



Connections

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances"
1 Thessalonians 5:16

**SPECIAL
ISSUE
#3**



The College of Bishops is inviting all people in the Diocese of Toronto to a day of prayer and fasting on Thursday, March 26th, during the unfolding situation with COVID-19.

Throughout the centuries, God's people have joined in unified prayer across the world in times of need. In prayerful fasting, we are

brought closer to the humble reality of our dependence on God in Christ for all things.

Resources, including suggestions of prayers to use throughout the day, will be made available on Monday. Let us come together as a Diocese, each in our place, and pray as one, turning our hearts to God.

Archbishop Linda Nicholls has also called all Canadian Anglicans to a day of prayer on March 29. Let us take every opportunity to pray for one another, and for our world, during this difficult time.

- The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil*
- The Rt. Rev. Peter Fenty*
- The Rt. Rev. Riscylla Shaw*
- The Rt. Rev. Kevin Robertson*
- The Rt. Rev. Jenny Andison*



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR PAM

Due to an increase in the number of people who have the virus in the Scarborough area, the community meal had to be cancelled for Saturday, March 21st. This was a hard decision to make, given the diligent faithful service and care given by those who have been a part of this ministry, rain or shine or snowstorm. Thank you for your care, even in this decision. Let us continue to pray for those who are marginalized and for all who feel the effect of the COVID 19 virus.

Financial updates

Two income tax preparation clinics, which were scheduled for March 21 and 28 at the church, have been cancelled. As the date for filing has been extended to a later time by the government, these clinics could be rescheduled.

Most of the expenses of the parish go on as usual even during this period of shut-down. It's going to be hard to pay our bills if we miss too many Sundays, so please continue to make your offering by mail or by dropping your envelope in the mail slot at the church. We recommend that you do so by cheque rather than cash, and that you write on the back of the cheque "For deposit only to account of payee".



Please pray for these members of our faith community

Anne S, Annet K, Beverly B, Corinne P, David M, Deb A, Dorothy, Florence S, George, Jenille L, Joan and John N, Leonora B, Lennox and Leonora Y, Maureen C, Valerie A, Viggy M, William I.

and for all those affected by the COVID-19 virus



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**ALL SERVICES AND MEETINGS
CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

Aboard the Thursday train – a journey in prayer together

I had a strange journey of thought this week that I ask you to follow with me as I try to retell the essence of it. I first received what I can only call a startling quote, from one of my favourite authors, Frederick Buechner. The heading was "Disaster" and you will find it below:

ON THE EVENING OF THE DAY the World Trade Center was destroyed by terrorists, a service was hastily improvised in one of the largest New York churches, where crowds of both believers and nonbelievers came together in search of whatever it is people search for at such times—some word of reassurance, some glimmer of hope.

"At times like these," the speaker said, "God is useless."

When I first heard of it, it struck me as appalling, and then it struck me as very brave, and finally it struck me as true.

When horrors happen we can't use God to make them unhappen any more than we can use a flood of light to put out a fire or Psalm 23 to find our way home in the dark.

All we can do is to draw close to God and to each other as best we can, the way those stunned New Yorkers did, and to hope that, although God may well be useless when all hell breaks loose, there is nothing that happens, not even hell, where God is not present with us and for us. From [Beyond Words](#)

For me, the startling part was, "God is useless". I questioned, is that fully true and the only part of the truth? Then from my Morning Prayer readings some time this week, from Psalm 91, I felt I was getting a different train of thought. It begins "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, abides under the shadow of the Almighty....,9 &10 "Because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your habitation. There shall no evil happen to you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling". (*Please find & read the whole Psalm*)

Now, I know that the Psalm is written in a particular context and it is about how the writer felt about His experience of God at that time. It feels so different from the Buechner quote. Full of faith and confidence in God's full rescue at all times. It made me think that bad things will never happen to good people, which I know is not the way life is. Recently, seven doctors in Italy, some coming out of retirement to help fight the COVID 19 pandemic, have died. Again I wonder, Is that fully true and the only part of the truth?

Then later in the week, other thoughts came down my train-of-thought track. The gospel reading from Morning Prayer was the conductor this time. Mark 6:46-53 "After saying farewell to them, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. When evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea. He intended to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Then he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded".

What should I make of this reading? The disciples are certainly not full of faith the way the Psalmist was in chapter 91. In this case Jesus is aware of their fear and tells them not to be afraid of the adverse weather/time they are facing. Yes, he is there. And there is something else notable. Jesus is working beyond the normal natural way of science that we are used to. He does not fall into the water and, in fact he stills the wind, once he gets in the boat.

I can't help but wonder, can Jesus also still our fear, which has come into our lives with this pandemic? And can we have the faith to ask him to move in ways over and above the normal way of science to combat this outbreak? And, of course also to work within science and with scientists/medical people to give wisdom in how to proceed and to find a vaccine. And to guide us in how we live our lives to self-protect against the virus.

The passage begins with Jesus, alone, praying. I believe it was in his time of prayer that he was given direction, power/strength and wisdom to act. This Thursday, we are called to fast and pray and ask that God would act in power and wisdom, that we would have our fears lessened, and that God would bring peace and comfort to all that are affected by the pandemic. I ask that, as people of faith, you get onboard the Thursday train and that we join on that journey of prayer together. And that God would lead us into all truth.

Pastor Pam