Easter Greetings to all of you! 
As we continue to live into this time of COVID-19, many of you have reached out wondering when we might enter back into our buildings for worship and what it will be like when we do. Later this week, you will receive a communication on behalf of all of the Bishops of Michigan. Please watch for that letter and be sure to read it. In short, we want you to know that we stand by the guidelines of the CDC and the recommendations of our Governor. We want to be back to worship in person as much as you do, however, we will continue to prioritize safety and will proceed based on Governor Whitmer's directives and medical professionals. Please know we will update you with a date for reopening as soon as there is one on the horizon.

Blessings this Easter Season and Be Safe. Rayford

Online Services
Lydia Kelsey Bucklin

Thank you to those who have been joining us for online worship. As you might know, we go "Live" on Facebook on our diocesan page at 9 am EST/8 am CST on Sundays. I have heard from some folks that it's been tricky to find that video. Another option is to join us on our YouTube Channel at the same time: https://www.youtube.com/channel I am trying to include voices and participation from people all over the diocese, from as many congregations as possible. We would love to include YOU! Please reply to me if you'd be willing to record a short prayer or reading for a future weekly worship service and I will help you with the tech side of things.
Contact Lydia at: lydia@upeepiscopal.org or phone 906-458-3115
We didn't know this would be our final visit to the refugee camp. It's just a trip to bring supplies to the four free stores. We meet Mark in a small parking lot. Like all regular Team Brownsville volunteer cars, his car looks like a mobile warehouse. Our's is currently filled with cases of water, wrapped snacks, small stuffed animals, coloring books, and crayons for the bus station. Also hats Sue recently knit, with plans to sneak them through customs and into the camp the next time we cross to serve dinner.

We unload boxes from Mark's car, pile them higher and higher in our three wagons, then secure everything with bungee cords. As we struggle to pull our heavy wagons across the international bridge, the Rio Grande River flows beneath us, deceptively calm. After carefully inspecting our wagons, Mexican customs officers wave us forward. We walk to the far end of the camp, up a steep hill to the top of the levee, and back down to the first store. The sign for Tienda #1 is newly decorated with blue ribbons. The camp is being divided into four areas and people in each section will receive corresponding wristbands. Initially this is to help distribute supplies but soon it will be useful as a way to keep one group separate from other groups. Concepts like stay-in-place orders, social distancing, isolation, and quarantine that will soon become commonplace for many of us will be impossible in this crowded camp.

We visit all four free stores and several individual campsites leaving a variety of supplies and noting what will be needed on the next trip. The tiendas are stocked by Team Brownsville and another group, Angry Tias and Abuelas. Each one is managed by an asylum-seeking family and serves about 200 families. Efforts to stock the camp are intensifying because we know it's just a matter of time until the border closes. A few days before, Sue helped Sergio, co-founder of Team Brownsville, put diapers, blankets, and cleaning supplies into the two new portable storage containers in the middle of the camp. Hundreds of pairs of donated Crocs will be distributed when rain turns the blowing sand into rivers of mud.

As we walk through the camp, Frank stops to play catch with a young boy. Differences in language and age do not matter when you have a ball!

Esperanza runs up to give Sue her usual bear hug. A lively seven-year-old girl,
What a reversal! Normally we serve meals to the asylum seekers but today we are the guests. Shadia has fixed a traditional Honduran dish and is very pleased to be able to offer it to us: boiled yucca roots, chiparrons (deep-fried pork skin), topped with coleslaw, and seasoned simply with vinegar and salt. It's delicious!

Esperanza usually helps us serve dinner. She has experience at each station and can do the work more efficiently than many of the adult volunteers. We haven’t seen her at the comidor (a large dining tent) lately and are relieved to see that she is okay. Next time Sue wants to get a picture with her.

Today we bring homemade blocks of ice to Shadia so she can keep food in coolers. Her family’s campsite is near the medical clinic operated by Global Response Management and she has been hired to cook lunch for those volunteers. She has an old Coleman camping stove and a wood stove created out of a discarded machine drum. She invites us for lunch and finds some chairs so we can sit down.

Shadia talks about the hearing she has scheduled in two weeks. It will be the fifth time she has been in the tent court in Brownsville only to have her case postponed. She's hopeful that she will finally get to present her evidence and request asylum. She can see the United States across the river.

As we roll our empty wagons along the uneven dirt trail, people wave and call out, "Hasta luego!" We expect to be back in a couple days to serve dinner. See you soon!

Team Brownsville had cancelled all out-of-town volunteers a couple of weeks earlier because of the risk of COVID-19. Those of us in the area have been extra busy delivering supplies, preparing and serving meals. As we get ready to cross again, we talk with Andrea, volunteer coordinator and president of Team Brownsville's board. The decision has been made to cancel all volunteers. We have to reduce the chance that one of us might bring the virus into the camp. A local restaurant will cook dinners. Asylum seekers who have been working with us to serve meals will now be doing it by themselves. We won't go into the camp again. Adios amigos! Our hearts stay with you.
Practice Resurrection
By Brother Thomas Steffenson

While working in a coffee shop in Portland Oregon, I had a customer comment on my tattoo. It is scrawled across the outside of my forearm in ornate script that reads ‘Practice Resurrection.’ Complete with the period. The customer, as he grabbed his coffee off of the counter said, “What is that about?” “It’s the final line of a Wendell Berry poem.” “Yeah, but what does it mean?” he asked. “I think we all have something to get up from,” I said.

I’ve had this tattoo for nearly 10 years and the statement is still true. It sits there as a reminder on my arm, it’s time to get up, you can do this, go on, keep practicing resurrection. And I do the best I can. I don’t believe that the words are laced with condemnation. I don’t think they are saying that I need to practice resurrection today because I failed yesterday and my pile of things I need to get up from is only growing. I think the term practice in this case means something closer to opportunity. Today I get to be a participant in resurrection. And if I am participating, then that means that a piece of humanity is participating. And if through me humanity is participating then that means that a little piece of the world is being made whole. Practice resurrection, it whispers, not just for you, but for a world that desperately needs it.

Wendell Berry’s poem Manifesto: The Mad Farmer’s Liberation Front is about living a simple life connected to the land. He talks about doing what is right and what will last into the future - a future we won’t see. He talks about caring for people beyond politics and living into the mystery of life. He sums all of this up, all the various facets of living with the final line, “Practice Resurrection.” Live well, live intentionally, live for others as well as yourself. This is part of resurrection too.

So here we sit in the Easter Season, the part of the church year where more than ever we focus on the resurrection of Christ. Right in the middle of all of the gathering darkness; the rising death toll from the coronavirus, the rising numbers of infections and hospitalizations, the growing divisiveness in our country, the mounting fear, all of the need, the hurt, the turmoil- right in the midst of all of this we arrive at Easter, when Christ emerged from the tomb and conquered death. It is fitting really. It has forced me to think even more about what it means to practice resurrection, how I can live into the resurrection of Christ in our current world and in what ways I can help our world inch its way to wholeness.

In Mary Oliver's poem, Summer Days, she asks the poignant question, “Tell me, what do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” Every time I read those words, I find myself answering the question with "Live". I want to live my one wild and precious life. My life is a gift that I don’t want to squander. And yes, it is hard and yes, there are obstacles and complications and yes, the world has a lot of darkness in it right now. But I still want to choose to live my life. Even sheltered away in isolation for the time being, I still want to choose resurrection.

There are times when I imagine being in a tomb and seeing the daylight shining through the opening where the stone has been rolled away. I imagine Jesus coming down into the tomb with me and putting his arms around me and lifting me onto my feet. Slowly, gently, we begin to move toward the light, toward the fresh air. Toward new life. Because when Jesus enters the picture, it is always a new beginning. That's resurrection too.
Practice Resurrection, con’t

Sometimes resurrection looks like having the courage to get out of bed. Sometimes it is answering the phone and talking to the person you’d rather not talk to. Perhaps it is stretching your legs and going for a walk or picking up that paintbrush that has been sitting there waiting for you to come back to it.

Maybe resurrection is letting go and accepting the fact that we can’t control things or fix them. Maybe resurrection is a nap, or a smile, or a dozen cookies left on the doorstep at a neighbor’s house. Practicing resurrection is the act of reaching toward anything that will give you life. And in a world that is being smothered by death and hopelessness, that reaching toward life is revolutionary. It is defiant. And that is the point.

Wednesday, April 22 commemorated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Another reminder for us to choose life in these trying times. In Berry’s poem he urges us to ‘plant Sequoias’. Sequoias are giant redwood trees that can grow to the height of a 26-story building and can live anywhere from 1800-2700 years. To plant a sequoia is to acknowledge the fact that you will never see it grow to its full height, you will never see the effects that planting that one tree will have on an ecosystem. To plant that tree is to believe in the future generations that will come after you. To plant a sequoia is choosing life and paving the way for others to do the same. Practicing resurrection is never just about me.

Resurrection says that life is a cycle. In order to have resurrection, you have to have life, death and then live again. Grief is part of the process, hardship is part of the process. Nostalgia and memories are part of the process. And we take all of that with us as we come out of the tomb.

We take those memories with us, just like the scars on Jesus’ hands and feet. Life moves forward and will always find a way. Christ is with us as we choose life, helping us to walk out of our tombs in all that that means. To choose life is to choose to walk the journey to wholeness. Practicing resurrection is an act of healing, about walking through fear and grief and disappointment to the light on the other side.

And everyday we choose to live our lives, we are healed a bit more, one mighty step closer to being whole. It is hard to think of anything else our world needs right about now. We all have something to get up from.

So, in the words of Mary Oliver, "What do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" I say live the hell out of it.

Click here to read the entire poem "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer's Liberation Front" by Wendell Berry from The Country of Marriage, copyright © 1973 by Wendell Berry

---

The Summer Day

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean—  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don’t know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?  

—Mary Oliver
The Ramifications of the Overconsumption of Goods by Our Modern Society

Submitted by Jacklyn Lenten

The single most important conservation issue of our lifetime is the overconsumption of goods by people in developed nations. We've become dependent on single use items to help simplify our busy lifestyles, we buy seasonal fashion and beauty products that we throw out or donate after only a couple of uses, and we're dependent on technology that was intentionally built to slow down and need replacing after only a couple of years. This is such a serious concern because the existence of these unnecessary goods has ramifications in every single branch of climate change. The production and transportation of these goods requires fossil fuels, produces greenhouse gas emissions, and increases demands for unethical labor in third world countries. Once these items have served their purpose, they're usually improperly disposed of and end up overcrowding our already problematic landfills, or worse yet, floating throughout our oceans. We are our own worst enemy in the battle against climate change and we're currently dragging our feet on making some very minor lifestyle changes that will have serious positive effects on the environment. By purchasing fewer, more sustainably manufactured, high quality goods, we will drastically reduce the devastating effects our lifestyles are having on the environment.

The average person tends to see climate change as an untouchable issue that needs to be taken care of by the government and big businesses. I would actually argue that individuals have the greatest ability to combat climate change because we are the ones shaping the market and shifting supply and demand curves. Big businesses are pumping out cheap goods because that's what consumers are currently demanding and government regulations are designed to accommodate for the production of these goods and support economic activity. There are a handful of businesses doing it right and supporting conservation efforts and if we start supporting those businesses more and start purchasing high quality reusable items, other large corporations will have no choice but to conform to our new societal norms or go out of business.

Now the question becomes how do we shift consumer mindset and get people to stop purchasing cheap, unnecessary goods? We need better conservation education in our k-12 schools. We need to teach elementary aged kids about the recycling system and the differences and concerns about the various types of plastics. We should teach middle-school students about fossil fuel extractions, greenhouse gas emissions, and sustainable alternatives. We should teach high school students about injustices in labor in third world countries, personal sustainability habits, human relationships with the environment, and how to be an informed voter. We have already seen almost sixty schools in the United States become certified sustainable and these schools have implemented 289 sustainable initiatives into their curriculum and hopefully we will continue to see this program grow. Going beyond k-12 schooling, all colleges that require elective courses should offer and require students to take at least one course on sustainability. I think by incorporating environmental awareness and sustainability into the core curriculum of the next generation we will naturally see much more thoughtful consumers.

That being said, the current population has grown up without such a curriculum and the natural world doesn't have the time to wait around for the next generation to take over. We also need to be able to influence the current generations of consumers. To do this, I think we simply need to make some noise. There are still a lot of people concerned about the environment out there and I think they need to take...con’t page 7
Ramifications, con't

responsibility and make their voices heard if they want to invoke change now. Peaceful protests, sustainable clubs and organizations on campuses and within communities, and speaking your mind at public forums and community meetings are all ways to spark people's interest in conservation and getting media attention. While doing this, it's important to remember that everyone's opinion is valid and we must advocate and not argue or we'll risk turning people away completely. The current generation will be very slow to transition to a more sustainable lifestyle, but we need to appreciate that any change is positive change.

If you take anything from this essay, please understand that your actions as an individual are meaningful and impactful on a global scale and taking action to save our planet cannot wait any longer. Interact with the general public and the older generation and address your concerns peacefully and thoughtfully. Educate the younger generation and ignite their passions so they grow up environmentally aware. Our society has somehow shifted into the mindset that single use items are a necessity and possessing material goods adds value to our lives, but it's not too late for us to take control and become more environmentally conscious. If we can act as a nation to reduce our consumption of unnecessary goods, we'll be reducing the need for fossil fuels and the rate of greenhouse gas emissions and we'll provide developing nations the opportunity to build their economy by reducing the demand for cheap and unethical labor. We'll reduce our generation of waste which will give us the time we need to start properly managing our recycling system and eventually eliminate waste pouring into our oceans. All of these issues will be combatted if we collectively said no to unnecessary goods and became more thoughtful and intentional consumers.

"For the Interim Time"

From, "To Bless the Space Between Us" by John O'Donohue

When near the end of day, life has drained out of light, and it is too soon for the mind of night to have darkened things,

No place looks like itself, loss of outline makes everything look strangely in-between, unsure of what has been, or what might come.

In this wan light, even trees seem groundless. In a while it will be night, but nothing here seems TO believe the relief of dark.

You are in this time of the interim where everything seems withheld.

The path you took to get here has washed out; The way forward is still concealed from you.

"The old is not old enough to have died away; the new is still too young to be born."

You cannot lay claim to anything; In this place of dusk, Your eyes are blurred; And there is no mirror.

As far as you can, hold your confidence. Do not allow your confusion to squander this call which is loosening your roots in false ground, that you might come free from all you have outgrown.

What is being transfigured here is your mind, and it is difficult and slow to become new. The more faithfully you can endure here, the more refined your heart will become for your arrival in the new dawn.

Submitted by Marcia Franz
May We...

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.
May we who have no risk factors remember those who are vulnerable.
May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between their health or paying their rent.
May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools closed remember those who have no options.
May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go.
May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.
May we who settle in for quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose love.
During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.
And may the blessing of God Almighty:
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, be yours this day, and always.

This prayer was shared at a recent Zoom meeting. It came from Lydia Bucklin, who got it from Jane Cisluycis, who shared it from someone else, who got it from someone else. I don't know who wrote it or the title, if there is one, but it's a prayer that should be shared.