

## January 31, 2020 – At-Home/email Worship

A blessed Sabbath to you, and welcome to worship for our Fourth Sunday after Epiphany ☺ Another busy and very cold week has passed but the sunshine and blue skies were a huge improvement over the grey! Some good and exciting ministry happened in the past week, as we were able to communicate via The Record the many ways in which we are remaining connected. I also explored the possibility of partnering to our Seminary to apply for Canada Summer Job Funding, with a focus on tackling material scarcity for students at our local tertiary institutions. More on that in the sermon!

The wheels continue to turn for our AGM on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 with the intention of using Zoom to meet on this date if in-person gathering remains unavailable. By now, you may have gotten a letter in the mail to confirm your voting membership. **Please carefully follow and respond to this letter, to ensure that you do your part in congregational decision-making, if your membership makes you eligible to vote per our church's constitution:** *"A voting member is one who has been confirmed in this congregation, or received by adult baptism, or received by transfer as confirmed members from another Lutheran congregation or another congregation in full communion with the ELCIC, or received by affirmation of faith as baptized adults. Voting members must have received Holy Communion and have made a contribution of record within the current or preceding calendar year."*

January has proven to be a month of incredible sharing amongst not only our congregation, but also with others who needed to feel that connectedness. Many of you have been generous with gifts from your hands and kitchens, and I want to say a big thank you ☺ Home communion kits, doorway and walking visits continue, especially with those who are not able to attend by Zoom, and to be able to also share a home-made treat, or chilli, or soup, has been well-appreciated. I have had an offer from Tracy to help with these deliveries, and this is one more way in which you can help too ☺ **I also would love to know if you have the time and ability to make a few phone calls in a given week, to help keep up our telephone visiting with each other, or to help with card ministry – all ways of remaining connected.** By remaining in community we will vaccinate ourselves against the isolation that COVID is imposing.

This Sunday, your worship service is available to you:

- in print copy (if you prefer to receive it this way, please call Bonnie Scott at the church office, 519-653-4721), **PLEASE NOTE, in 2021, the print copy will arrive in the week following the Sunday service, as this allows me to better focus on pastoral care duties during each week.**
- As an online service you can go through at your leisure, with music links provided via our St Peter's YouTube channel ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdxKUbgYbZj4PN\\_R36KPeiw/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdxKUbgYbZj4PN_R36KPeiw/videos)), or
- As a live, gathering of people for worship on the Zoom video/audio conferencing platform.

We are still experimenting on Heide's Zoom service for live online worship. This allows us to gather together for worship from our respective homes. The church is now looking into investing in our own Zoom license.

**You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of the Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply):**

1 587 328 1099 or  
1 647 374 4685 or  
1 647 558 0588 or  
1 778 907 2071 or  
1 204 272 7920 or  
1 438 809 7799

Use your telephone keypad to enter the meeting ID and Passcode when asked.

**Heide Emrich is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting for Sunday Worship**

**January 31, 2021 09:45 AM**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83013305057?pwd=SmlWbU1PNTFYMkVbTA5YW5MRmdZUT09>**

**Meeting ID: 830 1330 5057**

**and**

**Passcode: 897122**

If you need a check in with me, please do reach out by email or phone: [pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org](mailto:pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org) or 519-653-4721 ☺ Have a blessing filled week, and please do be in touch if I may be of help or support in these times!

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

**Click for land acknowledgement:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Zar8-GeUs>

**Please take a few moments of silence,  
 prepare your heart,  
 centre yourself for worship.**

**Gathering Hymn: Jesus The Very Thought of You ELW 754; Bradley Moggach, Organ**

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rj-87CGHYrY&t>

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### **Greeting:**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

***Prayer of the Day:*** God who involves us, your delight in our engagement with you is a model for our engagement with others. By being salt and light for this world, we draw others to the power of your love, your grace, your mercy. Show us how in this complex time. Motivate us to bear witness to your love by how we live in the midst of these times, following Jesus' example. Amen.

The Lesson: Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ[g] dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. [NRSV]

**Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.**

**Acclamation of the Word:** Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child ELW #297

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59JlsulUmcl>

Text African American Traditional; Music African American Traditional; Contributor: Jeffrey Radford; arr. Bradley Moggach  
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**The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:13-16**

**Glory to you O Lord.**

Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven. [The Message Translation]

**This is the Gospel of our Lord. Praise to you O Christ.**

**Message – SALT & LIGHT in the time of COVID.**

Last weekend it was with a sad heart that I read the news of a death. 19 year-old Yassin Dabeh, whose family fled from war-torn Syria for a better life in Canada five years, and who worked as a contract cleaner in the Middlesex-London area, died – after contracting COVID. My heart however was lifted when I continued to read that a local business person not only reached out to the grieving family to offer financial assistance for the funeral with community members.

This same business person organized for a biweekly community outreach in the area, which prepares 500 meals for those in need, to offer that meal on Sunday gone in Yassin's memory. The business man, a gentleman named Mohamed Fakih said to a local newspaper: "People need to feel that they are not alone ... We want to show them that ... we're all one big family and they are not alone."

I would say Mohamed and the community members who supported Yassin's bereaved family, and honoured Yassin with that community meal – I would say they were SALT and LIGHT. They added God-flavour, as the gospel of Matthew reading puts it, to an earth gone bland with grief for that family. They shone light, the light of community and love, into the dark space of sorrow for Yassin's family.

In other light-bearing news this week, we had a certain parishioner who shall remain nameless, who got in touch with me after Sunday church last week and said she would be making muffins and chili for me to share with others. Not only did she get the items ready, but before I could even get to her, she found some other people who I happen to know, who live in her neighbourhood, and she took hot chili to them. These other people also got a call from Alex Black, as a much needed dark moment on the weekend.

How do I know all this you might ask? Because I heard from those other people ... the exact words were "we were like two gazelles eating with two spoons from the same bowl and we ate that delicious chili all up." I also heard how helpful, how essential Alex's simple phone call was in lifting their spirits in that dark moment on the weekend. You all, my friends, are SALT and LIGHT – you all have the ability to BE SALT and LIGHT in a winter gone bland with isolation, and dark with cold and separation from each other.

Another parishioner reached out to me early this week too – this time someone who does not own her own vehicle, but takes a walk every day to keep her spirits up. She said she would be glad to do deliveries to homes in the area in which she lives, having accompanied to do such a delivery one of our walking visits together. She is looking for ways to be SALT and LIGHT.

Now the folks who ate like gazelles with two spoons from the same bowl, and who were lifted from their darkness by Alex's call – I got to see them this past week ... and they told me how they collect egg cartons and take them for a Mennonite family who have a farm and sell eggs. "It doesn't cost us anything, but over the years they have come to know us, and we have become friends" I was told ... and it broke things up a little on one of the sunny days in this past week, when they took a drive and delivered egg cartons to this family who were so thankful for them.

I imagine Mohamed who advocated for Yassin's family is Muslim – from his name. And I know the Mennonite family would have appreciated our Lutheran-Presbyterian couple dropping by with a gift of egg cartons. And I KNOW that each person who gave, or did something for someone else felt that joy of just being able to share love. This is the milk and honey of the Kingdom of God.

It was not an all-over-wonderful week by far. I attended a community consultation put on by the city of Cambridge, about a high rise condo building slated to be built in East Galt, within 150 m of my home. I wrote to city council about this build last weekend, asking the question of whether any provisions had been made in the building for either geared-to-income or low-income units, or supportive housing ... for in our Region we have many agencies doing that kind of supportive housing work – providing care for those who need a little help to manage their lives well, due to disabilities, mental health conditions, recovery from addictions or other challenges.

As I attended that meeting on Wednesday night, the community consultation, it became clear very quickly that the concerns of the neighbours and those advocating for the marginalized were going to take a second place to profit for the developers. Part way through the meeting, in which I was so deeply engrossed, my laptop battery died. And in the moments in between the computer coming back up, I got a call. It was from another Lutheran, from St Paul's in Cambridge, who has been a very active part of community advocacy for the marginalized in our area. He wanted to see how the meeting was going. As I scurried to get my computer back up and running, we agreed to talk later in the week. But after that meeting I was depressed ... it seemed the rich would get richer, and the marginalized would remain marginalized

My depression was not made better when later in the week, on a walk by the river trail near Myer's road, I saw a lady disembark a taxi with what appeared to be a pull along cart full of groceries and grocery bags in hand. There were no

dwellings in sight of where she exited the taxi, and I didn't want to be rude ... but on my walk back, I saw the tracks of the pull along cart disappearing into the woods heading towards the river (where there are no formal dwelling places). I imagine she is probably one of the many tent dwelling residents in our city this winter.

The night of the walk, I called back my friend from St Paul's in Cambridge, I was feeling the bland dark depression of injustice and hopeful that talking with him might give me a different outlook ... and from this individual I learnt that the development in West Galt on Blenheim road took a very different turn due to the influence of a group of concerned citizens, who accompanied the city's approval process so closely and helpfully that the developer actually asked them to give input to the build, and even gave a special donation back to the city, in excess of \$1,000,000. WOW.

SALT and LIGHT.

Even in the midst of COVID, SALT and LIGHT is possible – bland and dark can be converted through love and community into something to be joyful about, something to celebrate – a place of hope instead of a place of despair.

My final report on SALT and LIGHT this week comes from a conversation I had with Pastor Anne Anderson, of the Third Space worshipping community at our Seminary. You see last year we accessed funding from the Canada Summer Job program, but were unable to use it because of all the challenges COVID presented in our usual ways of doing things. I was looking for a partnership which we could continue to remain engaged with despite COVID. Anne told me about an incredible food hamper program, which also provides school supplies and even toiletries and women's products to students in need. We were able to do some checking and confirming and this year our St Peter's grant application will be to work in partnership with the Seminary to see how that program might be grown, maybe even Cambridge and Brantford-wide, through the paid work of a student or two who Anne and I would jointly supervise. SALT and LIGHT in the time of COVID.

Maybe your chili is not so good, and baking is not your forte. Maybe making phone calls doesn't appeal to you, but writing a card or six might ... whatever your way, make YOUR gospel presence felt this week by somehow, someway, being SALT and LIGHT to someone. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day: Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service ELW 712 (Beach Spring) Bradley Moggach, Organ**

**Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt5vfXUwA8M&t>**

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## **\*\* Prayers of the People**

As we celebrate the manifestation of Jesus, to all people in this time after Epiphany, let us pray for the needs in our world, responding to the call: God who provides all, with hear our prayer.

Gracious and Holy God, your eternal purposes revealed in Jesus demonstrate your love extends to the ends of the earth, far beyond our capacity to imagine. We give thanks for your expansive love, and for the abundant ways in which you make yourself known to us.

We pray for all who believe in you,  
Too often afraid of the rich diversity you have designed,  
Too often timid in our proclamation of the good news of your love-example, before the rulers and powers of this world.

Strengthen our witness, our voices, hearts and minds.

Fill us with Divine Spirit, that we may be bold and courageous, to live our witness of faith in Jesus.

***God who provides all, hear our prayer.***

Heal divisions in our world of knowledge, belief and power,  
So that your world may know the unity of love, sharing in the promises of Jesus,  
Knowing the peace those promises provide.

***God who provides ALL, hear our prayer.***

We pray for those who are struggling in and with darkness,

Darkness of health, of soul, of mind, of spirit.  
 We call upon your power to make apparent and manifest the knowledge of Jesus,  
 The light which darkness cannot overcome.

***God who provides ALL, hear our prayer.***

We pray for those who have little power according to the world's measure of power.  
 Guide us to be your defense in the cause of the poor, according to your will;  
 Guide us to be your hands and feet in deliverance of those in need, in ending oppression, according to your will.  
 Bring your healing to those in need, your comfort to those who are hurting. Show us how to help.

***God who provides ALL, hear our prayer.***

Help us to be your light that makes Jesus manifest in our world. Show us the way, we pray, in Jesus' precious name.  
 Amen.

**Let us share the peace of Christ:**

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

**Meal:**

Click here if you are accessing YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOYEYAO080U>

I invite you to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal. All are welcome

**Communion Hymn for email worship: Lead Kindly Light (with lyrics) Robb Wilson, soloist; Bradley Moggach, piano**

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFQa4orSziE>

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 Songwriters: Audrey Assad; Used by Permission. CCLI License # 11098609

**\*\*Prayer after Communion**

People of God: arise and shine, for your light has come and the glory of God shines through you.  
 Get up: shake off apathy, despair and all that brings you low.  
 People of God: show the light and love of Jesus,  
 so that others may know Jesus who is in you,  
 and shines from within you.  
 Take all that today's worship has filled you with, and pour it out in the coming week ☺  
 Amen.

**Sending Hymn: Will You Let Me Be Your Servant ELW 659; Text & Music Richard Gillard; Bradley Moggach, Piano**

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT-YrmucWgo>

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**Blessing:**

May the love of God uphold you;  
 the light of Christ guide you;  
 and the fellowship of Spirit fill you with joy,  
 now and forever.  
 Amen.

**Dismissal:** Go with Jesus, shining Christ light into the world. ***Thanks be to God.***

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