

Dear Friends,

It's a story of greed, lust for power, brute force met by courage and heroism, justice thwarted, mercy denied, truth twisted, sacrifice and glory. I describe the passion of Christ, but I wonder... I could be describing the world today. In two millennia, what has changed? Swords have been exchanged for missiles, drones, artillery, and the misuse of technology. As in the days of Herod and Pontius Pilate it is the innocent who suffer.

And so, the story of Christ's passion has lost none of its immediacy and relevance. Breath-taking hardness of heart in the face of unspeakable suffering is not unique to Ukraine. It has been a crimson thread running through human history throughout our lifetime and back to the days when the first caveman picked up a cudgel against his neighbour, instead of offering the hand of friendship and sharing scarce resources.

In the face of so much cruelty and heartbreak Christ's passion reminds us that at the heart of the universe is the God of love. Man's inhumanity to man will not have the last word. There will be a day of reckoning – if not in this world, then in the next. Those who consider themselves beyond the reach of justice will find that they are not beyond the sovereignty of God.

In the meantime, we have choices to make. We can worry, become anxious and watch too many images of suffering or we can pray and then do all the good we can, in all the places we can, for all the people we can for as long as ever we can. We could despair at the challenges facing the world or we can find inspiration in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and devote ourselves to acts of kindness. We can find the inspiration to do a good deed every day with no desire for reward and choose to do no harm. We can lament that the world seems to be going crazy or we can build local communities of faith where we model a different way of being, loving one another as Christ has loved us.

Passiontide and Easter present again the opportunity to choose life, to choose faith hope and love, to experience Resurrection. May God guide our choices and inspire our actions.

God bless you,

Keith

Keith C. Beckingham, Superintendent Minister.