

Around, Around, and Around

As I reflected on this week's announcement from the province regarding new restrictions, I began to identify with the Israelites in the wilderness.

The Israelites had left the slavery in Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and found themselves in the wilderness. There they travelled by day, set up camp for the evening, and moved ever closer to the Promised Land. The Promised Land was a place that none had seen, the pathway there was undefined, but God had promised to lead them. By cloud and by pillar of fire they were led through the wilderness for years, sometimes looping back around thus having to make ground over again.

Sometimes it feels like we are in the wilderness of this virus, trying to get to the point that the pandemic changes to being endemic. We mutter and grumble about the restrictions; restrictions are lessened, and we take a deep breath of freedom; restrictions are tightened, and we feel that we have made little progress.

The Israelites grumbled about the quality of the water, the lack of variety of food, and the fact that Moses was on the mountain too long. We have grumbled about masks and social distancing; certain necessities were in short supply (remember the signs limiting how much toilet paper one could buy at a time); many of us have begun to shop on-line to avoid going into a store. Our tolerance has been stretched to the breaking point at times.

The Israelites longed to be back in Egypt; we long for the world we left in 2019. Many of the Israelites longed for their lives to return to the predictable, even if that meant a return to slavery. We long for our lives to return to the predictable. We will never return to the world of "before the pandemic." As the Israelites entered a new way of being, so to are we entering a new way of being. We will carry with us the memories of what once was as we journey into the future.

The Israelites eventually entered the Promised Land; eventually we will enter the post-pandemic period. The Israelites were a changed people because of their experience and so are we. Our "Promised Land" awaits.

Through all of this, two truths about faith are abundantly clear. Love of neighbour has become more important as we keep their needs in mind. Whether we remember the words of Psalm 23 or the words of The New Creed, we are assured that the Holy One walks with us, and we are never alone. And for that we give thanks. Amen and Amen.