

Scripture: John 20:19-31

**“Trust in the Lord at all times, you people;  
pour out your hearts to him.  
God is our refuge and strength”.** Psalm 62: 8

Good Morning, Dear Friends—Peace to you,

It's been another difficult week with COVID.

On Easter morning, we talked with Bill's Mom (who is 101). She has to stay entirely in her little room. Her meals are brought to her. Amazingly, she was rather up-beat. I think she doesn't want us to worry about her. We admire her bravery. We also saw this week on the TV the man, 99 years old who was walking in his garden—with sponsors no less, and he amassed almost a million for the COVID cause!

Of course, we know there is much suffering—especially at the nursing homes & long-term care facilities. On the TV we see tragedies.

The Premier of Quebec says a police investigation is being launched into a Montreal-area private long-term care home where 31 residents have died. Nurses say residents at the nursing home were left unfed and untended, with soiled beds. It is really heart-wrenching to hear.

We pray for the families and workers and also for those who will investigate and find long term solutions. Unfortunately, there are too many examples of families suffering and grieving in this most challenging time.

Our Prime Minister and leaders of all parties have come together to pass the Wage Subsidy Bill to bring necessary finances to those so affected by this deadly virus. Here is part of what our Prime Minister said: **“But Mr. Speaker, this is not a war. That doesn't make this fight any less destructive, any less dangerous. But there is no front line marked with barbed wire, no soldiers to be deployed across the ocean, no enemy combatants to defeat. Instead, the front line is everywhere: in our homes, in our hospitals and care centers, in our grocery stores and pharmacies, at our truck stops and gas stations. And the people who work in these places are our modern-day heroes.”**

One positive thing that has come in all this tragedy is that people are working together and our House of Commons has never been so full of mutual good will. ---Praise God!

**In the scriptures of today—John 20: 19-31**, the grieving disciples are fearfully gathered together later that same day as when Simon Peter and “the other disciple” had seen the empty tomb after being told of such by Mary Magdalene. And they have heard from Mary who, obedient to Jesus' instructions, told them, **“I have seen the Lord!”** and shared his words of “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (John 20:17). Their direct encounter with the risen Christ results in joy and in the gifts of peace, the Holy Spirit, and a sending forth with responsibility and reminder of the power of forgiveness. For whatever reason that Thomas was gone then, a week later he too receives the gift of direct encounter with the risen Christ. From this comes Thomas' proclamation to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” – profound words of faith, trust, belief. These series of events share patterns then and now. We see how people's joyful sharing of

their encounters with Christ can result in others **responding in a variety of ways – with bravery, curiosity, doubt, scorn—or joy & faith!**

So today, as we hear the good news of Jesus' life and resurrection from death, we are invited to trust God with our lives. This 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter: We will be in this Easter time until Pentecost---May 31<sup>st</sup>---  
Have Communion---be really together--(This is my dream--& I hope God's plan!)

I have been **so heartened to hear of the many ways all of you are reaching out to each other** by phone, food deliveries, emails & various other technological ways.

**Thank you too, for all who send out jokes & songs to keep our spirits up and our emotions healthy.**  
**Thank you to Sharon S.** who will leave Upper Rooms for you in your mail box—phone her or me if you don't get one. **And thank you to Rosilla & Harold at Bothwell** who will help distribute the Upper Rm booklets. It is true---Death and life can be scary, with the elements of the unknown or unknowable leaving us to wonder what to believe, whom to trust. There are a lot of mental illnesses—PTSD---stress-- We continue to be strong and disciplined. Read our Upper Rooms—scriptures, talk to friends & family—reach out--& pray. --We count our blessings—and remember the many resources God has blessed us with.

I want to conclude with part of the Queen's message:

“ Together we are tackling this disease, and I want to reassure you that if we remain **united and resolute**, then we will overcome it.

While we have faces challenges before, this on is different. This time we join with all nations across the globe in a common endeavour, using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal.

**We will succeed—and that success will belong to every one of us.**

And –we will meet again--(A direct reference to the famous was song of WW2)

**Better days will return.”**

Our Prayer:

Holy God,  
Continue to open our hearts & minds to you and your presence. Help us to trust you with our lives. You are the ultimate place of refuge. May we always accept your invitation when feelings of

loneliness overwhelm our sense of acceptance and comfort. Spending time with you, can restore our sense of belonging.

In you, we find the blessing of true peace. Help us to reach out to others as you have reached out to us. -----**We trust in your abiding love.** Amen

For the MERRY HEART:

I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.

I had a hard time deciding where to go for Easter ----- The Living Room or The Kitchen

This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog..... we laughed a lot.

Quarantine Day 20 : Went to this restaurant called THE KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.

Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks woman with hand sanitizer for good clean fun.

Day 20 of Homeschooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year"....

I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?

-----Thank you, Carolyn for sending these along.

**Now a word from ou treasurers:**

If you would like to make a donation to the caring cupboard, please make out your cheque to

Bothwell United Church  
Box 187 178 Elm St.  
Bothwell, ON  
N0P 1C0

You can include this on your regular weekly/monthly cheque. On the memo line, indicate the amount you would like for General, M&S, Caring Cupboard etc.

For Wabash United: Send your offering to Dave Martin

The Peace of Christ be with you! **Stay safe, practice social distancing, wash hands & be kind.**

Shalom, Annalee

