

## From the Rector's Desk

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way...*

Those famous words beginning the Dickens classic, *A Tale of Two Cities*, are quite literally timeless words, because there has never been a time in human experience when they have not rung true.



I have this unfortunate habit of setting the front section of the Times Colonist beside my place at the breakfast table. (No, I'm not being rude; Marion is usually still engaged in her prayers at that point.) This morning as I read, the evidence of the worst of times was easy to find. A woman shot to death in the front seat of her car with her toddler in the back. A puppy tied up on a collar so tight it had caused an open wound. Yet another middle eastern country spiraling into civil war. Disproportionate numbers of Blacks in the Canadian Prison system. In our Church life we watch as Rainbow Kitchen scrambles to find a new location, and Camp Columbia's programs will happen in other locations this summer because the facilities have problems too serious and too expensive to fix in time for the summer. We wonder which of our historic Anglican parishes on the island will have to close their doors because of dwindling attendance, while the world around us continues to build bigger sports centres, cinemas, and shopping malls. Is it not the worst of times, the age of foolishness, the epoch of incredulity, the season of Darkness, the winter of despair?

But you and I both know, as Charles Dickens suggests, that there are other stories unfolding in our midst. Nowadays there is never a power project or pipeline proposal that does not come under rigorous scrutiny by both government and citizen's groups, speaking up for wildlife and the environment. We care about this earth. Volunteer organizations which used to be the haven for predators are now tightening screening, taking far-reaching steps to prevent abuse. We care about the vulnerable. The internet, for all its potential annoyances and pitfalls, is fostering a global human consciousness in which voices for good are joining forces. We have greater capabilities than ever before in history to ease suffering and to bring justice to all the peoples of the world. I think the human race is truly entering a season of hope, with everything we need before us.

Which way will God's world turn? I pose the question that way, because it holds the answer for us. *It is when we choose to live as if it is God's world and we are made in the image of the Creator's love and care for this world and each other, that we bring light and hope.* This is not complicated, nor is it out of reach. The Word of hope, as Paul says, "is near you, on your lips and in your heart" ...because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." The world, with all its political and economic turmoil; the Church, with all its divisions and struggles; our families, with all their tensions; our personal lives, with all our disappointments; even our own bodies in their aches and pains: these may not look the way we want them to look. But in the incarnation, the birth of Jesus, there is the clearest statement in history, that God has come amongst us to take up our case. So, even though it may be the worst of times, it is truly the best of times. In God's love the whole world is being saved, is being made whole. God's Mission of reconciliation, the ministry we have from God, is moving ahead, and you and I are part of it. Thank you for your part in helping make this the best of times.

May your Christmas, whatever else it brings, bring you the gifts of wisdom, faith, hope, and Light, surrounding you with that deep peace and love which is never shaken or diminished.

- **Peter**