



*I'm alive
forever
and always*
REVELATION 1:18

March 2021

Dear and Beloved People of the Parish,

Easter is within our reach now. There is light at the end of the tunnel. In the world around us vaccinations are taking place and Spring is bursting forth. And we are completing our journey through Lent.

During this time, we've been considering our journey, especially during these COVID times, within the context of pilgrimage. Usually when someone sets out on pilgrimage it's by choice, but with COVID we didn't have any choice at all. Yet I think often pilgrimage is something people feel compelled to do. Unlike pleasure trips and holidays, it's not something that simply springs out of a momentary impulse – "Oh, I think I'll go on pilgrimage. What a good idea!" Pilgrimage is more like a compulsion or an inner voice that can't be silenced saying, "This has to be done." It's not a shout or a loud order. It's more like a quiet urging and statement of Truth. In a way we could see these COVID times like that, see this time as a riveting WORD from God, telling us to stop and reconsider our path. We certainly have been brought to a full stop.

It has made us see things we've been ignoring for a long time. It's brought us to a halt from our busyness and to see things in new ways. We have come to see isolation as a wound in our culture. We see that those with less have way less than those with more. We've been forced to acknowledge how many live on a terrible financial edge where only one small disaster is enough to send their lives into freefall, along with their families – their children and perhaps their aging parents. Futures and dreams crash on the rocks. There is no escaping seeing this reality: when things get hard it's the people with less who suffer the most. It has also opened our eyes to the conditions in many care homes, where many of us are likely to live out our final years as well. The wounds of the world have been revealed to us in new ways. Aren't these the kinds of Truth Jesus held up to his people? How could we doubt that God is at work here?

And so we have found ourselves called to be a new people. Like the disciples we've found ourselves in need of pilgrim qualities – courage, resilience, perseverance, and most of all – faith. We've been required to open our hearts to what we're living through right now. We've been called to open our hearts outward, to see the needs, so that each of us might do whatever we can to respond to the needs. And we've been called to open our hearts inwards to see what's unfolding in our innermost selves as we live through this time. How is God at work within us during this pandemic? We have been blessed with fresh sight, and new perceptions. We've been penetrated by the love of God, calling us to a new way of living.

And now we've arrived at Holy Week. We're about to become an Easter people once again. We're completing our Lenten pilgrimage and will soon walk into the light of the Risen Christ. We will have our services this week, though they will look different – how could it be else! And our work continues, for the parish and in our

outreach. We have not laid off any staff. Your Parish Council and your Mission and Outreach Committee continue to meet (on Zoom). We keep on with our work and our mission as Jesus called us to.

But we do still have bills to pay. Therefore, I urgently encourage you to continue in your offerings. As we no longer have a physical offertory plate, please consider signing up for Electronic Collection Plate if you haven't already done so. You can email Dale, admin@saltspringanglican.ca, to have a form sent to you. Or perhaps you will choose to mail in a special Easter offering in honour of those essential workers who, at risk to themselves, have made all our lives so much easier in this past year.

I pray for all of you that you may continue to walk in the Resurrection Light, in this way of deeper perceptions, kinder discernments, and more compassionate choices. May you do this both for your own selves and for all you encounter. May you walk with trust as deep as the ocean and faith as strong as elephants, in the Light and Love of Christ.

Together we are stronger. Together we are church. Together we are Pilgrims and Seekers. In one of his great poems, The Christmas Oratorio, W.H. Auden wrote:

*He is the Truth.
Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.
He is the Life.
Love Him in the World of the Flesh;
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.*

The great city of course is the one not built with human hands. But as we move together to lift up each other and the world, we are co-creating that city with God. Together we can celebrate the Easter joy of our Risen Christ knowing we are never alone.

Yours in Christ, lover, healer, and light of the world,
Gyllian +

Holy Week & Easter Services – check our website for links

Palm/Passion Sunday: on our YouTube channel

Maundy Thursday: In your home using service liturgy posted on our church website

Good Friday: Stations of the Cross through the Tears of Creation on Diocesan Website
The Seven Last Words, Christ Church Cathedral. Good Friday Service
Livestreamed 12:00 – 1:00 pm

Holy Saturday: Many options are available. Here's a few:

St James Anglican Church, Vancouver – Anglo-Catholic flavour,
9:00 pm – 10:00 pm, on Zoom

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco – Closer to All Saints style of worship,
9:00 pm – 10:00 pm, live-streamed

St Gregory of Nyssa, San Francisco – a more liberal version, rich music
7:30 pm, on Zoom

Canterbury Cathedral, England – 3-hr service in 30-minute segments

Easter Sunday: All Saints Church, Salt Spring Island, Sunday Apr 4, on YouTube