



15 May 2022 newsletter



Fifth Sunday of Easter

From the Rector

You may have noticed that, throughout Easter season, we've been reading from the Book of Revelation on Sunday mornings. Since preachers usually focus their remarks on the Gospel appointed for the day, our series from Revelation has been passing by without much commentary.

Perhaps that suits you just fine. I remember a time when I really disliked Revelation. I found it confusing, and a bit frightening. And having grown up around many evangelical Christians who liked to use it in attempt to convert people to their viewpoint, I was content to set it aside as "crazy talk" that didn't really have anything to do with my own relationship with Jesus.



But eventually, when I was in seminary and we studied Revelation together and were empowered to name the parts that were foreign to us or that we found confusing or scary, I came to appreciate it in a different way. The crucial piece for me, was my professor's insistence that all apocalyptic literature—whether Revelation or the book of Daniel or some of the apocalyptic portions of the Gospels (recall the "little apocalypse" in Matthew 24, for example)—must be read, not with our heads, but with our hearts. Apocalyptic literature is about emotion, rather than fact. But that emotional testimony conveys very real truths.

Apocalyptic texts have a lot in common with the prophetic texts with which we are probably more familiar and certainly more comfortable. In the prophets, we see both a prediction of destruction as well as beautiful and poetic words of comfort, and their messages frequently come as the result of visions that involve some degree of other-worldly or fantastic imagery. The primary difference is that the focus of prophetic literature is on the call to repentance, whereas apocalyptic literature seeks to

strengthen our resolve and endurance by the promise that good will prevail in the end.

While it's easy to get distracted by horsemen and beasts and lakes of fire, we aren't meant to read Revelation as a literal prediction of future events. We're meant to read it with our hearts. The world is a terrifying place. Sometimes it feels like evil is winning. Sometimes it feels like things are only going to get worse before they get better. And the most frightening thing, when we feel that way, is the thought that sometimes creeps in that maybe things won't get better at all—that the wars and violence and exploitation and greed of our present world will only escalate until we have annihilated one another, and all is lost. And to that, in Revelation Jesus says, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades." (1:17-19)

The message of Revelation is one of hope. It is the assurance that in all of the chaos and fear of this world, Jesus is still triumphant. God is not blind to our suffering, and it will not go on forever. Though we cry, "How long, O Lord?" we can trust that God will intervene. Just as he came into the world in the incarnation, Jesus says he is coming soon.

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Mother Terry+

Reflections by the Rev. Canon Herb O'Driscoll

THE FIRST READING Acts 11:1-18

Peter is trying to justify what he has done in Caesarea. It is impossible to overstate the significance of the line he has crossed. Now he has to somehow justify his decision to the very conservative Christian community back in Jerusalem. He has fraternized with a Gentile Roman family in their home, something utterly forbidden in the Jewish world he has lived in all his life. This formidable community facing him asks a question Peter must have been dreading. "*Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?*".

All he can do is to tell the dream that changed everything for him. This dream has not only changed Peter's life. Nobody in this room yet realizes it but it has already changed the course of the emerging Christian faith for ever.

This is why this passage, and this event are so significant. The fact is that we Christians are here today as members of a planetary wide faith because of Peter's dream - and his response to it - in long ago Caesarea.

We can almost see Peter's body language pleading for understanding as he refers to the Roman family back in Caesarea. "If God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus, who was I that I could hinder God?"

In a multi racial, multi-cultural and multi-faith 21st century world, this passage addresses us more and more insistently.

THE PSALM 148

If the camera had been invented when this psalm was written we would have had a magnificent video. Space shots borrowed from NASA. *Praise the Lord from the heavens.* The great painters of the Renaissance would have given us canvases. *Praise him all you angels...all his host.* Back to NASA for shots of the solar system. - *praise him sun and moon.* On through the galaxy - *praise him all you shining stars.* We would even have sailed out to the great aerial oceans that were once thought to be above the skies. - "*waters above the heavens*".

Maybe our 21st century video would stop here. Not the Psalmist! Beyond the furthest star is the *One who commanded, and they were created.* Now back to our imagined camera. We explore Earth itself. *Sea monsters and all deeps.* Sweep through weather systems and climates - *fire and hail, snow and fog, winds.* All, in the psalmist's view - are doing Gods will. Now we climb *mountains and all hills,* run with *wild beasts and cattle,* shrink from *creeping things,* wonder at *great winged birds.* Suddenly we meet humans - *young men and maidens, princes and rulers.* With poetry like this, no wonder the ancients believed that the stars sang!

THE SECOND READING Revelation 21:1-6

A new heaven and a new earth. In seven simple words John triggers a dream, a vision that will attract men and women in every generation since he wrote them. Philosophers will search for ideas to renew society. Poets like John himself will compose wondrous visions. Theologians will propose a moral basis for a transformed society. Sociologists will outline ideas and systems. Saints will sacrifice life itself pursuing a vision of justice that will reflect John's Holy City.

Perhaps most important for us who live in an age of surging tides of change is the assurance that *God is making all things new*. To believe that God is *the beginning and end* of everything taking place in our time, can be for us *a gift from the spring of the water of life*.

THE HOLY GOSPEL John 13:31- 35

We are at the ghastly moment when Judas slips out of the upper room. Jesus' emotions must have been intense. He says "*Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him...Little children, I am with you only a little longer*". It's difficult to probe the meaning of the first part of that statement but I think we can gather some meaning to apply to our own lives. Because our lives have been given to us by God, it follows that, if we choose, we can in some sense glorify God. Much of our living may not give God glory. If anything, our great temptation as human beings is to seize any available glory for ourselves! Sometimes however, by the grace of God, in spite of our spiritual poverty we are enabled to do something that glorifies God.

One very clear direction comes from Jesus himself in that long ago moment in the upper room. *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples*. More than in any other way, we give glory to God by our ability to love.

The Common Cup is Back!

Whether you are a "sipper" or a "skipper" (no "dipping" allowed, per diocesan regulations!), the common cup has returned and is available to you. If you prefer not to drink from the chalice, that's absolutely fine, and

you're still encouraged to remain at the altar rail until it is offered to you, so that you might hear the words, "The Blood of Christ, shed for you." At that time, you can simply touch the base of the chalice or look upon it reverently. This is a perfectly valid way to engage with the consecrated wine, if for any reason drinking from the chalice is not the right choice for you. In fact, many people in recovery have been doing so for years-- long before the recent pandemic!

Now that the chalice has returned, we are in need of more lay ministrants to offer it to the congregation. This is an extremely important ministry, and we would love for you to join us. It is not a difficult task and training will be offered. Many people describe administering the chalice as one of the most moving spiritual experiences they've had in church. If this is something you would enjoy, please reach out to the clergy or to Janet in the parish office.

SJS Prayer List

If you request that someone's name be added to the prayer list, please keep in touch with us. At the end of each month, all names will be removed, so you will need to add the names again at the end of each month. Please also let us know if you want someone removed from the list. Email the office anytime! Thank you.

Greeting volunteers needed at the 10am service

We could use several more greeters. Please contact the office for more details if you are interested in greeting on Sunday mornings.

Virtual Coffee Hour after the 10am Sunday Service

Join us for a virtual coffee hour using [Zoom](#). You can pop in any time between 11am and 12:30pm on Sundays. You may need to wait several minutes for someone else to join you! <https://bit.ly/SJSCoffee> or <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88970734514?pwd=Z0hoSlg0SlU5a2lXRjhYRHUyN1VtZz09>

Nanny Wanted

We are looking for a full time nanny (9-5 Mon-Fri) to look after our 5 month old girl. We are located in the Shaughnessy area (Granville/King Edward). Please contact Carys on 604 906 8898 for further info.

WNM items for Homeless Needed

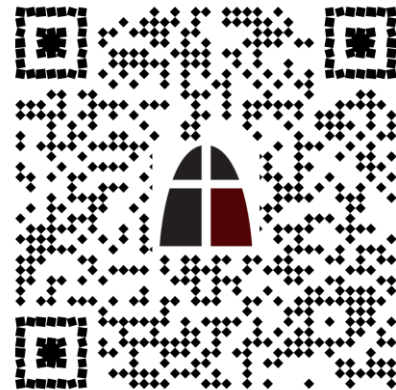
Winter clothing, raingear, boots, sleeping bags, socks, pudding cups, granola bars (soft with no fruit/nuts), & juice boxes.

Podcasts

If you like to listen to podcasts, why not include a podcast of Mid-Week Meditation or the Sunday Sermon? They are now available as a podcast under the heading of **The Anglican Angle from Shaughnessy**. You can get the podcast from: *Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Overcast*.

Financial Support - Stewardship

If you would like to make a financial contribution to help support the worship and ministry of St. John's Shaughnessy, please do! You can use this QR code (point your phone's camera at it) and it will take you to the donation page of our website. If you have recently made a contribution online or by cheque, thank you so very much! If you currently give by Pre-Authorized Donation, thank you! Our church has been affected by COVID-19 in many ways and financial giving is certainly one.



If you would like to give via monthly Pre-Authorized Donations (easy to change and easy to cancel), please contact Janet in the office (church@sjs.net or 604-731-4966). If you would like to give to the church using a credit card, please use the DONATE button on our website (Canada Helps on top of page one, and Paypal on the bottom of page one). Cheques may be mailed or dropped through the church mail slot.

SJS Garden Club Needs New Volunteers

It is time for the Garden Club to renew their efforts at St Johns. We hope we have some new volunteers who could join us from time to time. Or every week! Weather permitting, we meet on **Monday mornings** but the day/time can be adjusted to accommodate other schedules. We do watering, light pruning (no saws or ladders), weeding, dividing, planting, etc. We enjoy wonderful chit chats in the safety of the outdoors. You can bring your own gloves and tools if you want to, or you can borrow ours. If you have old tools in your garage that you don't use any more, please let us know. **We are accepting donations of old garden tools.**



Sunday in-person services 8am and 10am

Sunday online service

10am Holy Eucharist live-stream

Wednesday online service

8pm Midweek Meditation

Rector The Reverend Terry Shields Dirbas terry.dirbas@sjs.net

Assistant Priest The Reverend Elizabeth Ruder-Celiz erceliz@vst.edu

Vestry Clerk The Reverend Karin Fulcher

Music Director Michael Dirk organist@sjs.net

Rector's Warden Judith Downes

People's Warden Maggie Sanders

Treasurer Donald Wood

Property Trustee Michael Dezell

Pastoral Care Team Coordinator Helen Kline

Altar Guild Susan Firus

Parish Administrator Janet Hamilton

Please email the office if you would like to have newsletters sent to you.
Newsletters, leaflets and online videos are posted on the website.

St John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church

Diocese of New Westminster

Anglican Church of Canada

1490 Nanton Ave. Vancouver, BC, V6H 2E2

604 731 4966 (ex 1 office, 2 Rector)

church@sjs.net

www.sjs.net



Offices are open by appointment only.

Email and voicemail are checked regularly and often,
so please reach out. We want to hear from you!

Cover photo of Amelia and Julia by Michael Dirk

