

Fall/Advent 2020

THE BRIDGE

Bringing together the Parish of St. Joseph and St. George

St. John's
Hilton Beach

Holy Trinity
Jocelyn

St. George's
Echo Bay

Chapel of the Intercession
Llewellyn Beach

From the Incumbent's Desk

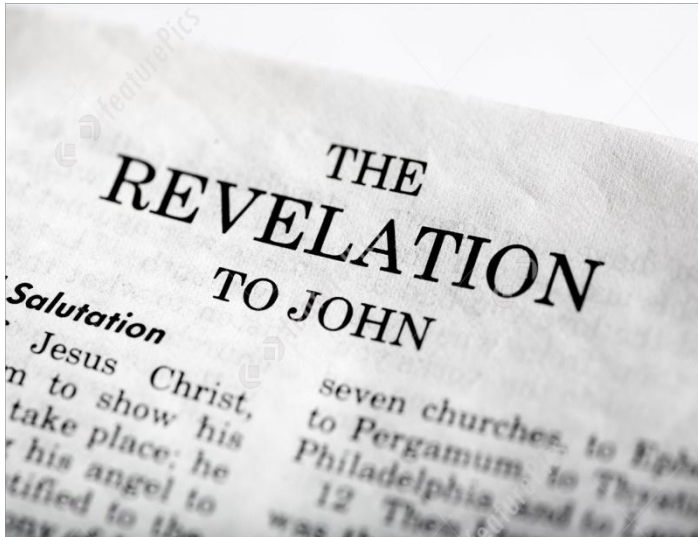
Studying *The Book of the Revelation to John*

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Revelation 13:10b

Members of our parish and that of St. James, Goulais River are coming together – via Zoom – each Wednesday evening to hear and discuss passages from the *Revelation to John*. Most people are not very familiar with this book that ends our Scriptures and so it is likely the most widely misunderstood and misinterpreted book of the Bible.





Contrary to what popular culture would have us believe, this book does not contain a blueprint for modern era events that have happened or will happen in the future. But, just like the rest of Scripture, this book does have important things to say to us.

Below (p.5) you will find all that we have covered in our first two Wednesday evenings of this study.

Because most people in our society

tend to be more immersed in the prevailing attitudes around us rather than in the Story of Salvation found in the Old and New Testaments, I am sure what you read will challenge your thinking and grow your knowledge. You can join in our discussions by sending me your email so that I can send a Zoom invitation to you:

<https://stjosephandstgeorge.com/calendar-of-events/>

And now, a quick word about Advent. Before you know it, this season of joyful expectation will be here. Yes, we are awaiting the annual celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ – our Saviour. But, our “joyful expectation” includes much more than that. We await the time when Jesus will come again to complete the bringing of God’s kingdom that he began – and that we continue with the help of the Holy Spirit. We begin our Advent journey in the Gospel of Mark with a reading (Mark 13:24-37) assuring us that Jesus’ physical coming again *will* happen and we must be ready – “Keep awake.” Surrounded by the brokenness of the world as we know it can make it difficult sometimes to truly believe in the coming perfection but God has not left us as orphans (John 14:18-26). We have the Holy Spirit and, through the power of the Spirit, God’s perfect kingdom is breaking-in around us and in us as we shine the light of God’s love into this world. *For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations (Isaiah 61:11).*

Praying you have a glorious Autumn and a blessed Advent season,
The Reverend Susan Montague Koyle

The New COVID-19 Pandemic Reality

Fundraising, Finances, and Being a Sign, Instrument, and Foretaste of the Perfection of God's Kingdom are looking a little different these days. Here are some of those changes...

CHURCH CLOSET

Due to the Covid conditions, the Closet could not open during 2020.

However, the General Operating Fund has received over \$75 worth of goods by word of mouth!

Hopefully in 2021, things will change and perhaps we will be allowed an outdoor yard sale in conjunction with Echo Bay For Sale on the first Saturday in May. In the meantime your generous donations are in storage.

M. Eggesfield, Convener.

The ACW is still at it!

Each year our ACW gives away hundreds of dollars to people and charitable organizations who need their help. The Children's Library and The Mission to Seafarers are just two of many. The ladies work hard at events throughout the year in order to have plenty of money to give away. One of our biggest events is our annual Cookie Walk which is going to look a little different this year. We will prepare delicious Christmas cookies and squares to sell by the tray. Please stay tuned for more information. 😊

Ham Pasties Minus the Luncheon

Please order your large Ham Pasties by calling Marie at 782-6813. \$15 per dozen; before Oct. 30.

These will be ready for pick-up on Dec.12 at St. George's in Echo Bay by appointment, wearing a mask and with the correct change!

We are not advertising outside of our Parish, and we are contacting former customers!

Thanks much, Liz Christie and Marie Eggesfield

We are having services each Sunday: 9am at St. George, Echo Bay; 11am at Holy Trinity, Jocelyn Township. People are wearing masks, social distancing, and using a lot of hand sanitizer. 😊 For those not comfortable with gathering in a group, there is a short (usually less than 20 minutes) service of prayers and a sermon posted on our parish Youtube channel each week (St. Joseph and St. George). My oldest son, Stephen, helps me out with these services and – yes – he got a haircut. 😊 The sermon – an audio recording and a PDF – is also posted on our parish website each week (<https://stjosephandstgeorge.com/>)

Red is a lovely colour but not when it comes to finances: Thank you to those of you who help us out financially. We really appreciate it! If there is anyone else who feels called to help us navigate this pandemic a little better, you can send a cheque to Box 61, Richards Landing, ON, P0R 1J0. Thank you! ♥

Studying the Book of the Revelation to John

First – Laying Some Groundwork

How do we categorize this book of the Bible? Let's hear what it has to say for itself (Rev.1:1-4a). The book describes itself as three things: First, The Book of the Revelation to John is exactly that – a revelation. The Greek word for revelation is “apokalypsis” and it means “unveiling” or “revealing.” The book is also prophecy – John was given a message by God to proclaim to his followers. Finally, it is a circular letter meant to be read aloud in the churches.

Back to “apokalypsis” for a moment: We need to clear up a very common misunderstanding (thanks to pop culture). If you look up a definition of apocalyptic literature, you may read that an “apocalypse” describes the end of the world and is, therefore, a description of “the end times.” Actually, apocalyptic literature describes God's destruction of evil ruling powers and God's raising the righteous to life in his kingdom. It is not the end of the world but, rather, the end of the world as we now know it – the fixing of all the current brokenness. We live in the end times – Jesus' resurrection signalled the beginning of a new era and we await its consummation.

An “Apocalypse” (or Apocalyptic Literature) has certain defining characteristics: An apocalypse is a story in which a message or vision is revealed to a human by an otherworldly being – an angel, angel of the Lord, etc. What is revealed is a transcendent reality – something surpassing our human experience, something other than our human world. In revealing this transcendent reality, we see where we are headed in our forward movement towards ultimate salvation (our eschatological future).

Apocalyptic writings offer hope and comfort to those who are afflicted and a protest against those who exploit their power. They do so through graphic and oftentimes bizarre imagery, symbolic representations of reality, and, most importantly, a “heaven's eye view” of the events on earth. As Richard Bauckham explains, “It is not that the here-and-now are left behind in an escape into heaven or the eschatological future, but that the here-and-now look quite different when they are opened to transcendence” (Bauckham 7-8). Bruce T. Morrill describes apocalyptic literature in this way: “Revelatory of the overturning of the world as they knew it, apocalyptic narratives were the imaginative, and thus empowering, symbolic language through which Christians maintained hope amid poverty, social alienation, and/or political oppression in their day” (Morrill 51)

Prophecy: Today we use “prophecy” and “prediction” interchangeably but “predicting the future” is **not** an accurate description of the prophetic literature found in Scripture. If you have children playing in your living room and they are starting to get a little rambunctious and aggressive in their play, you may walk in and say something like, “Settle down or someone will get hurt.” You are not a prophet predicting the future. You are taking stock of the current behaviour unfolding in front of you, pointing the children toward right

behaviour, and stating the natural consequences of noncompliance. This is a large part of what the prophets were doing when they were called and sent by God to carry his message to the people. God's people were getting out of control, the prophets reminded them of "right" behaviour according to God's ways, and let them know that consequences would follow if they did not turn back to God.

While biblical prophecy does deal with past, present, and future, the foray into future events is to reveal/warn of God's will in the fulfillment of God's purpose. The goal of revealing God's will is not for the gaining of information or knowledge as it is with modern "prophecy." Biblical prophets are like the lookouts on a ship and their goal is more about the formation of our spiritual lives through an ever-growing trust in God's hand at work in the world around us. Even if the announcement is "brace for impact!" we need to hear it and ready ourselves for a rocky future. The core of biblical prophecy is not in this rocky future, but in the "readying" of ourselves. In this respect, the prophetic word is about us getting to know the God who created us and who formed us in our mother's wombs; it is about getting to know the purposes and plans of God for the world, the end for which God created it, and how this world of his works; it is about knowing this information and allowing God to form us. It is in this that biblical prophecy differs from other attempts to predict or see into the future.

The Hebrew word for prophet is "navi", derived from the verb "nabu" which means "to declare, to announce." The primary goal of the prophets was declare God's message to the people in order to turn them back to God.

Revelation does refer to itself as "prophecy" (Rev.22:7) but, given the definition of biblical prophecy you've just learned, please discard our pop culture notion that this book contains John's forecasts of the distant future (our present time).

"John's vision gave insight into 'what must soon take place,' in his era (1:1). The seer knew nothing of global warming, the Internet, or the United Nations. He wrote a scathing critique of political idolatry in the first-century Roman Empire, not an analysis of Al Qaeda or the inequities of modern globalization. But just as the letters of the apostle Paul have become God's Word for us today when the Holy Spirit breathes through them, so God uses *Revelation* to illuminate our theological and political landscape. Rather than starting with the expectation that *Revelation* will forecast events of our time, we should seek to understand the life setting of John and the believers to whom he addressed his book. With that background, we then can listen for what the Spirit is saying to the churches about faithfulness to Jesus Christ today" (Kraybill 22).

Epistle: The apocalyptic and prophetic features of *Revelation* are woven together in a circular letter addressed to seven specific churches and, quite possibly, were intended for all the churches in Asia Minor. Some mistakenly think that just chapters 2 and 3 are "letters to the churches." However, we know from Revelation 1:4-6 that the entire book is addressed to these congregations, a fact confirmed by this typical ending for a letter, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (22:21).

Bauckham, Richard. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation, New Testament Theology*. ed. James D. G. Dunn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Kraybill, J. Nelson. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2010.

Morrill, Bruce T. *Encountering Christ in the Eucharist: The Paschal Mystery in People, Word, and Sacrament*. Paulist Press, New Jersey, USA: 2012.

Getting into the Study: Revelation 1:1-20

Before reading: Other than church, what is your favourite ritual that you/your family/friends engage in?

There are many smaller rituals in which we participate daily – some of them are what we call ‘habits’ – some are good, some are not so good but they all shape us. This forming and shaping takes place at a gut level not a brain level.

Ritual involves worship – we value and desire what it is that comprises our rituals.

No one knows this better than the advertising industry – they not only provide the objects we desire, they do it in such a way – in a ritualized, spiritual way – that shapes our desires for the objects (and not just objects...they shape our desire for the life) they are presenting to us.

There are all sorts of rituals built into our lives by outside forces – advertising is just generally the one that comes first to mind – but there are also the leisure industry, the world of commerce, prevailing social attitudes like a nation’s trust in weapons and so on.

“We need prophets such as John of Patmos to help us recognize idolatry and injustice and to show us the life-giving ways to worship a God of justice and sure salvation” (Kraybill 20).

We are hesitant to name things as gods, to use terms like idolatry and worship but things need to be named for what they are. The saying, “the almighty dollar” says a lot but we have become blind or immune to such things.

1st reading: Let’s introduce ourselves to John of Patmos (Rev.1:1-20)

What stood out to you? – word, phrase, image....?

What have we learned about John of Patmos? This will shed light on what he has written and why. (He engages in regular worship – he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day; he has authority in the young church otherwise he wouldn’t be writing this letter; in response to preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, he has either been exiled or has fled for his safety to the Island of Patmos; the young church is in the midst of persecution for their beliefs)

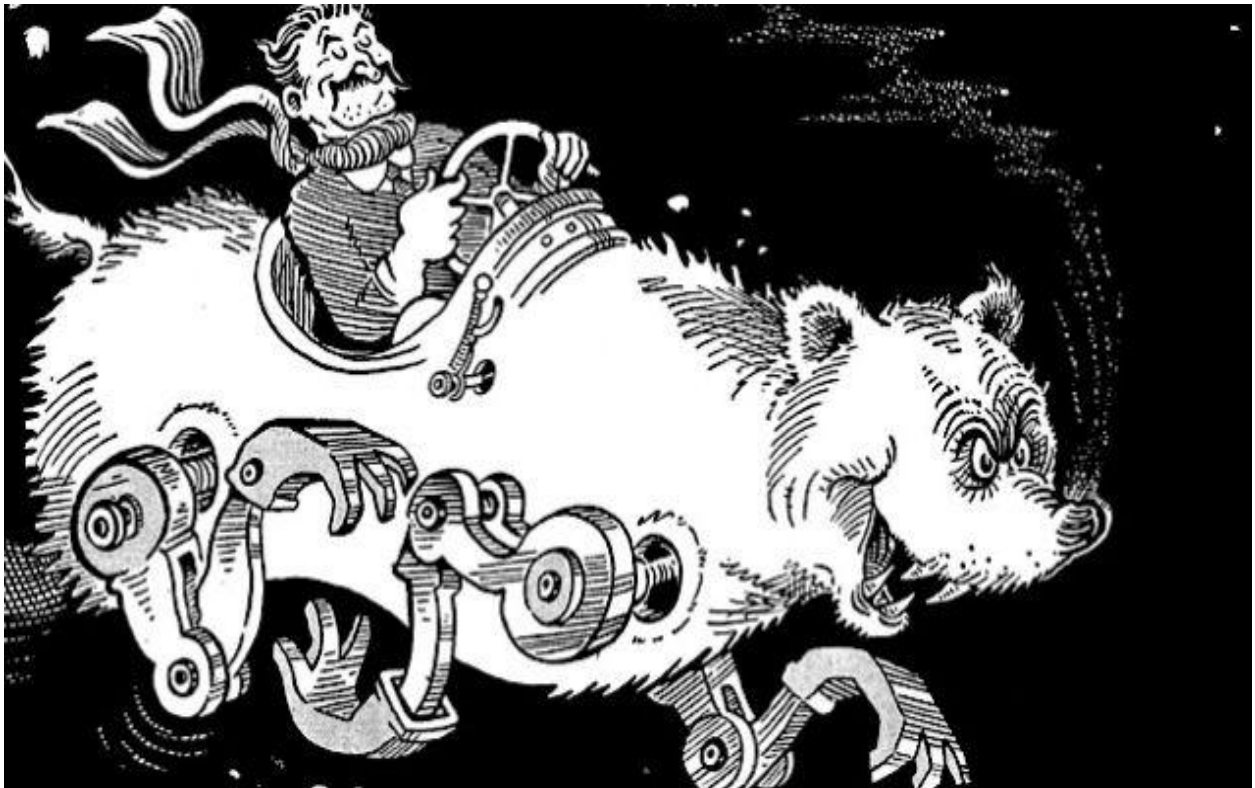
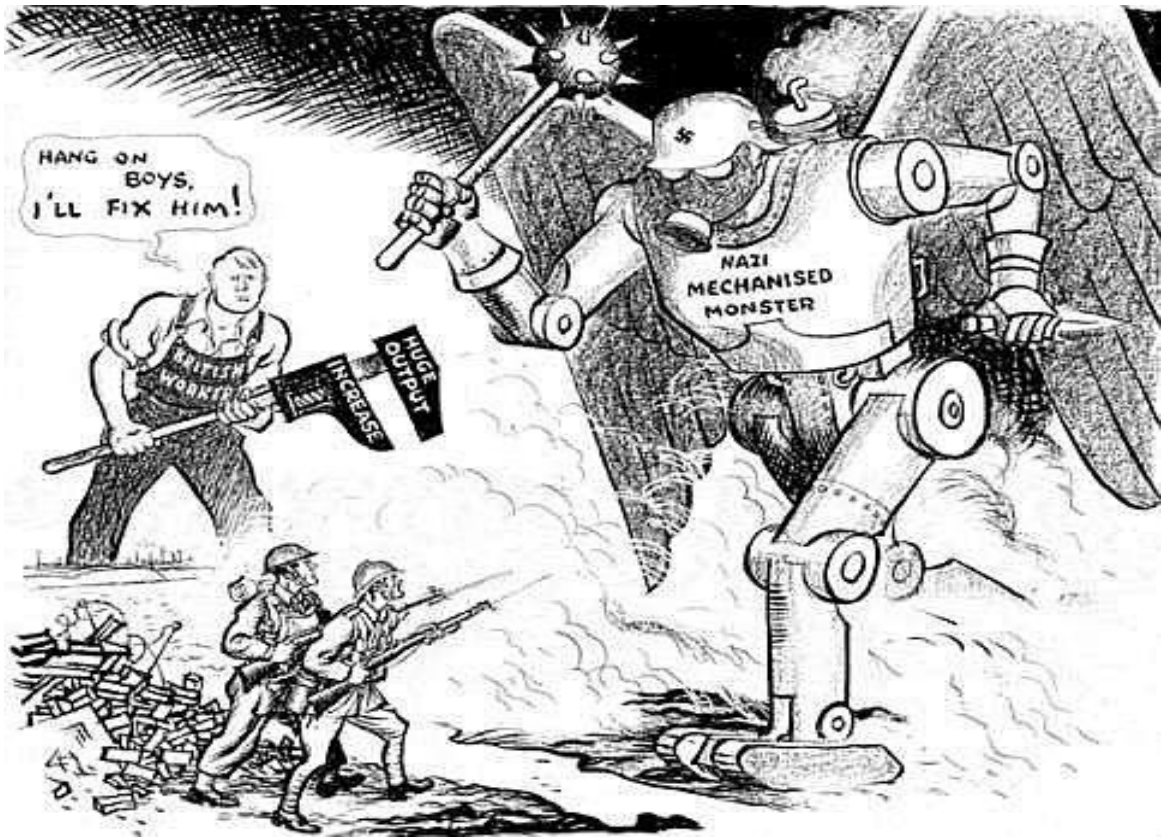
2nd reading of Rev.1:1-20: Points to make **1.** *Revelation* is a book **of** worship (not **about** worship) – meant to be read aloud/heard in a worship context (1:3) – engages all of the senses...”We need to feel the flow, absorb the anguish and jubilation, observe the periods of silence, smell the incense, and bow in worship” (Kraybill 33). **2.** *Revelation* is a mixture of politics and religion from start to finish (1:6) – worship shapes allegiance (we worship what we love and we are shaped by our worship); *Revelation* strongly calls believers to give ultimate allegiance to God and the Lamb – and not to Empire or Emperor.

- Taking a closer look at the description of Jesus (let’s reread vv.12-16) – this is an “icon” (it is not a literal description) – we do know it’s a description of Jesus...How?
- Jesus holds the keys of “Death and of Hades.” Why is this such a comfort to the people to whom John is writing (and to John himself)?
- Seven stars...here is some symbolism whose meaning is not readily apparent to modern readers. Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) declared his infant son divine when the boy unexpectedly died. The boy is pictured on a coin as the sun god Apollo – he is seated on a globe surrounded by seven stars. Knowing this, we know that the same imagery applied to Jesus – holding seven stars, face shining like the sun – is highly subversive...Jesus is **the** divine ruler (Kraybill 37).

3rd Reading followed by any final comments/observations: Given everything we’ve learned this evening, does anything strike you in a new/different way?

Week Two of Our Study: Revelation 12:18-13:10

Before reading: Let’s have a look at some political cartoons... (they’re on the next page because they didn’t fit here).



Similar use of symbols occurs in *Revelation* and in other Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writing – not all of which made it into our Bible. I realized, as I looked at the above cartoons, that I needed some understanding of the social-political world at the time of World War II in order to know what the cartoons were trying to say so...as bizarre as the beast is that we are about to encounter in *Revelation*, “it was recognizable to first-century Jews who knew the Hebrew Scriptures. John uses a beast as the symbol of an empire that has gone beyond its legitimate mandate by demanding idolatrous worship” (Kraybill 41).

The Book of Daniel is one of the earliest and best known of the genre of literature that became known as apocalyptic (unveiling). There are others such as *4 Baruch*, *1 Enoch*, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and *Sibylline Oracles*. Each of these is credited to an author (a prophet or other venerable person) who lived centuries before these books were actually written. This identification gave the book authority and allowed the actual writer to “predict” events then give a few more short-term predictions of his own. But John in *Revelation* doesn’t do this. John is who is he is...no pretending, no pretension. John does appear to have been familiar with Daniel and other apocalyptic literature because he uses familiar images and symbols that already have established meaning. For example, a bird or beast almost certainly represents an empire and heads, wings, or horns usually refer to an individual leader within the empire (Kraybill 43).

2nd Reading of Rev.12:18-13:10 and Commentary

The First-century Jewish view of history and the Christian alteration:

Jewish people pictured themselves as living in a period of time – the Present Age – that was evil, marked by sin and suffering. The messiah (or more than one) was expected to appear and...poof...the Present Age was going to abruptly end because the Messiah and God were going to completely obliterate all that was evil and a new period of time – known as “The Kingdom of God” – would begin. This is why Jesus’ announcement that the kingdom of God was at hand created such a stir.

Christianity saw things a little differently because of the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. They realized that the Present Age – the age of evil in the world – was not going to abruptly end but, rather, coexist with the time of The Kingdom of God for a period of overlapping time. The kingdom of God has already begun to take shape through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Christians live in a time of two conflicting eras – we are resident aliens in a time that pulls us backward but at the same time we are called to live as citizens of the future when the fullness of God’s kingdom will be the reality.

You heard the word “worship” in the passage we read... “the whole earth followed the beast. They worshiped the dragon...they worshiped the beast.” The reason given for this worship? It’s pretty lame, actually: “...who can fight against it?” (Rev.13:3b-4). People of the world are amazed by its power and authority...people **are** attracted by worldly power and they worship it and the people who wield it. Here we have a crucially important reason for our own Christian worship. Our rituals of loyalty and acts of devotion to God are a big deal. They

reflect our spiritual orientation, they recalibrate our spiritual orientation. “Through symbol, icon, and indexes of allegiance, we express and experience what is most essential to us in ways that direct our lives toward God’s future” (Kraybill 45). Our worship is an act of defiance against the world’s idolatry of worldly power. It is us saying “stick it” but it is also us renewing and affirming our loyalty and allegiance to God’s ways. It strengthens us and nourishes us. Like Daniel in the Babylonian court, we are called to turn away from ways that are contrary to God’s ways and keep ourselves oriented to God by practicing God’s ways.

The Romans were one of a parade of empires who conquered the Jewish people...Babylonia, Media, Persia, Greece...So, with the arrival of the Romans, there was “here we go again” feeling and the reminder of the various beasts representing the various empires that they would have known so well from Daniel – their model of hope and resistance.

The first thing we are told about this beast in Chapter 13 is that it rises from the sea. This would have connected to listeners in a couple of ways. First, geographically, Rome – as a city in Italy – is nearly completely surrounded by the water of the Mediterranean Sea. Second, this sea imagery would have called to mind the annual visit of the proconsul or governor from Rome. His ship would have been seen rising out of the sea as it approached the port at Ephesus (Kraybill 50).

While the beast in this chapter is very frightening and is being worshiped by seemingly most of the world, John has already given his readers hope to cling to...last week we heard that John was being spoken to by one who looked like the Son of Man. This immediately identifies Jesus with the triumphant figure in Daniel 7 who commands worldwide allegiance to the living God. We can relate quite well with John’s small, frightened Christian community being stampeded by empires. But we have the conviction “that God cares about human affairs and has entered the world in the person of Jesus Christ. History began with God’s loving attention at creation, and it will end with God’s loving redemption of the world at the return of Christ. In the meantime, followers of the Lamb live in the time between the times, in contested territory between the brokenness of the past and God’s restore creation in the future” (Kraybill 51).

Let’s look at v.10 for a moment. What do you think it means? Do we have passive resistance models we can follow in our age? It could also be a warning for those of the small Christian community finding themselves attracted to the power and wealth of the empire.

3rd Reading: As you hear this passage for the final time, remember: This is written for you, a small Christian community threatened with being overwhelmed by empire – by the beasts of rampant consumerism, individualism that has turned selfish and self-gratifying, and any other beast that comes into your mind. What do you hear? Where is the hope?

Signs of hope:

- passive tense in verse 5 shows God is in charge despite the problems in the world... “was given”, “was allowed”, “forty-two months”, in verse 7 there is another “was

allowed”. This doesn’t mean – as we modern readers tend to think – that God is endorsing the evil empire, allowing it to run rampant to punish humans for their sins. No. John is writing with the future in mind – trying to convey the belief that this time of empire **will** come to an end through the actions of God.

- verse 8 there is the mention of the book of life and of the “Lamb that was slaughtered” – Christians know these things point to salvation
- end of verse 10 “Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.”

Advent Outreach

Like last year, our Parish will again be “adopting” a family currently residing at the Women in Crisis Shelter in Sault Ste Marie. We are also collecting food and toiletries to give to our local food banks in Echo Bay and Richards Landing. If you’d like to contribute but won’t be able to make it to a church service before Christmas, you can send a donation to our mailing address:

Box 61, Richards Landing, ON, P0R 1J0

Please make cheques payable to: The Parish of St. Joseph & St. George, and indicate that it is for “Advent Outreach.”

Thank you so very much!

Here are a few photos from my ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons in the Anglican Church of Canada, Thursday, October 15, 2020 (on the Commemoration of St. Teresa of Avila). It was a very moving worship service and it was live-streamed so that people unable to attend were still able to see it as it happened.



This is me with my husband, The Ven. Dr. Jay Koyle, my oldest son Stephen is pictured right, and Kevin is on the left side in the purple shirt. We are, of course, a social “bubble” which is why we aren’t wearing our masks in this photo.

The service took place at Emmaus Anglican Church in Sault Ste Marie.

Here I am at home, after the service, about to dig in to a very scrumptious cake! I did share it though, in case you're wondering. 😊

That is a red stole on the left side of the cake. On the other side it says, Blessings 'Rev. Susan'.



It's hard to see clearly in this photo but here we are in our masks. From left to right we have The Rev. Canon Bob Elkin (Interim Incumbent for Emmaus), The Ven. Roberta Wilson-Garrett (territorial Archdeacon for the Deanery of Algoma), The Most Rev. Anne Germond (Archbishop of Algoma and Metropolitan of Ontario), then there's me (The Rev. Susan Montague Koyle), The Ven. Dr. Jay Koyle is next (Diocesan Archdeacon), and The Very Rev. Jim McShane (Dean of the Cathedral)

I think this article will become a staple in our Advent newsletter...Advent is meant to be celebrated in the home so here it is to help you do that:



Did you know?

The Advent wreath marks the passage of the weeks of the season of Advent. It was originally devised to encourage family observance of Advent and was introduced to congregational worship only to provide a model for family use.

If you'd like to have an Advent Wreath at home, hit a dollar store for what you need (that's what I did): plate; four candles (all blue, or all purple, or 1 pink candle for Advent 3); 4 candle holders; some fake greenery to decorate (if you want to).

Advent 1 – The week of Dec.1st ...Light one purple candle each night at supper and have someone read this prayer:

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Advent 2 – The week of Dec.8th ...Light two purple candles each night at supper and have someone read this prayer:

Almighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Advent 3 – The week of Dec.15th...Light three purple candles (or 2 purple, 1 pink) each night at supper and have someone read this prayer:

God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Advent 4 – Dec.22nd, 23rd & 24th...Light all 4 purple candles (or 3 purple, 1pink) both nights at supper and have someone read this prayer:

Heavenly Father, who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour, now fill us with your grace, that we in all things may embrace your will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

If you'd like to contact me

(The Rev. Susan Montague Koyle):

Phone: 705-253-6456

Email: susan.montague2@gmail.com

Check us out on Facebook:

[The Anglican Parish of St. Joseph & St. George](#)

And don't forget about our website:

<https://stjosephandstgeorge.com/>