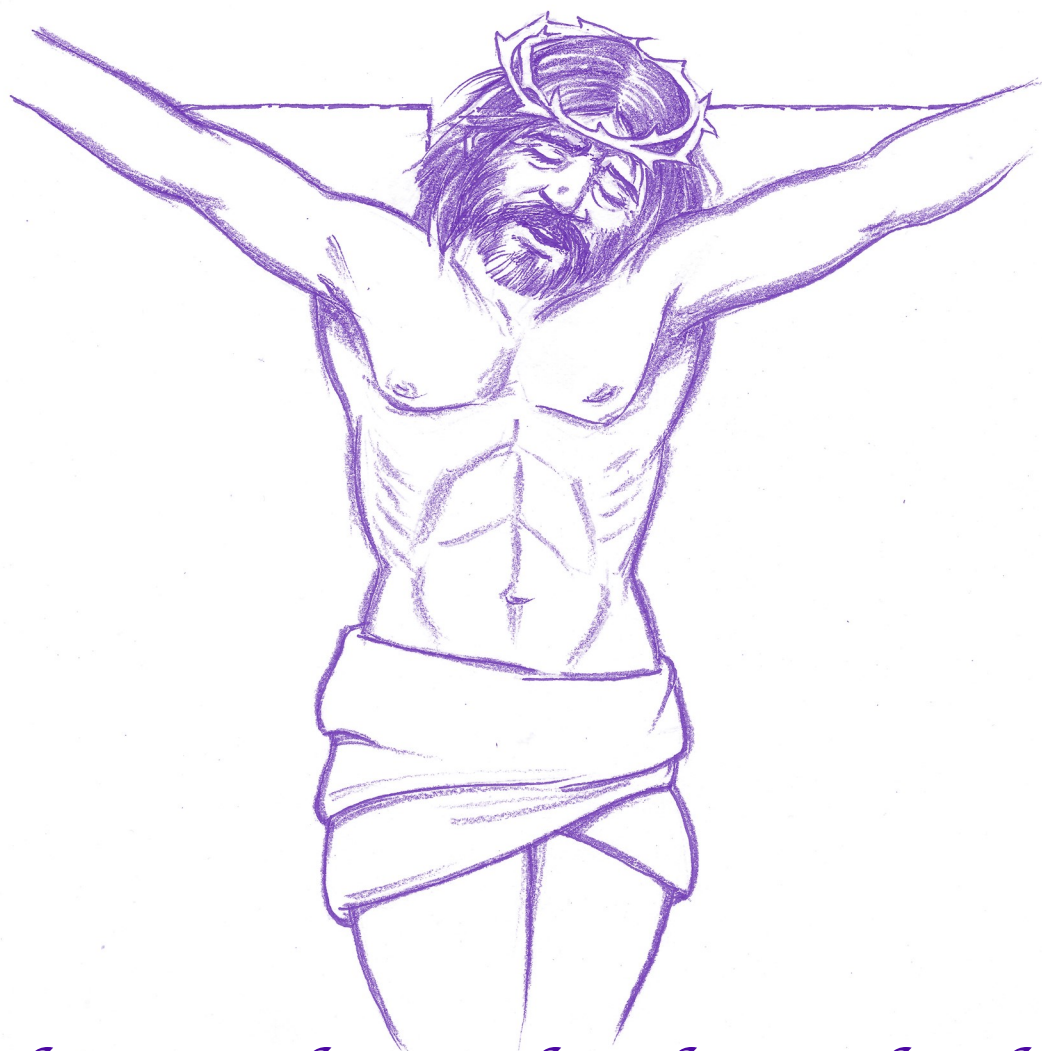

Holy Week Reflections

2020



Now the Son of Man has been glorified.

John 13:31



On Eagle's Wings



From the desk of ...

Rev. Lesley Hand

On Eagle's Wings' Executive Director

Now the Son of Man has been glorified.

John 13:31, NRSV

Dear Friends,

If I am observing Lent well and allowing God to stir things up that, to be honest, I would rather keep hidden, it is an uncomfortable time. It is not the six weeks of the church calendar that I most look forward to. And yet, I am thankful for the unease and discomfort because it is so necessary if I am to continue to trust God and grow in Christ-likeness. Perhaps you experience this too. This year, though, our observation of Lent has taken on unforeseen dimensions as 'social distancing' and 'self-isolation' have necessarily become part of our everyday vocabulary and practice.

Through all our experiences this Lenten season, we remember that God is a God of love, life, order, forgiveness, and generosity. As the epistle of James says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." (4:8) Whenever we draw close to God, we receive these gifts. This year's cover image that Mike Lee, our artist, has created reminds us that these gifts are ours through Jesus' death and resurrection. He beautifully captures the heart of Holy Week and our Christian faith. Thank you, Mike!

I pray that this year's insights from our writers will help you draw close to God as you journey through Holy Week, to the cross and resurrection.

Thank you for being part of the *On Eagle's Wings* family; may the God of hope bless you and fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

Crying Stones

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." Luke 19: 37-40, NIV

Living in the north has taught me a lot about the terrain and how it changes drastically from season to season. Stones and rocks form a significant part of the northern landscape and my son loves to climb up, jump over and slide down these rocks, especially during the summer.

The rocks made me think about Palm Sunday and what Jesus said to the religious leaders that day. Having come to Jerusalem on a donkey the crowds recognised Him as King shouting "blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord". Having seen His miracles (vs. 37) they knew that He was the promised Messiah and they celebrated. The religious leaders didn't approve of the people praising Jesus so Jesus said to them that if the people stop praising, the rocks will praise Him instead (vs. 40). What Jesus means, is that there is no escaping the fact that He is indeed the Messiah King whom God has chosen and He will bring salvation through His death and resurrection for which He is worthy of praise.

Can you imagine walking across our northern tundra in the silence of vast open space and suddenly the stones start praising God? It would be quite an experience to capture your attention. I wonder what song the stones would sing? My son likes to collect stones and put them in his pockets, sometimes we find them clanking around in our washing machine which is not quite a song of praise but is certainly striking! They remind me to praise God for Jesus.

Palm Sunday reminds us that King Jesus captures our attention as He goes to the cross and the resurrection for our salvation, that we might cry out to Him in worship. Will your heart sing of His love and grace? Will you be in awe of Jesus as the people were that day?

Heavenly Father thank you for sending Jesus to be our King. Help us to recognise Him as such and live each day with a song of worship in our hearts. Amen

Rev. Bryan Haigh
Rector, Holy Trinity Anglican Church
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.



Far from being barren, the vast, rocky terrain of the north displays the glory of God as it sustains life ranging from these fragile blooms to massive musk oxen.

Follow You? Where?

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." John 13:36, NRSV

We walked down to the beach. Our lesson was on the calling of the disciples. The children from the community were wearing head coverings as costumes and the disciples' names on their chests. In this reenactment all 12 disciples were on the shore, plus extras. The young disciples played their parts very well, laughing and giggling with their bare feet in the sand and splashing in the water. Intently they tried to remember the name of the disciple they were portraying.

Jesus' disciples were not exactly sure who they were either. Jesus came and turned everything they knew upside down, just like the tables of the moneychangers in the temple. On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem. That was what the promised Messiah was supposed to do, but He certainly did not do it in the way they expected. By Thursday, the distressed Jesus is praying to his Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. He wants his disciples to be present with him. They sleep. Jesus had foretold them He would die and be raised. They said, this cannot be so. While the disciples could not fathom what was truly happening, Jesus was on a horrific, unimaginable, predestined-by-God, journey of salvation for us and for all people. Jesus did it all.

In the lesson on the beach, we talked to the young disciples about following Jesus, trusting him and putting him first. But we did not talk to the kids about what Jesus' calling fully meant for those first disciples; they were too young for that. They left their homes, families, work and followed Jesus. Nothing would be the same again. Jesus had called them and was going before them through death, into life eternal. Jesus calls us to new life and unimagined journeys too.

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *(from Lutheran Book of Worship)*

Lois Graff
On Eagle's Wings Governing Board member
Huntsville, Alabama

Ever-Present Glory

For whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 1 John 5:4, NRSV

One of the most memorable events from my young adulthood was a visit to a taxidermy shop in northern Ontario.

The shop was rather plain on the outside; but inside was an amazing assortment of fish, birds, large and small animals, in various stylings and poses meant to capture the essence of each creature as you might encounter them in the wild.

On the one hand, everything appeared so life-like and real – as if the animals might come back to life at any moment. On the other hand, there was the unsettling stillness of each creature – perfectly preserved in its outward appearance, but no longer alive.

Despite all appearances, the true glory of each creature lay bound up in its past, the present serving only to remind us of a glory that once was but really is no more.

Holy Week is a time of preparing for and recalling the impending suffering and death – as well as the glorious resurrection – of Jesus. As we journey this week together, we do so not as people clinging only to a memory of past glory, but attentive and alert through the eyes of faith, to His ever-present glory, ever new among us.

Jesus, as our Lenten journey draws to a close, open the eyes of our hearts to witness your glory in all the joys and hurts of our lives and the lives of those around us – particularly the poor and those who suffer. Through the kindness of your mercy, draw us ever closer to you that we may experience a share in your victory and in turn share that victory with others. Amen.

Julien Hammond
Coordinator, Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations
Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton
Edmonton, Alberta

Holding Us Together

And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" Mark 15:39, NASB

One of the opportunities of the Lenten season in my congregation is to gather for soup and prayer weekly. Our time around the table and in worship allows for deeper connection and community. Together we join with Jesus and the disciples as we turn toward the cross. This year part of our journey has included conversation about the coronavirus and what it might mean to our community and communities all around the world. Many are worried that we will not be able to gather together in the coming weeks.

Holy Week begins with the crowds announcing Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem, and is filled with people shouting and cheering for the Son of David. "Hosanna!" As the week moves forward, the crowds start to get smaller until at the cross only a few of the women remain at a distance. The Roman guard was not from the area, nor was he Jewish. It was his voice alone that declared Jesus was the Son of God.

No matter the size of our community, God is present and revealing his glory.

In my travels, some with *On Eagle's Wings*, I have encountered communities of all sizes. Each one is different in how they come together. Gathering is part of what defines us and part of what identifies us to others. In these days of uncertainty for congregations and communities, let us remember that God is always with us – holding us together, even when we are physically parted.

Heavenly Father, thank you for being the voice that brings us together as community. Stay with us always and help us to share the good news of salvation. Amen.

Rev Katie Russell
On Eagle's Wings Governing Board Member
Sioux Center, Iowa

Selfless Service

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. 1 John 3:18, NRSV

Jesus calls us to serve others. What does this mean to you? Christ Himself was the ultimate example of being a servant. In Matthew 20:28 He told them “just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” What compassion and love He showed to those in need. Who could have passed judgement and criticism more than God Himself? But everywhere He went He showed mercy and brought light into the darkness.

In my involvement with *On Eagle's Wings* over the last 15 years, I have had the privilege of serving with some devoted servants. I was honored to join the prayer team for Reverend Lesley Hand during her time as clergy for *On Eagle's Wings* in Fort McMurray and during this time I learned much about the ministry. I became passionate about the ministry and its ecumenical nature. I joined the Board and served in this capacity for 6 years. Yet, the greatest pleasure during the 15 years were my trips as a volunteer Bible Camp teacher to Pine Channel, Fort Chipewyan, Wha'Ti and Fort Smith. Other team members and I were loved and served by those showing hospitality in these communities and inviting us to meals, helpers who set up the space for the lessons, those who gave time to help with the children or did prep work for the crafts as well as clergy in the communities that invited and encouraged me. All of these followers of Christ who showed me what service is all about are continually in my prayers and hold a special place in my memories.

Maundy Thursday, we remember Jesus foot washing, some congregations literally following His example. Let's do as Christ did and humbly love one another. Peter wrote “show others the goodness of God, He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light” (1Peter 2:9).

Lord, thank you for the example you gave of selflessness. Show us how we may serve and love others and give us the strength and grace to do just that. Amen

Deana Lemke
On Eagle's Wings Volunteer Bible Camp Teacher
Rochester, Alberta



Deana offers valuable individual attention to a child at Bible Camp.

A Child's Perspective

But he was wounded for our transgressions.

Isaiah 53:5, NRSV

Good Friday is a somber day. One year when I was in a remote northern community we did an enactment of the Good Friday and Easter Sunday events. A young male teacher who sometimes helped me with Sunday School offered to be Jesus. I read the Scripture and coached the children in acting out the various scenes. When I gave out the roles three boys were VERY eager to be the soldiers with the long spears (broom handles with cardboard spear heads). However when it came time for them to act out their roles as soldiers they froze. They were to prod Jesus with their lances and tell him to get up and keep walking but all they could do was stand perfectly still in a state of shock. They couldn't enter into role of soldier. There was no way they could poke Jesus. That was wrong. Jesus had fallen and they thought they should help him up rather than jab him with their spears and yell at him. After all, he was JESUS and they should treat him with respect.

Well, we moved on to the crucifixion. Although we tied Jesus to the cross, the children found it difficult to do this to him as well. After Jesus had died, they dragged him across the floor on a blanket to the makeshift cave. In the cave, Jesus quickly changed into a beautiful long white robe and came out as the resurrected Jesus. When the children saw that Jesus was alive, they cheered and danced around him. HE IS ALIVE! JESUS IS ALIVE! Alleluia! Alleluia!

As this experience had been quite traumatic for some of the children, we did a debriefing encouraging them to share their feelings regarding the experience. It had been a powerful lesson they would not soon forget. In subsequent lessons we looked at applications of this scripture passage and experience to our daily lives and it had been very fruitful. A very important lesson which they learned was the price Jesus paid to become our Saviour and that he did it out of love.

Jesus, continue to open our hearts to the awareness of your great love for us. Help us come to a deeper understanding of what it means that you are our Saviour and we are redeemed people. With grateful hearts, let us ponder the sacrifice Jesus made for us on Good Friday. We ask this in union with your Father and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sr. Joan Liss

Former *On Eagle's Wings* Governing Board member

And retired Pastoral Leader, Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories

Waterdown, Ontario

Where Does My Help Come From?

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. John 6:51, NIV

I have an elder friend whom I visit with a lot, and he offers many stories about how it was to live a life of survival in the bush. Once he said, “When it’s winter and you’re walking on a trail, if you run out of food, you can’t go on. You will get weak and you won’t have strength to keep going. You have to go back to your camp.” I wondered about why they would be out walking on the trail, and I realized it would always be for a basic purpose. Survival with no modern conveniences was a hard existence. People had no choice but to walk (boat, or dog team) to get what they needed to live, meat to sustain their families or firewood to fend off the cold.

Often the word “journey” is used as a metaphor for life. We all set out on life’s journey, seeking what we need to survive. As we step onto known and unknown paths, we need the knowledge that God created us, loves us and walks with us as teacher and guide. God’s presence is the food and drink that give us strength to walk the long trail that is life. Although a long hike takes hard physical exertion, there are blessings, too, in the beauty, stillness, and healing power of nature.

Each person faces personal struggles throughout life, “nobody else can walk it for us”. We can feel overcome with the problems, fears, and devastation in the world around us. When our hearts turn away from trusting in God, how can we keep going? We will feel weak in body, mind and soul.

**Dear God,
You are Love, your love is towards all of your creation.
You are Life, life meant to be rich with beauty, peace and joy.
You are Bread, sustaining us each step along the way.
You are Strength, and our song. Let us walk with You always.
Amen.**

Kathryn Scott
On Eagle’s Wings volunteer Bible Camp teacher
Trout Lake, Northwest Territories



Bible Camps offer children journeys of discovery and delight in God.

Mourning into Dancing

Now the Son of Man has been glorified.

John 13:31, NRSV

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy. So that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thank to you forever.

Psalm 30:11-12, NRSV

Just off the main street, on a rocky knoll behind the store in a small northern community lies an old cemetery. Most of the old wooden crosses are either long gone or strewn around on their backs among the knee high grass and wild flowers. There are a few that remain standing, dilapidated reminders of suffering and fear of the last epidemic that spread through the community just about a hundred years ago. The last time I walked through there, you could still read some of the names on the crosses. Mostly babies and young children. It is a sad place and the cemetery appears abandoned, justifiably perhaps. Nevertheless, communal memory of that time remains strong and fear raises its head again. What will be the toll this time? The fear is legitimate. Like the psalmist, we live in a time of lament.

And yet, in the psalms of lament, there is always a turning point where the psalmist switches from complaint to praise. This weekend, the Great Three Days of Easter, is our turning point. It is the turning point of all time. It is the turning point of all life. Jesus has been glorified! He has died for our sin and suffering, shattered their power, and risen again in glory. In him, we have traded fear for joy, death for life, mourning for rejoicing and dancing.

A hundred years ago, the community rebounded back to life through being the family of God—through the certainty of everlasting life in God, through extending the love of our risen Lord to each other, and through praising God for his goodness.

Today, in the light of the glory of Jesus' resurrection, may we also be bearers of God's light, life, and hope to each other and proclaim with joy, "*You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy. So that my soul may praise you and not be silent.*"

God of life and light, thank you that through Jesus' death and rising to life again, you have turned our sorrow into joy, our mourning into dancing. Fill us afresh with your Spirit, and show us how we may be your light to others. Amen.

Rev. Lesley Hand
On Eagle's Wings Executive Director
Spruce Grove, Alberta

Meet Your 2020 Holy Week Reflections Team



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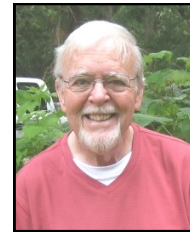
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Thank You!

Your ongoing support of *On Eagle's Wings* is deeply appreciated.

Your gifts enable us to provide a transformative ministry of Word and presence as we walk with people in over 20 of our most remote northern communities. That's over 400 northern children, youth, and their families.

We would like to have an On Eagle's Wings Bible Camp in our community ... children look forward to this every year! (Cindy, Aklavik)

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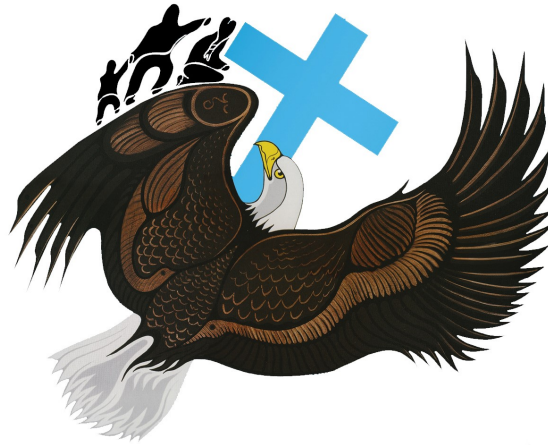
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On Eagle's Wings is an ecumenical Christian ministry that proclaims Jesus Christ and serves the Church and individuals in remote and isolated areas of northern Canada.

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