

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I bring you this greeting from my living room, as we sequester ourselves for the good of our neighbour.

A few weeks before "social distancing" became the norm. It was a discussion at Staff that I would bring a message this Sunday, a hat tip to my 25th Anniversary of Ordination, this last Thursday.

I am thankful to Pastor Goede and the Staff for encouraging me to deliver a message, but to do it in the form of a Pastoral Letter.

So, following the example of Paul. I bid you Peace in the name of our Saviour. Peace at a time of daily change... peace when many are home, not a work, reorganizing family life,

not sure when and if life will return to normal.

Peace in the name of the one who says:

I am with you...

In the name of the one who calmed the storm,

in the name of one in whom we are baptized...

and in that name, we are promised

the forgiveness of sin,

the opportunity for amendment of life,

a place of new beginnings.

And in this name, we are held in the face of death...

not an ending of all things....but a transition...

from what was, to what shall be in God's economy.

Our lectionary series give us some wonderful texts this Fourth Sunday of Lent.

They speak of God... the God of peace in the midst of great change.

We hear from the prophet Samuel, that God asks him to not grieve that which has come to an end (Saul's reign)

but to look towards what is yet to be.. (the calling of David as king).

Samuel don't look for the trappings that humans find appealing,

but rather, look for that which God has brought about.

Our Psalm, the 23rd Psalm, attributed to David the shepherd, musician, agile fighter, one of eight brothers now King. In this song we hear that in this midst of great tumult. God will provide a safe and quiet place where we are provided shelter, nourishment, protection and the promise that even amidst death itself, we shall not fear.

Paul in his letter to Ephesus reminds that community and ours that we who are in Christ should always seek after that which stands true in the full light of day. a call to living and dealing rightly and righteously in and with the world. (Doing what is right even when all around us is wrong)

And the Gospel of John presents us with the Healing of the one who was born blind.

This child of God receive healing at the hands (literally making a paste with spittal) of Jesus.

His world is now set on its head. Nothing is familiar, nothing goes right...

no one believes he was born blind, his parents are brought in to witness for him..and the say (after a fashion) "you're old enough, be your own witness" He's brought in again, now called a desciple of Jesus and is challanged on theological grounds and is finaly driven out of their presence.

Unbelieved and dejected for an act of grace not of his own doing. Jesus sought him out.

For me, this is one of the most beautiful phrases in scripture

"Jesus heard that they had driven out, and when he found him..."

The one who was lost... (because no one would have him in his "New" state)...  
was found.

And in the following discourse, Jesus discloses who it is that healed him.

And he worshiped.

The story concludes with Jesus challenging the religious authorities (the Pharisees)  
about their inability to see the working of God in their midst.

For us, living in these uncertain times, we are called out (the EKLESIA - Church) to  
be a witness to the world, that with everything seemingly turned on its head, God is here.

The Anointed of God walks with us in all things... asking us "do you know who it is who headed you?"  
And we do know... the Christ, the Son of God.

I response to this question, the one born blind responded with worship... and so do we.

And from our worship, we rise, to to the works God has called us to do.

To be faithful in witness and in living. Finding worth in all of God's creation,  
feeding the hungry, clothe the naked, workfor justice...

and as Micah asks us: "To Walk Humbly with Your God."

And so we do, as best we can in these changing times.

At worship,

at prayer,

at fellowship (calls, letters, texts)

in service in then world (which in the moment is the keep a distance for our neighbour)

and to look to the future, for the new thing.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you  
all. Amen