

Letter from the Rector, May 26, 2020

Dear St. Andrew's,

Greetings in the name of the Lord in these uncertain and unprecedented times. I hope this newsletter finds you well and in the words of Wendell Berry, "being joyful though you have considered the facts." In these days where much is changing, may your anchor be in the faithfulness of the Lord.

In a recent sermon I asked the congregation to consider two things in these days when we long for restoration... for things to be back to "normal."

One, that loss is real. We need to acknowledge and mourn that. Some days, the loss is what fills my thoughts and heart and the magnitude of what is no more is great. When will David and I get to visit my 91 and 94-year-old parents (it has been so long) or when will we get to meet our new great-niece? When will our home will be filled with students again and how long before we can be in the church building and sing and pass the peace, share communion and have important conversations in person? When can I sit at the hospital bedside or hold hands in prayerful pastoral care? How do we mourn the death of 100,000 in our nation and 335,000 worldwide? How do we celebrate the graduates? How much longer can those with no margin in health or finance or mental stability carry on? Mind you, **those** are the losses of my privileged, salaried, sheltered and safe life. How much more for so many others? How much more? Friends, loss is real.

Two, normal, like it was pre-covid 19, was not all good for everyone.

Poet activist Sonya Renee Taylor puts it this way. "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment, one that fits all of humanity and nature."

Admittedly, the realities listed by Ms. Taylor are not all immediate realities for many of us at St. Andrew's. But if we look closely at the list, some, maybe more than we would like to admit, ring true. And as Christians, we know we are called to care about and serve those for whom these realities

ARE real and to work against systems that promote and sustain these realities. And certainly, if we look beyond ourselves, at our community, nation and world, the truth of which she speaks is boldly apparent.

For the brokenness of the healthcare system in our country and the global financial system worldwide is more obvious with each passing day. The pandemic has exacerbated racism and domestic violence, fanned the flames of rampant nationalism and further revealed the pervasiveness of patriarchy. Our pre-corona existence was not normal.

So we acknowledge the reality of loss and the “not so great for everyone reality of pre-covid 19,” and we realize we can’t live there or spend our energy returning there. What if the energy we are now spending to get back to normal is precisely the energy called for in creating anew?

We must resist the forces of evil, standing steadfast in our faith, knowing that many of our siblings in our nation and around the world are also suffering. We can’t place our confidence or hope in systems that don’t work for everyone.

Our hope is in the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, the one who refreshed the land when it was weary and has made provisions for the poor. Our hope is in the One who gives us strength and the vision to participate in change. Our hope is in the One who shows us the opportunity to stitch a new garment, one that fits all of humanity and nature and through the Holy Spirit, provides the power for us to help make it happen.

And it is not the kind of power that we might think. For it is through the power of God’s spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Way of God’s Love that we can and are called to be witnesses to Jesus. The disciples, and we, are called to tell about the risen Christ and the strength of Christ’s love and the perspective of Christ’s ministry. Look for those who are not being seen or cared for. Reach out to those who are isolated and lonely. Confront and confess our own racism, turning to follow Jesus. Look honestly at our own greed and instead, invest in that which is ultimate. Encourage those who are giving and serving on the front lines of this battle.

Let our prayers be “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...” and let us join God’s work in the world around us.

Blessings,
Mother June