

AROUND THE CROSS

Immanuel Anglican Parish, Regina, is a diverse, open and caring community of people who have come together in fellowship to joyfully live out our love for God and to actively engage in loving our neighbours.



Immanuel Anglican Parish, Regina joins together communities of Jesus' disciples to share the Good News through worship, word and action and to engage the world as a sign of God's blessing and promise.

IMMANUEL ANGLICAN PARISH

Here's what the dictionary has to say about "grief": *deep and poignant distress caused by or as if by bereavement; a cause of such suffering i.e. life's joys and griefs; trouble, annoyance i.e. enough grief for one day; annoying or playful criticism i.e. getting grief from his friends; an unfortunate outcome: disaster – used chiefly in the phrase come to grief; mishap, misadventure.* Well I guess you just figured out that today we are going to talk about "**grief**" and what grief means to us and how we handle grief and the subsequent bereavement. We have all lost someone or "something", near and dear to us at one stage of our lives. Some of us have lost beloved pets, whose loss is just as painful in many cases as the loss of a dear friend or companion. We cannot measure each other's grief – and each of us journey through the stages of grief differently. How long we grieve is relevant to the loss...some will bear the grief throughout the rest of their earthly lives...some will bury their grief and *get on with life*...some will be forever changed by grief and it will be a struggle to get through a day...some will be consumed by grief to the point that everything and everybody is a constant reminder and their anger at their loss brings about a cloak of bitterness and a lashing out at God and all who cross their path. "Grief" is a big word...a word so big, so all-encompassing that it's hard to break it down – to apply it to all the circumstances of loss that touch our lives. Grief is always accompanied by other emotions as well – anger of course,

shame, resentment, fear, confusion, remorse etc. “grief” never walks alone.

These past few months I have been on a journey with “grief” – not the grief associated with personal loss but the “grief”, as a Priest, that I feel for all those I have vowed to love, comfort, guide and encourage. Grief has been the unwelcome guest at the feast – the interloper marching through the lives of friends and family – the dark shadow of fear and uncertainty that this time of pandemic has wrought – and for many a constant and disruptive companion. So what do we do with our grief – how do we walk with grief while making space for hope, faith, love, and joy. And how do we support those we know and love, and those we don’t know, through the physical and emotional pain and anguish that is “grief”.



When we lose someone we love, whether that loss is the ultimate loss of death – or the loss through divorce, separation, or the result of natural disasters, war, theft, violence, misadventure etc. we usually have an immediate support system that rallies round. When it’s the loss of a loved one, friends bring the inevitable casseroles and baking – calls, cards and visits are plentiful – the church provides comfort and a means of closure – our places of work are generous with time off and we are, for a time, cocooned in a wrapping of love and concern. But all too soon the rhythm of life picks up and our support system starts to fade away into their own lives and their own problems and concerns. The expectation is that you will now start to get through the initial pain and the subsequent grief – that your time of bereavement should give way to the demands of life around you. You are expected back at work – you have responsibilities to other family members – to volunteer commitments – to your home – yard – pets etc. It’s not that people don’t care – that they don’t want to support you any longer – it’s the sad reality of life when suddenly it’s “business as usual” and you are expected to fall into that pattern.

But what happens when you are left to face a loss alone. What happens when you are elderly, perhaps you are in a care home or living on a stretched income, you don’t have family or friends who are still living and you are not attached to a faith community, and you have just lost your life partner. Or perhaps it’s the loss of your only friend or last remaining family member. You are left alone to bear your grief to try and process the loss – to find a small ray of hope in the darkness around you. The temptation to simply “give in and give up” would be great and the loneliness and despair would be overwhelming. As people of faith we know that we don’t walk in this world alone...but to someone who may have lost their faith...lost their reason for living...how can they even begin to imagine a presence with no

physical form or voice that can support and comfort even through the darkest of times.



ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH,
KATEPWA

Grief doesn't just touch those who are blessed with the love and support of a caring community – who with time will begin to pick up the pieces of their disrupted lives and begin the process towards healing. All too often we assume that the person who has suffered a loss – no matter how large or how small that loss may be to us – will have the support they need to keep going after the “visitors” leave. The loss that accompanies grief may not be a physical loss – it may be the loss of a job, financial security, a home, or even a faith community. Grief isn't selective on where it lands or on whom it lands. Grief doesn't have boundaries or even dimensions – it doesn't always come with face and form – it often come with the force of feelings, real and imaginary, that pull and push us in a myriad of directions – that open old wounds and bring about new fears and insecurities. Grief is both a harsh and a gentle word but grief is never easy.

Sadly “grief” in one of its many forms is something none of us will escape as we travel this often rocky and always changing road of life. As we begin to embark on this new journey as the Parish of Immanuel “grief” will be along for the ride. Within our former congregations we have mourned the loss, through death, of many of our faithful members or members of their families. We have been hampered and frustrated by not being able to gather together to support each other and celebrate a life well lived, or a life cut short unexpectedly or tragically. The spectre of COVID hangs over us all and sadly has touched members within our community. We can't escape grief and while we don't have to welcome it we do have to find a place for it – we have to let it journey with us for a while until we are strong enough to let it go.

Grief is one of those words...both written and understood...that weaves its way through every book of the Bible. Grief is very visible during this season of Lent as we journey with our Saviour towards the cross and the unfathomable and unimaginable grief that will follow. As we stand at the foot of the Cross on Good Friday grief will enfold us...we will be transported back to a time and place that looked, for a few long and grief filled days, like the end of all hope. But for us...for all the faithful throughout generations...Christ's glorious resurrection heralded the beginning of new life and endless possibilities – and it gave us **hope**. Grief didn't then, and never will, banish hope. Hope will always live, grow and thrive in the hearts of the faithful. Grief walks with hope – they are companions along the journey – wherever grief enters hope follows closely behind. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – *But we do not want you to be uninformed brethren, about those we are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.* We journey through grief – but we don't need to let grief rob us of the hope of a new and beautiful tomorrow. Grief will always be

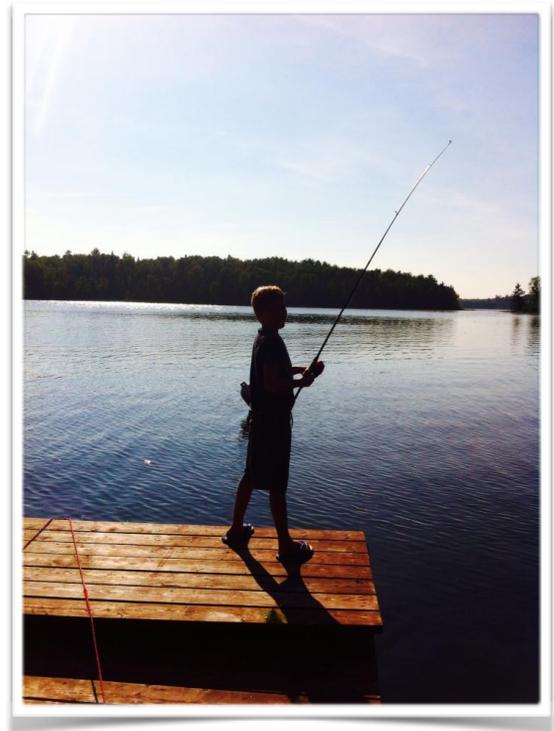
the shadow in the background but it doesn't have to be what defines us – and while we may have to visit with grief for a while we don't have to stay there. God will always give us the strength to move from grief to hope and from hope to life. I will end this reflection with a quote from Helen Keller: "What we have once enjoyed deeply we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us".



One of the hardest lessons in life is letting go. Whether its guilt, anger, love, loss or betrayal. Change is never easy. We fight to hold on and we fight to let go.

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens.*

I encourage you in days of anxiety or stress to find a quiet place where you can meditate, pray, reflect and let go of all that holds you back from experiencing the presence and healing power of God. *Psalm 62:5 - For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him..*



Thank You! *On a personal note I would like to thank all of you who reach out to say how very much you are enjoying Around the Cross and that a message struck a cord with you or brought some comfort. I consider this missive a very big part of my pastoral ministry and your warm and thoughtful comments are very much appreciated. I have been blessed with the joy of doing ministry in the Parish of Immanuel and in getting to know some wonderful people along the journey. I look forward to the time when we can all be together in person again. God's Peace my friends. Winna+*

A few things to take note of...

Seniors Coffee Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81151849728?pwd=UHZVZWt0V0U0dUoxOUw1UGM5VndvQT09>

Meeting ID: 811 5184 9728

Passcode: 946753



OUR NEXT GATHERING IS: FRIDAY, MARCH 12th

We are called "Seniors Coffee" but don't let that fool you - we like to be called "Friday Fun and Fellowship" - we are a welcoming bunch - sharing our stories and praying with and for each other. No agenda - unless you count lots of laughter an agenda. Come and check us out!

Friday Night Evening Prayer of the BCP Service of Compline

This quiet and reflective prayer service is led by me, Rev. Winna and Father Michael Bruce with the grateful assistance of our ZOOM host, Laura French.

Compline Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89324033051?pwd=QUxCQjBoQW9xdklEWVIVZIVzak52dz09>

Meeting ID: 893 2403 3051

Passcode: 701044

Compline is a lovely way to end your day and your week. Please consider joining us...



We, the clergy of Immanuel, hold you all in prayer daily...and we invite you to pray along with us. If you have a specific prayer request please let us know so that together, in community, we can lift your prayers to the Lord. I invite you to send your prayer requests to our Office Manager, Mojgan Shirazi, at officemanager@immanuelanglicanregina.ca Mojgan is keeping a list for us that will be updated regularly. These are some of the prayer requests that I have had this week...

We pray for healing mercies for: Doug O., Rick (Allison), Heather, Jan, Kay, Krystal, Leslie, Ruth, Shawn, Sheila F. (Tom), Theo, T.J., Trina, Wayne, Linda & Lloyd (and family), Bob G., Elaine K., Jessica K., Jackie, Lori, Pat L. (Dennis), Keith, Corrine, Declain, Allan, Marion, Greta, Pat, Pat B., Phillip, Beth, Stan and Phillis (Gwen and family). We remember in our prayers all those who have passed in the peace of Christ remembering especially those who we hold in our hearts....

We pray for Bishop Rob and Lorraine, as they begin this new journey into retirement and relocation with family and friends in the UK. We pray for comfort and strength in the days, weeks and months ahead and may God's peace surround them. We pray for Dean Mike and Archdeacon Catherine and the staff of the Synod Office. For our parish of Immanuel and for the AGM happening this month - that God will place a call of servanthood in the hearts and minds of those who are to let their name stand for the new Vestry of Immanuel; for our Ministerial and Team Leader Father Michael; for Archdeacon Cheryl; for the co-chairs of Parish Council: Mae and Richard and for all members of Council. We pray for Deacon Alexander Campbell who will be ordained to the Priesthood in May. - *Lord hear our prayers.*

Readings for Sunday, March 14th - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Numbers 21:4-9

21:4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.

21:5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."

21:6 Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

21:7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

21:8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live."

21:9 So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

107:1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

107:2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble

107:3 and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

107:17 Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction;

107:18 they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

107:19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;

107:20 he sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

107:21 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

107:22 And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

Ephesians 2:1-10

2:1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins

2:2 in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

2:3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us

2:5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--

2:6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

2:7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--

2:9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

2:10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

3:14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

3:15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

3:17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

3:18 Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

3:19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

3:20 For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed.

3:21 But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The Members of the Ministerial and Their Primary Areas of Responsibility...

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***Until May 30, 2021** Rev. Nancy Yee (*Family Ministry, Mission, Christian Education*) yeen@sasktel.net

ON LEAVE**Pastor Zsofi Schmiedge

***All members of the Ministerial work together on Worship Services within the Parish - sharing in the Preaching, Presiding and Assisting.**

I hope you are enjoying Around the Cross. As editor I am always delighted to receive your articles, information, pictures, etc. - anything you would like to share. I do however reserve the right to "edit" as appropriate or to not publish anything that I deem inappropriate. Remember this is YOUR Epistle so please send me whatever you think our readers may enjoy - we would love to hear from you!

You will notice that the last edition of Around the Cross that was pasted on the website was greatly altered and changed without my knowledge in order to fit into the allowed space. I will do my very best to reduce the size of this publication so that that doesn't happen again and so the file isn't so large that it creates problems in your inboxes. My apologizes if that was the case!

God's richest blessings....Winna+