



“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb...”

John 20: 1

A Letter for Holy Week: 2020

Dear Friends in Christ in the Parish of the Valley,

The great Holy Week and Easter celebrations of the Church form a deeply moving centrepiece for our annual liturgical calendar. Across the globe, Christian communities of all shapes and sizes traditionally gather at this time to hold special services, sing special songs, and pray special prayers to celebrate the life changing good news of our Lord’s resurrection. We sing, “Alleluia, Alleluia,” as the bells ring out from our sanctuaries for all the world to hear. “Christ is Risen!”

So much has now become of our annual Easter celebrations that we can perhaps start to forget that the first Easter probably did not resemble our usual festive worship. In all likelihood, it was actually more like the day that most of us will experience this year. On the first Easter, the disciples found themselves alone: their doors were barred, their guards were up, and their hearts were very much afraid. In the shadow of the crucifixion, most if not all of Jesus’ followers were emotionally wounded and grieving, left wondering how their loving God could have ever allowed such an awful event to occur. Much of what was going on in the world around them made little if any sense.

Early on that Easter morning, while it was still dark, a woman left the safety of her home and went for a walk. She too was scared, but something in her heart called to her. Mary Magdalene picked up a jar of water, took some simple washing cloths and some oil, and set off with tears in her eyes towards the dark and dreary tomb. Yes, the world around her was scary and uncertain. Yes, the future was very much unknown; but the love in her heart still pressed upon her to do something, even something simple. What happened next, changed everything.

This Holy Week, as we are faithful to remaining physically apart to care for each other during COVID-19, may we be reminded that the love in our hearts that presses upon us to do something, even something simple, is the voice of our risen Lord. Each time we telephone a friend, or send an email, or wave to our loved ones across the vast distances bridged by smartphones, computer screens, and at least six feet of distancing, may we be reminded that it is the grace of the Risen One that binds us together as a holy people: one body, with many members. May our hearts be assured that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Let the bells ring out from the sanctuaries of our hearts for all the world to hear!
Christ is risen!

Yours faithfully in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Michael Bird
Incumbent

The Rev. Canon Susan Clifford
Associate Incumbent

The Rev. Matthew Brown
Associate Incumbent

The Rev. Gillian Hoyer
Associate Incumbent