

**November 8, 2020,**

**Rev Jen's 27th WTF Love Letter From Lockdown**

Dearly beloved,

**WTF!? We the followers** are feeling a range of feelings right now. All saints and All souls and the two-year anniversary of my sister's death is "behind" me. Remembrance Day is before me. The spiritual and emotional heaviness of these times of year are palpable. I can feel the energy. And it is heavy. Add the US Election, the Pandemic and the changes at the church and the scales get tipped toward the negative energy of the universe. As "positive" as I choose and try to be, the reality of the current context is unavoidable.

**WTF!? When tears flow...**I am aware of the many tears flowing from many people. We are all in this together and the emotional, psychological, and energetic reality of this GLOBAL EXPERIENCE aligns the personal and micro level ever so clearly with the public and macro level. You can think that the "pandemic isn't real and isn't happening to you" but that does not deny the global reality of the pandemic and the fact that there is "nowhere to go" to escape it. And so we grieve, we rage, we rant, we cry, we self isolate and retreat. We have many defence mechanisms to address this trauma and we are all acting out in our own ways. AND IT IS OKAY. Do what you need to do and try to harm none.

**We suffer, we serve, we die** speaking of harm...life hurts. There will be pain, suffering, and sorrow. There will be death and destruction. The "end" will come whether that is a personal end or a communal end. The end is clear, and the end is near. We live with this reality from the moment of our birth.

And we still live, love, serve with faith and with hope, charity, compassion, generosity and so much more, because we are made with the capacity to love large, even as we experience pain and suffering in life.

**We remember**

On this Remembrance Day Sunday we remember...War. We remember winning. And we remember losing. So many wars. So many lives lost. By "us" and by "them".

We recall the voices and the stories of those times and places. We recall family members that served and still serve in the Armed forces. We commemorate and participate in rituals of remembrance as we wear poppies, lay wreaths, hold silence, offer prayers, and recall and remember our personal and collective “War story”.

Remembering is an important action in holding the story throughout the generations. Our story of faith is a received tradition from those who went before. The bible is a library telling the stories of the people of faith “from the beginning”. And the story that Jesus tells in the text of this day is one that seeks to answer the questions the disciples ask.

**We cry out** when will THIS end? Whatever THIS is! When will it end? When will the pandemic be over? Are these the “End times” that have been predicted and proclaimed? Will Jesus come again? When? How long must we wait?

**We confess** that we do not know the answers. We are unsure and uncertain. We are frightened and afraid. In prayer we name the urgent cries of our souls. We admit them, allow them in and confess them to ourselves and to God. We try to take it ALL to the Lord in prayer.

As daily praying practitioners, we pray...prayers of confession, unburdening, supplication, intercession, petitions and more. We pray with words and in silence. We pray in movement and in stillness. We cry out, we confess, we ask as we pray.

**We ask** ON this Remembrance Day we ask; is a world of peace possible? At what price? Like the disciples before us we ask; what the kingdom of Heaven is like? When will “the end” be here? When will Jesus come again?

**Jesus answers** in the text of this week by telling the story of the “Wise and Foolish Maidens”. While we could spend hours discussing the interpretative nuances of this text, for the purpose of this letter, we will not.

The words of focus this week are BE PREPARED...FOR THE WAIT and be ready, willing and able to light your lamps while you wait for “him to come” and to know that there is LIGHT at the banquet for all who attend.

Not all of us are ready to receive the bridegroom when he comes. Many of our lamps are without oil...and many of us do not have a reserve supply for the hours of waiting that may be required. We all grow weary in the waiting and many of us fall asleep.

The issue is WILL WE BE PREPARED when he comes? And what does that preparation look like? How shall we live while we wait?

Keep awake! Know that God is near...God is here. Be aware of God's presence and celebrate it all you can.

Be ready. Do what you can to "light your lamp" and keep up your oil supply as you will need this fuel for the journey and for the wait. It could be a lifetime! What fuels your lamp? What keeps the light of Christ shining brightly in you?

**Be prepared.** As a young girl I was a Girl Guide and BE PREPARED was the Girl Guide motto. These are indeed words to live by and they have proven to be life savers. Be prepared for whatever might come. Prepare your mind, your heart, and your body...so that on that day you may stand firm.

The community of faith at Cliff Avenue United Church is in its end times as a community of faith but that does not mean that God is finished with us or that we are finished with God.

WTF! We the followers are still here...still faithful...still serving...our relationship with God knows no end.

We remember that God is...present...active...alive and with us and we are not afraid.

Wars, pandemics, natural disasters, political unrest, church closures...we remember, and we recommit to loving one another through it all and to being God's people here and now.

No matter where you find yourself on this Remembrance day, know that God is with you and you are not alone.

I leave you with this song... "Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning. Give me oil in my lamp I pray. Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning. Keep me burning till the break of day. Sing hosanna, sing hosanna, sing hosanna to the Servant King. Sing hosanna, sing hosanna, sing to the king. "

People of faith! Keep your lamps burning! Shine bright into this current darkness. And don't be afraid. God is with you.

With great love from

Rev Jen