

## Reflections on Faith and Life, Easter 4, April 25, 2021

Justice and Joy. Joy in Justice. A gathering of over 120 clergy and 225 lay delegates to the first-ever virtual Synod Assembly. Seeing faith possibilities outside the box of our rural life together. Learning how interconnected local congregations are with each other and with our church-wide brothers and sisters in Christ. Appreciating more deeply how blessed we are to have such gifted and faith-filled Synod leadership.

*Gracious Jesus, I come to you just as I am. I am sorry for my many rejections of your overtures of love. Please forgive all my offenses against your law. I repent of my callous and insensitive ways. Break my stony heart with the things that break your heart. In remembrance of your sorrow help me to weep over my sin. . . and my sins. For your sake and in your name, I pray. Amen (Richard Foster).*

These were the topics of discussion and voting at the assembly:

- Hunger ministry
- Gender equity
- LGBTQIA+ education
- Racial justice
- Creation care

All of these are social issues inviting discussion in our congregations. Whatever your personal feelings about them, they impact our whole society at this time. NOTE: the fact that they should be considered does NOT mean that any changes will be forced on either congregation. I'll offer small group discussions, probably during the summer, for those who wish to participate. I'll mention the issues in sermons and reflections. I'll continue to invite prayerful consideration.

*Today, O Lord,*

*Let me put right before interest;*

*Let me put others before self;*

*Let me put the things of the spirit before the things of the body;*

*Let me put desire for noble ends above the enjoyment of present pleasures;*

*Let me put principle above reputation;*

*Let me put thee before all else (John Baillie).*