

*WILMOT UNITED CHURCH*  
*EASTER 2020*

Dear friends,

I wish I could write this in pen on a piece of paper rather than on keyboard and screen. I wish I could put the page in an envelope, seal it, post it, and watch a letter carrier bring it to your mailbox or your door. I wish that you could hold my letter in your hand in spite of the wobbly mess my tremor leaves on the page. Touch it.

But we have lost touch, haven't we? I mean literally. We have become subjects of a new regime of distance and isolation. We have become in a way untouchables.

As Easter draws near it seems important to remember that the most touching story of death and resurrection involves the disciple named Thomas. This Easter we may feel closest to him.

A good way of approaching Easter or any Biblical story is to enter it by assuming the role of one of the characters. Become an actor in the drama, enter and let the story unfold around you. Remember that stories are always energized by conflict. Find the conflict. That's where the energy is. The conflict may be external or internal, out in the open or under the table, but it's always there. The essence of drama is conflict.

Should you enter Easter as Thomas your conflict will involve not believing what you are seeing. Or perhaps it is it not seeing what you are believing. In any case you will be confronted with a presence you cannot comprehend. Could this presence be Jesus, the crucified? Not possible!

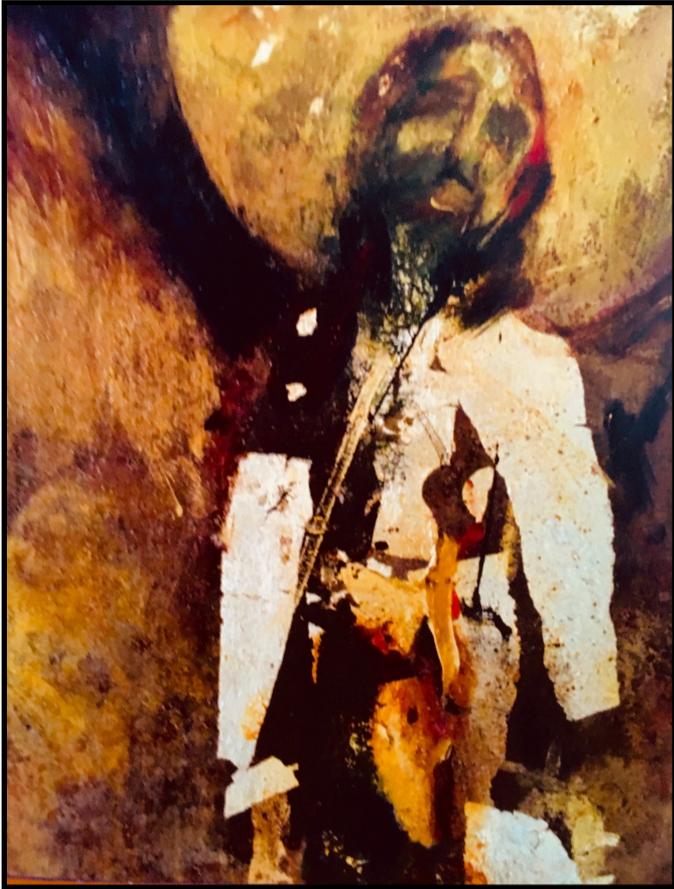
*"I will not believe" said Thomas, "unless..."*

Thomas, like every responsible person, has an "unless." It signals the presence of a mental and spiritual standard - I will believe what can be verified. As for what can't be verified - whistling in the dark.

*"I will not believe unless," said Thomas, "I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails." (Jn 20:25)*

When Jesus invited his touch, Thomas suddenly knew. What changed Thomas - mind and heart - was the awful knowing that this risen one is not death's recent escapee but the wounded Christ present in the wounded world.

It is a touching story driven by conflict of mind and heart. But note that as a result of this encounter Thomas is not relieved of doubt. He does not become an insufferable paragon of certainty. Rather he has understood that Christ will be wounded as long as stars shine in the night sky and that the wounds are for us, in us, in our world.



This is the touching knowledge that lights our path and gathers our energies for the work of healing and feeding and forgiving and freedom. This is the work of the church. We touch the wounds of the world knowing that these wounds are one with the wounds of Christ.

Ellen and I want to thank you for your support of this work. Though we are not able to engage it fully during the time of our confinement we are searching for ways and means of, for example, maintaining the voucher program for people surviving on low income.

Now that we cannot gather weekly your support becomes all the more vital. Thanks to our treasurer, Craig Frame, a helpful letter clarifying our financial challenges and possibilities has been shared. Thank you for giving his letter your thoughtful consideration. We know that each of us faces different circumstances and we are grateful for what seems right to you and the Spirit to give. We appreciate your support of Wilmot Church and its mission.

May you be touched by the energy of Easter and by the presence that helps us realize, in spite of the nightly news, that we are free to do our own whistling in the dark. For as Wendell Berry has written,

*“the dark too blooms and sings  
and is travelled by dark feet  
and dark wings.”*

In Christ,  
Peter Short  
for team partner Ellen Beairsto  
and the leadership of Wilmot United Church