God beyond our knowing, give us the courage to give up our illusions and to seek you, the God who is greater than our imagination, wiser than our wisdom, more dazzling than the universe, as present as the air we breathe and utterly beyond our comprehension or control. Amen.

_Credit to Barbara Brown Taylor_
"A Jesus who walked through the world knowing exactly what the morrow would bring, knowing with certainty that three days after his death his Father would raise him up, is a Jesus who can arouse our admiration, but still a Jesus far from us. He is a Jesus far from a [humanity] that can only hope in the future and believe in God's goodness, far from a [humanity] that must face the supreme uncertainty of death with faith but without knowledge of what is beyond. On the other hand, a Jesus for whom the future was as much a mystery, a dread and a hope as it is for us . . . this is a Jesus who could effectively teach us how to live, for this is a Jesus who would have gone through life's real trials.”

—Raymond Brown, Jesus God and Man, pp. 104-5.

**Congregational Lenten Reading**

*What We Talk About When We Talk About God*

By Rob Bell

Having interpreted God as “with” and “for” us, in Chapter 6 Bell describes God as “ahead of us, pulling us forward.” He also acknowledges it is possible “for religious people who see themselves as God’s people to resist the forward-calling of God to such a degree that the larger culture around them is actually ahead of them in a particular area . . . ” (p. 169). Can you think of some examples of when the larger culture was ahead of the church in perceiving the new thing that God was doing in the world? Why did the church fail to perceive “the forward-calling of God?”