

Musings from the Manse - Week 3&4

BUMPER EASTER HOLIDAY EDITION. 12/04/20

It's good to be back in business after too many days off. Jill and I are both well on the way to recovery. Thanks again to everyone for your prayers and offers of practice help. We hope you are managing in this current situation. Remember if you need help or just a word of conversation to another human being please get in touch with someone, stay in touch. In our churches we have a good pastoral network, remember we are here for each other. I also once again thank the Elders; they are still being kept busy on behalf of the church. There is a lot still going on behind the scenes. As for me I am involved with a Synod minister's video conference call next week, must remember to find somewhere with a good background. You have to be so careful what people can see on camera, could be embarrassing.

After my last newsletter photo, I was emailed - Andrew it looks like you have a fish tank on your desk. Yes, I do have a fish tank on my



desk! I will have to do a virtual tour of my study to showcase the various creatures I share it with. Back to the fish tank, one of several. It is a Nano tank that I designed and built. Totally biologically self-sufficient, seven water parameters are constantly monitored and adjusted. I shan't get into the technology, but it is good to gaze away from the computer screen now and again to see what's happening in this compact world.

In this tiny tank there are over 25 fish (no not overcrowded none grow over 1cm) and 20 Neocaridina (Cherry Shrimp, red, bright blue and yellow).

Tuesday night something else to look at in the night sky. It was a giant Pink Moon. A super moon, wow, awesome etc. Now I don't know about you, but I was just a little disappointed. Obviously, it was in a closer orbit, so it looked a bit bigger and yes it was nice and bright ... but it wasn't pink! You could call it silver, gold or yellow even but absolutely not pink. I found out "**Pink moon**" is just a nickname from folklore — a reference to wild ground phlox, whose pinkish flowers are among spring's earliest flowers in the eastern United States. So why do we call it a pink moon in the UK! Its strange during these surreal times what taxes your thoughts. Or perhaps it's just me ... I haven't been well lately you know.

A question that often crops up this time of year is ... why can't you have a fixed date for Easter like you do for Christmas?

Easter is a moveable feast celebrated on the first Sunday after the vernal equinox full moon (i.e. on Sunday after the full moon of March). These dates are calculated with the old Gregorian calendar, because it specifies the vernal equinox. Over the years churches have fallen out over how we tie our celebrations in with the Passover. It is a nightmare and I reckon that the bogus Pink moon has something to do with it.

The miss named Pink Moon episode reminded me of another conversation I had this time last year. It was a visitor to the church he asked me 'why do you call it Good Friday. To me that's weird as your God Jesus got killed that day. You should call it Bad Friday or Black Friday. He paused for thought. Oh, Black Friday was already taken I suppose the end of November when people go to the shops and grab all the big screen TV's'. I tried to explain but I sensed I was not

really listened to or understood (a bit like my Sunday sermons lol). But it is a fact that we take many things for granted in our Christian practices, language and tradition.

As we know the most harrowing event of holy week is the crucifixion itself, which happened on a Friday – and is commemorated on Good Friday. But where did the day get its name? And why is it thought of as ‘good’ when it’s the day the Messiah was put to death? The term ‘Good Friday’ does not actually mean that the Friday in question was good, positive or nice. Used in this context, the word ‘Good’ carries the same meaning as the original Old English word, in that it means holy. Thus, this day is also referred to as **Holy Friday**.

However, we Christians argue that the day of Christ’s crucifixion was good in its way, because it was the start of his resurrection (which happened on Easter Sunday) and also the day he died for our sins. All of Easter should be a joyful celebration anyway because ultimately if Jesus hadn’t carried the cross, worn the crown of thorns and commended his spirit into his father’s hands, we’d all be still in a state of hopelessness.

The Easter season is a time to celebrate. More than just a day. Yet sometimes our everyday lives feel so heavy that celebration is not a part of them. The burdens of everyday life under the shadow of COVID 19 can make it a challenge to feel particularly joyful – even in the Easter season.

But the joy we are being invited into this season is beyond what we see in our everyday lives. It’s true that Jesus says “Come to me and bring me your burdens” but we usually can’t believe it. Maybe we don’t want to believe it. Too good to be true. If I really allow Jesus to come into my life the way he wants to, will he ask me to change my life in ways that are too hard? How do I share the chaos of my life with Jesus? If I keep him at arm’s length, my life might be difficult, but at least my problems are familiar. What would it cost me to let go and change my life?

We know our own faults and failings so well. Too well. We begin to believe that Jesus loves the way we love – with all of our human limits. How could Jesus love us and accept us the way we are right now?

If we can trust in Jesus and begin to overcome our fears and doubts, the real

power of letting Jesus into our hearts is realised. Suddenly, we are not afraid, not burdened and simply ready to live our lives with Jesus.

The **good news** is that Jesus loves us - right now whoever, however we are. At this very moment in time, Jesus holds each one of our lives and loves us so freely at a depth that our human minds can’t take in. Whether we comprehend this or not, Jesus loves us endlessly and waits for us with his arms open, ready to hold and support us.

As we receive his embrace and feel the peace and joy of Easter wash over us, we can look over His shoulder, and see beyond to the hope we have been promised. That’s when we realize that the real joy in our lives is putting aside our own faults, challenges and difficulties for a while and entering into the life of Jesus our Lord and Saviour. We shall overcome all things for in Jesus we have the power and the victory!

*Let us pray to the Lord,
who is our refuge and stronghold.*

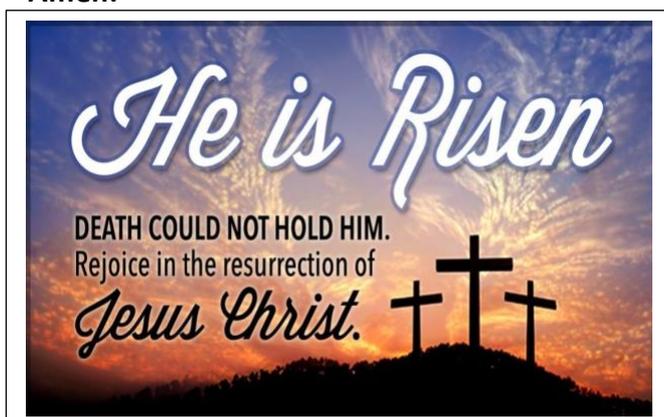
For the health and well-being of our nation, that all who are fearful and anxious may be at peace and free from worry:

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and care for them in their vulnerability:

For our homes and families, our schools and young people, and all in any kind of need or distress:

For a blessing on our local community, that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship, where all are known and cared for: Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.



A HAPPY EASTER from Andrew and
Jill