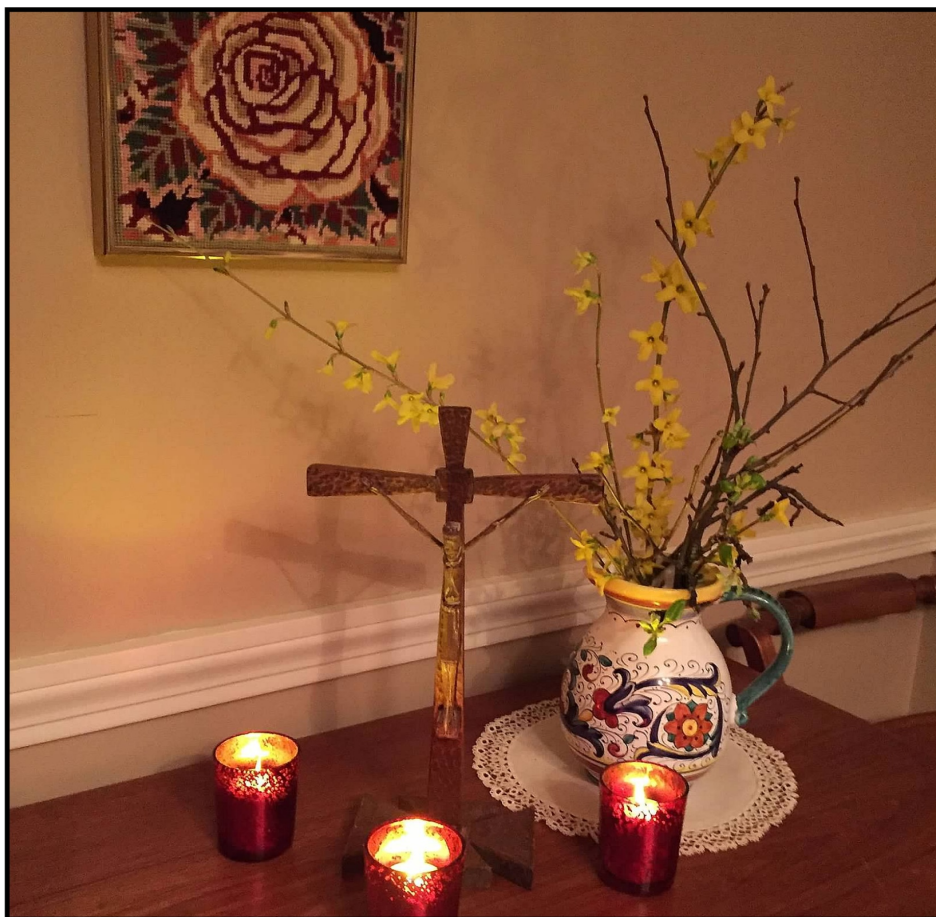




OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

SNAPSHOTS OF LIFE DURING
A ONCE IN 100 YEAR
PANDEMIC

Seeing God with a little help from my friends





The Calm before the storm...
HTELC Women's Retreat March 6-8,
2020





PANDEMIC

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear).

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love-
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

--Lynn Ungar 3/11/20



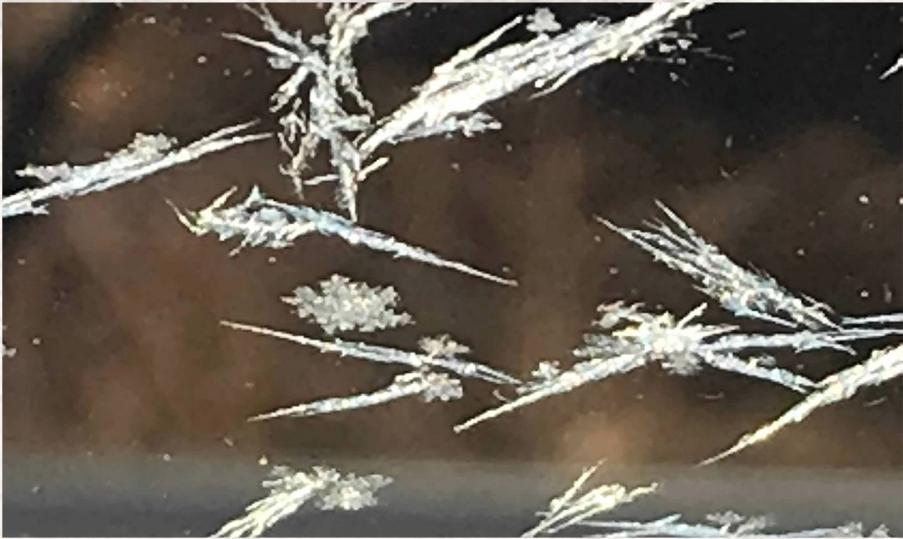
Friday, March 13, 2020

We had been introduced to a new coronavirus in December of 2019 appearing in Wuhan, China. It seems to have come from a wet animal market. It was later named SARS-Cov-2 and if you became ill, you had covid 19. In some people it was causing a mild cold and in others, severe respiratory problems. By March 2, 2020 there was a case in New Hampshire and on March 12 the first case in Maine was announced. Travel to/from China had been restricted previously.

But as cases mounted in Europe, travel to/from Europe now banned. On this Friday, everything ramped up. Schools in Maine and NH were readying for online learning and possible closures. The news introduced us to social distancing (be 6 feet apart) and grocery store shelves were stripped bare as people planned for at least 14 days at home. But being outside and walking the beach on spring like day helped to bring peace.

**KATRINA KENNISON
WRITES THAT
"INSTEAD OF GOING
AND DOING, WE ARE
STAYING AND
BEING".**

**"THE ICE LOOKS
JAGGED KIND OF
LIKE MY NERVES
FEEL"**



Monday March 16- Tuesday March 17, 2020
Over the weekend, Local schools transitioned from being in school to online learning for at least 2 weeks to stop the spread of the virus. At medical offices, meetings galore and procedural changes happened at a pace that no one could keep up with. "Flatten the curve" they say. I needed some relief so I asked my special friends Nina and Erlinde to join me in a daily picture sharing.
"God, open the eyes of my heart".



"MY HEART IS HERE."



Dog yoga, Cat meditation, Nina meditation



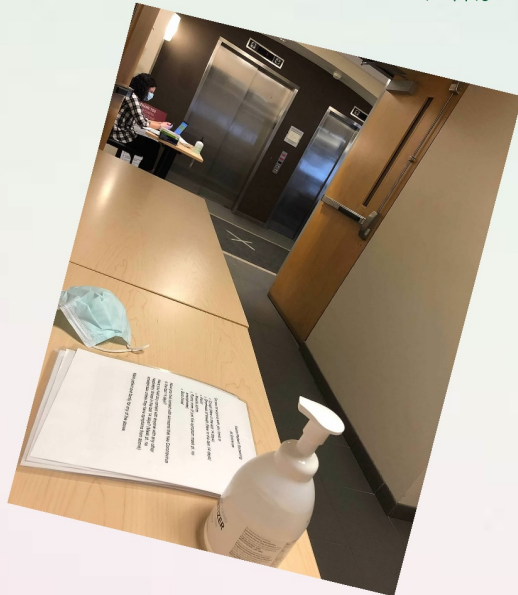
Wednesday March 18
First signs of spring and the pediatric
Infectious team that Leslie works with.



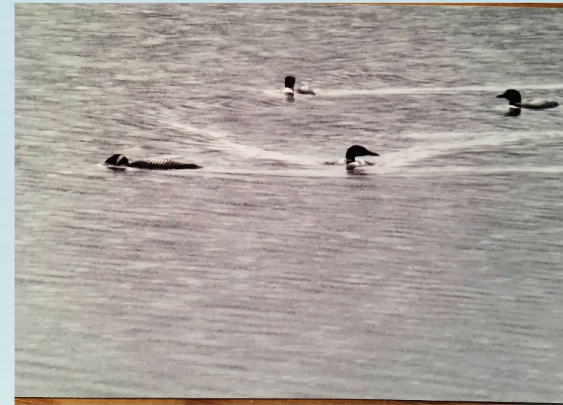


March 19, 2020

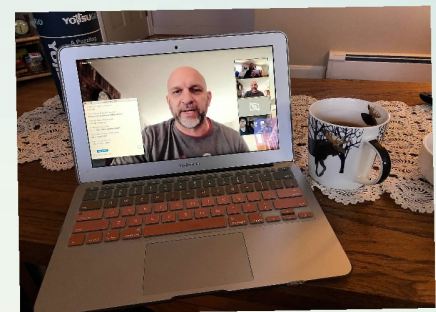
Adapting to the "new norm"...setting up home offices, walks away from people on the beach, working in separate rooms, setting up new yoga spaces, screening patients at doctor's offices, shifting supplies from schools to medical facilities for PPE (personal protective equipment). With worries about the virus, the stock market plunges. We are defining new priorities, not facing new problems.



Friday March 20-Sunday March 22, 2020
We keep finding new ways to explore this crazy world. The cases of covid 19 are mounting and the warnings are dire. Many signs around town show the outcomes -take out anyone? How do we find peace? Through our "art studio", picnics at the beach and church service via



Social distancing or social dancing?
Physically distancing and socially close?



In the baroness, there is hope.

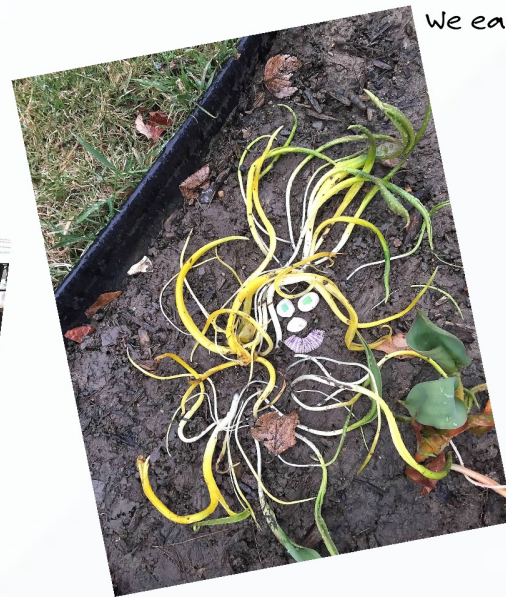


Monday March 23- Tuesday March 24, 2020

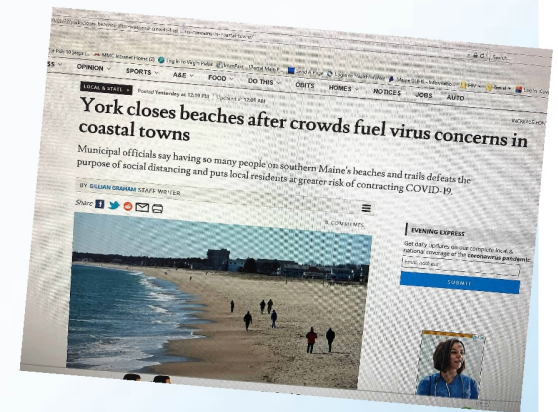
The cases of the virus continue to climb. "Physically distancing" becomes the norm, although estimating 6 feet away is tough. Using pieces of tape on the carpet help. No more picnics on the beach as they are now closed. More states and cities are initiating orders to stay home. Portland, Maine adds its name to that list. Schools in Maine now planning online learning through April 27th, NH through May 4. March Madness has been cancelled and the summer Olympics have been postponed. People in countries like Italy need to have permits to go out of the house. Covid 19 loves crowds and close indoor spaces they have found. But the horse is out of the barn and NYC is getting desperate. Workers are being creative on how to have enough ventilators for the people that need them. People are out of jobs and the government is passing bills to help- stimulus checks, small business payroll protection, and enhancements to unemployment. We get to know Dr Anthony Fauci, Director of the NIAID, through the Federal Coronavirus task force lead by Vice President Pence. They give us daily news. The stock market goes up then it goes down. The news is overwhelming. Doing yard work and bringing in branches to force into bloom help us get through these days.

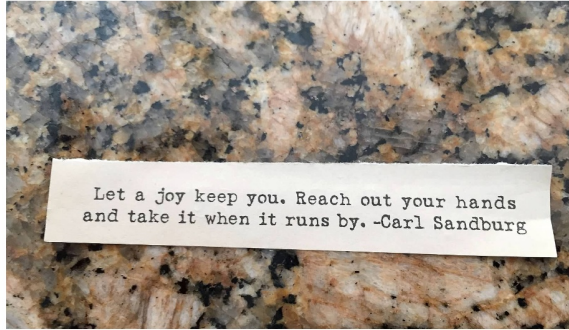


Pussy willow branches. We'll know it is over when I can deliver these baby trees to each of the three.

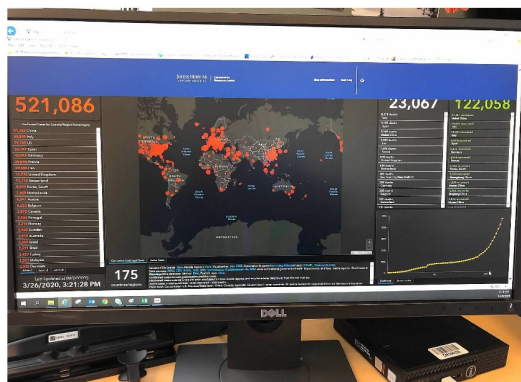


We each guess which branch will bloom first.
Tulip mermaid by Nina



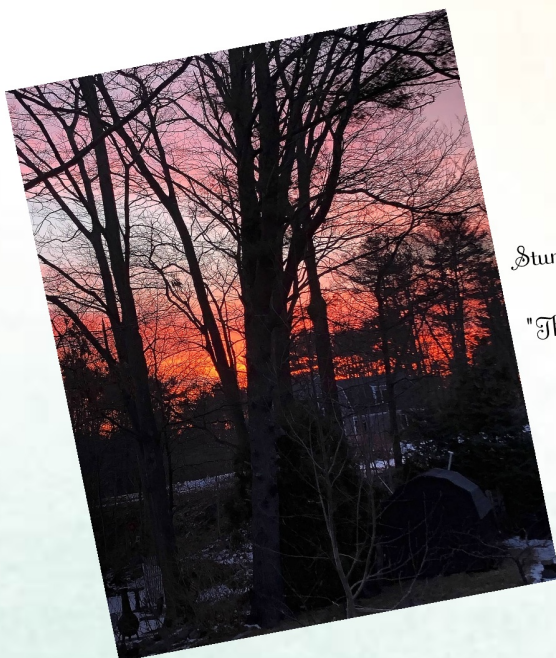


A spring snowstorm brings us joy (including puppies walking in the snow).



Wednesday March 25- Thursday March 26, 2020
 The confirmed cases of covid 19 in the world go over 500,00 and the US is nearing the top of the board with the most cases. Our local governors are starting to put into place stay at home orders. MaineHealth, Leslie's employer, curbs out of state travel (even to NH). People are trying to work from home but businesses deemed "nonessential" are struggling. 3.3 million people applied for unemployment last week. No one knows how long we will need to stay separated.
 What made you smile today?

Eighth day of self isolation and it's like Vegas in my house. We're losing money by the minute, cocktails are acceptable at any hour, and nobody knows what time it is.



*God's water color lessons.
 Stunning to see the fire (power) of the day and all God's potential that lay ahead!
 "There was never a night or a problem that could defeat sunrise or hope" -Bernard Williams*



*Is the sun reflecting on a lake?
 Sunset at Nina's*

Friday March 27- Sunday March 29, 2020

The Governor of NH issues stay in place orders for the next 30 days. One speech eloquently tells us, if we have done our job right, nothing happens. This is the day that Carsons would have left to go to Florida to see family. But no flights are flying, the risk is too great.

Everything possible has gone online. Getting a glimpse into people's homes- seeing their family and especially their pets. Entertainers start doing shows from their homes, spoofs of everything and many compilations of musical hits appear for our viewing pleasure.

Erlinde, Nina and I decide to try to zoom together. We all share our trials and silver linings. Erlinde shows us the forsythia she has blooming on her mantle. Michelle sends pictures of the prototypes of masks that New Balance may start manufacturing. LL Bean starts manufacturing masks and breweries start making hand sanitizer. So many acts of kindness done around the world.



The Peace Of Wild Things
When Despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rest in his beauty on the water, and the great heron
feeds.

I come into the peace of the wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry



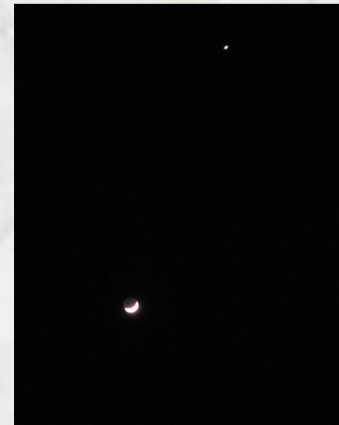
Keeping busy over the weekend includes yard work, more walks around the woods, baking... a relative peace.



Is there a light at the end of the tunnel?



Missy stump (or mossy stump)



Venus seen near the moon



Social Distancing



Let's stick together while staying apart.



Urban Spring

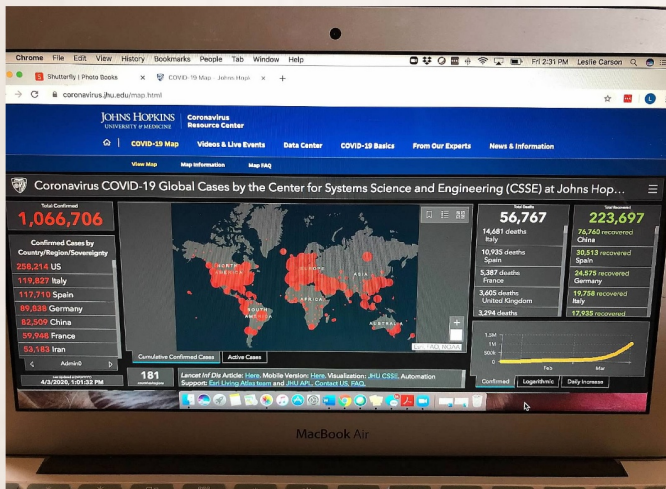
Monday March 30, 2020- Wednesday
April 1, 2020

On Monday President Trump extended the social distancing guidelines for 30 more days, until April 30. Governor Mills from Maine on Tuesday signs an executive order to "Stay Healthy at Home" which requires people to stay home unless they are leaving for an essential job or an essential activity. Debates rage about what are essential businesses. Take out becomes curb side delivery. April comes in with rain showers and another teacher plays an April Fool's joke on Scott telling the students it is his birthday.

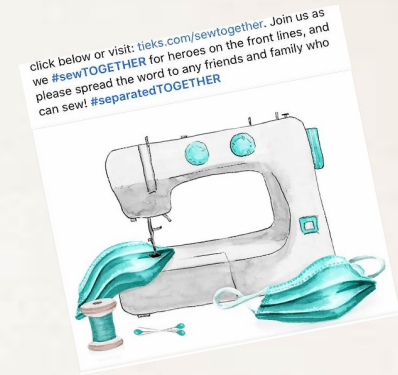
Nourishment and Sacred Spaces



Guess who belongs to each space?



Thursday April 2- Sunday April 5, 2020
 Week 3 of therapy and teaching from home. The world goes over 1 million cases. 6.6 million people apply for unemployment last week. Decisions are made to hunker down and not go out. CDC recommends wearing face coverings by all whenever you go out (but still stay 6 feet apart!). PPE shortages abound, the Federal Reserve has been emptied and shipped to states for health care workers.... Sewing masks at home starts in earnest. What they look like depends on what supplies you already have at the house. Palm Sunday remotely?? Scott and I join the virtual choir.





I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD



God's Creative Abundance



God is with You
Wherever You Worship
Our Hearts are with You
Wherever You are

Buildings on our
campus are now
closed and Locked Until
further Notice

Contact the Parish Office
for information or assistance:
office@parishwork.net
www.parishwork.net



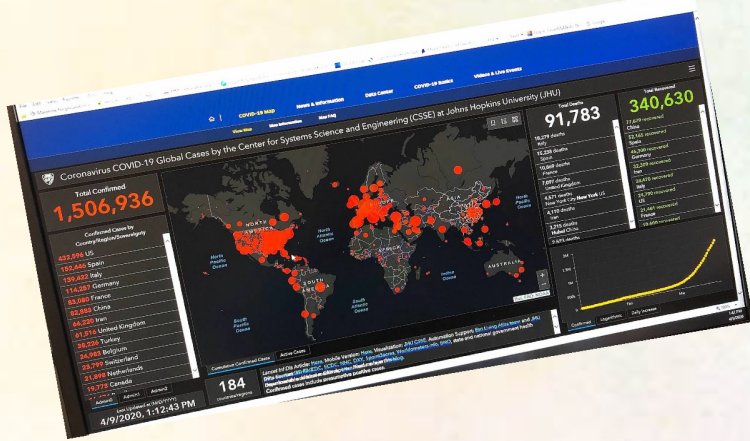
Balm for my soul



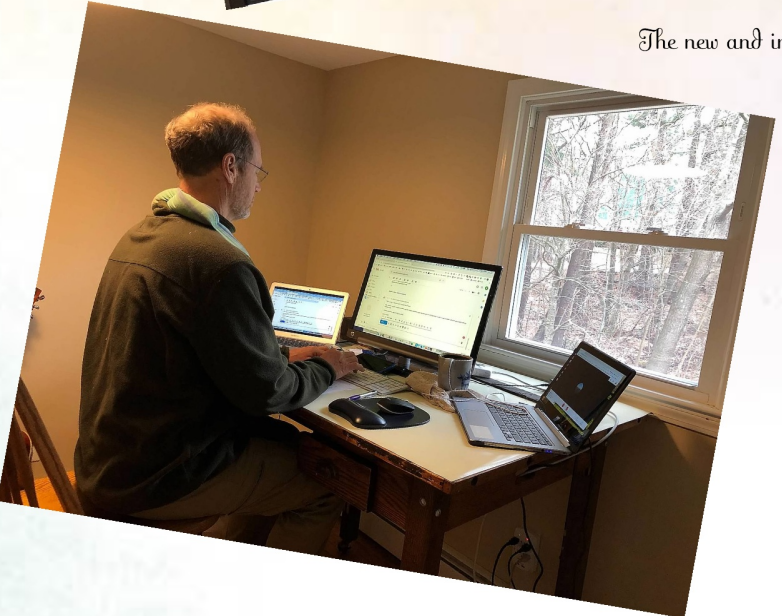
*Splish, Splash I am taking a bath.
Abundance!*

Monday April 6, 2020-Thursday April 9, 2020
We are told this week will be this generations "Pearl Harbor" or 9/11. Deaths are expected to peak from covid 19. Yet, models show that all the measures to social distance are doing their part and the curve is flattening. In Maine and New Hampshire deaths remain around 20 each. They say the peak for the country may be around April 15. The Maine Education Director asks state schools to close for the rest of the year. By the end of the week, 17 million people will have applied for unemployment since this all began. Crossing state lines becomes more taboo. At work, we start to be required to wear a surgical mask unless in an office alone with the door closed. Stores limit the number of people in the store at a time and have you stand 6 feet apart, go down aisles one way. We go over 1.5 million cases in the world and the US becomes the epicenter. Studies show through the genetics that the virus has been in the US for much longer then they thought and not only came by way of China but also Europe.

**Surgeon general:
This week will be
our Pearl Harbor**



Waiting in line outside the store



The new and improved home office



Erlinde made this wonderful video of her laundry blowing in the wind while the peepers made music in the background

Nina

Beautiful, powerful words...wind, shadows, sun, dance also a song of heart. Makes me take a refreshing breath.



A visit in the cemetery

There was a full "pink" moon on April 7. We all enjoyed it on different evenings and at different times... even 2:30am when our hamster wheel minds could not shut down.



Today is a new day.

Good Friday. April 10, 2020



Yesterday, Maundy Thursday, I had several conversations with coworkers about holding their grandchildren in this time of covid 19. One has a grandchild due to be born in 2 weeks and is scared that she won't be able to hold the baby because she is coming to work in a medical office. The other had a grandchild that was born a month ago and she told me how she got to see her through the window on a recent visit. Not much after that, someone texted the deep sadness at not seeing her daughter at Easter in person even though they are a mere town apart. What sadness this Holy Week is bringing us. It made me ponder "touch". Maundy Thursday worship centers around the last supper and includes the washing of feet. Touch...

As I lay in bed this morning and Scott's toe slightly brushed my calf in bed, I was filled with gratitude that I am not "physically" completely alone. I have not touched another person in 28 days except my husband. At work we do a dance to stay 6 feet away and close our office doors, cover our facial expressions with masks. I have hardly seen anyone in person and many of those were strangers. I never realized how much I miss people's hugs, handshakes, hands on my shoulder. I ponder on this Good Friday the touch that may have occurred as Christ walked through the crowds and then was crucified. Did the people standing on the street lean on the person next to them? Did they hide their faces in their neighbor's shoulder? Did the women have babes in arms? As Mary cried at the foot of the cross, did others lay their hands on her shoulder to comfort her? Did the disciples comfort each other with hugs? What did Joseph feel as he wrapped Christ's body in linen and laid him in the tomb? Before Good Friday, many are accounted to have touched Jesus or even his clothes and were healed. I feel lost without it...

So today, ponder touch. Hold the hand or hug those physically with you. Snuggle your cat or dog. Feel gratitude you are not physically alone. Pray for strength to endure these hardships away from those we want so much to be near, to keep as many people safe as possible. But also pray for a quick return to being able to hug our parents, our sisters/brothers, our children, our grandchildren, our friends and our neighbors.

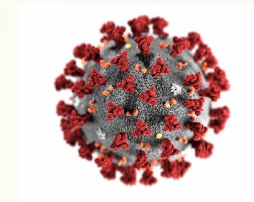
This Easter will be different. But bring some joy if you can. I plan to dress up and attempt an Easter Bonnet. Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Alleluia.



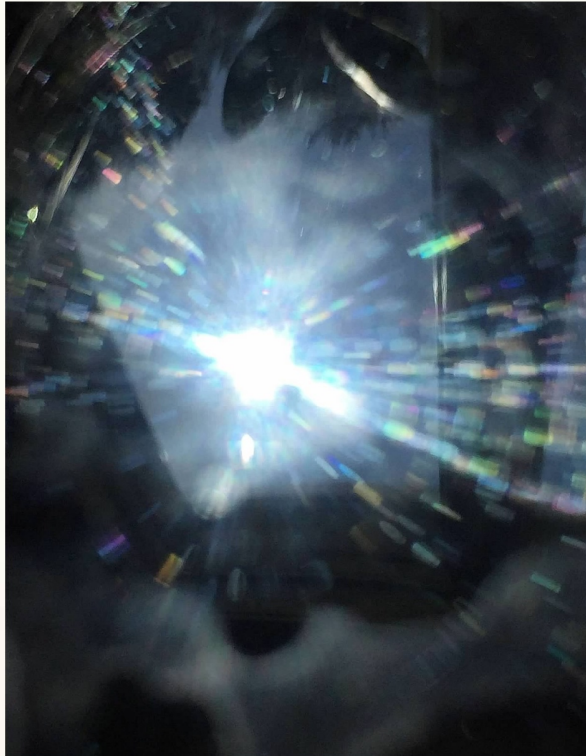
*Saturday April 11, 2020
This marked this first time that every US
state and territory had a federal disaster
declaration simultaneously. 20,000 in US
have now lost their lives. One of these is a
close friend's of Nina, John. He always
had a smile and he was a teacher for many
years. Our hearts are all heavy. "Stay here
and keep watch with me".*



I used to associate this shape with beauty with its spherical shape and interesting outcroppings. But now I only see fear and weeping.



EASTER SUNDAY



The light has burst forth from the tomb (and
lives on my kitchen faucet)



*Remembering Moms not with us this
Easter*

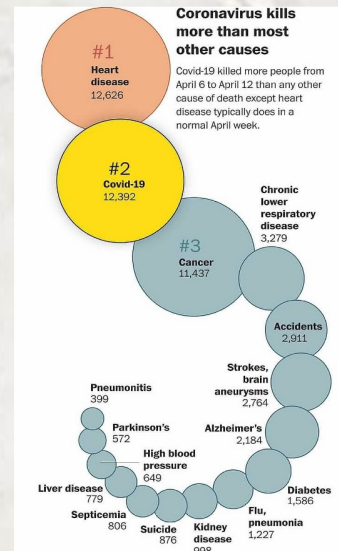


Easter Bonnet

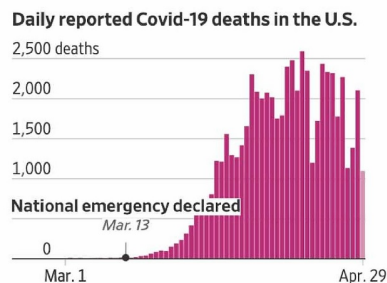


End your zoom meetings with a hug

Monday April 14, 2020- Thursday April 16, 2020
 The blame game has begun. Was the federal government so entwined in the Trump impeachment trials that the threat went unchecked. Did the WHO do their job? Good news- the curve is flattening. But 2 million cases in the world ??? How to reopen? The state governors were the ones to enact stay at home orders. They are now bonding together in coalitions to plan how to reopen. We need to release the valve slowly, have more testing, an army of contact tracers and social distancing until there is a vaccine in 12-18 months??? People at work are starting to worry about their jobs. Many schools now online learning for the rest of this school year. "When will this end is not the right question. The right question is how do we continue."



Emotionally weary



Note: For all 50 states and D.C., U.S. territories and cruises. Data is updated daily.
 Source: Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering

Statistics... Friend or Foe?