

Gathering Table
a Faith Community in the Anglican Church of Canada

Presider & Preacher: The Rev'd George Porter, D. Phil.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 29th , 2020

10:00 a.m.

WELCOME TO GATHERING TABLE

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For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of life and spirituality. We are gathered as treaty people on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg of the Fort William First Nation and acknowledge this people's stewardship of this land through the ages.

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

John 11. 25, 26

The Penitential Rite

‘Seek the Lord while he wills to be found, call upon him when he draws near; let the wicked forsake their ways, and the evil ones their thoughts; and let them return to the Lord, and he will have compassion, and to our God, for he will richly pardon. ‘

The Officiant:

Dear friends in Christ, as we prepare to worship almighty God, let us confess our sins against God and our neighbour.

Silence is kept.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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My life is in your hand, deliver me;

* shine on your servant with the light of your love.

My life is in your hand, deliver me;

*** shine on your servant with the light of your love.**

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;

let me never be put to shame.

Shine on your servant with the light of your love.

Incline your ear to me;
make haste to deliver me.

Shine on your servant with the light of your love.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe;
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.

Shine on your servant with the light of your love.

I put my trust in the Lord;
I will rejoice and be glad because of your mercy.

Shine on your servant with the light of your love.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

My life is in your hand, deliver me;
*** shine on your servant with the light of your love.**

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy:

O come, let us worship

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2 Song of Peace *Isaiah 2.2–5*

In the days to come *

the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall tower as the highest of mountains *
and be raised above the hills.

There shall all the nations flow; *
many peoples shall come and say,
“Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, *
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways *
that we may walk in his paths.”
For the law shall go out from Zion, *
from Jerusalem the word of the Lord.
He shall judge between the nations *
and decide for many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, *
their spears into pruning-knives;
nation shall not lift sword against nation; *
they shall never train for war again.

O people of Jacob, come, *
let us walk in the light of the Lord.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy:
O come, let us worship

The Proclamation of the Word

First Reading is from the Book of

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me
out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle

of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the

Lord, have spoken and will act," says the Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice; let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss, O Lord, who could stand?

For there is forgiveness with you; therefore you shall be feared.

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him; in his word is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy;

With him there is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins

Second Reading is from the Letter of Paul to the Romans 8: 6 - 11

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind

that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to
John 11: 1 - 45**

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Christ.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon: George

A time of silence for reflection.

Affirmation of Faith

**Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with**

**all your soul,
with all your mind, and with all your strength
This is the first and the great commandment.
The second is like it:
Love your neighbour as yourself.
There is no commandment greater than these.**

Intercessions and Thanksgivings

Collect Of The Day

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ, and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Prayers of the People

Creator, your word which summoned this world into existence, brought order out of chaos and beauty out of the formless, has infused the very air we breathe with the precious perfume of your love. This word is the light by which our journey is illuminated, the light by which we see the beauty of this world, and the light we pass to those who would join us travelling in the hope and joy of your company.

Sustainer, your love extends to the boundaries of the universe yet is focused on humankind; weak, sinful, helpless, blown this-way-and-that-way individuals who you count as your children, wanting nothing more than to

welcome them into your arms, prodigals returning to their home.

Your word is a lamp to my feet

ALL: And a light for my path.

Healer, your love extends to the boundaries of humankind, to rich and poor, have and have-nots, oppressor and oppressed, thief and victim, for we are all in need of your forgiveness and reconciliation. We pray for all your children wherever they might be, especially in this time of global pandemic, in their joy and sorrow, fear, pain and suffering; that your word might comfort, your love heal and restore.

Your word is a lamp to my feet

ALL: And a light for my path.

Reconciler, your love breaks through, demands to be noticed, exposes that which has been hidden, reveals the truth that has been concealed within the heart. We pray for those who exploit the poor, those whose business is slavery or persecution and those who hold power over life or death. We pray that your word, your love might bring change, and bring light into hearts darkened by sin.

Your word is a lamp to my feet

And a light for my path.

Saviour, your love has influence wherever it is shown; a shoulder to lean on, a willing ear to listen, a task performed, a gift given, a selfless act. Give special strength to those who daily give of themselves to care for the sick, the endangered and those in any need. We pray for Archbishop Anne and all those in positions of authority and responsibility. May they show your love and share

your word through their actions and service, and may they and those they serve be blessed.

Your word is a lamp to my feet

And a light for my path.

**Christ with us, Christ before us,
Christ behind us, Christ in us,
Christ beneath us, Christ above us,
Christ on our right, Christ on our left,
Christ when we lie down, Christ when we sit
down, Christ when we arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of us,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of us,
Christ in every eye that sees us, Christ in every ear
that hears us.**

Leader: And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing & Dismissal

The Officiant : May the God of hope fill us with all joy

and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Scripture Readings for the Sunday of the Passion

Psalm 118: 1 – 2, 19 – 29

Isaiah 50: 4 – 9a

Psalm 31: 1, 9 – 16

Philippians 2: 5 – 11

Matthew 27: 11 - 54

Anglican Cycle of Prayer

Please Pray for: Season of Prayer and Repentance

Today, the fifth Sunday in Lent, is the focus of the Primates' Task Group's call for a period of prayer and repentance in the Anglican Communion. The Bishop of West Malaysia, Moon Hing, is a member of the Task Group and has written this prayer, which the Task Group offers to the Anglican Communion for use today. Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Sovereign Lord of the universe, Creator of humankind, we, your unfaithful children, are truly sorry for our sins and the lives that we have lived. We sincerely believe and confess in our hearts that only through the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary, can we obtain Your forgiveness. We repent that: In thought, word or deed, we have committed serious offences against You and our neighbours; In laziness, despair and lust for power, we have provoked hatred, division and hurt within our communities; In greed, deceit and indifference, we have caused serious damage, unnecessary conflict and aggravated destruction to our refugee and migrant brothers and sisters; In selfishness, insensitivity and bias,

we have encouraged and emboldened those who inflict hurt, pain and sorrow on our loved ones and families; In the name of religion, doctrine and even of Christ himself, we have wounded believers and pursuers of holiness and faith; In stubbornness, pride and arrogance, we have caused division and strife within Your church and among Your children; Mercifully send Your Holy Spirit – the Spirit of order and comfort – and cleanse us from all unrighteousness; restore in us true faith in Christ which brings truth, peace and harmony; and help us to walk together with our brothers and sisters in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of Your name. Amen.

Anglican Lutheran Cycle of Prayer :

Please Pray for

ACC The theological colleges and training programs within the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada: The Atlantic School of Theology, Montreal Diocesan Theological, College, and Queen's College

ELCIC The dean, council, and congregations of the Northwestern Ontario Area of the Manitoba-Northwestern Ontario Synod

Diocesan Cycle of Prayer :

Please Pray for: The Parish of Wawa/White River, St. Paul's, Wawa, All Saints', White River.

Please pray for the lay leadership at St. Paul's and All Saints' as they provide crucial ministry and guidance in their communities.

Parish Cycle of Prayer:

Please pray for our own church members:

Elroy Ulmer, Robert Vienneau, Terry Wade, Evelyn Wallace, Elaine Waring, Barbara Warwick, Dolores Wawia Elizabeth Whalley, and Jim, Carl and Roberta Wolfe, Michael Wolfe and Heidi Dreher-Wolfe, Makayla and Riley, Anne Zale

Please Pray For:

Our young people in Junior High School, High School, College and University who are struggling academically, social and mentally, as well as with understanding their own identities.

Prayer requests from Arch Bishop Anne:

“Please join the bishops of our province in holding our province and our whole world in prayer during this time of crisis, especially those who are afflicted with this coronavirus. Pray especially for researchers, policymakers, frontline workers, and for all those who are caring for those who are sick, as well as for those who have died and those who mourn.”

“Continue to pray for those who are most deeply affected by COVID-19 - frontline workers, hospital staff, those who are stranded and unable to return to their homes from abroad, those who are isolated further because of the new restrictive measures in place, and those who have been diagnosed with COVID -19 and their families and loved ones.”

New- Gathering Table Prayer Chain

During this time of social isolation and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to pray for one another. If you would like to be a part of the Gathering Table prayer chain or you have any needs or concerns that you would like

placed on the prayer chain please contact Sheila Chisholm at chisholmsheilak@gmail.com or text or phone 306-240-0771.

A grace note from www.thunderbay-northshoreanglicans.com
.In times of trial, God has the answers.

Reminder about Visitations:

Pastoral care visits will be restricted to emergency situations – please call the office or the Rectory if such a situation arises. Telephone prayer ministry will be ongoing.

Dear Parishioners:

At this time when Sunday worship services have been suspended, we are providing a number of ways that you can continue to financially support our mission and ministries at Gathering Table. Of course, these methods are unnecessary for parishioners currently using the Electronic Offering Program (EOP). But if you wish to begin the EOP or modify your existing EOP, please contact the Diocesan office at:

[https://www.dioceseofalgoma.com/about-the-diocese-of-
algoma/electronic-offering-programme/](https://www.dioceseofalgoma.com/about-the-diocese-of-algoma/electronic-offering-programme/)

Offering Options:

1. Drop it off at the church office at 228 Pearl St. Office hours are Tuesday to Thursday 10 – 2 and Friday 9 – 12 noon. Just buzz the door, identify yourself, and the door will be unlocked. Give it to Roberta or Sharon, who will record the offering.

2. Mail it in to: Gathering Table, 228 Pearl St., Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1E4. Please ensure to not mail cash.
3. Send an e-transfer by setting up a profile with your own financial institution, indicate the recipient is Gathering Table church, and use the church email address of office@gatheringtable.ca

Use the security question “What is the first name of our Pastor?” (answer: George) In the message box, please include your envelope number or mailing address, and the Sunday date you wish the offering to be applied. For example:

| |
|---|
| Envelope no. 999 for
Sunday March 29 |
|---|

With appreciation,
Marg, Marjorie, Sheila, Jim

Sunday Sermons: Since we aren't gathering at the church, the Sunday service can be viewed on the Gathering Table website <http://gatheringtable.ca> and on the Gathering Table Facebook page. The whole service will be live streamed at 10 a.m. Sunday at the link <http://gatheringtable.ca>

BOOKING CHURCH FOR MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES

All bookings are cancelled until further notice.

Email office@gatheringtable.ca

Website <http://gatheringtable.ca>

Office Hours- 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Tues., to Thursday
Services Sundays start at 10 a.m.

The Most Reverend Anne Germond

DIOCESE OF ALGOMA DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE
619 Wellington Street East 2-113 B Third Street West
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 2M6 Cochrane, ON P0L 1C0
March 25, 2020

Dear friends,

In the past week, I have met via teleconference with the Executive Committee of Algoma as well as with Diocesan Leaders and Regional Deans in Moosonee. This week I am meeting via teleconference with clergy, wardens, and treasurers to share information relating to the care of ourselves, each other, and our buildings during this time of pandemic. I am encouraged by the stories I have already heard of parishes reaching out to their members and of the creative ways everyone is staying connected during this time.

We all saw the headlines of the *Anglican Journal* last December which asked the question “Gone by 2040?” In a post this week someone had put a big orange sticky note over that headline and written in thick black marker, “The Church: Transformed by 2021.”

The truth is that we have been forced out of our buildings and are discovering fresh ways of being the church in new and exciting ways. We need a message of hope now more than ever and we are all being transformed by the prayers of the wider church as we gather together in our own small corners.

We will not be back in our buildings any time soon and will soon be posting resources on the diocesan websites which will help you celebrate well at home or in livestream

services.

On Monday evening, the Ontario House of Bishops met via Zoom to discuss our diocesan responses to the pandemic. We wish to share the following with you in the hopes that you will join us in fasting from Eucharist and feasting on the Word during this time:

“One of the realities for the Church living through this pandemic is our inability to physically gather as community for worship and mutual support. The Eucharistic Feast which we are used to celebrating week after week has been interrupted. On-line celebrations, prayers, bible studies, and devotions offered by parishes have been keeping us connected in a virtual way and we are grateful for these inspired links. This temporary absence from one another tests our very nature as a living body and reminds us of our deep longing to be together. We now find ourselves in a time of Eucharistic Fast rather than Feast. The Reverend Dr. Eileen Scully, Director of Faith, Worship and Ministry puts this time into context in the article attached.

Therefore, the bishops of our province have agreed together that our virtual worship through Holy Week and the season of Easter, or until such time that we can gather in community together, will not include the liturgy of the Eucharist. Sacramental celebrations are the work of the whole People of God and require a gathering of people who can be physically present to one another. That is impossible for most of us at this time. The Great Three Days of Easter, and through the fifty days of the season, we will be fasting from the Eucharist but feasting on the Word. We believe that the Risen One, the Word, by the

power of the Holy Spirit, is present and active with us as we hear and receive him in the word of the scriptures, in that word interpreted and proclaimed in preaching, and in the word inwardly digested, by faith, in each person.”

I remain yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eileen Scully", with a small cross symbol above the first letter.

Dr. Eileen Scully
Director, Faith, Worship and Ministry
Anglican Church of Canada
March 2020

On this Eucharistic Fast

Precis:

The present pandemic has, rather swiftly, thrust us into what seems to be the unknown. Clergy and lay leaders across the country are responding in deeply caring and meaningful ways in support of their communities. Cessation of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a shock, and pastoral response to this new reality is challenging. The tools of social media and online connection are pastorally helpful in many ways. And we need to ask ourselves what it is that we are using them for. Pastoral care and connection, nurturing community, responding to needs and crises, and offering prayer are to be encouraged. What about the eucharist? Can it be done

through the medium of the internet? To answer that we need to ask what is the eucharist and what are we trying to do online? A full theology of sacramentality urges us to enter a time of eucharistic fast, which both honours the eucharist as the celebration of a particular community gathered, and helps to refocus our attentions on the sorts of discipleship we need to live and encourage in others. This – the suspension of eucharistic worship – is not an unknown thing to our ancestors in the faith and to churches even today in situations of war and other distress. We have a treasure trove of liturgical practices that we can and should bring to the fore in order to care for our communities and to nurture discipleship even now. Especially now.

The present pandemic has, rather swiftly, thrust us into what seems to be the unknown. We know we need to do many, if not most, things in new ways, distancing physically and, for those with access to the technology, doing more connecting through digital platforms. Clergy and lay leaders are checking in on parishoners, meeting and holding bible studies by videoconference, and in other ways tending to the local communities in the Body of Christ. Many are offering spiritual leadership in the live-streaming of prayers and worship. As people are at home in isolation, the offering of audio-video prayers, especially when done from the home of the clergy or lay leader, has a way of helping to hallow those homes, which can for some start to feel like a prison. We are reminded that home is, can be, and ought to be, a place of prayer.

One of the most difficult realities that we face as worshipping communities is that suspension of gatherings for worship means the suspension of celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. Whereas musical and theatrical performances can be moved online, the Eucharist is not about performance by one for the many, and cannot move into that mode. The sacrament is made such in and through the gathering of people with a presider, in a place and time, in the physical presence of what we can touch and taste, together, as well as hear and see. And since the 1980s, we have become healthily attached to the celebration of the Lord's Day, weekly, being about the eucharistic paschal mystery. For several generations, this has become the norm, and it is good that it is so. We have been blessed to be living in a time when celebration of the Holy Eucharist is not an 'occasional celebration' as it was for several centuries before us.

God is with us. Christ is truly, really, present with us, and the Holy Spirit surrounds us. Even when we cannot gather to make eucharist together we are not without the real presence of Christ in our very real, isolated, midst. Efforts to try to replace the community's physical-and-spiritual gathering with practices that try to offer a eucharistic communion online, though well-intentioned, do not reflect our sacramental theology, which is deeply about the physical-and-spiritual together.

Consonant with the most ancient Christian traditions is the practice of a *eucharistic fast*. In some contexts a fast from receiving communion is a choice – the very early

church instructed catechumens (those undergoing formation in the faith prior to baptism) to fast from partaking of the eucharist. Many communities of disciples today know this experience of fast because they do not have weekly presence of a priest.

This is a time of context-necessary eucharistic fasting, in which we join with the whole communion of saints in longing for the bread of new life and the wine of the age to come.

From our baptismal and eucharistic identities shaped over time, we are equipped and challenged to be the real presence of Christ to each other. The world needs that presence always. We are reminded that sacramentality itself – the awareness of the reality of Christ’s true presence with us here and now and at all times - is broader than the specific celebrations of baptism and eucharist in which we have shared and will share. We are reminded that the Body of Christ – we disciples – is the sacrament to the world.

Times like these call us to reach, with gratitude, into what has already been given to us, what is known from Scripture and Tradition, and to bring old-new things into light. A treasure-trove of liturgical resources is coming to light as we share online our liturgical texts, our music, and our offerings of prayer through audio-visual recording and live streaming. Words and music and visual connection through the internet are the same in many ways as the tools as Paul used when he wrote his letters to Corinth, Ephesus and Rome. That was the high technology of his

day. He reminded those early Christian communities to pray without ceasing, to remember all the saints, to help the poor – in other words to be the disciples Jesus called them to be.

The rhythms of daily prayer and devotion nurture our souls. One essential element of pastoral leadership right now is to support these soothing rhythms. Here are some suggestions of what we can do, liturgically:

- Encourage people to pray at home, whether they are persons alone or domestic communities. Point them to resources (see www.anglican.ca). Invite them to email or text particular prayer intentions. Gather them, through the internet or phone, to pray together.
- Those who have the charisms for audio-visual presence can lead Daily Office and other forms of prayer, providing the digital texts for parishoners to join in those prayers.
- Clergy can look to their lay leaders who have the charisms well suited for leading these online prayers, and further nurture their baptismal ministries in prayer leadership.
- Model home-praying when you do audio-visual recording or streaming. We're in our homes, together.
- Our eucharistic fast will continue past Lent. The glory of resurrection will for some feel unreal in very real ways. To what beauty, new life, and joy can you point people, in real ways?
- Now is a time to reflect deeply on what it is to be praying community in the time of "here but not yet"

Though we didn't choose this, it is a time to embrace an intentional eucharistic fast in order to become catechumens again and through that process reflect on and deepen our faith.

“The Eucharistic table is a table like no other table. AND the Eucharistic table is like every other table. The Eucharistic elements are special and singular in that there above all other places and times, we see what God is doing in ALL places and times. Here’s the question, then: do you think if we do not gather at the Eucharistic table like no other table that God is no longer at present at all other tables, i.e., at all other places and times? Is it not the case that God’s presence to all places and times is the non-binary anchor of this non-binary relationship between the Eucharistic table and every other table, actual and metaphorical?... Think on these things. May we gather again around the Holy Table very soon. In the meantime, look for the Tables around you and among you. God is still at the Table that is spread among us in our hearts, in our prayers, in our service.”

The Rev'd Dr. James Farwell, Virginia Theological Seminary

Message from George..

Dear Sisters and brothers:

As we come to the end of Lent, and move through the days of Holy Week, all of us realise that this will be a different sort of Easter for all of us this year. We had, of course, hoped to be able to gather together for worship by Palm Sunday, but the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus requires us to extend this period of time of physical ('social') distancing for what is most likely to be a much longer time than we had at first thought.

Although we are not physically gathering as a community of faith, it is important for us to realise that we are not 'disbanding'. We have read that our God *'who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by human hands.'* The apostolic writer told the newly baptised: *'As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'*

In this light, we have said frequently and for a long time that 'the church is not the building; the church is the people.' Miguel Petrosky writes: 'We can believe that God is present and still be either six feet away or in the safety of our homes on Sunday morning. The church will always be the church no matter how physically close its members are. God isn't just found in the confines of a physical church building — God meets us where we are.'

Now, to paraphrase something Abraham Lincoln said in another context, we are engaged in a great trial testing whether this community can endure. Do we really believe

what we say we believe about God and about God's people? In this situation, we are being called upon to find what Archbishop Anne called in her latest letter 'creative ways everyone is staying connected during this time.'

Our journey that began on Ash Wednesday leads us through this long fast of Lent, into the difficult days of Holy Week, along the road of Jesus's Passion (his suffering and death). It is a journey that has taken on an unexpected significance for us this year. Last Sunday we heard the familiar words of the Psalm speak of walking 'through the valley of the shadow of death' and we realised that these were not just comfortable religious words of a long ago Hebrew Poet. They describe our present reality.

It's so very important, when there are so many reasons to let go of hope, to remember that where we walk, our Lord has walked and continues to walk with us. Even in 'the valley of the shadow of death' – even in this time of global pandemic – our Lord is with us, comforting rod and staff in hand. Our journey takes us through lenten lands and days of passion right to the open door of Easter's empty tomb.

We will not be able to physically join in the processions of palms, but in our hearts and in our homes we can sing: 'Ride On, King Jesus'. We can consider what our Lord has done for us, not as the proverbial 'white knight' but as the servant who washes our feet and feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation - as the broken one who prayed three times in the garden but then drank deeply of the cup of suffering. We can see the wounded one who dies bleeding on the cross to show us how very much we are loved and forgiven.

This we recognise as the same one who broke the power of death – death that had kept humanity bound with chains of fear – rises never more to die. We may not be physically present to kindle the New Fire or to shout together: ‘The Lord is risen!’ But we can trust anew that our Lord – the light of the world – ‘is risen indeed!’

In that light we are being called to consider again how we, made to be members of the Body of Christ by the Spirit, live out our vocation to be the light of the world – *to love mercy, do justice and walk humbly with our God.*’ now in this time of ‘physical distancing’.

We are very much an incarnational community. We gather as an incarnational community to celebrate together sacramentally. We aren’t able to do that in present circumstances. We’re being challenged and stretched by the paradoxical question as to what it means for us to remain together when we can’t be together.

As part of this, Archbishop Anne, along with other leaders of the church, have called us to a period of ‘Eucharistic fasting’. That means we will continue, for the time being, to engage in worship using non-eucharistic liturgies and will continue to livestream via our website and Facebook page until such time as it is safe for us to gather again. (This will include the liturgies through Holy Week.)

These are difficult times. I wish I could tell you otherwise or promise that this will all soon be over – that we will just go back to normal. I can’t. The world and the church which emerge from this experience will likely look and feel very different.

I am reminded of Sir Winston Churchill’s leadership

during the Second World War. He didn't mince words nor engage in Pollyannaish magical thinking. He said: 'Nourish your hopes, but do not overlook realities.' What we don't want to do is fall into the traps of despair or denial. These really are difficult times.

At the same time, these are times ripe with potential, and we want to sustain, as much as we can, our life as a community of the beloved. We want to encourage one another and continue to hope in God. There are many ways to reach out to one another and our other neighbours while still practicing safer 'physical distancing'.

In that light, I echo these words from Archbishop Anne: '... we have been forced out of our buildings and are discovering fresh ways of being the church in new and exciting ways. We need a message of hope now more than ever and we are all being transformed by the prayers of the wider church as we gather together in our own small corners.'

I will end by saying this: I am inexpressibly grateful to the wardens. Pastor Gail and many others who continue to work long and hard to lead us through these times. I have heard people asking how we are enjoying this 'staycation', but leadership in this time for which none of us were prepared calls for persistence and energy and creativity and careful thought – all a lot of hard work.

Godspeed. George+

PS: Here are some other things to take note of:

The building will remain closed indefinitely, though

phone calls will be answered during office hours. All gatherings, events or meetings must either be postponed or conducted by means of various internet tools.

The Food Cupboard will operate every second and fourth Sunday of the month in its present modified format. No emergency food parcels will be distributed during this time.

Pastoral visitation is drastically restricted. In emergency situations please call the office or the Rectory. We realise that, despite the focus on this crisis and the cutting back on medical and social services, other things still go on – and some things get worse. Isolation is hard for many people for different reasons, not only physically, but relationally, emotionally and spiritually. We want to do what we can to help.

There is a new ‘prayer chain’ to supplement our ongoing prayers. Please call the office with potential requests. Remember to pray especially for leaders and for those who must engage in heroic forms of ‘risky behaviours’: medical personnel, emergency responders, those who deal with the dead and their families, those who keep vital services operating, and those mostly unseen people who enable these others to keep going.



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Phone: 768-9865

Lay Readers: Frances Bennett-Sutton, Kim Bienvenue,
Rose Jardine, Brenda O'Neill and Jim Sutton

Rector's Warden: Marg Boone

Deputy Rector's Warden: Marjorie Tutkaluk

People's Warden: Jim Sutton

Deputy People's Warden: Sheila Chisholm

Co-Music Directors - at Gathering Table

Pianist Donna Hamill Organist (Vacant)

Archbishop Anne's Motto for 2020

***"In the same way, let your light so shine before others
that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven."***

(Matthew 5.16)