

# The Lakeside



## Message in a bottle

Verse of the day for Monday March 4, 2024 - John 16: 3, Isaiah 41:10

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Read John 16 and Isaiah 41 for meditation and inspiration.



## ***TOGETHER IN THE FAMILY OF GOD***

Dear Lakesiders and friends,

When you think of what we have endured during the scourge of Covid-19 and living with the realization that “staying in”, “isolate”, “social distance”, “hunker down”, and “makes-up” are facts of life, no wonder the mental illness of loneliness is overwhelming many across the world. Many are still shut-in, only coming out to others in very tentative ways and choosing Zoom over in-person meetings, face-time over face-to-face visits. This all is having a profound negative effect. God created us to be social, community centered, intimate beings.

One of the world-famous author/psychiatrists, Dr. Paul Tournier, once called loneliness "the most devastating malady of the age." Another eminent physician has said of loneliness, "There is no human condition so acute-or so universal." Loneliness "doesn't happen just on dark days," novelist Faith Baldwin has written, "it can pierce you like a knife on a spring morning or a golden summer afternoon, no matter where you are or what you are doing." And I don't have to tell you that during the global pandemic, the piercing pain of loneliness reached epic proportions.

It was Good Friday. Through a series of chance circumstances, a well-known actress found herself sitting in a crowded church, listening to a reading of the "Passion of the Lord." For months the woman had been suffering from what she described as a "terrible cavity somewhere in the abdominal region." She had been examined by several doctors who found no physical cause for her pain. She had undergone exploratory surgery at her own insistence. Again, she was found to be well physically. Now, in church, as the Passion Story moved toward its climax, she felt the cavity cut deeper into her being than ever before: an overwhelming feeling of emptiness. Then came Jesus' words, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" The woman said, "I shall never forget that blessed moment when, in my emptiness, I felt at one with Jesus. I realized that His anguished cry to the Heavens was coming from the very depths of His soul. I realized that this Jesus, whose friends had betrayed and abandoned Him was my present experience. I was alone! I was lonely!

Let's remember that God created us to be relational beings. To relate first to Him and then with each other. One of our great responsibilities today is to help people find their way into the church, God's family and have a beautiful loving relationship with the church family as together we dispel loneliness in the arms of a loving Heavenly Father.

Together In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roger".

Roger