



# *I know that my Redeemer lives.*

JOB 19:25 (NKJV)

Easter 2020

Dear Friends,

As we contemplate the end of our Lenten journey with Christ in the wilderness, our anticipation for Holy Week this year, is something that is at the least, a little different. 2020 will certainly be a year that all of us will remember!

My thoughts are with you and your families at this challenging time. We are all feeling the pressures and uncertainties of this present moment. Not knowing what the coming weeks will look like or when any form of normalcy might return. In times like this, I know many of us are searching for wisdom, to help steady our rhythm of life, as we float in these uncertain waters.

As we travel together towards Easter, albeit at a distance, I would commend to you this year some wisdom gleaned from the life of an English mystic. She like our patron St. Mary, patiently and lovingly walked a daily life of faith. Many of you may know of *Julian of Norwich*. She was the author of the first book written by a woman in English. Her given name is lost to history, so we call her Julian after St. Julian, patron saint of where she practiced what today we might consider an extreme form of social distancing. She lived alone for many years in an anchorhold, a small, stone structure appended to St. Julian's Church in Norwich, England. The Rule of St. Benedict says that "solitaries," such as Julian, represent the highest form of monasticism. The calling, he said, suited only the most spiritually mature.

That maturity was evidenced in the two forms of interaction she maintained during her isolation. One window in her space opened to the church, so she could nurture her connection to the divine in worship (*similar, perhaps, to the way live-streamed services let us participate via our screens*). For human connection, another window opened to the busy street. People came up to it for spiritual guidance. Much like our friends, families, and co-workers with whom we need to stay connected today, the folks she spoke with were living through a time of disease (bubonic plague), never-ending conflict (the 100 Years War), and religious division that often turned violent ("heretics" were burned at the stake a stone's throw from her space). Although her written insights were inspired by a series of visions she had while seriously ill in May 1373, it's fair to say that they were tempered and informed by the hours she spent in spiritual conversation. We might think of it as similar to the fieldwork modern-day seminarians do in hospitals and parishes to round out their classroom studies.

Her famous saying, "*All shall be well*," sprang from this immersion in suffering. She repeated it so often it became the connecting fiber of her writing. She even expanded on it: "*All shall be well, and all shall be well, and you shall see it for yourself, that every manner of thing shall be well*." If those words can appear trite in times of suffering, it's worth asking how they came out of such a time. What makes them more than a medieval "*Don't worry, be happy*"?

That's the question Julian herself wrestled with for twenty years. Ultimately, she understood that at the heart of her visions there was a bold assertion about the fundamental nature of reality itself. God is love. Yes, we know the Bible says that (1 John 4), but what if God *is really* love? Nothing *but* love? What if God is never angry, never condemning, always seeing the pure, unblemished beauty that lies deep in every human being? We, on the other hand, are often angry, condemning and harshly judging both others and ourselves. (*By the way, Julian also says that the process of self-accusation can be helpful if we learn from it and don't get stuck there!*)

Having just celebrated *Mothering Sunday*, maybe we should reflect on the love of a mother for a child. That's another image Julian is famous for: God as a mother. How would our lived experience be transformed if we believed that God constantly attends to us with a mother's unconditional love, patiently waiting and encouraging us to see ourselves for the wonderfully made, glorious creatures that we are, no matter how often we mess up, or how drastically?

Julian's fellow Christians were told that they experienced violence and disasters because God was angry. She offered a different perspective. Today we often hear that at the heart of all human behavior is cold-hearted competition for scarce resources — the survival of the fittest. Looking around at human behavior, this view can seem persuasive. Have any of you gone out for Toilet Paper lately? If we shift our gaze, however, we can also find evidence that at the heart of existence is love, with all the actions and attitudes it engenders — compassion, care, altruism, self-sacrifice, kindness, and generosity. Looking from individuals to families, communities to nations, we can all name instances where humans act not out of self-interest but out of selflessness. We care for the common good, we build up others, and we share concern for the most vulnerable among us, for generations yet to be born, for nonhuman life, and the planet itself.

Julian saw clearly how difficult it is to rely on love:

*God wants us to consider and enjoy love in everything. And this is the knowledge of which we are most ignorant; for some of us believe that God is almighty and has power to do everything, and that he is all wisdom and knows how to do everything, but that he is all love and is willing to do everything — there we fail. And it is this ignorance that is the biggest obstacle for God's lovers, to my sight.*

Theologian Karl Rahner wrote about the kind of evidence that could testify to the Resurrection. He said that no amount of apostolic witness would convince us, unless we've experienced the risen Christ in our lives. The same could be said of love as the heart of reality. One of the richest conversations I've had with others recently was about how difficult it is to believe in love, particularly unconditional love, when you haven't experienced it. Some of us have had reliable figures in our lives who've shown us just what love is: parents, teachers, other family, mentors, spouses and partners. Some haven't.

One way we might spend our extra time in this period of sequestering is by meditating on who those people have been for us. While evolutionary science dictates that our minds skew toward negativity because that attitude kept our ancient ancestors alive, can we instead dwell on the people who have been loving, kind, and inspiring to us? Can we hold them in gratitude? Can we send them our thanks? Can we let our inner state of gratefulness colour our dealings with others?

At the same time, can we ask who needs our love? Do we have a close relationship that yearns for healing? Are there neighbors who cannot work during this time and need support for their families? Are there distant people we'll never meet whose lives have been disrupted? Can we contribute to their well-being? Are there fault lines in our society that we each might, in some small way, help to bridge? To say that the best way to find love is to give it is a cliché, but only because it's true.

Julian's message across the centuries is that, if the ultimate power in the universe is love, then all will be well. It has to be. And if we center our lives in love, then we shall see it for ourselves, that all manner of things will be well.

May you have a Holy and Blessed Easter,

*Matthew* †

*The Reverend Matthew H. McMillan  
Rector, St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill*



March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*The Feast of The Annunciation*

*Dear Friends,*

As St. Mary's adjusts to the provincial and federal operating restrictions to help fight Covid-19, our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Should any of you need any assistance with obtaining: food, medication or household supplies, and you are unable to secure them, please call us at the church office (905) 884-2227. We have ready and willing volunteers who can help those that are in need of assistance. Please call any time, we are all in this together!

Your wardens and I have recently done some strategic reviews to reduce expenses and transition to reduced operations. We have suspended and cancelled various contracts over the past week to help manage our cash flow. As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, Betty Lehming has offered to take a voluntary lay-off to help reduce staffing costs. Amanda Ball will be helping to cover office duties as well as our family based Next Gen programs. Thank you both for helping St. Mary's in these uncertain times.

For those who are in need of prayer support or pastoral care, please continue to keep in contact with me and our Lay-Pastoral Coordinator, Jan Mills. Jan is always available to place names on the parish prayer list, as well as be a first point of contact for any pastoral care or prayer needs. She can be reach on her cell at (416) 428-4132, or at home (905) 883-3515. Please know that the whole parish is prayed for daily.

The Wardens and I have decided to open the parish office on Wednesday mornings from 10am till noon each week. Those who would like to drop off items for the Richmond Hill Food Bank will find our large food donation bin, right inside the front doors to receive items for the food bank. This past week 400 pounds of food was sent over from the church, which made a great difference. Any staff onsite will not come out to visit to maintain proper physical distancing. We ask only one family at a time come in. A mailbox will also be available in the entrance on Wednesdays if you wish to drop off any mail or donations.

Although the church is closed for all programs, Sunday services are still occurring each week at 10:30 am through our video broadcasts on the parish website. I pray that God may bless and guide us all in these challenging times.

Yours in Christ,

*Matthew †*

*The Reverend Matthew H. McMillan, Rector*

### ***St. Mary's Holy Week Broadcast Schedule***

View our services live or anytime at: [www.saintmarysanglican.ca](http://www.saintmarysanglican.ca)

Palm Sunday – April 5<sup>th</sup> 10:30am

Maundy Thursday – April 9<sup>th</sup> 7:15pm

Good Friday – April 10<sup>th</sup> 11am

Easter Sunday – April 12<sup>th</sup> 10:30am

### ***Sign-up for our Weekly Email Newsletter***

Each week, the office prepares a weekly newsletter, which provides news and updates for the parish. If you do not receive this weekly "WebNews", please email the office ([office@saintmarysanglican.ca](mailto:office@saintmarysanglican.ca)) and we'll happily sign you up.



# NEXT GEN MINISTRY UPDATE

During this time, my main priority for our kids & youth is to **stay connected & stay safe**. Although events have been postponed & we aren't able to gather together and celebrate who God is in-person yet, I want to ensure I use this "quiet time" to the ministry's benefit – **it's a chance to be intentional in building relationship & momentum**. Because of the contextual reality that most of this connection needs to happen online & in other ways that are *not* face-to-face, here is an overview of the platforms & resources I will be utilizing to keep our ministry going strong at this time:

- ❖ **Marco Polo:** This is an app that allows group video chatting – kind of like texting but with short videos! Our kids, youth, & families have the opportunity to use this app for "facetime" connection with one another, to learn & talk about what God says in his Word, to play games & walk through activities together, & just to have fun together in conversation! Familiarity during this strange time will be comforting & I think that kids having the chance to see one another's faces will help.
- ❖ **Parent Resources:** I want to help our parents & families be as equipped as they can be to navigate this time! I have & will be offering resources to parents/guardians such as homeschooling tips, tips on how to talk to kids about COVID-19, family devotional plans, Bible-based apps for kids, & much more. I am here to help families through this season in whatever way I can & I always have an eye out for resources that I think the families of our parish could benefit from.
- ❖ **At-Home Activities:** Of course, I want to provide opportunities for kids & youth to take what we talk about during our Bible lessons & apply the information in a way that is relevant and impactful to them! This will include parent/guardian conversation guides, crafts/activities, etc.

As a church family, I ask that you would take this time to **PRAY** for the future of our next gen ministry here at St. Mary's – **that the true character & nature of God would be revealed to students & families, that they would make the decision to love & serve Jesus for the long haul, & share the hope of God with the world around them**. That's what this is all about. Pray also that students & families will learn to trust God through the scary & hard things in life at this time, finding comfort, hope, & refuge in our gracious God. I pray that for all of us.

We would love to engage you and your family with these resources. To sign up, please feel free to contact me at [amanda@saintmarysanglican.ca](mailto:amanda@saintmarysanglican.ca) & I will ensure you have all the information you need!

Pastor Amanda Ball  
Director of Next Gen Ministries



# **St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill**

*1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2020 – Opening 3 Month Financial Update*

Revenue:	Weekly Giving's	\$36,070
	African Caribbean	\$5,485
	Rental Income	\$48,978
	Family Grant	\$11,812
	Other	<u>\$2,600</u>
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$104, 945</b>

Expenses:	Staff Salaries/Benefits	\$50,524
	Diocesan Tithe	\$17,259
	Building Costs	\$47,295
	Admin/Office	\$6,665
	Programs/Committees	<u>\$4,238</u>
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$125,981</b>

2020 Budget Difference:      **Deficit:**      **\$21,306**

## **Cash Flow Summary:**

Opening Cash Reserves for 2020	\$31,663
Present 2020 Deficit	<u>\$21,306</u>

**Current Cash Reserves \$10,627**

*Dear Fellow Parishioners,*

As many of you are aware, our yearly giving's come in waves, particularly at Christmas and Easter. Through the year we use our operating reserves to manage our expenses. Presently we anticipate exhausting our Operating Surplus at the end of April, should more parishioners not adopt our monthly PAP program, where people direct deposit monthly from their bank account or consider online donations using the parish website. Mail donations are welcome as well, but with possible postal disruptions, online and automated donations are the most stable way to help support St. Mary's.

We as your parish wardens and treasurer, would ask that you prayerfully consider joining us, who are already using these giving options to support St. Mary's. At this time, we also ask you to consider an Easter offering as well, as we help to strengthen St. Mary's to weather these difficult times.

*Yours in Christ, Sharon Hanns, Colin Webb, James Agyeman, Chas Mills & Maggie Veltheer*

# St. Mary's 2020 Pre-Authorized Payments Form

If you would like to begin using PAP, please return this completed form with a voided cheque to the church office.

## St. Mary's Anglican Church

10030 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 1T8

### Pre-Authorized Payment Details Needed

Name		
Street Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Bank or Financial Institution		
Street Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Bank Number	Transit Number	Account Number
Amount of monthly payment	\$	

I/We hereby authorize the Bank/Financial Institution named above to debit my/our account indicated above, in the amount of indicated above, at end of the third week of the month, payable to St. Mary's Anglican Church.

Each payment shall be the same as if I/we had personally issued a cheque authorizing the Bank to pay the Church as indicated and to debit the amount specified to my/our account.

I/We will notify the Church promptly in writing if I/we move the account from one bank or branch to another, or if there is any other change in the account, or if I/we wish to change the amount paid.

I/We understand that the Bank is not responsible to verify whether these payments are properly debited to my/our account.

This authorization may be cancelled at any time upon written notice by me/us to the Church.

Delivery of this authorization to the payment processing organization by St. Mary's Anglican Church is the same as if you delivered the authorization yourself.

I/We am/are all the persons who are required to sign on the above account. I/We have received a signed copy of this authorization form.

Signature

Signature

Date

For verification purposes, please enclose one of your personal cheques marked "VOID".

NOTE: You will not need to complete this form if you have used the Pre-authorized Payment before. Simply indicate your revised payment by contacting the church office by telephone – 905-884-2227, or by e-mail – [office@saintmarysanglican.ca](mailto:office@saintmarysanglican.ca).