



# GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH

25 Buchanan Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 0A4



---

***Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.***

--1 Peter 4: 12-13

To the Saints of the George Street Pastoral Charge,

Living in Canada as we do it is easy to imagine that the pandemic, we are fighting is not really something new. New to us maybe, such suffering is not new to the world and many of our faith siblings deal with pervasive health threats on a constant basis.

The whole idea of suffering with Christ is not distasteful to Christians though I suspect that we always hoped for something a little less lingering and much more physically intimidating. I mean, if it were a demonic invasion, we would feel that there was some grander purpose at stake. As it is, we are being brought to a stand-still by a virus, were it not for symptoms we would never even notice it.

Peter is not specific about how we would suffer or how long we would suffer just that we should not be surprised that we do suffer and that we should put our suffering into the context of Christ suffering. I do not imagine Peter was asked to be a cheerleader very often. He kind of sucks at it.

Positive spins can be difficult to manage, sometimes they feel like adventures in stretching the truth. We are about a year and a few months into Pandemic restrictions here in St. John's, NL, Canada, and it really is not getting much easier to deal with. We are better off than our friends and family in Ontario and Alberta but that does not provide much joy.

Peter is not wrong though. There was much more that Jesus had to contend with on a daily basis than the obvious threats to his life. Sometimes, the biggest obstacle of the day was disciples not quite on board or, actively resisting what he was teaching. Jesus suffered the mundane as well as the profound. Why should it be any different for us who have been called to follow in Christ's footsteps?

Our faith is not about us. It is about what we believe in. If we believe we have been called by Christ, then we know it is our responsibility to follow and we have been warned that the path Christ treads is not a pleasant garden path. It will take us to a garden where we wrestle with what God wills and what we ourselves would will. The example given by Christ is that in such conflict we are to lay our wills aside and be conformed to Christ who yields to the will of the Father.

It is out of that, that our rejoicing comes. In the understanding that we are on the right path with the knowledge that on this path Christ defeated the twin powers of death and hell. We rejoice that we have found the path of life and as we follow it we find Christ' glory shining around us and illuminating the way forward.



# GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH

25 Buchanan Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 0A4



---

Christian author G.K. Chesterton once wrote, "Christianity is not an ideal that has been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried." If you struggle you are on the right path and on this path, Christ walks with you as do the saints of God in every age and every nation. You are most definitely not alone.

There will be days when you wish it were all over. How many mornings, I wonder, did Christ rise early, find a solitary place to come to his Father in prayer and share his vulnerability in wanting the path to end? Christ, more than any other, can empathize with your fatigue, doubt and fading hopes to persevere. Christ, more than any other, lends you his strength to follow him on his way so that none will walk in isolation.

If you are tired. Rest.

The road will wait. It must still be walked. Set your pace so that you may finish and take every stride in turn with Christ Jesus and rejoice as with Christ you see the glory of Christ revealed by God's grace.

One more step. Christ is waiting.

One more step. Christ is watching.

One more step. Christ rejoices as you walk with him.

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

Reverend John Maich  
(226) 208-0452  
revmaich@yahoo.ca