



**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**  
January 14, 2022  
**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT**  
**DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
**By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces**



Photo: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

**Today's Inspiration in one sentence**

**“Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”**

(John 16:22)

**Did You Know?**

- The **Gospel of John** is one of the most beloved books of the Christian canon. Its stories and images have captured the imaginations of Christians in every generation. Images of Jesus as the bread of life, the good shepherd, and the vine are familiar from Sunday school lessons, sermons, and stained-glass windows.
- John's Gospel is not only one of the most popular writings of the New Testament, it is also distinctive in many aspects of its style and outlook. For example, Jesus does relatively few miracles in John. He teaches in much longer speeches than in the Synoptic Gospels. The “I am” sayings that characterize Jesus' speech do not occur in any other Gospel.
- Trying to understand where, when and why this author wrote can help us to understand why his portrait of Jesus often looks different from the other Gospels. But historical investigation can only take us so far; it may help us to understand how John's language came about, but it will not answer all the questions a reader may have about John's distinctiveness.
- In its earlier manuscripts, the Gospel of John was anonymous, as were all the Gospels. Their titles, which attributed authorship, were added only later. The title added to John in the Greek manuscripts was “according to John”. But even these titles do not identify which John (or which Matthew, Mark or Luke) wrote these works. Christian writers of the second and third centuries attributed this Gospel to John, the son of Zebedee, a disciple of Jesus.

(Westminster Bible Companion: John; by Gail R. Oday & Susan E. Hulen; pages 1-3)

**Personal Insight**

I believe we all need the calming promise of peace offered to us as the numbers of Omicron cases soar not only in our province but all over the world.

Jesus doesn't sugar coat the situation: **“In this world you will have trouble.”** (John 16:33) And it doesn't have to be Covid-19, although for many of us the pandemic added an extra pressure on already existing troubles. For the first century Christians this distress was severe persecution; for the people of our time, it can be many varied issues, not less tragic than the threat of torture and execution.

With the realistic assessment of our condition however comes an encouragement: **“But take heart!”** (John 16:33) In Jesus we are offered the continuous presence and support of the Almighty God, regardless our “troubles”. As Jesus promises: **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”** (John 14:27)

Grace and Peace to You All, Rev. Maria



## Escape or Peace?

*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

John 16:33

### READ [John 16:25–33](#)

“ESCAPE.” The billboard shouts the benefits of having a hot tub installed. It gets my attention—and gets me thinking. My wife and I have talked about getting a hot tub . . . someday. It’d be like a vacation in our backyard! Except for the cleaning. And the electric bill. And . . . suddenly, the hoped-for escape starts to sound like something I might need escape from.

Still, that word entices so effectively because it promises something we want: Relief. Comfort. Security. Escape. It’s something our culture tempts and teases us with in many ways. Now, there’s nothing wrong with resting or a getaway to someplace beautiful. But there’s a difference between escaping life’s hardships and trusting God with them.

In John 16, Jesus tells His disciples that the next chapter of their lives will test their faith. “In this world you will have trouble,” He summarizes at the end. And then He adds this promise, “But take heart! I have overcome the world” (v. 33). Jesus didn’t want His disciples to cave in to despair. Instead, He invited them to trust Him, to know the rest He provides: “I have told you these things,” he said, “so that in me you may have peace” (v. 33).

Jesus doesn’t promise us a pain-free life. But He does promise that as we trust and rest in Him, we can experience a peace that’s deeper and more satisfying than any escape the world tries to sell us. – By **Adam Holz**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Father, help me to trust You so that I may find peace and rest in You. Amen.**

How have you seen invitations to escape in the world around you recently? How well do you think they might deliver on those promises? Read [Finding Peace in a Troubled World](#).

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

After three years of following their Teacher, seeing His miracles, and expecting to see Him overthrow the Roman occupation, His disciples were confused when He told them He was leaving (John 16:5–7). But that’s not all. He also said that in His absence, they’d have trouble (vv. 1–4, 16–18). Sensing their alarm, Jesus signaled that before long they’d understand God’s plan to overcome the oppressive world rule of His enemy (v. 33). Only after He’d risen from the dead and sent His Spirit would they understand the self-sacrificing goodness of God. Jesus exposed the accusing lies of Satan (v. 11), overcame with love the worst of our sins, and conquered death by showing His power over the grave. - By **Mart DeHaan**

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