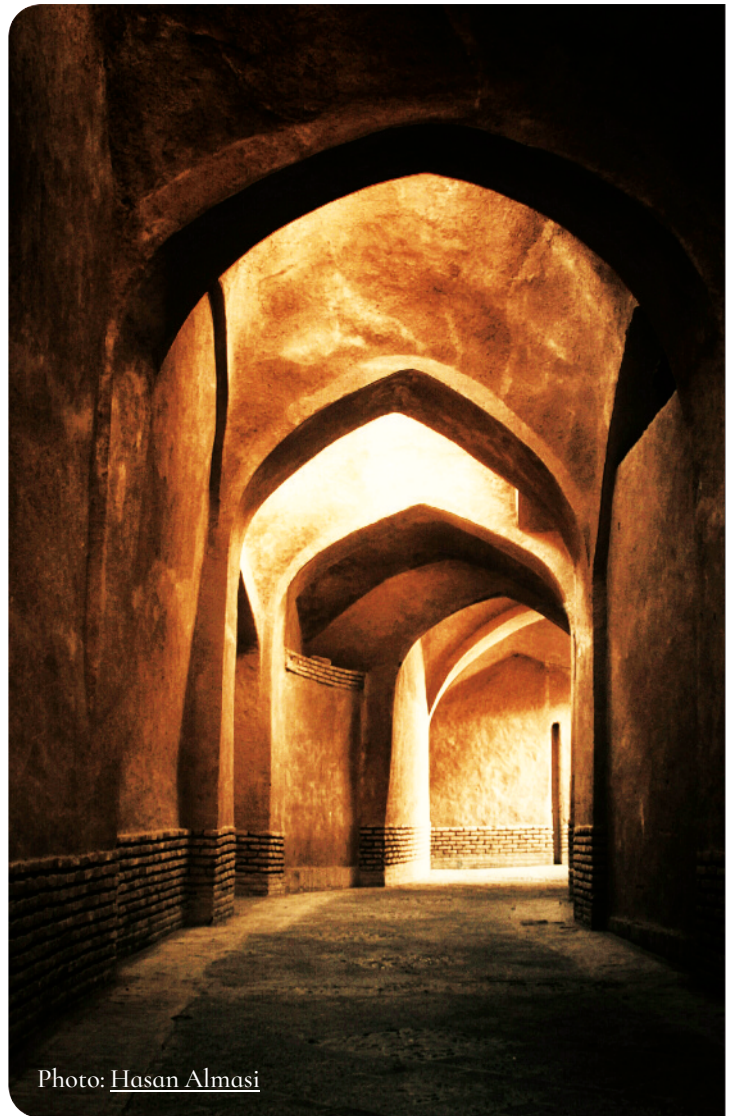


Photo: [Hasan Almasi](#)

One can also present that the Diocese needs to be raised from the dead (rejuvenated, reimagined, and recreated) but the bystanders, lay and cleric leadership, have given up the hope. The leadership has decided to address the situation reactively. Outreach and social ministry are the first items to be cut from the budget, and clerical positions are made half time or less to accommodate the scarce financial resources. In short, the church struggles to be relevant, and the members have perhaps given up hope and accepted doom and gloom as a normal and new reality.

Nehemiah and Lazarus's raising from the dead elicits hope and grants us a way to address the situation. While we lament, let us also use our influence and talents to reach out to the exiles and rebuild the church. These passages inform and encourage us to proactively and prayerfully discern our role and responsibilities in rebuilding our churches. We must

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<sup>1</sup> Nehemiah 1:11



Photo: [Datingjungle](#)

not wait for the day of reckoning and the closure of our diocese and its churches, but with steadfast faith seek strength from the Son of God to bless our efforts to perform miracles in our midst.

Lent calls us to reflect, pray, meditate, and prepare ourselves for Jesus' glorious resurrection from the dead. Why don't we take this time to reflect, pray, and meditate on our role and contribution to rebuilding the Body of Christ? This introspection will assist us in engaging proactively with our faith communities to transform ourselves so that spiritually, we can be the cupbearers to the King.



**EDMUND LALDIN**

Rev. Edmund Laldin was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. Liberation Theology and his father's ministry were the catalyst for his call to ministry. Ordained in 1995, he has served in the dioceses of Quebec, Western Newfoundland, and Rupert's Land. He is currently the Incumbent of St. Saviour's church. His academic interests include preaching, liturgy, and how to make church accessible to the marginalized.



Photo: [Europeana](#)

## Weeping for the World

In October 2019, just before Thanksgiving, the city of Winnipeg had a [freak snowstorm](#) with freezing rain, gusts of wind up to 80km/hr, and up to 35 cm of snowfall. It was one of those disasters that feels both unusual and ominous — a sign of the times. The storm damaged houses, downed powerlines, and took a particularly brutal toll on Winnipeg's trees, 30,000 of them. An unseasonably warm fall meant the trees still had their leaves, which allowed moisture-laden snow to cling to branches like concrete, snapping limbs and downing whole trees.

ZOE MATTIES

One of those trees was the beautiful old elm tree in my front yard. This storm delivered its death sentence. A significant branch was broken off in the storm, leaving a gaping wound in the trunk. Over the next two summers canker worms devoured its leaves leaving it weak and stressed. Climate change added to the strain. When Dutch Elm Disease found the tree, it was unable to resist the invasive fungus carried by the Elm Bark Beetle. I came home from work one day to see the dreaded orange dot sprayed on its trunk, a sign that the city would soon cut it down, and I mourned.



Photo: [Hasan Almasi](#)

You see, this tree, and all trees for that matter, perform daily acts of wonder and mercy for us and the rest of creation. They are a refuge, a playground, a source of nourishment and shelter, and they provide the very breath in our lungs. One large mature tree can provide the day's oxygen for up to [four people](#). We breathe for each other: their oxygen, our carbon dioxide. We are not as separate as we may think. If we lose trees, we lose everything.

The loss of my tree is a small grief, but it is nested within a much larger grief – one that many of us carry in these days of biodiversity loss and changing climate. [Studies](#) say that up to 90 percent of young people today feel at least moderately anxious about the ecological crisis and 75 percent say the future is frightening. Experiences of climate anxiety and eco grief have risen exponentially in people of all ages. Theologian and priest, Hannah Malcom, writes in her edited

anthology *Words for a Dying World*, "Our grief about a dying world – however all-consuming it might feel – is not about death in abstraction. We grieve the death of particular things, whether creatures or places." She continues, "We mourn the death of the world because it is where we come from. But we do not come from the same places. We cannot emphasize our creatureliness without understanding our locality. We are finite, belonging to a particular community, and that finitude is not a barrier to our flourishing, but a gift."<sup>1</sup>

Let me return to my tree for a moment. The gift of my tree's breath reminds me that all breath originates with God. Genesis 2:7 says, "the Lord God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into his nostrils."<sup>2</sup> As God breathed into us at the time of creation, our every exhale is a reflection of that first satisfied breath of God. It is a reminder of our intimate connection to the Creator and to the created. On Ash Wednesday we are reminded of this fact as we are told, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return"<sup>3</sup>. The Common English Bible translates this verse as "you are soil, to the soil you will return." In Hebrew the word in these verses for man/human is *adam* and the word for dust/soil is *adamah*. The human created out of the humus. On Ash Wednesday we could say "remember you came from the earth, and to the earth you will return." This isn't meant to be a threat. Yes, it is a reminder of the inevitability of death, but it is also a call to return to our essence as God's creatures.

Our failure to remember that we are creatures has led us to the very dire situation we now face with biodiversity loss and a changing climate. The season of Lent encourages us to enter a time of penitence and fasting. It invites us to sit with grief for a little while. Psychotherapist Francis Weller writes in his book *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*, "Sorrow helps us remember something long intuited by indigenous people across the planet: our lives are intricately comingled with one another, with animals, plants, watersheds, and soil."<sup>4</sup> Weller writes that we all must undertake an apprenticeship with sorrow. As disciples of the "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief"<sup>5</sup> there is much we can learn about lament from our teacher.

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, Hannah. *Words for a Dying World* (London: SCM Press, 2020) xxx-xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> CEB

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 3:19, NRSV

<sup>4</sup> Weller, Francis. *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2015), xvi.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 53:3 KJV

Jesus's words to the weeping women in Luke 23 give us some insight into the role of lament in times of crisis. As Jesus is carrying the cross to his death, a great crowd follows, including a group of wailing women, some of whom may have been professional mourners — a common practice at that time. Jesus redirects their grief: "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."<sup>6</sup> He names the suffering to come, the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans, and calls them to repentance. In doing so, Jesus joins their lament and invites them to see the larger tragedy unfolding around them. This is not just personal grief, but communal grief over an empire that thrives on systems of violence and oppression.

In what ways might Jesus direct our sorrow today? Perhaps He would say, *don't weep for me, weep for your siblings whose homelands are being swept away by the rising tides. Weep for your fellow creatures who perish under rushing flood, and burning forest.*

Kyle Lambelet writes, "laments are prayers at the end of human agency. They confront the reality of our situation in recognition that things are not as they should be."<sup>7</sup> Lament does not demand joylessness, nor is it the same as despair, which assumes we already know the end of the story. Rather, lament is a form of truth-telling, a refusal to look away from what is broken. Lament allows us to see the world as God sees it: as beloved. While lament can be expressed individually, when expressed in community, we are reminded that we are not alone. It can be a powerful act of solidarity with those who are suffering and a way to upend the status quo. One outcome of lament is repentance, which means a change of direction, a turning towards God who is still creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world.

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 23:28 NRSV

<sup>7</sup> Lambelet, Kyle. "My Grandma's Oil Well," In *Words for a Dying World*, ed. Hannah Malcolm (London: SCM Press, 2020), 29.



Photo: [Hasan Almasi](#)



strange company  
he kept on that long walk

some of those hired nailers  
were widows, abandoned,  
trying to raise a mite or two in a macabre dance  
for a stranger in a bloody field  
of severed trees

they had reasons of their own to mourn —  
the coming destruction of their known world, for example —

maybe they already knew what it was like  
to wish  
their hungry children  
had never been born

grief beyond grief

don't cry  
for this one green tree,  
Jesus said,  
cry for the whole  
beloved  
burning forest

LORI MATTIES

As compost transforms death and decay into life-giving soil, expressions of lament can create fertile ground for action. It can point us toward the work of repair, restoration, and reconciliation with our fellow creatures, and our Creator. My husband and I intend to plant a new tree in our front yard this summer. We know that climate change brings uncertainty, and that we are bound up in harmful systems, but we also haven't reached the end of our human story. We are in the "messy middle"<sup>8</sup> and there is work yet to be done. My prayer is that as we learn to weep for the world, we also learn to care for it with the same tenderness God does. This is courageous and hopeful work.

<sup>8</sup> I borrow this phrase from Mariko Clark, *The Book of Belonging: Bible Stories for Kind and Contemplative Kids* (United States: Convergent Books, 2024).

*"Station 9: Jesus talks with women on his way to the cross  
(Luke 23:27-31)"*



ZOE MATTIES

Zoe Matties lives within the watersheds of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. She enjoys eating veggies from her garden, exploring the woods with her dog, and watching birds. She works for A Rocha Canada helping people of all ages learn to love and care for the places they call home.