



GOOD NEWS LETTER

... In the Age of Coronavirus ...

How are you feeling?

The title of the piece is my general conversation starter. How are you? And I am not looking for a discussion of the weather or another surface platitude that covers and hides the genuine emotions. So, in the age of Corona, how are you, right now?

I'll tell you how I feel.

I have had some fantastic family moments with my children (ages 10,8,5) and wife. We've played long games of monopoly, hiked many miles, and enjoyed true "down" time that is often absent in our hectic lives. We've reconnected with cousins and old friends. It's genuinely been meaningful and a reset for us. I am grateful for these moments.

I have also felt an incredible closeness with God and our Parish. We have been meeting over zoom, and it's been a powerful way for us to share in the Gospel and support and love each other.

The feelings in the preceding paragraphs are 100% true. Equally valid, and many times in the same hour, are feelings of despair, anger, and grief. For instance, in the same hour as a family walk, we will experience a family breakdown: i.e., everybody is yelling. The joy of the moment with the family gives way to the fears of the future: Will my son start Kindergarten wearing a mask? Will one of our family members die from COVID-19? What will be the economic ramifications of this pandemic? Emotional Rabbit Holes!

Church has been Holy Spirit-filled over zoom, but it's not immune from these rabbit holes either. When will we have public worship again? What will a post coronavirus life look like in Church and the World? And just the sheer lamenting of not getting to hug my friends (anywhere!). I worry about teenagers, young adults, older adults in the Parish, and outside of it...Help!

Do some of these feelings and questions bubble up in your life? I'm guessing so. What do we do with these feelings in this unprecedented time? Where do we go with these feelings?

We go to God with all of them. The good, bad, indifferent, and the yelling and screaming and the hardest question you can muster". Take it to God.

Can we take these emotions (those yucky gucky things) to God? YES and our Bible tells us so! This time is unprecedented for us, but the rawness of emotion and collective struggle is not. Humanity has been torched by plagues before. Humanity has experienced collective grief and scary moments before just like we have all celebrated, too.

How do we know this? Well, it's chronicled in the Bible, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments that tell the story of God's people: you and me. Specifically, I'd call your attention to the Psalms. The Psalms

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are the emotional bedrock of the Biblical Canon. These poems oscillate between lament, thanksgiving, joy, anger, and sadness and are spread out through the entire Psalter. They are raw feelings, the heartbeat of humanity calling out to God for help in despair, in collective grief, in anger, in questioning, in wonderings, you name it, and it's there.

The Psalter does something else, too. It calls us back to Jesus, and we remember that we are part of a story that has already been written. The Psalmist writes:

weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.
(Palm 30:5)

The above verse is a direct connection to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Author and Protector of our Faith. It is in His death that we are reconciled to God, and in His resurrection that we have our Hope. Good Friday gives way to Easter Morning.

The Good News is God has written the final ending and he has not abandoned us nor forsaken us, rather He awaits your petitions, cries, screams and everything you have throw at Him. Read a few Psalms and hand it all over to God.

Willis Logan is a minister serving at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Fincastle. He'd love to check in with you, drop him an e-mail if you want to talk, willis@stmarksfincastle.org



REMINDER:

Here are the Zoom code numbers/links for our weekly services. This information remains the same week after week.

Service of Morning Prayer at 10:30am Sunday: <https://zoom.us/j/529751141>
Call-in Use # 1 301 715 8592 // then enter meeting code 529 751 141

Service of Evening Prayer at 7:30pm Wednesday: <https://zoom.us/j/515775059>
Call-in Use # 1 301 715 8592 // then enter meeting code 515 775 059

Brown Bag Bible Study at noon Thursday: <https://zoom.us/j/357687400>
Call-in Use # 1 301 715 8592 // then enter meeting code 357 687 400

Update on Elijah

Dear friends from St. Mark's,

I hope this letter finds you all well in the midst of this pandemic. I look back with deep gratefulness at the time I spent with you all last summer, well aware of how much I learned and grew during my time with you. As I complete seminary and look toward the next stage of my life, the Lord has placed it on my heart to consider the poor, the suffering and those who exist on the margins of human society. Because of this, I have accepted a call to go as a missionary to the US-Mexico border.

While there I will be working for a two-year term as the new Missionary Curate at Trinity on the Border. Trinity on the Border is a Mission on the Texas-Mexico border serving migrant workers, refugees fleeing violence and the many impoverished people on both sides of the border. As a Christian Mission, Trinity brings a unique offering to the border as it works not just to provide for the material needs of the vulnerable, but also to care for their spiritual well-being.

As a missionary on the border I will be working to fulfill Christ's great commission, to care for the poor, and to show the love of Christ to those whose human dignity has been all but forgotten. Exactly what should be done about the southern border is a complex political question. What is not a political question is the fact that Jesus has told us to feed the hungry, to welcome the strangers, to cloth the naked and to visit the suffering. As Christians we are to greet every stranger, every suffering person, as if they were Jesus Christ himself. Could it be the case that Jesus stands knocking on the door of our southern border? Could he be knocking in the form of unaccompanied minors, in the form of impoverished refugees huddled together in makeshift tent cities, in the form of human beings trafficked across our border like animals? If so, what will we do to greet the crucified God, bruised and broken with the sins of the world?

As I prepare for this season of my life, these are the questions on my heart. I would appreciate your prayers as I begin ministering on the border, and for those of you that are able, I would also appreciate your financial support. As a missionary, my work is entirely based on the support of those willing to be involved in sending me. My primary need is for pledges of support on a monthly basis. However, if you are so inclined, you can also give a one-time gift. This can be done either at the Trinity on the Border website through PayPal, specifically at this address <https://thebordermission.org/giving-elijah-luikham/> or through sending a check to this address P.O. Box 231 La Feria, TX 78559. Every little bit helps! You can contact me at elijahluikham@gmail.com with any questions.

With gratefulness,

Elijah Luikham

**The Botetourt Food
Pantry will operate at
normal hours each
Saturday, 9:30-12:00. The
food distribution will be
done as a drive through
process.**



Clients will be asked to stay in their cars and volunteers will bring the food out to you. Food will be already boxed up. **We ask clients and volunteers to stay home if you have any symptoms.** We appreciate your patience. We want to keep our volunteers and clients safe. If you have any questions, please contact Martha Rodgers at 540-597-0025.



It's mighty quiet in the Guild Room of the Youth Center, but needles flash and bright colors flourish as many of the stitchers continue their work at home. We miss the fellowship of stitching together, but there's a project to be continued and masks to be made – and if we run out of those things, we can continue with adult clothes protectors! When we 'convene' together again, we'll put out the welcome mat for others who might like to wield a needle of any kind on a personal project or on one of ours! Hope to see you SOON on Thursdays, starting at 1:00 – watch the weekly updates and this newsletter for more information!



BY English Poet and Cleric John Donne

A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, thou hast done;
I fear no more.

We Care Team

Our need to pray for one another and the world around us continues without ceasing, as our prayers must continue without ceasing. Additionally, many of our shut-ins would appreciate an uplifting note of encouragement or a call. If you feel so called, please consider dropping notes to members of the parish or in our community who may be quarantined alone and feeling isolated. If chatting on the phone fits your schedule, try giving someone a call, just to say *hello and hope you're doing well*. If you would like to receive the bcc prayer and service updates, please contact Carole Geiger at 540.525.0559.

Getting to know you...

We asked **Anna Preston**, our new Music Minister, to answer a few “getting to know you” questions.

*What is a home project, craft or hobby that you tried that didn't go so well?
What is something important a grandparent or older mentor taught you?
What is one favorite activity from childhood you wish you could do now?
As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up and why?*

Here are her responses!

As a child, I was incredibly lucky to have my Gramma move in with my family when I was ten. She taught me how to sew, she taught me the art of after school snacks, and how to make dinner with grace during the crazy homework hour. She lived two months past her 100th birthday, after surviving breast cancer at 85. In so many ways, she was my hero. It's a huge gift that I have her dining room table in our home, a constant reminder of her love for me. In addition to my Gramma, my Oma and Opa were deeply inspiring, too! They moved in with my parents when I was in high school, and stayed until they, too, passed away. My Opa always whistled beautiful tunes, had many stories to tell me about being captured by the Nazis (not once, but twice), and deeply encouraged my passion for music. He was a painter toward the end of his life, and I have many of his paintings hanging in our home. My Oma spent much of her life volunteering, helping anyone in need. She was amazing with the tiniest crochet hook you've ever seen, and though I wish she had taught me how to crochet, she did teach me the meditative quality of curling up on the couch with beautiful yarn to make scarves and hats. It was a giant gift to dress Clara in the sweater my Oma knitted for my dad when he was a baby.

I was raised in a very remote (it is not that way anymore!) part of Loudoun County in northern Virginia. One of my favorite memories was jumping in the back of my dad's '52 pickup with my siblings and riding down to my best friend's farm house to pick up milk, fresh from their cows. Oh, we would laugh and laugh, bumping down the dirt road, my dad intentionally hitting every pothole. We had the best little pony, Faun. My brother and I would jump on her bareback, just a simple lead rope on her halter, and run her as fast as possible through the fields behind our house. No helmets or saddles or riding boots necessary! Oh, we had so much fun.

When I was twelve, my piano teacher told me I needed a new teacher. She remained to be one of my biggest supporters, until she passed away just a couple of months ago. At the time, she sent me to a teacher at the Shenandoah Conservatory Arts Academy. Upon meeting my new teacher for the first time, I told her that I wanted to play piano for singers when I grew up. She reminded me of this often, as I moved through my undergrad studies at James Madison University as a Piano Performance major, and then again, when I went to Westminster Choir College, studying accompanying and solo piano. Somehow I knew, at that young age of 12, that I'd grow up playing piano for choirs and singers--and what an extraordinary musical journey I've had so far.

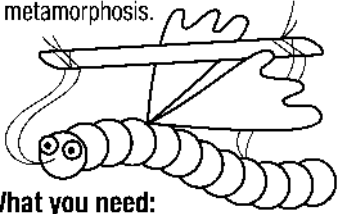
Maybe my Dutch roots are to blame--I love to bike! When I lived in Princeton, I biked everywhere--to my church, to my classes at Westminster, to my piano students' homes, to my ballet classes and even the grocery store. It was so great! I miss that so much. Thankfully, my husband who knew this about me, bought me an electric assist bike so I can keep riding--in fields instead of on sidewalks! I have to share a funny anecdote about my bike. About two years ago, I rode my bike to Elena's school to have lunch with her. I parked the bike just off the sidewalk in front of the school, as there is no bike rack there. When I walked out from lunch, the school was surrounded by police cars. Feeling concerned, I asked the school's security guard what was going on. Turns out, there was a random white bike (mine) parked outside the school and it was very suspicious. After handing the police officer my license so he could call it in (can you even believe this story?!), I had to explain that my maiden name was still on my license as I had only been married for 2 weeks at that point, and my new social security card had not arrived in the mail. Finally, the principal of the school came out, and recognizing me, told the officers everything was okay--I was in the clear, thankfully!! Of course, as I pull my bike out to ride home, they all gathered to check out my e-bike, as they had never seen one before in this area. Who knew that riding a bike would be considered even remotely criminal!!

In less than three years, I moved from Princeton, married Channing, became a stepmom to two extraordinary kids, had a baby and am now pregnant--it's a lot to keep up with in such a short time! But in this time, Nathan and Elena have expressed again and again how much they want to have matching clothes with Clara. It's a challenge for me, especially finding matching clothes for Nathan and Clara. Thankfully, there are great online stores, like Hanna Andersson, that continuously support the kids' wardrobes. I even have found pajamas for myself that match Elena's and Clara's!

For Kids Big and Small

CHANGED!

Make this cute puppet to show and tell the amazing story of metamorphosis.



What you need:

- Needle and string
- 12 small pom-poms
- Wooden craft stick
- Scissors
- Googly eyes
- Glue
- Coffee filter
- Markers

What you do:

1. Sew pom-poms together to make a caterpillar body. Tie off that string.
2. Thread another string up through the first pom-pom, leaving 12 inches to dangle. Repeat with the ninth pom-pom, leaving two dangling strings.
3. Wrap those strings around opposite ends of the stick, adjusting their length to about 6 inches. Tie in place.
4. Glue on eyes.
5. Flatten the coffee filter and draw a symmetrical design on it. Pleat in the center to create wings.
6. Move the caterpillar puppet by holding the stick. Glue on the wings as you describe the transformation into a butterfly.



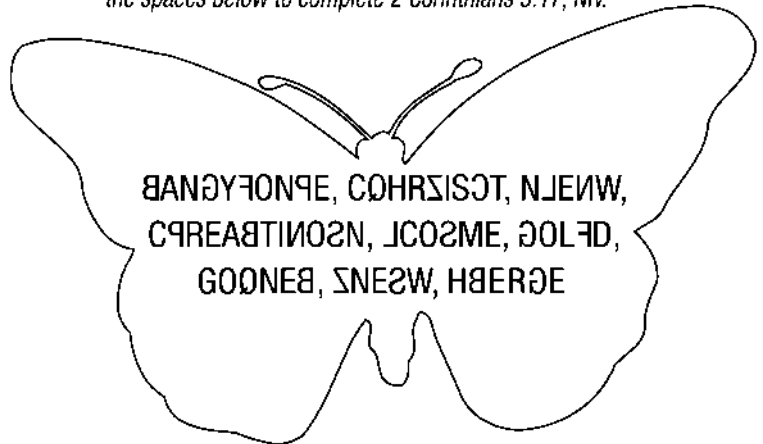
Transformation **POWER**



Just as the caterpillar becomes a butterfly,
God transforms us from old to new.



Directions: Cross out the backward letters. Write the remaining letters in order in the spaces below to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV.



Therefore, if _____ is in _____,
the _____ has _____:

The _____ has _____,
the _____ is _____!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, NIV

Answer: anyone, Christ, new, creation, come, old, gone, new, here

Messages of Hope

Trust the Artist



We must offer ourselves to God like a clean, smooth canvas and not worry ourselves about what God may choose to paint on it, but at each moment, feel only the stroke of his brush. ... It is the same with a piece of stone. Each blow from the sculptor's chisel

makes it feel ... as if it were being destroyed. ... All I know is that I must stay immobile in the hands of the sculptor. ... I have no idea what he is doing ... but I know his work is the best possible.

—Jean Pierre de Caussade

Unshakable faith

No one wishes for crises, but Christians who've endured them often speak of the faith benefits that result. Here are two examples:

Author and Bible teacher Nancy Guthrie, who lost two babies to a rare genetic disorder, writes: "Trusting God when the miracle does not come, when the urgent prayer gets no answer, when there is only darkness ... this is the kind of faith that cannot be shaken because it is the result of having been shaken" (*Holding On to Hope*, Tyndale).

Christian musician Danny Gokey, whose first wife died from congenital heart disease, writes: "Sometimes we don't discover our purpose until the darkest moments strip us of everything and all we are left with is brokenness and heartache. It is in these moments, ironically, when hope becomes our strength and carries us" (*Hope in Front of Me*, NavPress).



A surprising solution

The only solution for being broken is ... brokenness. By brokenness, I mean the acknowledgment of it, the full and unflinching acceptance that we are bankrupt, poor in spirit and have nothing to offer. In our culture, that's a hard sell. ... Brokenness is not trending on Twitter. It's not written on anyone's résumé, and it's no business strategy at all. It is, however, the one hope Jesus holds out for us, the inside-out, upside-down way that is somehow the only path that ultimately is right side up. Embrace the paradox: brokenness is the way to wholeness.

—Kyle Idleman, *The End of Me*

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Hi Friends:

How are you? If you are like me, then you are okay one minute and crumbling the next. So many questions, so many rabbit holes and many (I hope) meaningful moments...All wrapped into the same hour.

So, with the fantastic suggestion of Lisa Uotenin, I'd like to invite you to a **Pandemic Support Zoom**.

What's a Pandemic Support Zoom? A place to process and share your feelings about this current age. Social Worker Pam Garrison has agreed to support this work. We might break into smaller groups or have topics for our meetings, but first, we want to gauge interest.

Interested? Email or call me. We will meet for the first time on Tuesday May 5th at 1 pm-215pm. If you are interested but time does not work, then please let me know that.

Our hope is that this group might turn into an in-person gathering as we begin to transition back to more public and physical interaction with one another.

Grace and Peace to each of you,

Willis
434-409-7433

May Birthdays

- 2 Trudy Trammell
- 3 Linda Webb
- 5 Anne daCosta, Gina Painter
- 11 Bruce Wilsie
- 15 Stephen Woodson, John Alexander
- 19 Ashley Logan, Colin King
- 27 Joan Workowski
- 29 Pat Honts