

Devotion, Holy Week, April 7, 2024

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

I am adjusting to being back in Atlanta in springtime. When I left, it was right after Christmas. I skipped all of winter, but also missed Lent and Easter. It has been a shock to come home to fully blooming azaleas, pine pollen, and green leaves. More importantly, it has been an adjustment to preach about Eastertide, when I missed Easter. I did see a lovely sunrise from the balcony of a ship in the Pacific on Easter, but I missed celebrating the resurrection with my church family. I need a little more Easter before I move on to life after that joyous occurrence.

The post-Easter time lectionary readings for Year B are from 1 John, a letter written to a very Greek Christian congregation or group of churches sometime in the early first century. The letter has no Old Testament quotations and addresses current alternate Greek philosophies, and the author does not appear to know the synoptic gospels or Paul's writings. But the author clearly knows the gospel of John and at times paraphrases sections of it.

It is interesting that the Eastertide readings are from this letter. The focus of 1 John is on testimony to who Jesus was – not a ghost, but a real human being who was the Son of God. He lived, he died, he was resurrected, and we are all to live by his teachings and to accept the presence of the Holy Spirit to guide us. Jesus is alive in our hearts, and the Holy Spirit is here to help us live out the path Jesus set for us.

1 John tells us how to go on after Easter is over and reminds us of the joyous gifts that Jesus left us as we follow him. Easter is not over, and it is our job to bring about God's kingdom now, on this earth. Alleluias don't end when the Easter lilies wilt – they continue on as we sing praises to our savior. We will celebrate Eastertide until Pentecost, as we watch our flowers bloom and the birds sing and the earth renew itself at this wonderful time of rebirth. He is risen, and all life can celebrate.

Jeanne