



Dear Bethany friends

I am looking forward to our Lenten-Easter Faith Study which begins Tuesday, February 21st at 7 pm, for those wishing to be together in-person, we gather in the MacKinnon Chapel, for those wishing to join via ZOOM, a link will be sent out. Let me know if you are interested. The study lasts for seven weeks, each Tuesday we discuss a chapter from The Last Week, Marcus Borg and Dominic Crossan's book that chronicles the last week of Jesus' early life. You don't need to have the book to participate, I will be summarizing each chapter before opening up the discussion to questions and comments. For those who have wondered, been confused by, and were looking for some clarity on what Holy Week has historically offered, what it means, this may be the study for you. I never pretend to have all the answers, nor do Borg and Crossan, but I do try to offer books and resources that speak to the wide variety of faith perspectives found at Bethany, in most Christian churches. My prayer is this, we listen to the book, we listen to other resources, we listen to each other, we listen to the Spirit, and we learn. I know I learn, and I look forward to learning from you.

Since coming to Bethany seven years ago I have been asked about the Affirming designation some United Churches carry, if this is something Bethany will explore. I have consistently responded, "That is a decision for our church, not the minister, though my position should be crystal clear from my sermons, emails, pastoral visits. The church needs to own this decision, not be pushed into anything by staff." You know where I stand. I preside at same-gender marriages, and I have supported this effort since I was ordained in 1990. I have been invited to speak at the Halifax Pride parade. To become an Affirming church requires a lengthy process, a vote with a 75% threshold, and a lot of work by laypeople. No one came forward to "champion" this effort for seven years. But that has recently changed. There is now a committee, approved by Session, that is beginning this process. The outcome is an open question. Public information meetings will be offered. Everyone will have their say and their vote. The process began with laypeople and will be decided by laypeople.

Lent is a time to consider the hard journey to new life. We are not alone.

Peace, Kevin