

Coop's Scoops #147 Tuesday December 29, 2020

And so, the great day of the Nativity has been celebrated and we moving forward into a brand new year. What will 2021 hold for us? We certainly have hopes... family love and health, good employment, children and grandchildren doing well with education and with friends... a "return" to somewhat normal living...a time when once again the Church is worshipping together on Sunday's...when music, and coffee hour, and pot lucks and community groups are filling the very air with joy. You will have some personal hopes, dear to your hearts, and whether spoken or not, they are "in" your longings and your prayers. It's a time to reflect and dream and also a time to act, so that our hopes are fueled by love and sincere effort. Here's a prayer I found online which I am making my own.



The words are a little hard to see so...

"Thank you Lord for giving me the brand new year ahead.

Help me live the way I should as each new day I tread.

Give me gentle wisdom that I might help a friend.

Give me strength and courage so a shoulder I might lend.

The year ahead is empty, help me fill it with good things

Like love and trust and wonder

And the happiness they bring.

Amen!

Parish Celebrations:

Thanks to all who worked to make the luminaires shine brightly leading to the door at St. James, Port Cunnington and bells to ring out for all to hear in the early evening. Bells were also rung at St. Ambrose, turning the thoughts of Baysville residents to the birth of the Lord.

I have received many comments about the beauty and simplicity of the Christmas Eve on-line service filmed at St. Thomas. Thanks again to all who participated in leading the worship, and blessings to all who took the time to join in whether on-line or with our print service. Thanks to Pam and Dave Hough who donated the beautiful pointsiettas and helped with the decorating of the church. The Angel Banner over the small Altar was a gift to St. Thomas from my former Parish of St. Luke in Thunder Bay, made by Joy Liggins, a faithful Warden and ACW member. The Altar figures were crafted by Libby Porth many years ago, and radiate the joy of the Nativity beautifully.

The United Church in Bracebridge provided a four scene living Nativity drive through on Christmas Eve at the golf course... it was much enjoyed by parishioners who took the opportunity to see it. Many thanks to them!

As you know, we are continuing in "lock down" mode until January 23rd. We are required to "do" our Annual Vestry meeting off-site and on-line. And we are to ensure that everyone has a way to participate even if they have no on-line access. That will be quite a logistical challenge. The Diocese will be sending along some resources and guidance on how to make it possible, and the Wardens and I will pass along the details. In the meantime, if you are the head of a committee or group, please start in on your annual reports to Vestry, emailing them to me whenever they are done, as I am hoping to circulate them all before the actual meeting in order to have an efficient vote on a motion of acceptance. We will also have to find a way to do Budget preparation and review, statistics, and Screening in Faith reports without actually being around the table together.

All the diocesan parishes will be struggling with getting this done so no doubt some good ideas will be brought forward as we go. Prayer is much needed! The

deadline for the full Report is that it be received at the Diocesan Office by Feb 28th.

Some Fun Just for the Fun of it!



12-31

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JEFF
and
BILL
KEANE

**“Mommy says we get to have
midnight at 9 o’clock!”**



Scripture for Today: Isaiah 43: 1-3a; 19

1-3a But now thus says the lord, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you! I have called you by name, you are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you, for I am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up;

Do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Homily: These verses from Isaiah 43 merit keen understanding and lots of study to comprehend what they meant to the people Isaiah was leading. Yet they can also punch a huge hole in the darkness just by themselves, just in proclaiming that what “was” does not always have to “be”, and that God Himself also creates new beginnings, God is Lord of New Year’s Eve is one way of thinking about it.

2020 has been hard for us. Not as hard as slavery was for the people of Israel captive in Babylon, but certainly not the best of times for any of us. We are getting used to others telling us what we have to do, and how to do it, and when we might expect things to get better or get worse. Many of us just can’t listen to the news every day anymore. We have been taught to lament, to pour out our anxieties, to examine ourselves and our relationship to God and to neighbours. And some of us have been so lonely that we’re sad much of the time. Some of us are grieving deeply for people we have lost. Some of us despair of better times. Totally understandable. We all need each other so very much.

Into this broth of pandemic stress, the Scriptures proclaim that we are not to fear, that we are to live in trust and in hope. On what basis can we do that? Well, that’s where today’s Scripture comes in. Isaiah gives us four reasons not to be afraid:

1/ God has created us....

2/ God has redeemed us...

3/ God knows us by name...

4/ We are His.

And He has plans for a future which is good. Good. Yet again, good. Things had not been going so well for Israel... back in slavery, back in a place with no Temple, back trying to be God's people in a place that did not recognize their God. Sin and rebellion had led them to this captivity. They had no "dream" that it would change in their lifetimes. Yet God says "I am about to do a new thing....it's beginning to spring forth right now....can you not see it?....I am making roads in the wilderness and cool springs in desert." And it is He who will inspire Cyrus to let them go, He who will bind them up and make them whole again.

As we enter into 2021, let's pay even more attention to God's Word. Let's remember that we do not serve a God untouched by our tears, that we do not serve a God who wishes our destruction....we serve the God who hears, who cares, who answers, who one day will wipe away all tears... we serve the God who has the power to change the human heart, to transform our thinking, to help us become who He has already proclaimed us to be: His beloved sons and daughters, joint heirs with His Son Jesus, ambassadors for Christ in our world. Jesus does the huge new thing of calling us no longer servants, but friends!

So don't give up! Don't give in! Don't give out! Just calmly go about each day doing whatever good comes to hand, trusting in our God who "makes all things new" in His time. We close much of our worship by stating who God IS: 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. That is to be our "attitude" toward God. And God has an "attitude" toward us. "I have called you by name, you are mine, and nothing, but nothing, ever, not ever can separate you from my love". God believes in us. We believe in Him. And that perfect relationship of love casts out fear.

Happy New Year! Blessed new beginning!

- Judie+

Prayer:

Lord, You make all things new You bring hope alive in our hearts and cause our Spirits to be born again. Thank you for this new year; for all the potential it holds. Come and kindle in us a mighty flame So that in our time, many will see the wonders of God and live forever to praise Your glorious name. Amen

Blessing:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, assuring us of pardon, confirming us in faith, and leading us into green pastures bursting with springs of living water in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.