



## Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

February 10, 2021

**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT  
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**By Rev. Maria Szabo Berces**



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

This morning I had a chance to attend a Regional Clergy ZOOM gathering. Our get-together focused on our preparations for Lent, and what that journey means for the clergy who are to lead the congregations towards celebrating the upcoming Holy Week and Easter.

Different concerns and themes came up as we shared thoughts and plans. But one was quite dominant: *we all need **hope*** amidst the ongoing struggles caused by the pandemic. We are tired of this whole situation, and need to see the light at the end of the tunnel! And of course, the big question is: what life will be like when we actually finish our journey in this ‘wilderness’?

We were reminded that those of us who experienced grief before know this process and feeling very well. They went through tremendous pain, had to make unthinkable adjustments, and had to cope with the reality that life will never be the same as it was before. How is it possible to make it at all?

I believe, we can survive demanding journeys in our various types of ‘wilderness’ if we can realize that we are not alone as we **“walk through the darkest valley”** (Psalm 23) of life. As a church family, we ought to stand by those of us who suffer for any reasons. But it is not only us on whom this responsibility lies.

We are the Church, because *“we are called to be the Church”*, (A New Creed) and we answered that call. We have a “Head” and a “High Priest” who **“is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us”** (Romans 8:34). Or as the writer of Hebrews puts it: **“Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”** (Hebrews 7:23-25)

His precious and divine presence with us can give us endurance and hope even amidst storms of life, or suffering. As we can read in the booklet that this meditation refers to: *“Jesus wanted those twelve men – and us – to know that our all-powerful, all-loving God is bigger than whatever storm we’re in. He wants his presence to comfort us and calm our fears. He wants us to know that nothing – not wind or waves or storms or fear – will stop him from coming to us.”* (Clinging to Hope in the Storm; ODB)

The Almighty’s providence and strengthening, calming presence is still offered to us. In our troubled world it is encouraging to remember, especially as we wait for relief, good news and hope.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



## Waiting in Hope

*Simeon . . . was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.*

Luke 2:25

### READ LUKE 2:25–35

In the movie *Hachi: A Dog's Tale*, a college professor befriended a stray Akita puppy named Hachi. The dog expressed his loyalty by waiting at the train station each day for the professor to return from work. One day, the professor suffered a fatal stroke. Hachi waited hours at the train station, and for the next ten years he returned each day—awaiting His loving master.

Luke tells the story of a man named Simeon who patiently waited for the coming of his Master (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he saw the Messiah (v. 26). As a result, Simeon kept waiting for the One who would provide “salvation” for God’s people (v. 30). When Mary and Joseph entered the temple with Jesus, the Holy Spirit whispered to Simeon that He was the One! The wait was finally over! Simeon held Christ in his arms—the hope, salvation, and comfort for all people (vv. 28-32).

If we find ourselves in a season of waiting, may we hear the words of the prophet Isaiah with fresh ears: “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:31). As we await Jesus’ return, He provides the hope and strength we need for each new day. – By **Marvin Williams**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Jesus, I will wait for You. Through pain, tears, and uncertainty, help me to not become weary but to rest in Your provision. Amen.**

**For hope in the storms of life, read [Clinging to Hope in the Storm](#).**

When have you become weary as you waited for God? What encouraged you to endure during that challenging season?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Simeon had one clear characteristic: he was in tune with the Spirit. Luke 2 says “the Holy Spirit was on him” (v. 25). The Spirit had revealed that he wouldn’t die before he’d seen Jesus (v. 26) and moved him to go to the temple courts (v. 27). The surrounding verses also reveal the power of the Spirit in his life. The description of Simeon as being “righteous and devout” (v. 25) is connected to the Spirit being on him; and his recognition of Jesus, his song of praise, and his words to Mary and Joseph (vv. 29-35) came through the Spirit. – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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