

# NEW BEGINNINGS

## LENT NEWSLETTER

### PASTOR TERRY'S NOTES – We're still walking

*“And the Spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.”*

Mark 1:12-13

On Ash Wednesday, I preached a sermon inviting people into Lent. It was especially intended for those who find themselves in a quandary, asking what exactly is Lent about, anyway? After-all, we have many new faces in prison.

Is it suffering? We suffer enough. Is it fasting from chocolate? We've heard about that one. My most targeted audience was those who say, “I prefer to skip Lent and go straight to Easter jellybeans. Why dwell on anything depressing?” Bring on the candy.

Lent or the wilderness? Why go there if we can skip over it?

Anyone who knows me well, knows I have absolutely no sense of direction. Working with a tiny budget years ago for my Internship Project, my Internship Supervisor *insisted* that a guide be hired to lead us. He wasn't going to risk losing a dozen of his flock following me over a mountain in Haiti.

When we're walking through the wilderness, regardless of the time or place, it's easy to lose our way. What practice do we employ to lead and guide us? Breadcrumbs? Jellybeans? If that wilderness is filled with scary things, these are not likely to help us.

Since our last newsletter in August, there have been times when we thought in prison that we were losing our way. We had a solid 2020 mapped plan. The breadcrumbs got eaten. Events were canceled. We took many detours, knowing we had to trust in more than ourselves to find our way.

In August, I could still hold one on one pastoral care meetings with women. COVID made its way inside the gates, and these precious times together were

denied in order to keep the women safe. While other congregations found their way through zoom, live streaming, emails, telephone calls, car parades, and parking lot worship, women at Denver Women's were advocating for more visits to the showers. There were no family or social bubbles.

With faith, we are finding our way. Skipping over this time has not been an option. We are finding our way because we have been honest about our worries. We are finding our way as we admit we cannot do it alone. We come in prayer, asking the Spirit to be our helping guide. We ask Christ to be our hope leading us out of the wilderness place. But first, we had to admit we were in the wilderness—which is what Lent is about, anyway.

Many of you have and are continuing to show up, offering us hope, even as you face your own challenges. A small thing can offer those feeling devoid of shelter, a sense of home. A small thing can allow those who feel near the end, a path out of the wilderness.

We lost a dear friend of the ministry a few weeks ago. She was also a friend of mine. In the weeks since her death, cards and donations have been coming in to New Beginnings in her honor. Her name was Ardith, but we all called her Artie.

Artie's “small thing” was to encourage everyone she met to see God in everything. Artie visited New



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Beginnings often. There was not one of the women in whom she did not see God's face, and she told them so. She laughed with and delighted in them. Through her genuine love, they came to see themselves as BELOVED.

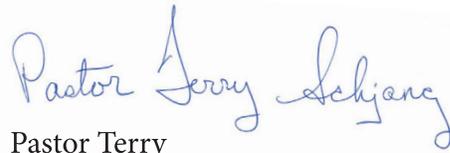
Who needs breadcrumbs when we have someone in our life who can teach us we too are God's children, we too are beloved, even when we find ourselves in the wilderness of prison, or loneliness, or addiction, or grief? Why skip ahead to jellybeans and risk missing the healing love of someone showing up as an angel in the wilderness to serve as our hired guide to true peace?

Okay, candy is good. Trinity Boulder is donating candy for all inmates at Denver Women's. Holy Trinity Littleton will be bagging all 630 bags. I will be delivering them

to the women for Resurrection Sunday, but not before the women have done their "Lenten wandering through the wilderness". As they wander, they have learned how much we need each other and how God's face shines in their own as well. Thank you all for continuing to walk with us.

*Thank you, Artie, our angel, who is still with us.*

*Peace and hope,*



Pastor Terry

## WENDY'S REFLECTION



I have been a volunteer at NBWC for about five years. The last year has been very different, but rewarding in its own way. Our family was blessed to be able to record prayers for the women to see in virtual services. Knowing we could help provide some comfort and connection was beyond rewarding.

My children were so frustrated by the COVID rules, but connecting and uniting to record prayers helped us all realize how blessed we were to have our freedom, even if it was restricted by the pandemic. They realized the restrictions could have been much worse and being grateful for our blessings helped us cope with being locked-down. We were transformed by the love of God that is present for everyone even in the dark times. Hopefully we were able to share a bit of that transformation to the women inside.

*~Wendy*

**SAVE THE DATE · OCTOBER 8, 2021**

*Save the date for our annual Chow Hall Gala on October 8, 2021!*

*Planning is underway and we look forward to sharing more details about this fun event in our next newsletter.*