

Michael's Musings April 8, 2018

"We are Easter People"

The many emails and comments we are receiving this week at the church are confirming what so many of us experienced last Sunday: It was a glorious Easter!



The largest crowd in recent memory gathered at 10.30am to celebrate the gift of new life. There were many "Hallelujahs" - culminating in Handel's great Hallelujah Chorus when dozens of people came forward to join the choir, organ and brass ensemble in singing (see picture at right).

A smaller crowd gathered at 7am on the lakeshore for an equally meaningful celebration. It was a cool, calm morning, and as we sang, "When I break the bread of life with my face to the rising sun," the glory of the sun appeared above the clouds on the horizon.

But what was most profound for me about Easter Day, 2018 was the public witness of faith we shared with our community. Joggers stopped to observe our outdoor service. People from surrounding houses joined in - they had visited our website and read our sign. At 10.30am, many first-time worshippers were among us.

We at Port Nelson have a long-standing strength in worship. We are blessed with a gracious worship space. God's Spirit frequently draws Word and Sacrament, music and prayer, liturgy and humour together, creating an experience of Holy Mystery.

And yet, I know that, while it is a great strength, there are hundreds of people right in our neighbourhood who are spiritually yearning for a different - yet equally meaningful - experience of Holy Mystery. Easter Day reminded me of this reality. I think of public worship - or gatherings, or services - as slices in a pie. It could be a glorious pumpkin pie, or a tart lemon pie, or a sweet cherry pie. Pick your favourite. We have a great strength in a couple of different slices, but there are still many more slices that could be explored and served as part of the great banquet we call life in God.

Could we offer a second, weekly gathering (a service or something like it) that may invite people we do not yet know into an experience of Holy Mystery? We already have the strength in worship. We already offer variety in the form of sunrise services at the lake, Taize services and youth-led dramas. None of these is intended to replace, to change, to diminish or to threaten what we already do well on Sunday at 10.30am. They are occasional second slices of pie! Because most strong, healthy churches build on the strengths they have and expand them.

What is God inviting us into? For several years I have had a sense that Port Nelson is being invited to offer an additional service/gathering. I love our existing service. It brings me joy every week. But I also find the prospect of something additional exciting, and I am prepared to work on that part of our Vision Plan. I pray that some of you reading this might also feel that excitement and that calling. **Would you join Marilyn**

Parsons and I this Monday, April 9 at 7pm at the church to share our excitement and to discuss possible next steps around a second gathering/service?

Easter has just begun. The Great 50 days ahead remind us of God's gifts of hope and joy. Easter is God's way of reminding us who we are - individually and communally. Easter is God's way of reminding us of our strengths.

-Michael Brooks