

# SPIRITUS

## Our Easter Song

By Robert Dixon



My favourite service of the year begins in darkness. A fire is kindled. A candle is lit. And from this single flame other candles take light throughout the church until the whole building is glowing. The symbolism is powerful: darkness will never vanquish the light of Christ. Among the flickering flames, we tell again the story of our salvation. We sing songs and psalms, and then—the Lord is risen! The church fills with light, bells ring, and we celebrate the Resurrection with Glorias and Alleluias.

As a liturgical musician, I’ve been privileged to perform in churches, chapels, and cathedrals around the world. And when I’m asked the big question—why? why do we have music in church?—I often come back to the Easter Vigil.

Firstly, because music has always been the tradition of the Church. The *Exsultet*—the hymn of praise which opens the service—could date as far back as the fifth century. St. Augustine wrote about hymns when he was baptised at the Easter Vigil in the fourth century. In singing the ancient songs of the Church, we are united with our spiritual ancestors.

Secondly, because music expresses our worship in a way that transcends words. What better reflection on the empty tomb than Taverner’s *Dum transisset Sabbatum*? What conveys

the glory of Christ’s triumph more than Widor’s *Surrexit a mortuis*? Listen to Sir James MacMillan’s *Since it was the day of preparation*, and you are transported to the first Easter. Words alone don’t do it.

Thirdly, because music not only expresses our faith, it builds and reinforces it. Texts are easier to remember when sung. Hymns like “Thine be the glory” and “Jesus Christ is risen today” are not just creeds, they are treasures to which we return in times of sorrow and joy.

And there’s another reason to offer music in worship: it enables the Church to grow. The drama and beauty of the Easter Vigil can speak profoundly to a world that is mesmerised by Netflix and Spotify, yet yearning for deeper meaning. Like Canada, the UK (my home country) has seen a decline in church membership—but not everywhere. Cathedrals with professional choirs have bucked the trend, reporting impressive growth. Last year saw the highest Easter attendance figures for a decade.

As churches worldwide shut in response to COVID-19, we’re desperate to recapture the connection we feel in corporate worship. We know that buildings and choirs are not essentials of our faith, but perhaps this enforced Lenten fast has nurtured a keener gratitude for their role in our Christian journey.

Easter might come late for us this year, but it will come. And as the darkness gives way to light, we will all join together in the song of God’s people: Alleluia.



⊕ Robert Dixon is the Associate Director of Music at Christ Church Deer Park.

INSIDE	
<i>Our Easter Song</i>	1
<i>Apart from Each Other... in Community</i>	1
<i>Anastasis</i>	1
<i>Volunteer Spotlight: Kathy Lindsey</i>	2
<i>Finding the Paschal Path</i>	2
<i>Your Glass: Half Full or Half Empty?</i>	2
<i>Movie Review: Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story</i>	3
<i>Small Blessings</i>	3
<i>Haikus</i>	3
<i>Notes from the Music Library – Easter 2020</i>	4
<i>Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Easter”</i>	
<i>Future Perfect</i>	4
<i>Onward, One and All</i>	4
<i>Fearless in the Love of God</i>	5
<i>There is Something More Infectious than Coronavirus</i>	5
<i>Lenten Illumination</i>	6
<i>Editor’s Choice</i>	6
<i>Book Review</i>	7
<i>walk humbly: encouragements for living, working, and being</i>	
<i>Dear Church Mouse</i>	7

## Apart from Each Other... in Community

By Cheryl Palmer

This past Tuesday evening when twenty-one of us “gathered” for the final meeting of our Lenten study, via video conferencing, the incongruity of the situation was not lost on us. The evening’s discussion topic was Community! There we all were, forcibly separated from each other by a virus, as we delved into the joys of being in community.

The disruption of community in these past few weeks has us all defining community through camera lens, telephone lines, and satellites. We are communicating in real time, but not in each other’s real presence. Easter is on the horizon, but families are not to host dinner celebrations for their nearest and dearest. We are not allowed to gather and worship during our most sacred season—on our most holy day. Indeed, these are strange and unsettling times.

I have a friend who lives in Geneva, and this week, as I expressed my worry to her about the Church and the scattering of our community, she sent me

this note: “Church will survive. Humans need community, and each other. We always have, and always will. This is a temporary pause, and nobody is liking it because it is hard and dislocating. But I know that God will keep us all in his embrace and when this runs its course, we will all flock back to church because we choose to go there and connect. So, this online church is a temporary fix, as I see it, to sustain our community until we can be together again. That need to be together will never go away.”

It is precisely because of community that we will be able to live through these difficult days without going mad. Even though we are physically separated, we know we are loved, cared for, and supported by each other and by the living God.



⊕ Cheryl Palmer is the Incumbent of Christ Church Deer Park.

### Anastasis

Fear not.  
While we hoard and huddle at home,  
harrowed by a virus  
that wears a crown of thorns,  
hoping to stay safe,  
sporadically happy,  
intermittently holy,  
Life resumes in Mount Pleasant cemetery.  
Arise!  
Early morning bird broadcasts  
Cacophonous conversation  
Bells, chirps, tweets, peeps  
whistles, whinnies, trills  
resonant drumming  
nasal yanks  
honks and sometime shrieks.  
From the wakening oak on the crest of the hill  
high in the pine to the right  
left on the leafless lilac.  
Spilling from sepulchres, crosses, and stones.  
Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia, they shout.  
Resurrection party in the cemetery.  
Now!

Genevieve Chornenki  
Easter 2020





# Volunteer Spotlight: Kathy Lindsey

By Deborah Wilkinson

**When did you first start coming to Christ Church Deer Park?**  
We started coming to the parish in 2010.

**Please tell us a bit about yourself.**  
I am the daughter of a post-WW2 couple, Norman and Doreen Browning. My father died when I was eight years old. I have 3 siblings and I am the eldest in the family. After my Dad died, it was hard, but we survived. Growing up in Willowdale was like having a second family, a family of friends that you knew would help you if the need arose. St. George's Anglican Church, Willowdale, was also a mainstay of our life; Sunday school, Confirmation, youth group, altar guild—they all helped me be who I am today.

**Tell us a bit about your family.**  
Ward and I have been married for 49 years, and we have one son. We both grew up in Willowdale and belonged to St. George's Anglican Church. We went to the same schools and church...we grew up together. We had a strong group of friends in youth group and finally decided to get married. So here we are today, married and still friends.  
Music is very important to both of us, and this was one of the reasons we came to the parish. In our search for a new place to worship

we knew that music was at the top of the list as "important." Christ Church Deer Park won. We love the choir!

**What is your dream vacation?**  
Oxford, UK. I feel that I was there in a former life. I love it there. I would go back over and over. My first time there was a singing vacation, and I lived in college residence and sang in Balliol College.

**Favourite sports team?**  
I don't watch sports. But when and if I do, I like watching golf.

**Favourite ice cream flavour?**  
Peanut butter and chocolate.

**What book are you currently reading?**  
*You Are Dead* by Peter James, a murder mystery.

**In what ways do you volunteer at Christ Church Deer Park?**  
When I first came to Christ Church Deer Park I was on the Property Committee for a while; I love buildings. I have helped out at the Christmas Fair and Rummage Sale. I also am on the Advisory Board and, as I said above, I sing in the choir.

**Why is it important to you to volunteer?**  
I firmly believe that along with being "a butt in the pew," every parishioner should participate in another aspect of parish life. It is how we get to know other people. We are a family, and families participate together in other aspects of parish life, not just worship.

**How has giving to Christ Church Deer Park had an impact on you?**  
Supporting my parish church by working with other members of the parish on events, bible study, BBQs, picnics, clean-up... anything, even just sitting in a pew conversing on a Sunday morning. These events provide growth, security, and nourishment so we go into the week feeling refreshed. Another component of parish life would be giving financially to support the work of the parish in our community. We know that the parish family will have our back in times of need. They will always be there...you just have to ask.



Deborah Wilkinson currently serves as People's Warden at Christ Church Deer Park. If you would like to be interviewed for an upcoming issue or want to offer someone's name, please contact Deborah at [ccdpcoffee@gmail.com](mailto:ccdpcoffee@gmail.com).

# Finding the Paschal Path



By Julia

**In an indefectible world**, it wouldn't seem strange that Easter is around the corner. There wouldn't be a virus to fight, anything to change, or anything to discover. In such a world, we might also think about Easter and instantly understand its whole meaning. Assuming it's a perfect world. It isn't. But if it were, would that be any adoring way to pursue the love of God?  
I'm slowly learning that it's hard to tune in to some of the messages and feelings that can come from the most complicated part of the year and of the Bible: Easter. So, how can I better think about this event that shaped the Bible and the message that shaped the world?  
There are three ways that are on my agenda to walk (or at least peek down) the Christian path. One, to read the Bible (No surprise there!). Two, to listen to music. You would be amazed at the effect Christian music can have on you—Hillsong Worship, Zach Williams, Lauren Daigle, Kirk Franklin, and Casting Crowns. They're all unique and inspired in their own way. The music can help you relax and think about Easter and Christianity in a new light (there are many different lights). And three, to live my life. And because God gave us freedom, this may be the most empowering.  
You may find some metaphors of the Easter story hidden in interesting places. And hey: Easter would be a lot less amazing if it was as easy to comprehend as coronavirus—or rather, a cakewalk. Like Andrew Davidson said, "The true master knows that if he had a God he could understand, he would never hold Him to be God."



Julia enjoys doing scripture readings at services, participating in pageants, and helping out at Christ Church Deer Park's Sunday school. She also attends youth group on Wednesdays.

# Your Glass: Half-full or Half-empty?



By William Jackson

**W**ith curling curtailed, baseball put back, and the public library locked, a guy gets to thinking. He turns over in his mind familiar adages and expressions and wonders what truth they might express about present circumstances. Take, for instance, the question "Is the glass half-full or half-empty?"  
Many of us hear that as a question about our personality. Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Do you see the world as a place where good things happen (mostly)? Or bad?  
It's also a question about one's perspective. Are you oriented to the past or to the future? Are you looking backwards or forward?"  
The glass half-empty person spends time looking back, reminiscing, and concentrating on the parts that are over. Don't get me wrong. Memories are good things, but half-empty thinking focuses on the contents of the glass you've already enjoyed. For my part, when I see only foam at the bottom, I'm not thinking about that glass at all. I'm imagining what will be in the next one and heading off to get it. Concentrating on the part yet to come, imagining what new adventures lie ahead can be compelling. It's a fun thing to do, provided you're careful not to dream your life away.  
Baba Ram Dass, author of *Be Here Now*, has a different take on the question altogether. He infuses the tired question with new life. Ram Dass would have us focus on the glass itself. He would encourage us to enjoy the taste of our current mouthful, instead of worrying about what we just gulped down or what we've got left to chug.  
*Be here now.* That strikes me as sage advice at a time when our daily routines are disrupted, when we're fighting a microscopic foe that's outfoxing us, when some tomorrows might be beyond imagining. I can do that. One moment, one thought, one day at a time.

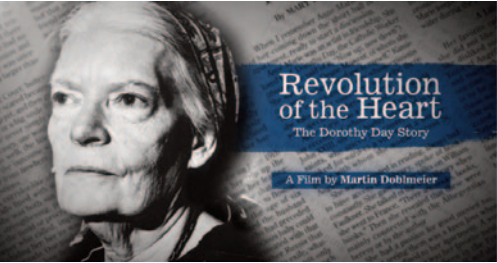


William Jackson leads the Congregational Care Team at Christ Church Deer Park. He likes to bake bread.



Movie Review

Revolution of the Heart:  
The Dorothy Day Story



<https://www.pbs.org/video/revolution-of-the-heart-the-dorothy-day-story-lwz697/>

By Andrew Harding

One thing is certain amid the current economic climate—it’s not a good time to launch a venture that will always need funding. Nor was it a good time in New York City in May 1933. And yet, after four years of economic depression in America, Dorothy Day launched a newspaper, *The Catholic Worker*, on May 1, 1933—International Workers’ Day. Eventually, her initiative expanded into one of the most significant Christian social movements of our times.

*Revolution of the Heart*, a new documentary on Dorothy Day, follows her formative experiences from childhood to Vietnam-war protestor in her seventies. It shows how her radical Christian witness was formed and sustained through times of intense pressure from the police, the FBI, and, at times, her own supporters and the Catholic hierarchy. Day recalls one such conflict. “I said to the Archbishop [of New York] that yes, we would shut down, and give him the 500 people we take care of in our houses of hospitality.” *The Catholic Worker* and houses continued.

Dorothy Day wasn’t born into the Catholic faith but converted in her late twenties after a bohemian life and time as a journalist for socialist papers and magazines. The birth of her daughter was a turning point. However, she struggled with one aspect of her newfound faith— the lack of focus on people living in poverty. At one point she lit a candle and prayed that God would show her the way forward. Two days later, Peter Maurin was on her doorstep. Peter was her rock. As an itinerant philosopher/worker, he introduced Dorothy to Catholic social teaching, and together they founded *The Catholic Worker* and related movement.

The film illustrates an important feature of Dorothy Day’s—that her conservative stance on theological, biblical, and liturgical matters, and deferring to the Bishops (though not uncritically), was the foundation for her radical witness in social, political, and economic matters. A deep spiritual commitment and strong identity sustained her willingness to suffer. In a 55-minute film, this is hard to show fully, but interested viewers can learn more about this part of her life in her memoir *The Long Loneliness*.

Dorothy Day’s life was wide open to the gifts of strangers. After *The Catholic Worker* wrote of the need for a house of hospitality, a woman walked into the office and asked where it was. Hearing from Dorothy that there was no house, the woman asked, “How can you write about a house of hospitality if you don’t have one?” And so, Dorothy Day went out and set one up. That was how she worked—on a wing and a prayer—helping one person at a time, treating everybody who came in the door as a Christ figure. “We must have a sense of personal responsibility to take care of our neighbor, at a personal sacrifice,” she said. That was what her life was like; she lived with the kinds of people with whom Jesus spent much of his time.



⊕ Andrew Harding is a regular contributor to Spiritus. He and his family joined Christ Church Deer Park in 2019.

Small Blessings



By Tony van Straubenzee

On March 11th I was playing golf in Florida with my American friends. It was 80 degrees Fahrenheit. None of us imagined that it was our last game of the season—or perhaps forever.

The day before I had watched the Toronto Blue Jays defeat the Pittsburgh Pirates in a preseason game. It was the last game played before the suspension of the baseball season. Bichette and Guererro hit home runs—such fun to watch.

Our children called us and demanded that we get home as soon as possible! We packed up and hit the road. We blew a tire just outside Erie, Pennsylvania, and had to wait three hours for a tow truck. When the tow truck driver finally arrived, we were towed for two hours all squished in his cab—Mary, our new dog Brady (12 pounds), and me. We shuffled off to Buffalo where the car dealer checked the car and gave us a new tire. Everyone kept six feet apart.

We made it home. HOME SWEET HOME. And as we sit in our condo in splendid isolation, we got to thinking just how privileged we are and what a wonderful life we have had. Why? Three reasons. The three “Fs.” Family, Friends, and Faith.

Our daughters stocked our cupboards with food prior to our arrival and made sure we were comfortable. They arranged a video link with all our grandchildren online to welcome us home.

The phone started ringing as friends, new and old, called to commiserate. We heard from people we haven't seen for ages. It was great to catch up on all their news. It was better than getting Christmas cards.

We tuned in to the conference-call church service at Christ Church Deer Park and got the giggles as we all tried to sing a hymn. Ed Saunders once said that while he enjoyed many friendships in different constituencies, his church friends mean a lot to him and Louise. My wife and I feel the same way. Hearing familiar voices calling in to that conference call made us realize how important the church is to us. And Cheryl, Molly, and Cathy along with Andrew and Matthew are one super staff.

So here we are with our new one-year-old Norfolk terrier from Florida, hunkered down in self-isolation. Brady likes our condo and his walks through Queens Park and Philosophers Walk. He does wonder why Canadians don’t pat him like his native Americans. He doesn’t understand the virus. He brings us joy at a time when we need it. We apologized to him a month ago when he was neutered. Mary was sad for him and loved all his parts, but she wasn’t amused when I said we could have earrings made. Oh well...

Anyway, we hope we all survive this challenging crisis—with or without testicles.



⊕ Tony van Straubenzee is a long-time parishioner of Christ Church Deer Park and a faithful contributor to Spiritus.

Haikus

By Rebecca Wells-Jopling

**Haiku were first written in Japan in the 1200s.** Traditional ones consist of three lines, the first and last of which have five syllables, the second of which has seven. Today, haiku need not follow a strict pattern, but they should all have “an ability to be read in one breath; and a sense of sudden enlightenment.”<sup>1</sup>

I began writing haiku after teaching elementary students about this form of poetry. It’s a practice, a discipline really, with such potential for enhancing how we see and think about things. These haiku reflect my experience of the divine.

The stranger’s face glows  
with a beauty that Christ’s love  
allows me to see.

All the world’s beauty  
cannot tell me what I need  
to know about You.

Formed are we for  
giving ourselves. How to give...  
entrust the Risen.

Solemn candle flame;  
abating thought, calming breath.  
Spirit, pray with me.

In this vast cosmos  
and after, there is only  
One worth following.

<sup>1</sup> <https://poets.org/glossary/haiku>



# Notes from the Music Library – Easter 2020

## Ralph Vaughan Williams’s “Easter”

By Emily Chatten

As the need to distance ourselves continues and it appears we won’t be spending Holy Week and Easter together, I wanted to tell you about one of the gems from the Christ Church Deer Park library that we choristers had been preparing for you.

Someone recently described the music of Lent to me as all “dirges.” I took offence to this as I love the music of Lent. However, while you were hearing “dirges” from us on Sunday mornings, on Thursday evenings we’d been dipping our toes into the music of Easter for some time. On a recent Sunday before services were cancelled, the service music (Kyrie and

Agnus Dei) were from a mass by Ralph Vaughan Williams. I was pleased to find his “Easter” from Five Mystical Songs on the music list for Easter this year.

One of my fellow choristers calls Ralph Vaughan Williams the “John Rutter” of his day. This gives me a bit of a giggle. I tend to think of Vaughan Williams as more of a scholar than John Rutter. Vaughan Williams had a long-standing interest in folk songs and worked extensively with the Folk Song Society to document and publish folk songs discovered throughout England.

After five years of work, including a thorough rewrite, the Five Mystical Songs —“Easter,” “I Got Me Welcome,” “Love Bade Me Flowers,” “The Call,” and “Antiphon”— were premiered at the 180th Worcester Musical Festival at Worcester Cathedral in September 1911. The texts of the songs are drawn from five of George Herbert’s poems (published in *The Temple* in 1633). The Musical Times reviewer present at the premiere wrote of Five Mystical Songs, “They breathe consolation, and at times joyfulness. The music is a combination of old

and new idioms, some modal tonality imparting a certain quaintness, and have simplicity that had a distinct charm.” The reviewer went on to note that the peculiarities of Vaughan Williams’s musical style were likely influenced by his work with folk music.

Apparently, Vaughan Williams had a lifelong interest in setting poetry to music. According to musicologist Michael Kennedy, “it was the composer’s job, as he saw it, to re-create the poem as music.” In an article in the *George Herbert Journal* about 30 years ago, one academic who reviewed Five Mystical Songs suggested that Vaughan Williams and Herbert shared an understanding of mysticism. I’ll leave that up to you to ponder.

There are numerous YouTube recordings of “Easter” as a stand-alone or of Five Mystical Songs. I invite you to take a few minutes to enjoy one or both this Easter season.



Emily Chatten is a Christ Church Deer Park chorister who helps to maintain the parish music library.

# Future Perfect

By Pat Butler

March 19, 2020. Today is the first day of spring. It’s overcast and a bit chilly, so my husband, Eric, and I head out for a walk, warmly dressed in winter jackets, hats, and gloves. March in Toronto is a typically ugly time of year. All the snow has disappeared, refuse once hidden in the snow is visible, trees have not yet started to bud, and all vegetation is brown, lifeless, and messy. There are still no daffodils or crocuses to add colour as they herald the new season.

Today is particularly depressing because the city, in fact, the whole world, is in pain and distress. The COVID-19 virus is spreading like wildfire, so we in Toronto have been ordered to practise “social distancing.” That means we must stay home a lot, wash our hands continually, and stay at least two metres from anyone when we venture outside our homes.

What does that mean? All schools, universities, restaurants, places of worship, bars, fitness facilities, sports clubs, and many businesses and stores are closed. Shut up, tight as a drum with a typewritten notice posted on the door explaining, “Due to the COVID-19 outbreak…” After we’ve read one notice, we don’t bother to read any more. Only coffee shops are open, but their chairs are up-ended and only Grab-and-Go wares can be purchased. We just walk briskly, hoping to improve our moods with healthy exercise. It works a little.



As we pass a whole block of closed establishments, a surreal image comes to my mind. Perhaps an invisible, odorless gas has seeped under each door and killed the building’s occupants. It certainly looks as though everybody has died because lights are turned off and all is still. Somehow this grey quiet reminds me of Ingmar Bergman movies of the 1950s and 60s. The streetscape is monotone today.

Perhaps I imagine this catastrophic scene because the first newscast of every day includes a tally of the number of people killed by the virus since yesterday, as well as the total number of deaths to date. Statistics are listed by country. Canada’s statistics are listed by province.

Those we walk past fall into two categories. Wee children play and dogs sniff as though nothing is out of the ordinary. Everybody else strides with purpose, maintaining the required distance but making very little eye contact. Couples, whom I assume cohabit, stroll in private conversation, keeping to themselves. I hope they are happy together. It would be hell-on-earth to self-isolate with a partner one no longer loved.

So far, we do not know anybody who is showing symptoms (dry cough and fever), has tested positive, been hospitalized, or died. I wonder how much longer I’ll be able to make that statement.

We healthy retirees have it made. Our regular lives are just a delicious rotation of hobbies, sports, movies, volunteering, singing, concerts, shopping, plays, dinners out, church services, art museums, and being with friends. Everything in that list is presently eliminated except the first—hobbies. That’s why Eric is painting a lot and I’m writing every day.

I try to not cogitate too much on the challenges thrust upon school kids, university students, those at the start of their careers, and those poised to leap ahead in their jobs. I can’t do anything to help except tell those I love that I’m aware of their issues and say, “This too will pass.” It will.

In fact, it is my strong faith that life will revert to a new, improved version that first stimulated me to write this piece. I’ve prominently included today’s date for future reference—this is my life on March 19, 2020, and it will not always be this stark. Beauty and laughter will return. Thanks be to God.



Pat Butler is a volunteer chorister and regularly prepares flower arrangements for Sunday worship at Christ Church Deer Park.

# Onward, One and All

By Edna Quammie

My family, my friends, and my neighbours  
Walk this fragile earth and be well!



There is no doubt that Easter 2020 will be different this year.

On February 26, 2020, we faithfully went to church to receive the cross of ashes on our foreheads, bearing the cross to symbolize our Christian faith and reminding ourselves that we are dust and unto dust we shall return. With this in our hearts and minds, we went out into the world prepared for our Lenten journey—to travel through the valley of death towards the Resurrection and Easter Sunday.

Two weeks and a few days later we were faced with the reality of a pandemic.

When we started Lent we were prepared to walk the journey through worship, prayer, reading of scripture, listening to the words of Him who died for us. We were reminded through scripture and the parables that Jesus calls us to listen, share our faith and love our neighbors as ourselves, as God would love us.

Many in the Anglican and Episcopal churches took a Lenten journey through “The Signs of Life and The Way of Love” sessions. The questions may arise, did we prepare for Easter through self-examination? Did we listen to the words of Jesus? Did we prepare enough and did we love enough??

As we look back to Ash Wednesday, we did not know the challenges that were ahead of us. But those challenges now confront us. We must face them decisively but with love, always with love. I think of the beautiful hymns of Easter. Yet, with the trials of the past weeks the hymn that keeps running through my mind is “Onward Christian Soldiers.” Onward we must go, “marching as to war.”

This truly (was) is a test of our faith in God, a test of our love and charity for our neighbors, a test of how much we realize and appreciate the true grace of God.



Edna Quammie is a retired operating room nurse and a member of the Congregational Care Team at Christ Church Deer Park.



# Fearless in the Love of God

By Molly Finlay

*God, you're my refuge.  
I trust in you and I'm safe!*  
(Psalm 91:2, The Message)

This has been a Lent for the records! We will never forget this 40-day period just before Easter in 2020, and, in fact, it feels that we will carry with us this Lent beyond the great day of the Lord's Resurrection. We are an isolated people—sharing with the Israelites of ancient biblical times in a kind of exile. We are an oppressed people—the doors of our churches are closed, which is an historic first. We are a scattered people—each in our homes, and not being able to share in the joy of the physically gathered community each Sunday.

But there are beautiful things that have come out of this time of exile and oppression. If your faith was shaky before this, you may be feeling conflicted about the importance of what you believe. If you have felt lonely and alone, you may be using this time to lean even more on the One who is closer than mother or father, sister or brother. Perhaps like me, you are enjoying the companionship of God in a new and immediate way. When the rug of security and control is pulled out from under us, then where else do we have to go but to the Lord?

As the psalmist says, *"Fear nothing—not wild wolves in the night, not flying arrows in the day, not disease that prowls through the darkness"* (Psalm 91:5-6).

The psalmist is not saying here that none of us as Christians will succumb to COVID-19—that is simply not true. But what God does say to us through the words of the psalm is that we do not fear. We know that this life is fleeting and that we are mere mortals. Our Ash Wednesday words ring true throughout this Lent: *"Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

We are not to fear. We may be oppressed and in exile, but we are an Easter people—always persevering in the face of adversity and never losing hope. We need to continue to be a witness to the world which is fearful and feels heavy under a spirit of scarcity. We can push back against this and continue to feed the hungry and care for the poor. When we walk outside in the mornings, we can continue to greet our neighbours, not letting our physical distance remove our care for each other.

Our community has come together in new and amazing ways during this crisis. We have been gathering on Sundays via phone and online, and meeting during the week for virtual prayer, learning, and fellowship. We cannot actually break bread together, but we have been following the examples of the early Christians in Acts. We have been encouraging each other with emails and texts and comments online. This has been a source of great joy to your clergy who see a new spirt of encouragement growing at Christ Church Deer Park! We are excited to see how God uses our exile time to refine us into the community that we are called to be at the corner of Yonge and Heath streets.

Hear the promises of God through his psalmist:

*"If you'll hold on to me for dear life," says God, "I'll get you out of any trouble. I'll give you the best of care if you'll only get to know and trust me. Call me and I'll answer, be at your side in bad times; I'll rescue you, then throw you a party. I'll give you a long life, give you a long drink of salvation!"*



Listen to our own Ben Kizemchuk reading Psalm 91 at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Vzoh39IYfSqdEEtUmtHSOGK1SBnjsj3/view?usp=sharing>



⊕ Molly Finlay is the Associate Priest at Christ Church Deer Park.

# There is Something More Infectious than Coronavirus



By Andrew Harding

One of the most disorienting things right now is the conflict between our need to be with each other and the need to stay apart to protect each other. We know that safety—indeed survival—is partly in our hands by following strict hygiene. At another level, we know we are in God's hands.

There is a feeling of exile from our routines of worship and friendship, work, and play. We feel diminished and unable as a church to be all that we want to be and do all we are called to do. At this time, it's good to know that the bedrock of our faith from the Old Testament came to us from a time of exile during the century Israel was exiled in Babylon after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple—and indeed much of Israel.

It was through the prophets at this time that God's promises of hope and renewal were heard loud and clear. Now more than ever, I ask what it means for us today to live the hope and renewal we have through Christ. What is the difference that Christ makes?

Christianity is much more than a way to pursue a meaningful life as a sense of fulfilment at work, at home, and in contributing to the wider good of society. These can be good things. However, the real question is whether they are at the heart of Christian discipleship. Drawing on an analysis by the Canadian Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor, Samuel Wells, a prominent Anglican priest in the UK, says that if we accept that Christianity in our society is one option among many, that the forms of community offered by the church are helpful for raising children, having a sense of vocation at work, and contributing to the welfare of all, then "Christianity can become the ideal route to contributing to general social welfare, and creating happy families and healthy careers." If this sounds fine, then what's the problem?

The problem is that anyone who doesn't or can't share conventional middle-class goals is excluded. Despite good intentions to offer a sense of meaning, purpose, and spiritual experience, Christian faith risks becoming a middle-class faith without a clear vision to challenge deeper problems in the world. Deep down, says Wells, this is a contradiction of the Gospel.

I am deeply attracted to a vision of church that knows God is often met most fully in adversity—even scarcity—to a vision of "a church that cherishes at its heart the kinds of people with whom Christ spent most of his ministry," says Wells.

Thinking ahead for Christ Church Deer Park, the energy and gifts of strangers and people economically and socially on the edge could lead to the renewal of the church. Such a church should see itself as an alternative society and community of hope, embodying forgiveness, joy in service, and being with people in distress and on the margins. The writer of Hebrews said that by showing hospitality to strangers, you may have entertained angels unaware (13:1). And that is even more infectious than coronavirus.

## References:

Samuel Wells: A Future That's Bigger Than the Past: Towards the Renewal of the Church (Canterbury Press, 2019)

Charles Taylor: A Secular Age (Harvard University Press, 2007) [www.heartededge.org](http://www.heartededge.org)



⊕ Andrew Harding is a regular contributor to Spiritus. He and his family joined Christ Church Deer Park in 2019.

# Lenten Illumination

By Genevieve Chornenki

I announced my Lenten discipline at a party on New Year’s Eve: “In 2020, I’m giving up cynicism.”

“Really?” said a former journalist who’d only just met me. “You don’t strike me as the least bit cynical.”

“She’s deceptive that way,” said my husband.

The next morning, I told my son, “Hey, I’m giving up cynicism for 2020.”

“Good luck with that,” he said.

“Thanks for the support.”

“Well, a cynic’s just a coward in disguise.”

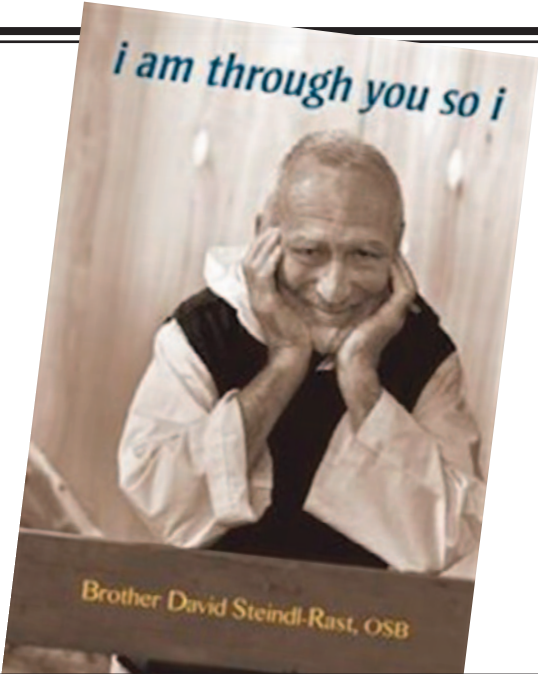
“Where’d you get that idea?”

“From you.”

Ah, yes. I’d heard the remark on CBC years ago and repeated it to him when he was a teenager. Who knew he was actually paying attention at the time?

In any event, my husband and son know me well; cynicism is one of my cherished habits. And as they predicted, three days into the new year I’d broken my resolution many times. So, when Lent arrived I decided to renew my pledge and give up cynicism as a forty-day, pre-Easter discipline. Wasn’t I supposed to repent and reform during Lent?

The day after Ash Wednesday, I began in earnest. My first task was to really understand what it was that I’d vowed to forego. My son had equated cynicism with cowardice, but that struck me as incorrect. I didn’t feel persistently afraid. I felt—well, *accurate* in my perceptions—and as I explored “cynicism,” I found meanings and synonyms that only reinforced my condemnation of the world.



**Cynicism/** n. An inclination to believe that people are motivated purely by self-interest. That would be correct. Why would I give that one up? Take climate change, for instance. Few of us are willing to make personal sacrifices or “to become poorer,” as Wendell Berry suggested we must if we are serious about reversing long-term damage inflicted upon life.<sup>1</sup> We’d rather rant on about corporate or government failures.

**Scepticism.** Nothing wrong with that. Healthy, in fact.

**Distrust. Suspicion.** Of course. They come in handy.

Then, something prompted me to put aside the dictionary and thesaurus and look back at *i am through you so i*, the autobiography of Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Benedictine hermit. I’d asked for and been given his book, titled for a line in an e.e. cummings poem, as a Christmas present last year.

Brother David was born in 1926, and he’d written the memoir at age 91. In it he describes an experience he had when he was in his twenties, an experience that produced an immediate insight about aging. He described the insight as “an intuition deep enough that I still have not fully plumbed it, not even in the last decade of my life so far—I say ‘so far’ because I have learned to expect surprises, and because there do remain mysteries that wait to be plumbed.”

*Because I have learned to expect surprises. Because there do remain mysteries that wait to be plumbed.*

Today, Brother David is ninety-four years of age. With deep respect, I read his words, again and I again. Then I copied them on my paper: *I have learned to expect surprises.*

As my pen moved across the page, I had an insight of my own, a “deep intuition” that I have yet to fully fathom: Learning to expect surprises is the opposite of cynicism. It’s an open, gentle, and generous way to live. And foregoing cynicism is really all about humility. Yep. I could use some of that.



⊕ Genevieve Chornenki is the editor of Spiritus. She is interested in the contemplative aspects of all religions.

<sup>1</sup> <https://progressive.org/dispatches/less-energy-life/>

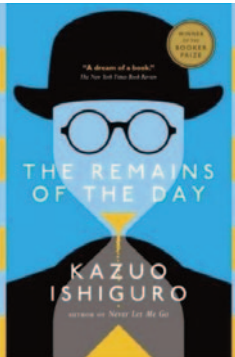
## Editor’s Choice

If you managed to keep Marie Kondo away from your library in recent years, you may now be reacquainting yourself with old favourites—or discovering new ones.

### The Remains of the Day

Kazuo Ishiguro  
(Vintage Canada Edition, 2014)

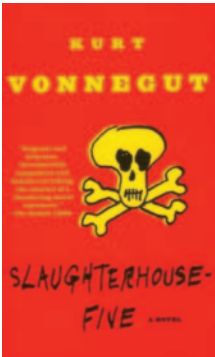
The gentle unspooling of a British butler’s thoughts. As he motors to the West Country in his employer’s Ford automobile, butler Stevens reviews his life and his previously unquestioned attitudes to love, loyalty, and a stiff upper lip.



### Slaughterhouse-Five

Kurt Vonnegut  
(Dell Publishing, 1991)

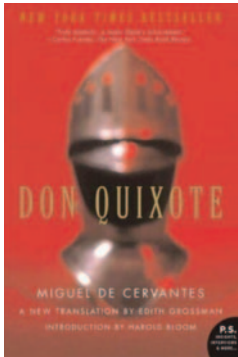
Imaginative, satirical, wickedly funny, but deadly serious. The narrator, who was a forced labourer in Dresden when it was aerial bombed in February 1945, reflects on the absurdity of the event and the after-effects experienced by those who suffered through it.



### Don Quixote

Miguel de Cervantes,  
a new translation by Edith Grossman  
(Harper Collins, 2013)

Even though it was first published over 400 years ago, this picaresque novel can still amuse and beguile. Who can resist Sancho Panza’s proverbs and Don Quixote’s enchanted experiences? The language of Grossman’s translation is dextrous and playful, and the book makes for an extended read—940 pages!



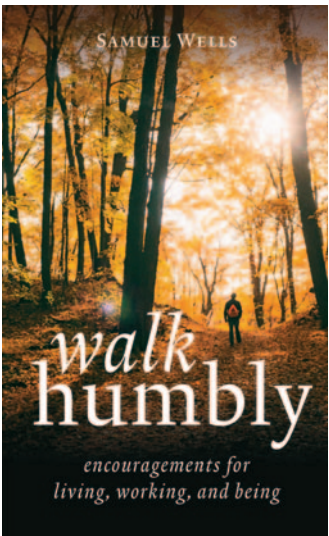


Book Review

# walk humbly: encouragements for living, working, and being

Samuel Wells  
(Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019)

By Rebecca Wells-Jopling



What a pleasure to read Samuel Wells’ new book, walk humbly. Yes, that’s right, the title is not capitalized, very much in keeping with the idea that humility really should saturate our lives as we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit in all that we do, including giving a title to a book. At 99 pages the text is relatively sparse, but so rich in wisdom, no doubt a gift Wells has received serving twenty-nine years as pastor in the Church of England.

The style of the book, Wells says, was inspired by the poem “Desiderata,” written in the early 1920s by the American Max Ehrmann, an attorney and member of the German Methodist Church. If you are of a certain age, you may have seen this poem batting around on posters, engraved on curio items, bound into gilded-edged books in stores at Christmas time, with its ubiquitous first injunction: “Go placidly....” Check out Amazon today, where you’ll find dozens of instantiations of the poem on journals, calendars, keepsake boxes, and colouring books as well. Wells’s deeper inspiration, though, is clearly his love of the Trinity, of God’s people, and of those who might hear the good news through his words.

Intriguingly, Wells’s directives, each of which heads a chapter, seem rather workaday, any one of which a kindly aunt might impart: Be humble; be grateful; be your own size; be gentle; be a person of praise; be faithful; be a blessing. But this is no chicken-soup-for-the-soul book. Each chapter is deeply theological in a refreshing nuts-and-bolts kind of way. In his chapter “Be a Person of Praise,” Wells asks “[W]hy is there something rather than nothing? The answer is, because essence—or God, as we usually say—always intended to be our companion, to be with us...Jesus isn’t an afterthought that came into existence when essence realized existence was going awry: Jesus is the whole meaning and purpose for existence in the first place. Jesus is the reason we exist” (p. 39). Easter is the perfect time to wrap our heads around that one. And, “We discover God for one reason alone: because God reaches us. Essence becomes existence. Jesus becomes human. The Word becomes flesh” (p. 50).

Where, you may wonder, does the walking humbly enter in? The theme is woven through every chapter in important ways, but I will only discuss one of the chapters here, so as not to spoil your experience of this must-read book.

Many of us have been fortunate enough to attend the phone-in worship services for the past two Sundays, or to participate in the online Lenten discussions. Our concept of fellowship has been morphing whether we are aware of it or not. We are deprived at this time of hugs upon greeting, of the feel of one another’s hand during the Peace, of the experience of the host on our tongue and the cup at our lips, of opportunities to offer up ourselves and our skills for the building up of the Body in the small ways we do for our brothers and sisters in Christ each week during the service we attend. In his chapter entitled “Be One Body,” on what the church is and does, Wells reminds us “To be the body of Christ means to dwell in the freedom Christ brings—freedom from the prison of the past and from the fear of the future” (p. 71), a commission that we can claim at any and every moment. And, we can see “the church as Christ sees it: not limited by time, not circumscribed by geographical space, not inhibited by its own shortcomings or clumsiness or failure, but led by the vision glorious and drawn into the mystery of grace” (p. 78). These are words we need to hear right now: the next time the phone line cuts out, or ZOOM freezes the faces of our fellow parishioners in mid-sentence, or when we feel guilty for all that we cannot do in person during these times with and for each other.



Rebecca Wells-Jopling enjoys worshipping with her church family at Christ Church Deer Park. She also enjoys reading and discussing theology and serves regularly as subdeacon.

# Dear Church Mouse



Dear Church Mouse,

Regarding *Hesitant Vexillologist* (Issue No. 17, February 2020), the flags over the baptismal font are tributes to Christianity. St. George was martyred for his faith in 303, St. Andrew died in AD 62, and St. Patrick was a 5th century missionary in Ireland. Any baby baptized under these three saints is certainly blessed by them. Forget the Victorian jingoism. Rise above it.

Attentive Reader

Dear Attentive Reader,

Church Mouse is grateful to you for writing. Blessings!

Dear Church Mouse,

In the last issue why did the editor of *Spiritus* encourage people to use dried beans and lentils? There weren’t any left when I went to store, and I blame her.

Miffed

Dear Miffed,

The penny just dropped for this mouse, and the recent run on toilet paper now makes sense.

Dear Church Mouse,

There’s a rumour that you have received other job offers. Is it true that you will be taking over as The Ethicist in *The New York Times Magazine*?

Worried

Dear Worried,

No secrets in this parish. The truth is, I was tempted. Then I got a pay raise.



Editor:  
Genevieve A. Chornenki

Creative Design:  
Henry Zaluski



**WANTED  
CONTRIBUTORS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHERS  
OF ALL AGES AND STAGES.**

**Would you be willing to take on a specific assignment or take pictures?** Is there something you would like to research and write about? Do you have a constructive comment? Or, is there an activity or initiative that you would like others to join? If so, please contact us at [spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org](mailto:spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org)

Submissions should be 250 words long and in Word format, and all submissions will be subject to edit. **Copy deadline for the next edition is Friday, August 21, 2020.**

A big thanks to all of the contributors for this issue of *SPIRITUS*.



Christ Church Deer Park  
1570 Yonge Street  
Toronto ON M4T 1Z8C  
416.920.5211  
[ChristChurchDeerPark.org](http://ChristChurchDeerPark.org)