



*From the desk of Bishop Mark J. Webb*

*"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."  
- 2 Corinthians 3.5-6*

*"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." - 2 Corinthians 9.8*

*"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4.19*

Dear Friends,

We prepare to enter Holy Week amid the continuing reality of life, changed, and interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These indeed are days unlike any most of us have experienced in our lifetime.

The same could be said for those who witnessed and traveled with Jesus from the parade of Palm Sunday to the reality of an empty tomb. The events of Holy Week were a rollercoaster of experiences and emotions for those following Jesus. From highs, to lows, and back to highs again, the one constant in that journey was the reality of who Jesus was, his dependence upon God, and his utter willingness to surrender his will for the glory of God and the purpose of God's will. Jesus found in trusting God; he had all that he needed. As we follow Jesus, we find that He is sufficient, and as we trust Him, we too have everything we need to live out our call as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I have been blessed by the testimonies and witnesses of God's people in Upper York trusting that truth. Through unprecedented days, you have been the Church in expected and unexpected ways. I want to thank the clergy of Upper New York for your outstanding leadership as you trust that God is sufficient. I want to thank the laity of every congregation for your response to the needs around you and participating in ministry as usual and in new forms. You are witnessing to your trust in the adequacy of Jesus. Thank you for being the Church!

While we know God did not cause the events we are experiencing, I have no doubt that God is not wasting these days. God is using this season to draw us closer, to renew us, and to help us reimagine the ways in which we can be the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus Christ in the world. I pray that we will continue to be open, first to what God desires to do in us and then, how God desires to use us in the lives of others in offering the good news of Jesus in word and deed.

There are people around us and even we ourselves who are struggling with fear, anxiety, and hopelessness. Individuals have been infected with the coronavirus and are struggling physically. Families are dealing with separation from one another, with some experiencing the grief that comes in the death of a loved one. Our world is begging for good news!

Our neighbors are looking for hope and promise of a better day. We know the one, we claim to follow, the one who is the answer to all those yearnings - his name is Jesus Christ! What an opportunity we have to let others know about the sufficiency of God through Jesus.

I hope you will continue to do whatever is necessary to support one another, as clergy and laity. Stick together, look out for one another, build one another up, and encourage one another all you can. I encourage you to continue to offer to God what God has given to you, by supporting your congregation with your tithe and offering. Mail your tithe to your church or sign up for electronic giving. The needs continue in your congregation and community- the resources God has given you are a piece of what is necessary to meet the needs. Thank you for your faithfulness in returning to God what God has given to you.

I also want to thank you for honoring and following the directives to not hold in-person worship currently. As disappointing as it is to not be able to gather with one another physically during Holy Week, your willingness to worship online is a gift of love to one another and your community. Our top priority must be the safety of those we have been called to serve among and with. We will gather together again in person, but for now, thank you for your creativity and participation in online worship and gatherings.

I am praying for you and I will continue to pray for you. We want to assist you and your congregation in any way we can in this season of life and ministry. If you have a need, please let your District Superintendent know or reach out to me or another Conference staff person. While we can't promise to always have the exact resource you need, we can walk beside you and help you to discover what God has already given.

When those early followers of Jesus experienced the events of Holy Week, they had in their mind a definition of life that would be found in following Jesus. By the time they got to the empty tomb, that definition had changed. It moved from an earthly focus to an eternal one. It moved from sufficiency found in power and authority to sufficiency found in service and submission. In just one week, Jesus changed it all! From a parade to an empty tomb, Jesus trusted and demonstrated the sufficiency of God and now invites us to do the same.

As we move from Palm Sunday to Easter, as we travel through these different, difficult, and uncertain days because of the coronavirus, may we encounter our God who proclaims while seated on a donkey, reclining at a table, hanging on a cross and emerging from a tomb - I am sufficient - I am adequate - I AM ENOUGH!

Believe it and then go tell someone else about it!

With gratitude and love,



Bishop Mark J. Webb