

## March/April 2022

Dear friends in Christ,

I am writing to you on the eve of Holy Week, the holiest and my favourite time of the Church year. For all the busyness and work that goes into ensuring that we can celebrate the important events of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection, it is such an important and beautiful tradition that we return to each year. As we come out of the other side of a two-year long pandemic and continue to watch horrors occurring in Ukraine, the themes of Resurrection and new life seem to be even more important as we are reminded of the way that God brings new life and light out of death and darkness.

### Re-Opening

Recently the Diocese announced that as of Wednesday April 27<sup>th</sup>, the whole Diocese will be entering the Green Stage of the COVID-19 re-opening plan. Parishes who wish to enter the Green Stage early for Easter Sunday (April 17<sup>th</sup>) are permitted to do so, and the leadership of Grace has made the decision to enter the Green Stage on this date.

Entering the Green Stage entails:

- The Eucharist will be celebrated with communion in both kinds.
- Choir and congregational singing fully resumes.
- The sharing of the Peace and other liturgical practices will resume with modifications.
- Meetings, coffee hours, hall rentals, and social and fundraising events may resume without any restrictions.
- Masks become optional but not required to enter the church
- Provision of space to be made for people who still feel more comfortable practicing social distancing and masking.
- Renewed commitment to good hand hygiene and self-screening for symptoms before coming to worship

As part of the reopening plan, everyone on our parish list will be receiving a phone call in the coming weeks to check-in and discuss reopening. During these calls you will be provided information about what is happening in the church and upcoming events such as our 2022 Photo Directory and the opportunity to provide any feedback to us about what you need or would like to see in your church community.

### Worship

After having no in-person services for the past two Holy Weeks and Easters it will be an immense joy and delight to celebrate this Holy Week with you all in person this year. This year we will be offering the following worship services for Holy Week:

- **Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 11 am** – Join us as we celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, waving palms as we process into the Church. Gather outside (weather permitting) at 11 am for the liturgy of the palms and procession into the sanctuary.
- **Stations of the Cross** – This year our stations of the Cross will be an interactive self-guided experience. Using your own smartphone, tablet or one provided to you by the church you can listen to the recorded sonnets and music of the stations at your own leisure throughout the church. We will have one group tour on Wednesday evening at 7pm.
  - Monday April 11<sup>th</sup> – Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup> 9 am – 1pm (times may vary, check office)
  - Wednesday April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm – Evening Group
- **Maundy Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm** – Join us as we celebrate the Last Supper with sacramental foot-washing, communion and the stripping of the altar and chancel area.
- **Good Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Prayer Walk at 10 am* – Join us as we carry the Cross together and pray for our neighborhood in preparation for our Meditation on the Cross
  - *Meditation on the Cross at 12 pm* – Join us as we mark the Crucifixion of Jesus with an opportunity to pray and meditate before the Cross.
- **Holy Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at 8pm** – Join us for the Great Vigil of Easter. We gather at 7:45 and the new Easter fire is lit outside (weather permitting) as the sunsets at 8pm. Following the lighting of the Easter fire we process inside and recount God's great salvation culminating in Jesus bursting the bonds of death.
- **Easter Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 9 am and 11 am** – Join us as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus together for the first time in two years!

For those of you who continue to feel uncomfortable or unable to worship in person all of our Holy Week services will be livestreamed at <https://www.facebook.com/GraceChurchScarborough/live>.

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I hope that over the coming weeks and months we will be able to see many of your faces again, celebrating the new life that God has in store for Grace and for each one of us. There are no doubt challenges ahead for this congregation, but I am certain that in Christ and together we can weather any storm and continue the work of proclaiming God's Kingdom in our worship, in our service and in our very lives.

May God bless you this Holy Week and Eastertide,

Rev. Graham McCaffrey

