

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” - Romans 15:13*

The daffodils are pushing out of the ground in the church garden. Some are even blooming. I'm not actually certain when it started because my attention has been elsewhere. It seems like they appeared suddenly, overnight, out of nowhere. They are a welcome sight especially as a prelude to walking into an empty building. I wish you could see them; that we could see them together.

Even though my allergies start to flare I get excited about this season. The daffodils are a sure sign that Spring is approaching, and the worst of Winter is behind us (said the Clevelander). Soon we will be seeing more of the sun and feeling warmer temperatures.

Spring has always been a hopeful time for me. Opening Day. March Madness. College softball season. Riding outside. Ditching the sweaters and dark colors. Driving with the windows rolled down and the stereo cranked up. The Metroparks turning green again. Fresh air circulating through the house.

It's a hopeful time for the church as well. The forty-day journey of Lent can be tiresome, and we still have Holy Week events in front of us. But we can catch the glint of Easter on the horizon. In the familiar glimmer we are reminded that new life is on the way... just like always.

My personal devotional this morning included a portion of Psalm 118: *“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!”* Lutheran theologian Martin Marty reflected on this verse by saying, “No one gives thanks because God is good. God merits thanks intrinsically, in the nature of the case, because the chief feature in the experience of God and the witness to God is that *‘he is good; his love endures forever.’*” Hope springs from the fact that God, by his very nature, is good and merciful and gracious. We enter this day under the providence of a good God, which brings us back to the church garden.

It would be easy, this year, to allow the darkness of the coronavirus to cover us like a funeral pall and miss the good news that is surely still coming. Instead, the daffodils offer an important reminder. They are blooming regardless of the virus and thus become a sign of hope. The virus does not have complete control. It can't stop Spring from coming and it can't stop Easter from coming. At some point in time the virus will stop spreading and we will be free again. We will rejoice in the promise of Easter, that death is conquered by our good God who is the source of abundant and everlasting life, and whose love endures forever.

People of God, be hopeful!

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Lord God, the signs of new life are coming into view. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we remain hopeful for new beginnings. Strengthen us during this difficult time, and turn our hearts toward the life giving power of your love. Amen

