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How do you hold something that is at once very real and and at the same time, completely surprising and mysterious? How are we to navigate our way when two such worlds collide?

The Psalmist tells us that when we are disturbed, we should ponder, and be silent. We ought to take a moment to let it all soak in.

Some say Apprehension proceeds acceptance; that doubt is the precursor of faith? Perhaps. Perhaps as human beings to wonder and question is inherent to our being? As children we were brilliantly curious. We often took things at face value as we basked in awe and wonder, with delight.

But somewhere along the way, things changed. We changed. The world got more complicated, more serious. And as our curiosity slipped away, we began to be expected to know. To understand. Either completely with proof and evidence, or enough to be able to take a stand.

In such moments our minds work hard to make sense of what our senses are taking in. We call upon everything we have seen, heard and known; we compare and contrast. We may look for evidence or proof that justifies that which we have seen. Maybe at some point, if we are able, we give in. We surrender ourselves to the mystery—to the awe and wonder and we soak it in.

In our gospel from Luke, we find presented in the person of Jesus an intersection of truth and mystery; the truth of his death and the mystery of his foretold resurrection; the truth of the fulfillment of the scriptures, that he is physically and viably present and the mystery of his body that is the same, only different, no longer simply human but now divinely transformed. The truth the disciples have longed for, and the overwhelming feelings that arise when they behold that which they perhaps had only imagined.

Just this past Monday, millions of people across North America came out to look and to see, to bear witness with their own eyes to the truth and mystery of the total solar eclipse. It was mysterious and mystical; a phenomenon of the heavenly creation, and, it was true. Scientifically proven — down to the minute — or actually, down to four minutes of totality.

If you paid any attention to the hype leading up to the actual event, you may have noticed expressions of everything from anticipation and excitement to those of fear &

trepidation. There were warnings about not looking directly upon the sun (warranted) and warnings that the end was near.

Yet, apart from the pure beauty of our moon nesting between earth and our sun for four glorious minutes, including the diamond ring effect, other things caught my attention:

-The awareness that in those four minutes of darkness caused the temperature to drop noticeably, causing me to be more aware than ever of my/our reliance and dependency upon the sun for its warmth, and how much I take it for granted;

-The awe I felt for the way in which our planet, our moon, our sun and our universe are interconnected and how these miraculous moments (even if scientifically predictable) surprise me. (actually, the fact that humanity has evolved to the place where we can accurately predict to the second when and where the eclipse would occur is mind blowing too).

-But what really moved me deeply is how, across our continent, in city after city, human beings gathered with one another to watch and witness this phenomenon, **TOGETHER**: In unity they stood in eager anticipation of an event that would in a moment result in awe, wonder, and joy. Together they shared gasps and giggles. Children and parents alike were left speechless.

I could not witness this event (yes, up close thanks to technology) without seeing God's hand at work. Although scientists can explain the timing with precision, I wondered: maybe God knew that four minutes was enough - exactly long enough to incite true awe and wonder for creation, as well as unity and comraderie between humans. If it had been only two minutes — it might not have felt enough. If it had gone on longer, folks might have begun to experience discomfort and anxiety. Four minutes was just long enough for us to be surprised, to catch our breath, to soak it in, and to prepare to let it go, with gratitude.

I wonder if this is what it was like when Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection. In some ways they had anticipated his return, but were uncertain of when and what they might see. And then he appears. And they experience excitement, but also some trepidation. They want to believe but are questioning. We don't know how long he stayed with them, probably longer than 4 minutes, but maybe just long enough for them to bear witness but not so long as to make it normal.

Like with the eclipse, they are left to hold with gratitude all that they had just seen and experienced, both that which was real and that which feels surreal. After he opened their minds to the scriptures, after he gave them understanding - spiritual proof-he left them

to do the next thing: to share their experience with others. To tell their stories, to bear the good news.

As Christians we do not flourish by holding our faith close for ourselves: we come alive when we share it, because when we describe it to others, it once again comes alive in us. Christ kindles within us a fire of hope and joy, anticipation and excitement. This is the truth which we are called to share, the stories we are to tell:

Christ is risen, forgiveness is offered, hope is everywhere.

When your Vestry met for its retreat in February, the topic of our gathering was telling our sacred stories. We began by sharing sacred stories of our own with one another, and then began to reflect upon sacred stories of At Dunstan's. Out of our work together, came a new awareness of who we are as a church, what is sacred to us, and how we might share our love of a Jesus with our neighbors.

In just a little over a month we will have a big celebration and you all are invited! It will be Pentecost Sunday, the day we celebrate the arrival of the Holy Spirit, and it will be also St. Dunstan's Day.

On Sunday, May 19, we will gather for one spirit-filled worship service at 10 AM, followed by a catered lunch and a then a special presentation by your Vestry.

While it is God's work alone to save souls, we all are called to bear witness to what we have seen and heard, to what we know in our hearts to be true about God and why it matters.

Like the disciples, we may find ourselves uncomfortable, terrified and we may long for empirical proof upon which we can rely.

This is what we know:

Jesus offered the whole of himself: his flesh and bones, his hands and feet with wounds, his appetite and enjoyment of food as physical proof. He appeared in the flesh, although transformed and glorified. And through scripture and the stories of his life we have had our minds opened – seeing and being able to track how the law and the prophets and the psalms have been fulfilled in him.

Beyond evidence, it is the transformation of our hearts that brings our stories to life. And that is personal- something only we can speak to.

In the space between emphatic proof and evidence and unexplainable mystery and wonder, is where I believe Christ is to be found. We must rely upon the testimony of

those who came before us, all the while, considering our own experiences of the heart and soul, those wondrous ways in which we God shows up and is active in our lives that we know, and believe, but cannot always point to with proof.

The resurrection is a big deal, not easily explained, or proven, with no evidence to be gained until our own lives come to an end. But in faith, we can choose to live inside the possibility that what the disciples of the first century said, is in fact, true, and then allow it to inform the way in which we live our lives as disciples of Jesus, and to help us to share our sacred stories.

The discipleship experience can be frightening, overwhelming, demanding, even confronting. We may doubt we have what it takes. We may be terrified: of rejection, of being vulnerable, of not knowing what to say, of not having answers.

Remember: Moses hid his face from God, filled with a profound sense of unworthiness, yet God chose him and gave him the tools he needed to lead.

God called Isaiah and Isaiah was mortified: Woe is me, he said. I'm a man of unclean lips, living among the same — and so God sent angels to make his lips clean with hot coals, erasing the barrier to his prophetic calling.

Elijah, fearing for his life, hid out in a cave — avoiding God's call, and so, God let him sleep and made sure he was fed, and then called him up and out — to bear God's word to the people, assuring him that he was not alone.

Sometimes we, like Moses, Isaiah and Elijah try to hide out from God, but God has a way of making Godself heard, seen and known- a way of nudging us forward so that God's purpose and God's good news prevails.

The invitation today is to allow ourselves to hold with awe and wonder the holy mystery of the risen Christ. To give ourselves space for both the questions and the joy, the doubt and the certainty. And then, with our minds and hearts opened up, to be witnesses: to share what we have seen, heard and felt.

When asked by my son why I believe, I have often said that if I did not believe, I don't know how I would survive the heartbreak and sorrow of this world. The world can feel too much, too heavy. But then, comes an eclipse. And for 4 minutes I am rendered silent, and in the space of it all, my faith in God and humanity is rekindled.