

THE GRAPEVINE – Issue 50:14th March 2021

Dear Friends,

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.*

Psalm 23:6

"Goodness and mercy pursue me." God's kindness will run over me and case me down, grab me, and hold me. We are being chased by God's powerful love. We run from it. We try to escape. We fear that goodness, because then we are no longer in control. We don't trust such a generosity, and we think our own best efforts are better than God's mercy.

Lent is a time to stop the running, to let ourselves be caught and embraced in love, like the sheep with safe pasture, like a traveller offered rich and unexpected food. God does not wish for our lives to be filled with endless anxiety. It is meant to be an embrace, but that means we need to be caught by God.

The second to last line in Psalm 23 is, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever, " or my whole life long. I will not depart from God, because I have no desire for a life apart from God. Why would I want to leave? The last line of the Psalm asserts that the true joy and purpose of life are to love God and be loved by God, no longer alone, but in communion together. Our society is full of temptations and desires, but they will never amount to a good life. The sheep trust in God and wants nothing else.



Lent is about noticing our blindness and seeing differently. I invite you during Lent to see differently, maybe for the first time. To see past your anxiety, greed, fear and control. See yourself as a sheep of the Good Shepherd, as the traveller in God's good valley, as the citizen at home in God's good house. You will then see truly, be free and full of joy, generous and grateful.

*Desire one thing: God's presence,
and you will be less driven by all those false desires of the world that really don't matter.*

May God's richest blessing be yours!

