

*“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (John 1.5)*

Dear friends in Christ,

As we come again to the threshold of Holy Week and Easter, I find myself reflecting—much as in years past—on how the story of the Passion and Resurrection seems to meet us differently every year. Each time, it takes on fresh meaning in light of the moment we are living.

This year, the darkness feels particularly heavy, doesn't it? ‘Wars and rumours of wars’, as Jesus put it to his disciples near the end of Matthew’s Gospel (and also in Mark and Luke). And even if we think it’s all just happening on foreign soil (and seas), the effects are global. And as always, they have an impact on the most vulnerable.

There are several temptations bound up with these lengthening shadows. *The temptation to despair*, to think it’s all over. *The temptation to lash out* at one group or individual and lay all the blame there (which only exacerbates the darkness). *The temptation to hunker down*, batten the hatches, and protect self and loved ones while we ride out the storm.

Yet, as always, the Gospel—the Good News—reminds us that darkness does not have the final word. It never has. I think Jesus’ point in telling his hearers to be alert when the shadows rise, is to remind them (*and us*) that it is in times like these that our work as seekers and cultivators of light is most needed. Passiontide *and* Easter together declare that what looks like an ending is in fact *just the beginning* of something new—something filled with God’s life and promise, which has always been here, with us. Within us.

Last week our book study group that has been working through *Living the Questions* (by David Felten & Jeff Procter-Murphy) were wrestling with the problem of evil, and one of our number told us of a wonderful story from later Jewish tradition: the *Tikkun Olam*, Hebrew for ‘the healing/repair of the world’. In this legendary retelling of the Creation Story, vessels containing the Divine Light are accidentally broken, and bits of the Light become attached to the shards of the containers, which fall into Creation—each shard bearing some of the Light. The shards attach themselves to Creation—the souls of the people, to *everything* in the Creation. In this Story, *our job* is to seek the shards of Light and help reunite them with the Source of the Light. In other words, God’s good Light is indeed all around us—in us, in the people we meet (*all of them!*), and in all the Creation. The darkness can *not* overcome this Light.

Here at St Mary’s, that reality is made visible in the enduring and growing life of our community. We have continued to meet new faces, to build renewed partnerships, and to deepen in our commitment to living ‘in God’—a commitment that shapes our attitudes, our actions, and our hopes for one another. Even amid challenges, our parish continues to be a place where people encounter welcome, compassion, and the steady light of Christ that cannot be overcome.

## **Easter Offering 2026**

As you may know, our special Festival gifts throughout the year (Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas) support projects both within and beyond our walls. This Easter, our special collection will directly support those affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine. **Help Ukraine Vancouver Island** ([ukrainehelpvi.ca](http://ukrainehelpvi.ca)) is a volunteer-led charity that endeavours to direct and assist displaced Ukrainians in creating decent and safe new lives for themselves and their families.

As our parish continues to grow into our calling, your generosity directly strengthens the work we do together: nurturing faith, building community, and extending Christ's reconciling love to our neighbourhood and beyond. Supporting our shared ministry is not just a practical necessity; it is a spiritual act—a way of participating in the life God is renewing among us. You can use the enclosed envelope if you wish, or if you wish to give online, you can do so at our 'Collection Plate' on our website at [www.stmarysoakbay.ca/pages/donate-online](http://www.stmarysoakbay.ca/pages/donate-online) and choose '6 - Festival Offering' under the Fund choices.

My friends, as we stand at the threshold of Easter 2026, may we open our hearts to the God who brings life out of death, hope out of despair, and renewal out of weariness. May the Light of Christ rise in you, in our parish, and in our world. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*

In peace and hope,



(The Ven) Craig Hiebert

### **HOLY WEEK & EASTER AT ST MARY'S**

1701 Elgin Road Victoria BC V8R 5L7

Apr 2, 7:00pm	<b>Maundy Thursday Eucharist</b>
Apr 3, 11:00am	<b>The Good Friday Liturgy</b>
Apr 4, 8:00pm	<b>The Great Vigil of Easter</b>
Apr 5, <b>Easter Sunday</b>	
7:00am	<b>Easter Sunrise Service</b> <i>with Oak Bay United @ Willows Beach</i> <i>(hot cross buns and hot drinks afterward, back at St Mary's)</i>
10:00am	<b>Easter Eucharist</b>