

April 8th, 2025

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.
John 13:34-35*

Dear Members and Friends of St. Andrew's:

In the final week of his time on this earth, mere miles from the Holy City of Jerusalem, Jesus of Nazareth sat down to a final Passover meal with his closest friends and disciples. At that meal the controversial but innocent rabbi, fated to betrayal, arrest and death, washed the feet of those disciples he knew would abandon him, shared the first ever holy communion with them, and gave them a *new commandment*: "love one another, as I have loved you".

The Apostle Paul would later famously expand upon the definition of this "love" which Jesus exhorted his first disciples to practice, saying:

"Love is patient; love is kind ... it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." -1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Clearly, we failed Jesus in his most desperate earthly moment, but I truthfully do not believe that Jesus came to make us feel ashamed for that failure. Naturally, we do feel sorry for sincere moral failure and wrongdoing, and the season of Lent is all about reflection on such things, and true repentance. But more than that, the season of Lent is about this love which Christ lived out for our benefit. Jesus does not hold our wrongs against us, but he does intend for us to learn from them. We all make mistakes, as the first disciples did, but after every dark night, there is a morning of reconciliation.

Being Christian isn't about being perfect and morally superior to others; it is about becoming more perfect with each passing day. Jesus understood that we wouldn't be able to "get it all at once". But we have the opportunity to practice Christian love, now that we have seen it in action in the person of Jesus. Lent is all about "resetting" ourselves once more, so that we can go out into the world to love others as Jesus has loved us; and Holy Week is all about celebrating the renewal of our lives in Christ that comes with the resurrection.

We are entering the final days when all things will be made new. Join me as we celebrate the coming Easter. We will be celebrating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem this Sunday, April 13th, on Palm Sunday, at the usual worship hour, 10:30am. Thursday, April 17th, we will be celebrating the last supper and the institution of Jesus' "new commandment" with a Maundy Thursday communion service and communal meal at 7pm in the great hall. On Friday, April 18th, we will be observing Good Friday at 11am.

Finally, on Sunday April 20th, we will celebrate a long-awaited Easter morning at the usual worship time, 10:30am. You are invited to each and every one of these Holy Week services, and I look forward to seeing you all there.

I would also like to inform everyone at St. Andrews that our Easter Sunday offering will be allocated to “manse renovations”. Enclosed in the physical copies of this letter are the special Easter offering envelopes for this purpose. My family and I thank you in advance for generously welcoming us into your community. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to live and worship at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church Brampton, and to be a part of this wonderful church family!

Come join us this Easter as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, and the promise of everlasting life!

Yours in Christ,

Byron Kappes

Rev. Byron Kappes