



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

An inclusive church welcoming everyone

61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth, NS
www.christchurchdartmouth.com

April 15, 2020

“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

-From John 20:19-31



Dear Friends in Christ,

The Lord has Risen! Alleluia! These were the words that the world proclaimed last Sunday, and they are still true today! It may not have seemed like the Easter of years past, but just remember what the very first Easter was like for the early followers of Christ—perhaps it too was confusing, lonely, and unfamiliar? As we know, Easter continues over the next fifty days, so we continue to celebrate our risen Lord in our daily prayers, our actions, and in the spreading of the Good News.

As we focus on this Sunday's lectionary, we hear the story of “Doubting Thomas.” Annually this reading shows itself after Easter Sunday. What will this reading say to you this year? In the account from John, we have the quiet fear of the disciples, which turns into a loud hope, when Jesus shows up beyond the locked doors, into their lives and hearts once again. I think more than ever, we are called to re-read this rich text in a new way.

We are called to wade into hope's waters, to trust the currents' ability to bear us up and travel down streams of joy. We are invited to share the splashes of hope that hold us fast to our relationship with Jesus Christ. What are we to make of Thomas's response to this hope?

“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25). I like to remind myself of Thomas's response. When this dear disciple reaches into the wounds of Jesus with his finger, there is a change, a shift. He experiences a *metanoia*, a conversion in his encounter with the risen Lord. Thomas is not a villain. Thomas is a hurting and hopeful follower of Jesus Christ. I encourage our community to hold one another in prayer, especially so, when the world is hurting, and many are unable to keep up with the currents of these long days.

I also wanted to touch base with you as we continue to progress over the next little while in terms of our ministry—just a few points to share with you.

- Weekly worship:

- Our Sunday worship continues via the Zoom platform at 10:00 am with the *Service of the Word*. “Coffee and Conversation” follow this after the service. Links and details can be found here:
 - <https://www.christchurchdartmouth.com/zoom-church.html>
- Sunday bulletins can be downloaded here:
 - <https://www.christchurchdartmouth.com/online-bulletins.html>
- Sunday sermons will be posted on our Facebook page, website and YouTube Channel:
 - <https://www.christchurchdartmouth.com/sermons.html>
- On Wednesday mornings, join Rev. Bonnie in a service of Morning Prayer. The video will be posted on our Facebook page, website and YouTube page at about 10:00 am.
 - <https://www.christchurchdartmouth.com/online-worship.html>
- Thursday evenings, there will be a service of Evening Prayer or Compline, which I will lead. Look for it on our Facebook page, website and YouTube channel at about 7:00 pm
 - <https://www.christchurchdartmouth.com/online-worship.html>

In many ways, things are continuing as usual as can be. Friday coffee hour over Zoom has seen increased numbers, and book studies continue with Debbie Fice as she navigates us through Gayle Boss’ book *Wild Hope: Stories for Lent from the Vanishing*. (Zoom details found on our website). Foodbank continues each week with modifications. Weekly meetings that otherwise would be in person are now hosted online. Calls and pastoral visits are conducted over the phone or online. If you would like to have a pastoral visit with Rev. Bonnie or me over the phone, or online, please do not hesitate to contact the parish office, and this can be set up.

There has, however, been a change regarding hospital visitations. As previously mentioned, clergy were able to visit parishioners who are in the hospital if the family explicitly requested their presence. This is no longer the case. Because of the increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases, clergy are not permitted to visit the hospital, and this includes if a loved one is facing death. Often, members of the clergy administer *Prayers for the Dying*, sometimes described as “Last Rites” for someone who is facing imminent death. At this point, credentialed members of the clergy cannot visit. If this changes, I will communicate with you. If your loved one is facing the end of their life, please still contact the office if you require pastoral support.

In other news, we continue to make headlines with the *Anglican Journal* and the national church. Our very own Don Murray, Warden, has written an excellent article on the justice system in light of COVID-19. I encourage you to read it here:

<https://www.anglicanjournal.com/advocacy-and-policy-could-help-prisoners-during-covid-19/>

As I conclude this note, I do hope to see you online if you can join us. I know that this is not reasonable for some, and we continue to reach out to those who do not have internet or computer. But if you do, and are interested, I encourage you to make the leap, or rather, connect to our Christ Church family in new ways, including our Zoom gatherings. It would be wonderful to see your face and hear your voice!

With Easter blessings, faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kyle Wagner".

The Rev. Kyle Wagner
Rector, Christ Church, Dartmouth
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