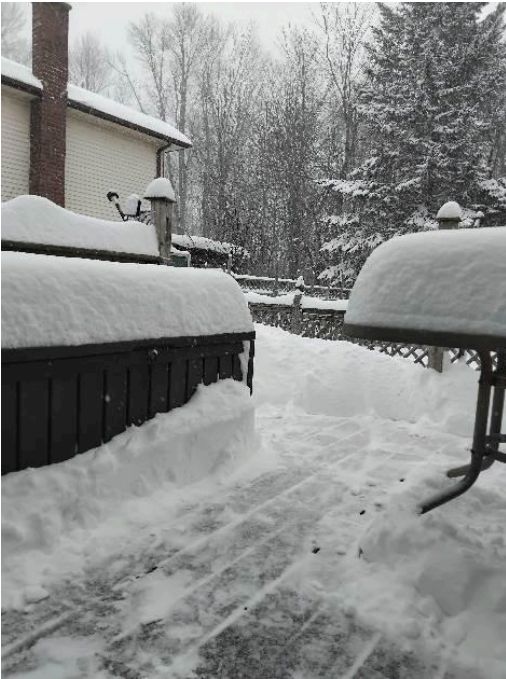


Monday Musing March 3, 2025



Shovels...

A few weeks ago, the snow was so deep on the deck that I had to get out and start shoveling it off the side. Except that, the snow going off the side was piling higher and higher and was now higher than the side of the deck. The steps were long buried. And the snow kept coming. I finished what I could and went inside to get warm. And to rest. The snow was heavy to push, heavy to lift, and heavy to carry.

Right now, life feels like that. Right now, there is so much happening globally that I find my mind is bogged down as if I am pushing the snow off the deck or shoveling it to the side to make room for the everyday stuff and keep the deck safe from the weight of the snow. Right now, the news and social media and Facebook and You Tube and, and, and, are packing high with the weight of a horrific snow storm of greed, narcissism, racism, corrupting power and control, with no care at all for that which

holds it all together, the world that is, people. You and me. And I can't seem to shovel all this ...well you know...off the deck of my living. I'm tired of it but I know I need to be aware and cautious of it too because it keeps snowing tariff threats and economic woes. So, what do we do?

Maybe if we liken all of what is happening to shoveling, we might get a picture that we can't shovel it all at once. We need to take small shovel-fulls. And we need to be timely about it. Strategic for the health of ourselves: mind, body and spirit.

Last week Louise gave a handout at knitting on managing this storm of news and world events so that we don't become overburdened, feel despair or hopelessness, instead being able to maintain the ability to enjoy life too. So, reduce the amount of snow on your shovel. Take one section at a time. Be wary of how you carry the weight of the snow, the storm of information. Maybe even, take a look at yourself in the mirror and see if your shoulders are up or down. Is your body tight and stressed? Take time to look after you.

Even Jesus needed time to go away from the crowds, the news, the social media of his day, to be alone. And to pray. Yes, we can pray too for the strength of faith and the presence of the Spirit to keep us well.

Next then comes planning to do something. If we can't change the storm of events and news, we can change how we respond to it, not just for ourselves, but with and for others. We can plan to love and serve and bring God's peace and calm to those struggling in the storm, in the snow, and the cold, and the fear. We can offer God's loving hospitality to each other and the stranger, with hope that comes with actions accordingly. We can find the courage too to stand up, speak up, and walk with Jesus.

This week we begin our journey of Lent. It starts eating up the sweets of our cupboards to make room for the journey to challenge ourselves, our living and our loving, against what Jesus said and did to teach us and show us the way. Ash Wednesday, we will place ashes on our foreheads or hands to show we know and are sorry for the times we have not been as gracious and caring as we might or too afraid to speak for justice. Then week after week, we will go deeper and deeper with Jesus, watching him live out his faith, inviting us to follow till his last week and ultimate sacrifice.

Carry your own cross to follow him? What is that cross for you? Something heavy, a burden to be resolved, or an invitation to step outside your comfort zone? Perhaps it is to find something new for clearing the snow of the storm? What might it be for you?

Whatever it is, be careful lifting, guard your back, don't twist too quickly, and ... use a snow blower if you can. That way you'll only have to clear twice a day. A sensible dose.

Peace always,

Rev. Deb Foster, Minister, St. Andrew's United in Markham

905-294-0351

minister@standrewsmarkham.com

Prayer

Holy God of the journey, you call us to follow. You call us to serve.
You call us to work for justice and peace.
In the storm of this world's making, with greed and power and control,
Guide us to respond not with apathy, not frozen in the snowbank,
But with certain hope, a strategy, with manageable sized shoveling
To clear a way of understanding and to clear a way of action. Words and deeds.
Love and service. Justice and peace. Amen.

Scripture

Lent One

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

My father was a wandering Aramean.

Psalms 91

I will raise you up on eagles' wings.

Romans 10:8b-13

Declare with your mouth; believe with your heart.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus tested in the desert.

TR Question (theological reflection)

What are you carrying that you need to sort or let go and hand over to God this Lenten time? How are you managing through this storm of scary uncertainty in the world? What might God be thinking? What is really happening and why?