

4th Sunday of Easter
May 3rd, 2020



Opening

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

May his grace and peace be with you.

May he fill our hearts with joy.

Sentence

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord: I know my own and my own know me.

John 10.14

Collect

O God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do your will, and work in us that which is well-pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

Easter 4 Reflection

This week marks the 75th Anniversary of the end of the holocaust. While there were no gatherings of remembrance, our Prime Minister joined leaders around the world in marking the end of that sad history. Our readings for the next few weeks will be from the Gospel of John. John was a late gospel written about 90-100 CE. In it Jesus seems to be in serious conflict with “the Jews”, for this reason this Gospel has been used by people over the years to promote anti-Semitic views.

If we're going to understand the gospel of John we need to understand it's unique position historically.

The land Israel was important to Rome because of its critical access to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Prior to the Roman conquest of Palestine by Pompey in 63 BC, Palestine was a self-governing country. When Julius Caesar defeated Pompey in 45 BC Palestine became part of the Roman Empire but continued to enjoy it's semi-independent and unique status. As a result, Israel was granted the freedom to practice their monotheistic religion, as long as they kept the peace, obeyed Roman rule, and paid their taxes. They were exempt from Roman worship and military service.

The Christian community (initially called ‘followers of the Nazarene’) was one sect within Judaism (along with the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes etc). As part of the Jewish community, they enjoyed the unique privileges of the Jewish community within the Roman Empire– for example: freedom of worship, freedom from military service.

During this period, there were tensions between the Christian community (then called the followers of the Nazarene) and the Jewish leaders, but both communities continued to meet on the Sabbath together for worship. But as this small sect within the Jewish community grew, often with converts from the gentile community, they also began to gather separately for worship (for the ‘breaking of the bread’) on the 1st day of the week (Sunday).

In the early Christian scriptures (esp in the writings of Paul and Peter) you can see the differing opinions regarding what were considered required practices. For example: Was circumcision required, what dietary requirements were to be followed?

The differences between the Jewish community and the followers of the Nazarene spilled over into daily practices. Tensions continued to grow between these two groups and finally in AD 90, at the Jewish Council of Jamnia, the Jewish leaders declared the followers of the Nazarene too different from them and so no longer part of the Jewish community. As a result, they were expelled from the synagogue. With the loss of their status within the Jewish community, the Christians were expected to obey all Roman laws without exception e.g. Military service, taxation, and veneration of the Roman gods.

So by the time John writes his gospel (cir AD 90 – 100) the Christian community had lost it's ties to the Jewish community and the privileged position and the somewhat independent status that offered – but not simply by it's own choice. The most serious result of losing the religious protection of the synagogue was that now this new religious sect was required to worship the Roman Gods at penalty of imprisonment or worse. The Roman persecution of the Christians was thus a direct result of the separation of the new Christian sect from the protection afforded by being part of Judaism.

The Christian community had begun to pray/worship separately from the Jewish community. It had begun to ask what it meant to be part of the 'community' - and that community was no longer the community of Israel. So there were tensions.

Is it any wonder then that in John's gospel, Jesus seems to have ongoing conflicts with "the Jews", and that one of John's central messages is that Jesus is in fact the true Messiah. (this was another point of conflict with mainstream Jewish belief of the day).

How do we deal with those tensions now? Certainly not by seeing John as an anti-Semitic text. Never forget, Jesus was a Jew! Our roots are in the Jewish traditions.

Rev. Jack Cox
revjackcox@gmail.com

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Gathered in the care of the Good Shepherd, let us in trust pray for the Church and the World, saying, *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We pray, Good Shepherd for your presence in our time of need, our time of anxiety, economic uncertainties, and worldwide pandemic. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We pray for all who work on the frontlines, the doctors, nurses, first responders and all health providers. We pray that appropriate equipment may always be available to keep them safe as they save lives. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We pray for the lonely, the homeless, those in mental anguish, and the elderly. We pray for those who are suffering with CoVid-19, especially in our long term care and retirement homes. We pray for all who have died, and all who mourn their loss. Comfort them we pray, with your healing presence. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We pray for all Government leaders, that the decisions they make during this Pandemic will protect our citizens and our communities. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We pray that with so many unemployed, with food plants closing with the virus, that food will be available for the hungry. Pray that we don't hoard food but share as much as possible. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We pray for those whose homes have flooded, and instead of self distancing at home, leave their homes to be placed in alternate housing. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We remember the victims and their families from the shootings in Nova Scotia. We pray that you will comfort them as they begin to heal, personally and in the communities. May they know all our prayers and thoughts will be with them as they go through these dark days. We pray for the members of the law enforcement as they continue their work. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

We have just heard of a Cyclone Helicopter Crash while on a NATO Mission. We pray for the victims and their families as they await the outcome of this disaster. Father, we ask that you comfort them with your healing presence. *Lord, Have Mercy.*

In the oncoming days, when the sun is shining and we want to go outside and visit, help us to continue to follow the guidelines and do our part in staying home and social distancing.

Submitted by Juanita Kynoch.

Please pray for Our Bishop Dr. Todd Townshend, Anne our Metropolitan, Linda, our Primate, Mark, National Indigenous Archbishop and Marinez, Bishop of Amazonia **Ven. Rick Jones** (interim) and the people of the **Parish of Long Point Bay** and all lay and clergy leaders.

We ask your prayers for parishioners and friends in need of God's healing touch upon their lives: Betty F., Don G., Franz and Elaine Z., Andrea P., Steven K., Rebecca M., Trista P., Kathleen C-S., Bill Mc., Dwayne M, and Andrea B., Susan A., Olivia H., Karen M. Jerry M., Diane H., Delores B.,and anyone known to you.

Remember our shut-ins at home, hospital and in local nursing homes: June, Shirley, Iris, Everett, Julie, David, John, Anna, and Ron

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Search us O God and know our hearts today
Try us and know our anxious thoughts,
see if there are any hurtful ways in us
and lead us in your loving and life-giving Way

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God knows our secret fears, ignorance & selfish ways.
God forgives, forgive yourself, forgive others
Amen

CLOSING PRAYER

God our strength and salvation, receive all we offer you today, and grant that we who have confessed your name, and received new life in baptism, may live in the joy of the resurrection, through Jesus Christ the Lord,
Amen

DOXOLOGY

Glory to God,
whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

If there are any changes to the prayer list or shut in list, please either let AD Rick or Anne Halls know at the at the contact information below.

We are also going to start a COVID-19 prayer list. If you know of anyone that has asked you to pray for them during this pandemic, we will put on the list for a month.

This week we sent out the Easter bulletins via Canada Post to any parishioner on our list that does not have access to email. Please let us know if you get any feedback from these parishioners. We are planning to send out a mailing once a month until this shutdown ends.

Please click on the link below to watch AD Rick’s video for this week

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEazRq6_bA0&feature=youtu.be

At this extraordinary time if you wish a telephone visit please call the Rector. If you have any other announcements or news contact Anne Halls at the contacts below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Archdeacon Rick Jones can be contacted by email rickplus@gmail.com or by phone @ 905 537 0324

Our parish assistant Anne Halls can be contacted by email at lbpbarishsecretary@gmail.com or by phone @ 519-586-7034

Please visit our website parishoflongpointbay.com and Facebook page