

The Fish Net Lent 2019

Dear Friends,

It was my very first Christmas and my mother sent my father out to buy me a present. He came back with a present that clearly did not impress my mother: a fairly large elephant, red and yellow in colour and stuffed with straw. While it did not impress my mother, it became a fixture in my bedroom until the day I married and left home. Indeed I still have it today though, quite understandably, not in the bedroom! It's not hard to see why; the material is worn and faded, the head is ready to fall off and after over six decades the straw doesn't smell very nice either. Every once in a while Susan will suggest that we get rid of it but so far I have resisted. There is no logical reason to keep it and some very good reasons to get rid of it but I am unwilling to do so; being my first Christmas present from my parents makes it special. But why am I sharing this with you?

On Ash Wednesday I led the worship service at Allendale and as I said that day, so often we think of Lent in negative terms. It is all about sin. It is all about the death of Jesus. Who needs it or wants it? As I said that afternoon though, Lent, more than anything else is about the love of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son" and "God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world but rather to save it." Logically and rationally, there is no reason why God should love the world and all therein; indeed there are a lot of good reasons why He shouldn't but since when was love ever rational or logical? God loves us just as I love that old stuffed elephant. In fact just as I love it for what it is, so too does God love each and every one of us because of what we are; His children. The love of God for His world and all therein including each and every one of us is what this special time of year is all about.

Wishing you a most blessed Lent and Easter,

Shawn