

The Living Word

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Meanderings.....

I think it was last week that I heard the phrase “lurching into April” in our zooming together and it seemed to describe pretty clearly how I was feeling then – and probably retroactively in however many months prior. Energy? Less. Focus? Hiding out with energy. More “what did I come upstairs/out here/laundry room (fill in your own blanks!) for? The items on my checklist remained mostly the same from day to day. Instead of zooming in I would find myself zoning out. Bewildering me. Is this the “new” normal? The real March Madness?

♪ *Larissa to the rescue, unbeknownst to her!* ♪ Somewhere in a Sunday Zoom she played “Tis the Gift to be Simple” – an old Shaker song with which most of us are familiar. Here are the words (from the Chalice Hymnal page 568 – and likely in many other places – in case you are wondering):

‘Tis the gift to be simple, ‘tis the gift to be free, ‘tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, and when we find ourselves in the place just right, ‘twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed, to turn, turn will be our delight till by turning, turning we come round right.

BUT...

Here's what I heard in my heart of hearts and which I have been singing every day since. It's a reminder of the journey from one beginning to the next beginning, long imprinted ... **Lord of the Dance** from "Songs of Faith", arranged by Sydney Carter and in Workers Quarterly – Hymns for Now. Sing as you are able the story that, when remembered and repeated, leads us together into our future.

In the Beginning...

I danced in the morning when the world was begun, And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun. And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth. At Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance then wherever you may be.
I am the Lord of the Dance said he.
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be
And I'll lead you all in the dance said he.

(refrain – to be sung, hummed, danced to after every verse)

Gathering the followers

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee but they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me. I danced for the fisherman, for James and John. They came with me and the dance went on.

Holy week

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame. The holy people said it was a shame. They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high. They left me there on a cross to die.

The Cross

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black. It's hard to dance with the devil on your back. They buried my body and they thought I'd gone. But I am the dance and I still go on.

The Promise

They cut me down and I leapt up high. I am the life that'll never, never die. I'll live in you if you'll live in me,

I am the Lord of the Dance said he.

My hope and my joy is that we will all be together in this dance.

Glenda

Living Stones

*And the table / will be wide. / And the welcome / will be wide.
 And the arms / will open wide / to gather us in. / And our hearts
 will open wide / to receive. / And we will come / as children who trust
 there is enough. / And we will come / unhindered and free. / And our aching
 will be met / with bread. / And our sorrow / will be met
 with wine. / And we will open our hands / to the feast / without shame.
 And we will turn / toward each other / without fear. / And we will give up
 our appetite / for despair. / And we will taste / and know
 of delight. / And we will become bread / for a hungry world.
 And we will become drink / for those who thirst. / And the blessed
 will become the blessing. / And everywhere / will be the feast.
 —“And the Table Will Be Wide” by Jan Richardson*

Here we are—once again—entering Holy Week—a week of big, intense, powerful, and possibly overwhelming emotions that run the spectrum from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. It might be helpful to think of this week like the arc of a dance or the movement of a symphony. It sweeps in with potent and forceful “Hosannas!” welcoming Jesus triumphantly into Jerusalem. It follows Jesus boldly to that Last Supper and asks defensively, “Surely not I, Lord?!” And it ushers in tsunami waves of love and longing as we hear Jesus hold out the bread and say, “Take, eat; this is my body.” But that love quickly transforms into heartbreak and heartache with every demonstration of grief, sorrow, betrayal, and denial that follows: Please, “Let this cup pass from me!” “I do not know the man!” “Crucify him!” “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” “It is finished.” . . .

But even when the end seems close enough that we might touch it, it moves, shifts, transforms. For the crucifixion is—by no means—the end of the story. “He is not here. He has been raised!” And here, we witness the miracle of miracles—the undying, everlasting, unquenchable, boundless love of God. And this love cannot be killed. It cannot be shut up in a tomb. It will not limit its reach or welcome.

Cornell West has said, “Justice is what love looks like in public.” David Whyte argues that “Courage is what love looks like when tested by the simple everyday necessities of being alive.” And while I do not disagree with either of them, I believe that an extravagantly wide-open table is what love looks like to God.

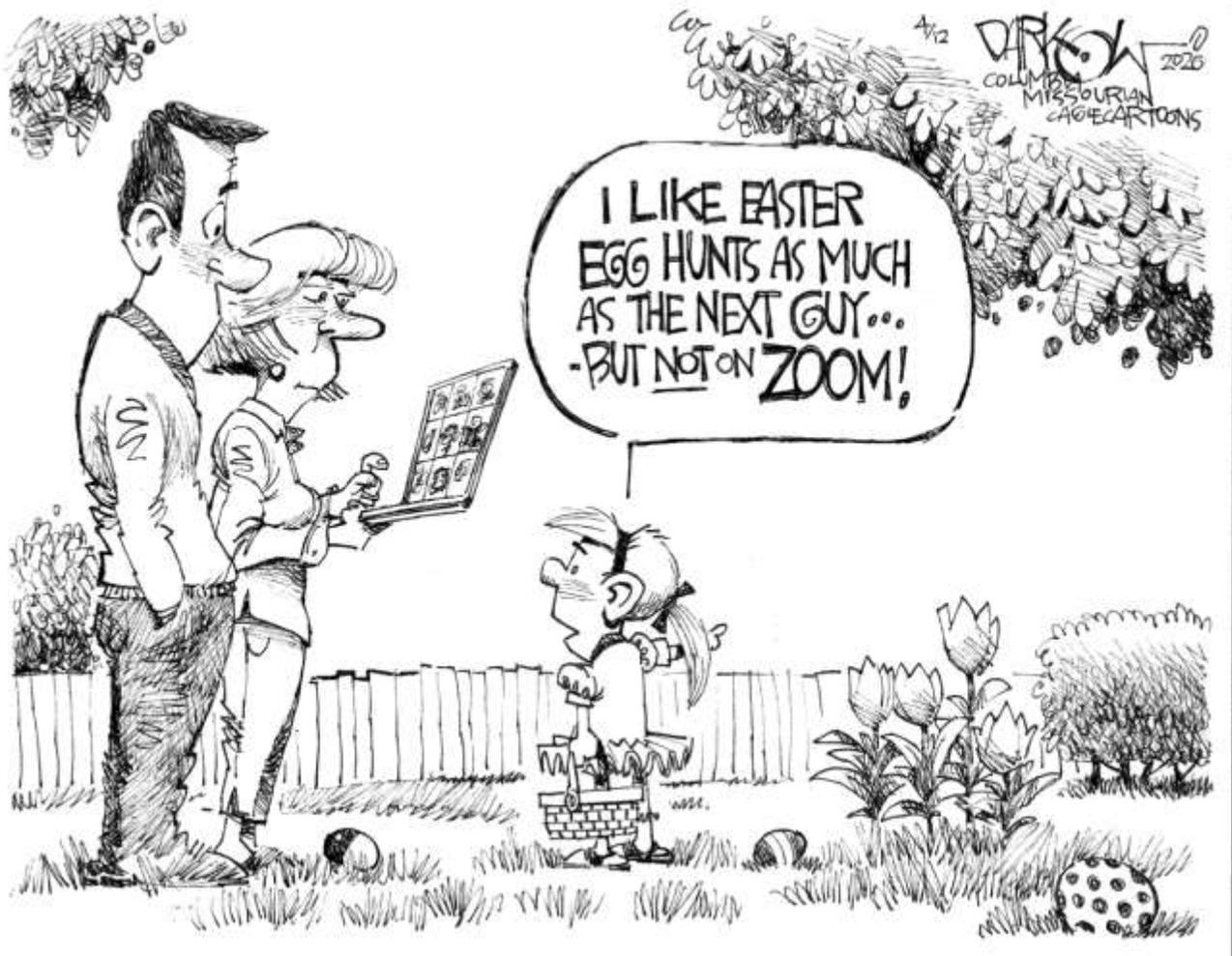
So, as we travel through this Love symphony this week, I invite you to consider how you might become bread for a hungry world—how you might hold out the cup of welcome—and how you might create and share the gifts of an extravagantly laid table.

See you in (zoom) church,
 Christy

ZOOM WORSHIP

As we continue to shelter-in-place, we will continue to worship together online using Zoom. Bible Study begins at 9:30. Worship begins at 10:30. Please join us for any or all of this time together by clicking the link below and joining us through video. Or alternatively, you can dial in by calling the number below according to your time zone. The instructions to connect are fairly easy, but if you need help, please reach out.

In preparation for worship, please have communion elements of some form with you so that we can all partake together. This can be bread and juice—or any other elements that evoke the Last Supper for you. You may also want to light a candle near you as we worship together.



GUIDELINES AND VACCINES AND TIERS, OH MY!

Dorothy: I don't like this forest. It's dark and creepy!

Scarecrow: Of course, I don't know, but I think it'll get darker before it gets lighter.

Dorothy: Do you suppose we'll meet any wild animals?

Tin Man: We might.

Scarecrow: [nervous] Animals...that eat...straw?

Tin Man: Well, some, but mostly lions and tigers and bears.

Dorothy: Lions?

Scarecrow: And Tigers?

Tin Man: And bears.

Dorothy: Lions and tigers and bears, oh my.

If only reopening our church building could be as simple as clicking our heels together and wishing, "There's no place like church, there's no place like church." Guidelines from the CDC, our county, our state, and even our insurance provider suggest everything we must think about and prepare in order to return. And it seems we are getting closer to that with our congregants getting vaccinations.

Have you completed your Covid-19 vaccinations? We are working on a survey, but in the meanwhile, send Sonya an email (auntsonya@sbcglobal.net) letting her know if you have been vaccinated and any thoughts you have regarding returning to in-person-worship.

167th CCNC-N ANNUAL GATHERING

Scripture: Ephesians 4.1-16 "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" v. 15-16).

Location: Zoom - RESERVE YOUR SEAT NOW!

Time: 10:00 am-2:00 pm

Cost: \$25.00 per household to cover costs for materials and workshops



Four workshops will take place in the weeks immediately following Annual Gathering. All workshops are free to Annual Gathering registrants.

MISSION ACTION GIFT

Our March Mission Action gift is going to the local program Food Is Free Solano. Their mission statement reads "We believe that food is a basic human right. Our goal is to create community, foment happiness and feed people. Everyone deserves access to nutritious, culturally relevant food." They operate three programs: Food Is Free permanent and

temporary food stands at numerous locations throughout the county, Park-It Market, a mobile unit bringing food directly to neighborhoods, and Solano Gleaning Initiative, where volunteers come to pick fruit that homeowners don't want or can't use. Find out more (and request your trees to be gleaned!) at their website, <https://foodisfreesolano.org/>.

Our April Mission Action gift will go to Ample Harvest. This organization is a nationwide non-profit that uses technology to end food waste and hunger, reduce malnutrition and help the environment in America by educating and empowering millions of home/community gardeners to easily find a local food pantry eager for their surplus garden bounty. Ample Harvest envisions an America where millions of gardeners eliminate the hunger, malnutrition and the waste of food, in their own community. They also help those who need food to find local food resources. Find out more (and learn where to donate your own excess produce!) at their website, <https://ampleharvest.org/>.

GREEN CHALICE: DEEP GREEN COMMITMENT

FCCV's latest effort to fulfill our commitment to the Green Chalice ministry is to switch our electricity to 100% renewable sources. This is a new opportunity through MCE Clean Energy and their Deep Green program which we are very excited to join. This switch goes into effect in April, 2021. We are now a Deep Green Champion which means we are doing our part for the planet.

MCE, a not-for-profit public agency, provides customers like FCCV with a choice of cleaner, locally controlled electricity options. Their regular service provides 60% of customers' electricity from renewable sources (twice as high as typical energy providers). But, their Deep Green program provides 100% of the electricity from green sources like solar and wind. For a small monthly fee, our Administrative Council felt that it is well worth upgrading to the Deep Green program considering the immense importance of switching to clean, renewable sources.

We believe strongly in our commitment to caring for God's creation and this is a great effort towards that end.



DON'T FORGET:

To help earn money for the church beyond your generous donations:

- ✓ Use www.goodsearch.com (instead of Google or Bing) for your internet searches.
- ✓ Start at www.goodshop.com when shopping online.
- ✓ Sign up at www.escrip.com for when you patronize local stores and restaurants.
- ✓ Take your recycling to Valcore (www.valcorerecycling.org) and ask that the money go to the church.
- ✓ Use www.smile.amazon.com. The first time you use it, you will be asked to select a charity to support. Pick our church, and don't forget to bookmark the page!

Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, April 1

Maundy Thursday on Zoom, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 3

Cross Chat, 9:30 a.m. in the Peace Garden

Sunday, April 4

Easter Sunday!

Sunday, April 11

Elders' Meeting following Worship

Wednesday, April 21

Administrative Council, 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 24

CCNC-N Annual Gathering on Zoom, 10:00-2:00

Wednesday, April 28

Ministry Council, 5:30 p.m.

