

Message from the Minister

Easter at Eden United Church 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our Lenten Journey has brought us to the season of Easter. Easter is the oldest festival of the church. Every Sunday when we gather, we celebrate "Easter Jesus'" resurrection. Without the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no need to gather. Easter is the pivotal point of our faith. Easter coincides with the season of Spring and is the time of new life and new beginnings (that which was dead is alive).

During this time, we often find ourselves following some kinds of spiritual practice, especially during Holy Week. For me, reading and praying the final chapters of the Gospel of John helps me take the risk of yet again opening my heart to the deep pain and deep peace held within the sacred story. Last Sunday, our youth reminded us that death, too, can be a celebration even though it's a sad time. As we prepare for this final week of Easter, let us embrace our joys as well as our sadness.

John did not record his life with Jesus, until many years following Jesus' death. It was decades later before he gathered the courage to record his experiences and life with Jesus that included some of the words and statements Jesus said: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again." (Jn. 2:19). Jesus was talking about what would happen to him at the time; they did not understand. It was years later that they began to put things into perspective.

Despite instant messaging, we still find ourselves listening to the old stories, trying to make sense out of them and to put them into our context. Following Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection, his friends gathered as a confused and lost community. When they had gathered together, Jesus appeared to them with a message of peace, reassurance, direction, challenges and hope—God's love made known to them, the living Christ made known to the human eyes and ears. No story holds more power or meaning for us than the Easter story.

Yet, when we watch the news, some of the images we see and the stories we hear are stories of suffering and pain that go to the very core of our beings. More people are displaced today than at any other time in the history of humanity. We ask ourselves why? And we respond by opening our hearts, our doors and our country with compassion and love. We remember that Jesus was crucified, suffered and died on the cross. He defeated death and rose again.

We gather to hear those words spoken by Jesus again: "Destroy this body, and in three days I will rise again." Like those first friends, we, too, gather as friends of Jesus following his devastating death to discover new life and direction in the saving, healing power of Christ. We become an Easter people filled with God's love. As we prepare for the Easter festival celebrations, let us remember that first Easter morning. Mary stood crying outside the tomb, when suddenly she heard a familiar voice calling her by name: a call that turned her mourning into joy. Jesus said to her, "Mary!". She ran to him, but Jesus said to her, "I must return to the Father and to your Father. Go and tell the others what you have seen and heard". Mary went and told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" (Jn. 20, 16-18).

May your hearts experience the Easter joy Mary felt so long ago. As you gather in your times of celebration with your family and friends, please know that this will be my final Easter letter to you, I thank you for the opportunity to journey with you during this time of Transition.

Thank you in advance for making a special Easter offering in the envelope that is provided for such. Your support enables Eden United Church to continue to testify to the liberating power of Jesus' resurrection.

On my own behalf and that of the Transition Team, I take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones the joy and peace of the Easter season.

Reverend Eleanor Scarlett, Interim Minister

Holy Week Easter services are as follows:

Maundy Thursday Worship at 7pm with Communion.

Good Friday Worship at 10am.

Easter morning celebrations with Easter egg hunt before Worship at 10am, Intergenerational Worship with Communion.