



Easter 2018

Simon -- who is nicknamed "Peter" or "The Rock" by Jesus -- was one of Jesus' closest friends and companions. Peter was likely not very old. When he abandons everything, job and family included, to wander the lakeshores with Jesus, he is an apprentice for his fisherman father. Jesus was 30 years old when he began his public ministry, but Peter might have been little more than a teenager. Although he is frequently included in Jesus' inner circle, there is little about Peter that is admirable in the story of Jesus that unfolds. He is the ultimate "big talker," quick to make bold and brash statements about his commitment to Jesus, but then just as quick to change his mind or lose his nerve when things get difficult. Although Judas is most closely associated with the betrayal that led to Jesus' death, Peter also betrayed Jesus in his friend's darkest hour. Nonetheless, Jesus gives him this nickname, and treats him as a dear friend, because Jesus can see in Peter a goodness and faithfulness that Peter has not yet been able to discover in himself.

This Holy Week (March 25th – April 1st), we enter into Jerusalem with Jesus on Palm Sunday. A power is revealed in Jesus that is markedly different from the power of the Empire. We follow Jesus day by day as he teaches and provokes and reassures his followers and detractors. We can feel the heat turning up as those in authority become more and more challenged by Jesus. We share in his final meal with his friends and see him enact a new commandment of love through the breaking of the bread and the washing of the feet (hence the name "Maundy Thursday" from the Latin word *mandatum* "commandment"). Our hearts break with him on the cross as all but a few faithful female disciples abandon him to his fate. We return to the tomb on Saturday evening and we live out that journey from darkness to light, from defeat to the first Alleluia of our Easter proclamation. We gather on Easter Sunday around our bold and life-giving proclamation, that in Jesus we see death and hatred and fear defeated by the power of God's love.

We make this central Christian journey this year through the eyes of Peter. Peter is not just an easy character to whom we may relate, not just one of the most influential leaders in forming the early church, he also allows us a way in to two of the most central tenets of our Christian faith. His close friendship with Jesus reveals to us the invitation to know the God who is most definitely beyond the comprehension of our limited human minds, but who also who walks with us as a companion and friend, intimately invested in each of our little lives. Peter's obvious imperfections and moments of crashing failure, along with the seemingly small point of Jesus nonetheless naming him as a rock of faithfulness and dependability, invite us to see Peter the way that God sees him. As we have been discussing in our "Just the Basics" class, Jesus reveals to us the perfection of his human life in full partnership with God, but more importantly he reveals the purpose and goal of *all* of our lives. God does not see us as a collection of our failures and mis-steps, but rather as the fullness of who we are created to be, how our lives are perfect and good and holy as they are sealed by the love and blessing of God.

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Peter is the ultimate example of a flawed human being, leaving every opportunity for us to relate to him as we assess our own flaws. And yet we can also witness how Peter lives, step by step, into the identity Jesus already sees in him.

I invite you, through the eyes of Peter, to become personally invested and implicated in our Holy Week story this year. Where do you experience the friendship of God? Where in your life do you need to feel God's loving companionship? What weaknesses or mistakes do you carry with you? How do you experience Resurrection life: the promise of healing and wholeness and freedom revealed in Jesus? As we come to the brink of the cross with Peter and with Jesus, do you hear Jesus' commandment of love ringing down across the millennia? Do you allow that commandment to have authority in your life?

I wish you a blessed Holy Week. I wish you the life-changing power of our Easter faith.

In Christ's love,

Martha Tatomie +

Martha.



HOLY WEEK: FAVOURITE TRADITIONS & NEW CONNECTIONS

March 25th - Palm Sunday

March 26th, 27th, 28th - Noon Hour Service

March 28th - 7pm Advent Café in the Lounge

March 29th - 12:10pm Maundy Thursday noon hour service

6-8pm - Maundy Thursday Dinner & Worship

Our foundational worship service as Christians:

join us for supper, candlelit procession into the church, a beautiful Eucharist in our Sanctuary with choir & pipe organ, and the stripping of the altar. All generations will be moved by this celebration.

March 30th - 9:45am Downtown Good Friday Walk with Guest Speaker Mayor Walter Sendzik.

Music by *Infinitely More*

Noon Hour Good Friday Worship at St. George's

March 31st - 7pm Easter Vigil with Resurrection Party

**If you don't like to drive at night, contact our office to arrange rides to any of our services.*

April 1st - 8am & 10am - Easter Sunday

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