

Good morning,



I just saw a few very tiny snowflakes fall outside my office window. They will probably disappear before they touch the ground. However it is a reminder to me that it is January and the middle of winter despite the lack of snow cover. I remember when we arrived here at the end of January fifteen years ago. There was bitter wind and biting cold in Ottawa as the moving truck pulled away with our stuff, but when we arrived here I was stunned to see one of the neighbours washing his car in the driveway. There was no snow that winter except for a few small flakes. I hurried outside with a teaspoon, filled it up and took a picture of it. I added the caption, "snowstorm in Nanaimo!" and sent it to all my friends in eastern Canada. That resulted in quite a few groans and rude comments.

But we have had a lot of snow some winters. At those times I remembered the giant snowblower I used to have in Ottawa as I shovelled the sidewalk here.

We live with the weather in the same way as we live with many other circumstances like aging, health, shifting politics, and a host of other uncertainties. We would like to have certainty in life but it is not often available or turns into an issue of debate. This provides the opportunity of faith to help see us through the uncertainties of life.

Hebrews 11:1 says "**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**" It raises the issue of what we hope for and what we do not see. What I hope for is that God cares for this world and us. What I do not see physically with my eyes is God standing before us. The best we get is what Martin Luther called the "*hidden God.*" That is, God hidden in the beauty of creation, the laughter of a child, the love of a friend. Faith might have eyes to see that. Luther added that God is also revealed. That happened at Christmas in the child Jesus. It kept happening as Christ showed us compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and promised to be with us in loving community. Along the way faith is borne and begins to see that God still cares for this world and us as the Spirit of Christ whispers, "***I am with you always until the end of the age.***" A lot of things can change, but faith can carry us through.

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Coming up at Hope:

Jan 30 @ 10:00 am *Hymn Sing* on Zoom

Jan 31 @ 8:30 am *Men's Breakfast* meeting

Jan 31 @ 9:00 am- noon *Hope Quilters* in the sanctuary

Feb 2 @ 10:00 am *Sunday Worship Service*

Feb 4 @ 1:30 pm *Tuesday afternoon Bible Study* on Zoom

The *Sunday service* and *Invitation to Zoom* will appear in your dial on Saturday morning.

The Lord is with us.

Pastor Terry