Midweek Update #14 June 17th, 2020

It’s good to be with you virtually today from the friendly confines of my study at St. Matthew. I trust and pray that you are doing well, that you’re enjoying the endless cloudy, showery weather (I saw the forecast for today, Wednesday and Thursday and was positively giddy because it showed “partly sunny!” You’ve got to settle for what you can get). I know, I know, there are many of you who love the rainy, showery weather, some of you even prefer it! It’s one of those things that speaks to the diversity of the human race! I’m reminded of the time, back in 2004 when I was a delegate to General Synod in Niagra and I was talking to a Innuit lady who was a delegate and she said she was almost fainting at the heat. But it’s only 20 degrees I said, and she said, “I know, it’s cooking! How do you stand it?”

Well, enough about the weather. Where to start, well, from the perspective of the Diocese of New Westminster we’re 3 days into Phase II. The wider society is a couple of weeks into Phase II but because of the ongoing risks associated with gathering, the Diocese is being abundantly cautious about encouraging us to come together.

Indeed each parish needs to fill out an application for plans for Phase II and Phase III. Both St. Thomas and St. Matthew will be having a few “practice gatherings” in Phase II but we won’t be offering regular in-person in our buildings till Phase III.

We had hoped to have the first of these practice gatherings the next couple of weeks but planning constraints and a desire to all be on the same page around whether we’re well enough prepared for such a thing has meant that we’ve pushed the dates forward. St. Matthew will have a practice gathering on July 5th and we’ll have a practice gathering at St. Thomas sometime in July, stay tuned.

At the same time we’re making plans for Phase III. We are having a Telus team coming to St. Matthew this week to install highspeed Fibre capability so that once we begin to offer in-person Holy Eucharist we can still livestream our services. We already have this capacity at St. Thomas. This will open up new opportunities for us to minister to a wider community. We’ll also need someone who can operate the camera and computer that comes from Livestreaming and that will sit up by the soundboard in each parish. That location will allow us to capture the service and protect the privacy of parishioners.

For those of you interested in quite hilarious take on Churches attempting to open in Phase II mode, please click on the hilarious video that I’ve embedded in the hardcopy of this report. Thanks Debbie Alford for sending this to me! https://youtu.be/fIfItkvCVfA

Other building and grounds news: St. Matthew has hired an arborist and landscaper to do some work done on the grounds near the corner of Marshall and Guilford and will involve morning glory removal and trimming of trees; this work is largely made possible by the generous financial donation of a parishioner. Thank-you!

St. Thomas continues to spruce up the office areas. This coming weekend the old wallpaper will come off in my study and then, after washing the walls the study and the main office will be ready for painting. Thanks to those who are helping with this.

A special thankyou to those who are keeping our memorial gardens looking great and to those who are cutting the grass. I hope your outdoor work is rejuvenating you!

For those of you who are interested in doing a deeper dive into worship practices across the Anglican Church of Canada during the pandemic check out the summer edition of the Anglican Journal which, if you don’t have access to a written copy can be found a the address I’ve embedded. anglicanjournal.com

For those of you looking to stay informed about the ongoing racial unrest in the U.S. and in our own country I’d highly recommend the Netflix documentary “13.” Denise and I watched it the other day and found it highly insightful. The 13 refers to the 13th amendment which abolished slavery but which contains clauses that ensured that a type of slavery would continue for black people, albeit under different guises, legal protection and names.

Well friends, it’s a short one today. Please send me notes or items you’d like to see included in these midweek updates. They seemed particularly important in the first 6-8 weeks; are they still serving a purpose? I’d like to keep them up if they’re helpful to enough folk, otherwise maybe there is something else that might better take their place.

This week, in our church calendar we celebrate the life of Joseph Butler who in a series of closely reasoned works argued for the inherent reasonableness of the Christian faith. Then two days later we celebrate the life of Bernard Mizeki who become for the first Anglican Martyr in Southern Africa. He was a teacher of the faith, a layman and when his village was attacked by warriors he chose to stay with his congregation.

“On the night of June 17, 1896 he was assaulted and mortally wounded. He managed to crawl to a nearby hillside. Early the next morning, as Bernard’s wife and another woman approached his hiding place, they were frightened by an unearthly sound, ‘like many wings of great birds,’ and a dazzling light which moved toward the spot where Bernard lay. When the two women finally had the courage to to him, Bernard’s body was gone without a trace.

From that day to this, Anglicans from all over southern Africa have made pilgrimages to the site of his martyrdom, in order to offer their prayers and petitions in the house of so great a witness for Christ.”

That which can be explained and that which is unexplainable, side by side in the same week; we commemorate the work and life of Christ in varied ways believing that God will use that variety to draw all of us in to the great Mystery of God’s Love and Life.

I look forward to worshipping with you on Sunday as we continue our journey through Ecclesiastes and celebrate the Solstice, National Aboriginal Day and Father’s Day!