

Easter 2018



**Dear members and friends  
of St. Mark's Anglican Lutheran Church!**

After what seems to have been a particularly long winter I think we are all so very ready for New Life! I look forward to seeing fresh green and bask in the warmth of the sun. I look forward to seeing the blue waters of Georgian Bay again. – Many of you have shared similar feelings with me recently.

To me, there is a spiritual side to this longing. It is more than just a seasonal change I am hoping for.

In so many ways the world has fallen back into the habit of building barriers. Many seek safety and protection by trying to secure what is “their own”. “Me first” is even claimed as a value by many who see themselves as faithful Christians. Personally, I cannot see that to be a true reflection of Christ's invitation to live by serving the least and to putting God first in my life. There are moments when I feel reminded of the days of the Cold War when I used to live in a divided country, very close to a real and deadly wall that divided people and marked a major division in the world. Reading the news, I am reminded of those dark days again, and I can feel the anxiety creep up on me once more.

I love our worship together for one particular reason: When we gather together to sing and pray, when I see your faces as you participate in our liturgies, you inspire me and your faith lifts me up. Worship at St. Mark's is my personal antidote against fear and desolation. I give thanks to God for St. Mark's! I give thanks to how we care for those who are homebound or homeless and alone. I give thanks to having a place where, even though I serve you as your Pastor, I can also sit back for a moment to let go and let God.

Yes, I think the world is “in love” with trying to find on their own what has ***already been given*** to us! The dark grave of anxiety and grief, of loss and separation, has been opened. We need no longer be focussed on our own efforts to find safety and protection, definitely not by surrounding ourselves with barriers and walls. ***We can step out into the world God so much loves that he is giving to us God's very best: the holy presence of the Son of Man and of Mother Spirit.***

I like to joke in the days of Lent, and say that Easter was my favorite holiday, because after Easter, when all the preparations and celebrations are behind us, I had a life again. But it is true, Easter is my favorite holiday, because it is the reason why I am here and have a life! A blessed life, together with all of you!

**God, who is love, burst out into the open and into the light of a new day!** God does not share the fascination with self-protection and self-preservation. God went so far to suffer and experience death to reassure us what God really is all about: A good life for you and me and for all of God's creation.

**Thank you for your support for our mission and ministry!** And, please, continue to help us in any way you can as we try our best to do God's good work in our community. Together, let us continue to open ourselves up to the goodness of God who renews all things for us again. **God is doing great things through you and your ministry!**

By the grace of God the anxiety of our day and age will not get the better of me! Because my hope is for the world, for our community and for you and I personally, that we would see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears as the one sitting on the throne of God says: **"See, I am making all things new!"** (Revelations 21:5).

God bless your Easter and our time together!

*Pastor Hart*