

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is hard to believe we are approaching a third Easter in the midst of a pandemic. It almost feels as if we have been in an unending Lent that began Ash Wednesday 2020. And even as spring dawns, we are surrounded by mixed signals and confusion in our society. Mask mandates have been lifted, yet many of us are still feeling cautious and afraid about the threat of COVID, which has not gone away. And beyond the pandemic, we look East to Europe and see horrors that have not been seen on that continent for more than 80 years.

With all these challenges around us, Jesus' response is the same today as it was 2000 years ago: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27.

These words, we must remember, were said on the cusp of trial and execution for Jesus. These were not words said as platitudes on a sunny day, but words of hope during a time of deep trouble. The original hearers, the disciples, would see Jesus arrested and crucified, and likely wondered what Jesus was talking about – their hearts were surely troubled. But Easter Sunday had not yet arrived, the truth of Jesus' words had yet to be seen in the light of the Resurrection. In the light of the resurrection, the disciples' hearts would be lifted and their fears banished. Yet for us, who read those words and know about the resurrection, when and where our hearts will be lifted, our fears banished, can at times seem far off.

It is in the community and life of the church that this lifting and illumination happens, happens for those of us who follow Christ, but also all of humanity. Jesus calls us to be a light on a hill, a signal of God's renewing and redeeming purpose. That doesn't mean our hearts won't be troubled, they at times rightly are. But this community of St Thomas gathers every week on Sunday to recall the power of the resurrection, the power of God with us, and even for but a moment have our fears pause, our hearts gladden. Because we are reminded that God's love for each of us is more than we can imagine.

As the pandemic continues to wane, our beloved parish will need to continue to reimagine its call in both an expanded parish area, and a transformed society. A society reeling from two years of pandemic. The need for our Church to provide witness to and testimony of God's

redeeming love and resurrection power is needed more now than perhaps at any point in human history. God continues to call our parish to be the hands of Christ. It is through your actions, your contributions, your lives that we touch and transform the world around us.

Happy Easter,

Tim+ & Michael+

You are invited to all our Holy Week and Easter Services – in Person and Online. For more information go to our website – www.stthomasaltavista.ca

Palm Sunday 8am in person, 10am in person and online – Parking lot communion after the service

Maundy Thursday 7:30pm in person and online

Good Friday 11am in person and online

Easter Sunday 8am and 10am in person and online – Parking lot communion after the service