

Val's Voice



I wrote last Thursday morning about the news that Russia had invaded Ukraine. People were trying to flee their cities, or sitting in underground subway stations, not sure where to go next. Parents separated from their children were panicked,

trying to find a way to get to them.

And now, just a few days later, the pictures and stories have gotten more sad, and more intense. The Ukrainian people, Putin, all the others involved, are all more determined that something needs to shift.

Life has always been complex, and though we don't like to admit it, it remains so. All of us struggle and worry: about ourselves or our families or friends, about health or grief, political unrest or partner violence, the effects of prejudice or injustice. And who knew a short time ago that we would soon worry about war? It feels like another layer of frailty for our all too human selves.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, then, we arrive as God's people again at the season that we call Lent. In our tradition, it is a season when we acknowledge the brokenness of life and its uncertainty - the ways things take turns we can't expect, and even that we move towards the end of our lives.

It sounds depressing, but we all also know it as realistic. We may be highly skilled or wonderfully generous, wise or creative beyond the norm, loving or forgiving as well. But still life is sometimes a mess. Lives aren't all that we hope them to be.

Lent is a time we all need, a time when we turn to God for love and mercy and hope in the midst of what can sometimes be too much brokenness. It is a time when Christians look at ourselves, and

then attempt once again to turn our hearts to God, because it is only with God that healing can begin for each of us and the world.

The uncertainty of life in Ukraine and so many other places in our world is heartbreaking. That being the case though, those uncertainties - as they always have - ask us to dig deep, to learn from history and the people who have come before, to immerse ourselves in the wisdom and hope of our faith, and to learn God's call to us to serve our neighbours.

As we do that digging, we will be blessed as well with resilience, laughter, strength and hope. Things built in unexpected places when we are pushed in directions we simply don't go when life is smooth.

Blessings to all of you in prayers borne out of desperation, and may the hope and healing you seek for your own struggles, for all of us, and for our planet, be fulfilled.

Thanks to all of you for your faithfulness, to God, to our little community, and to all the world... we all need each other... peace!

Val



Photo credit: Kampus Production

Vestry Notes from February 22

Vestry made the decision that our parish will **resume in-person worship on March 20, 2022.**

We hope to continue to have worship available via Zoom as well - this will take some technical insight we don't have right at the moment, but hopefully we will pull it off with your prayers! Bishop Geoff has directed all parishes to continue requiring parishioners to wear masks.

The parish continues to hold its own **financially.** Donations are always a bit low early in the year, but we know from experience that they catch up as the year moves on. Donations can be made by e-transfer, PAR (monthly automated program), mail, or by arranging a drop off with one of the Wardens. Of course, when we resume in-person worship, offerings can be offered in person as well. Thanks to everyone for your faithfulness and generosity!

We were reminded that Barbara Jalibat has been taking part in a course from 1JustCity, thinking about **how we can create a better environment** for everyone in our city. We hope to be able to hear more from her soon about specific projects we can take on as a parish.

Vestry will be having an orientation, via Zoom, on Saturday morning, March 12. We have invited The Rev. Deacon Di Panting to help facilitate the process. She regularly does facilitation work with the Diocese, and comes highly recommended, so we are looking forward to having her with us!

Carey Isaac gave us an update on **our companion parish in Uganda.** They have begun the Kasaka Nursery School for little children in their region. We will hear more about this school in the not-too-distant future, and how we can help them with their important work.

We look forward to a **Parish Visioning Event** in the fall. Because of our partner relationship with the ELCIC, we will be able to use the skills of Deacon Michelle Collins, Assistant to the Bishop of the MNO Synod, to help us with this process. A planning committee will look at working with her later in the spring.

A couple of the GICs that our parish holds in the **Jubilee Fund** - an ethical investment opportunity in our province - are coming due very soon. After hearing about the excellent work the Fund does to support people in our province in need of housing, employment skills and even a healthy

place for those aging out of foster care, Vestry made a motion supportive to continuing our parish investment in this Fund.

The **Refugee Ministry Committee** brought the possibility of sponsoring a couple more family groups to Vestry, seeking approval for moving ahead. Vestry passed a motion indicating they are on board with this. We will keep you posted. In the meantime, please remember to hold those waiting to come to Canada in your prayers.

Corporation has decided that for now Judy will continue to look after many of our **parish administrative needs.** She and several Wardens and Vestry members have begun learning about some of the tasks she can't complete remotely. Thanks so much to everyone for your willingness to make this work!

We received a Thank you note from Vicki English, saying how much it meant to our Honorary Assistant, **The Rev. Bob English,** to work with and serve our parish for 20 years. Our prayers and love to Vicki and ongoing gratitude to Fr. Bob.

Why Lent?

Just as we set aside time to spiritually prepare for Christmas Day, it makes sense to set aside time to prepare for the two most important days of the Christian year - Good Friday and Easter.

Lent offers us an opportunity to come to terms with the human condition we may spend the rest of the year running from, and it brings our need for a Saviour to the forefront. Lent is a time to open the doors of our hearts a little wider and understand our Lord a little deeper, so that when Good Friday and eventually Easter comes, it is not just another day at church but an opportunity to receive the overflowing of graces God has to offer.

Lent is a time when Christians separate from the world; when we find out our faith is not just a feel-good, self-help religion but one that answers the deepest questions of life and eternity. Those who journey through the Lenten season will enter the Easter season with an increased appreciation for who God is and what He has done for us. And the joy of Resurrection, as well as the promises of eternity, will not be soon forgotten.

(an excerpt from: crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/lent-101-honoring-the-sacrifice-of-jesus)

O God of many names,
lover of all peoples;
we pray for peace
in our hearts and homes,
in our nations and our world;
the peace of your will,
the peace of our need.

**Dear Christ, our friend and our guide,
pioneer through the shadow of death,
passing through darkness to make it light,
be our companion that we may fear no evil,
and bring us to life and to glory.**

O God of peace and justice,
of holiness and love;
knit us together in mind and flesh,
in feeling and in spirit,
and make us one,
ready for that great day;
the fulfilment of all our hopes,
and the glory of Jesus Christ.

**Keep us in the spirit of joy and simplicity and mercy.
Bless us and those you have entrusted to us,
in and through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**



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