



May 2020 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

Christ is risen. Alleluia!

You may recall in my correspondence this year for congregational AGM's these words:

"Since being called to serve as your bishop, October 2012, my prayer has often been the following: O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go forward with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

One of the reasons I love this prayer is because it is realistic but encouraging, honest but hopeful. It doesn't deny difficult truths, but neither does it succumb to sterile pessimism. It was written in the first part of the twentieth century by a Church of England priest named Eric Milner-White. Like many good prayers from another time and place, it sounds like it was tailor made for us here and now."

Little did I know the future when I first penned these words last December.

The prayer is realistic, encouraging, honest, hopeful, no denying of difficult truths nor succumbing to sterile pessimism.

The prayer continues to be "tailor made" for us here and now. The Spirit of God continues to lead us into a future that is unfamiliar, with the assurance that God is present, that God's hand is leading us, and that we are cradled in love.

Friends, you continue to be witnesses to me of Resurrection, to the truth that there is life and hope and promise.

I have experienced in these past weeks so many signs of hope, and of faithfulness, trust, courage, and encouragement:

- Congregational leaders, lay and rostered who, under extraordinary stress, pressure and restraints have poured themselves into the work of leadership
- Congregational leaders, lay and rostered who, tired and weary and wondering, have reached out to one another, and to those in their midst, providing pastoral care, connection, compassion and care

- Congregational leaders, lay and rostered who, in the midst of an unprecedented time, exercised great skill (and energy and time) in preparing and/or searching for worship resources for Holy Week and Easter services
- Rostered Ministers who gather each Wednesday via ZOOM with Synod Staff for prayer, affirmation and encouragement, updates, and connecting
- Area Deans who gather weekly with rostered ministers via ZOOM for check-in with each other, study and/or prayer
- Creativity, ingenuity, openness, support, encouragement, trust, community....

Friends, you have been signs to me of Resurrection life.

And, I have never been so proud of you.

Alleluia. Christ is risen, indeed!

In Christ Jesus –

Shalom,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)