

Red Door Chronicle



A newsletter of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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A SHOCK OF GOOD NEWS

RESURRECTION LIFE



ALL OVER THE WORLD, THIS EASTER Sunday, Christians will rise up with the sun. They will gather outside in the cold light of dawn (for it will be cold in many places, quite possibly here, too) to tell the world that “Jesus lives.” (Yes, in most places outdoor gatherings are still permitted, if the necessary protocols are observed.) They will testify that in God’s Kingdom, shockingly, “all bad things come to an end”: even death, even despair, even Covid-19.

The first recorded Easter Sunrise Service took place in 1732, in Saxony, Germany, among your friends and mine, the Moravian brethren. After praying all night long, these wonderful 18th-century Christians went to the local cemetery—which they called “God’s acre,” by the way, the traditional name for a Moravian

graveyard—to sing hymns in praise of Jesus, whom they knew and loved; Jesus, who had risen from the dead.

When Jesus swept into Jerusalem for the last time, some thought he was John the Baptist, come to life again. Others said he was Elijah. Still others said he was the Messiah, the Christ of God. Whatever the case, almost everyone (save those in authority) went positively wild, hailing him “King” with flung-down clothes and shaken palms.

But did they really know who he was?

Seeing him arrested, beaten, and dragged before the Sanhedrin, and Herod, and Pilate, confidence faltered, and the people of Jerusalem simply assumed that his “power had gone

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out of him” (to paraphrase Luke 8:46); that they had been mistaken. And so when Pilate popped his final question, i.e. *What do you want me to do with him?*, they thought nothing of answering, “Umm, crucify him, please. This is a problem we really don’t need.”

And with the death of Jesus an eerie calm began. It was the Sabbath, after all, and all the crowds went home . . . But then came the news; news so quiet that it could not at first be heard. As the Welsh say, “bad news goes about in clogs; but good news, in ‘stockinged’ feet.” Here’s how Mark describes it:

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe—clearly some sort of angelic figure—sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.”

““Don’t be alarmed,” said he. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’””

But here’s the kicker: when they first heard that Jesus was alive, the disciples would NOT believe it!! They would not! (Yes, truth is

stranger than fiction.)

“Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form, to two of them while they were walking in the country,” Mark goes on. “These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.”

Jesus had defeated death, and shattered forever the gates of hell. **But they did not believe it!!!** It was the best news that they had ever heard, but they would not believe it. Why? Because they were too afraid; because they were so accustomed to news that was always so bad that they had long since learned to shut off the TV—as it were—and bid the radio goodnight; despairing of all that they had ever known or hoped or believed.

Are you, too, too afraid to believe? Don’t be! Don’t be afraid! The news is good—it’s **so very good!** Death itself has been defeated, forever, and its curse broken! Unlike the cowering unbelieving disciples, you—even you—can make bold to declare that there ***is*** hope for the hopeless, even now. You can, by the Spirit’s sacred impress, set forth the **best news ever given the world.** Covid or not!!

Declare it; share it; live it; be it; believe it. Don’t go back to bed! Don’t shut off the light! Don’t pull the covers back over your head! Don’t give up! Embrace **the world with love!** Strive; hope; believe; engage. Get up, in Jesus’ Name, and join the believing as they take joy in Christ at the dawn of God’s New Age; the Age of Resurrection—and as they minister and move out. For the Son of God is risen, a glorious reality that will change the lives of people everywhere.

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“The gifts of the Master are these,” writes Stephen James, “freedom, life, hope, new direction, transformation, and intimacy with God. If the cross was the end of the story, we would have no hope. But the cross isn’t the end. Jesus didn’t escape from death; he conquered it and opened the way to heaven for all who will dare to believe. The truth of this moment, if we let it sweep over us, is stunning! It means Jesus really is who he claimed to be!”

“Therefore do not abandon yourselves to despair,” said John Paul the Second. “We are Easter people,” and ‘hallelujah’ is our song.”

“Christ is Risen; he is risen indeed.” Therefore let us make ‘hallelujah’ our song, even in time of Covid. Let us be unafraid, engaged, hopeful, and fully alive, moving from strength to strength as God himself calls us to new life—and new ministry—as his people, and as his church.

With love and benediction, Colin



NOTES FROM A TIME OF COVID

A note from my Covid-19 diary. I awoke in tears again this morning . . . pandemic fatigue I tell myself. Yes, I am tired. I spend more time in bed than upright. My procrastination becomes epidemic in itself. What can I do?

Firstly, I turn to God in prayer. Every morning I take a bit of time to commune with our creator God. In my prayer I express my gratitude for all that I have . . . my family, my friends, my charmed life, my financial stability, my home. I move on to asking forgiveness for the wrongs I have committed. The hasty words, the small slights to various people, the lack of understanding for the needy in our society, whatever comes to my mind in this time of reflection. Finally, I come to asking God to give me the strength to travel this life’s road for another day.

Once I have discussed the day with God, I move on to my physical wellness—with getting dressed for the day, taking a moment to really think about what I will be doing. My wellness also depends on a certain amount of exercise be it Qigong, walking, a trip to the pool. Experts have found that physical exercise will lift your moods and help you to avoid sinking deeper into depression. I make a plan for my day every morning . . . an actual list of what I want to accomplish in the day. (I don't get upset if things change, but I like to have that list to keep me on track.) Having a plan for the day helps me to place focus on positive achievement. Perhaps this is why I am often “down” over the weekend.

And so, with God's help I make it through another day of feeling bereft of friends, of longing for a hug, of being able to meet as a family. How long O Lord, how long, I wonder? No matter, God is with me and

I will be able to weather whatever happens in this day and the days to come.

Jan Higgins



DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

*The tragedy is not so much that we suffer,
rather the tragedy is that we make so little use of our suffering.*

James Houston

Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies . . .

John 12:24



ONE CONSOLATION OF THIS PANDEMIC IS WE have a greater opportunity to spend time alone with the Alone. Jesus made a regular practice of seeking out solitude to pray. One of the best places to practice solitude is in nature. Gazing at the beauty of the sparkles of light on the waves at a beach can draw you into an experience of the Shekinah of God. The glory of God is shimmering all around us if we have the eyes to see. The spiritual purpose of the Sabbath was to cultivate a heart of gratitude for all the beauty and goodness that surrounds us on a moment by moment basis.

If we make a regular practice of silent prayer it allows us enter more deeply into the “amen” of prayer of letting go and sinking down into the ground of our being. The ground where we live, move and can experience our very being flowing into exist-

ence. Periods of suffering and come and go in our lives. When suffering comes it enters into our prayer practice and the suffering itself can become a form of prayer. This wound of love is the longing for our beloved and for our true home.

Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies....

In this silent prayer of longing new growth is happening in secret below the ground, below the surface of our conscious minds. Here in the darkness, there is something worth “paying attention to, as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19).

So let us try to turn this dark time of the pandemic into an opportunity for spiritual growth. The resurrection is not limited to an event that happened thousands of years ago; it is something that can happen today in our hearts.

Bob Pushak



EASTER APPEAL

WE HAVE ATTACHED THE FINANCIAL Report for 2020 along with this newsletter. We managed to get through a tight year in 2020, and are extremely grateful for the financial support you all provided during that time. We are so impressed and thankful for your generosity.

The Spring is historically a time when many churches experience less money coming in. With the Pandemic we are receiving about half the donations compared to the same time last year. Many churches are experiencing financial hardship so our situation is not unique.

Sadly, we suspect some churches in Penticton and in our region will not survive the Pandemic. We are receiving some CEWS (Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy) financial support from the Federal government, but this sup-

port is scheduled to end in June. We are putting the Annex up for sale.

Osoyoos Signs, an Okanagan firm, has expressed interest in buying the Annex. If this sale is completed, the sign company has graciously agreed to let us continue to have access to the building for Colin to have office space, for parking on Sundays, for Sunday School, for storage, and for use during special events such as Walk to Bethlehem. This would be the ideal, sweetheart deal for us!

Osoyoos Signs are hoping to sell some of their property in Osoyoos, which would free them up to purchase the Annex. Let us pray that our sale can be completed soon.

Any donations you can provide in the mean time will be deeply appreciated. Thank you.



PRAYER REQUESTS

*BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION,
WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD. (PHILIPPIANS 4:6)*



GOD IS GOOD AND WE KEEP PRAYING! Join us as we lift to God the following people:

- For Inez Pringle, for recovery from macular degeneration;
- For Yurdle Vant Geloof 's Class 4 drivers' test; also continuing prayers for her daughter Ashlin.
- For Carroll Moreland, who wishes to express prayers of gratitude for sunshine and for how much spring has lifted her spirits. Carroll shared a delightful story of watching a crow dropping walnuts in front of approaching cars so they could break open the walnuts for the crow to eat;
- For Margaret Sisley, for continued recovery from pneumonia;
- For Louise Thorpe as she copes with arthritis;
- For Nadia Pushak, recovering from a shoulder injury that interferes with sleep and daily chores;
- For Nadia's nephew Brodie—who has Covid 19—and for Brodie's wife, and his brother , who have both been exposed to the virus. Brodie phoned in sick before he was diagnosed but his boss told him to come in anyway ; therefore the people Brodie works with have also been exposed to the virus;
- For Sherry Ure, and David Ure, friends of the congregation. David suffered a minor stroke in late March;
- For Irene Drebit who is looking forward to warmer weather which will help her arthritis and her mobility
- For Anna Proudlock, who can now have visitors at Haven Hill. Anna has now been withdrawn from the palliative care list at HH;
- For Marion Blanchard regarding stress and health;
- For Brenda MacDonald, that she recover fully from eczema on her hands. She is grateful that after 6 months she is finally seeing improvement, and requests continuing prayers;
- For Debbie Norris and her grandchildren; Alexa, Zero, Arion, and Avianna;
- For Pat Mesic's daughter, Teresa, who has had viral damage to her heart and will likely require open heart surgery to repair the damage sometime this year;
- For Sue Lane, that God would encourage her spirit & enable more from each new day;
- For Gwen Sulz, for renewed health and safety, especially while walking;
- For Tony and Joan Vant Geloof, for renewed health and recovery;
- For Audrey Nicol, for renewed health; she expresses gratitude for her recovery from surgery;
- For the MacDonald's nephew, Brad, a pilot laid off due to a still-undiagnosed hand ailment;
- For Fraser's ongoing health. Iza expresses gratitude for answers to prayer & requests ongoing prayers.
- For Rev. Colin as he takes a week's vacation April 5-12, for rest, revitalization, and ongoing vision;
- For God's provision financially, as we continue to do ministry; for the sale of the Annex;
- For children and youth; for teachers and counselors; for doctors and nurses and therapists;
- For our livestreamed Sunday services, now often viewed over 120-130 times weekly;
- For hope, encouragement, mutual love and forbearance as we continue to face the challenge of Covid.