

# Jeff's Jottings

## *Hard things and hope*

April 18, 2019

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When we come to the table with Jesus tonight at the Last Supper, we know, perhaps more than his disciples ever imagined in that moment, that hard things lie ahead.

We know that from our own lives, and those of our parents and children and friends: how disappointments, sorrows, griefs, and tears become woven amidst our joys, accomplishments, dreams, and hopes. We know it from our churches, too, places of good news and struggles all at once.

Easter week reflects life, or perhaps the other way around: life reflects Easter week, from the triumph and push for justice that is Palm Sunday to the poignancy and shadows of Maundy Thursday; to the shock and grief of Good Friday; and the hope and new life that is Easter. This is us.

Last Friday, the singer Carrie Newcomer was in Minneapolis. She is a remarkable talent, one who reflects real life in her songs and music. I am reminded this Maundy Thursday morning of the words from one of her songs:

*Here we stand breathless  
And pressed in hard times.  
Hearts hung like laundry  
On backyard clothes lines.  
Impossible just takes  
A little more time.  
From the muddy ground  
Comes a green volunteer.  
In a place we thought*

*barren, new life appears.  
Morning will come whistling  
Some comforting tune, for you.  
You can do this hard thing.  
You can do this hard thing.  
It's not easy I know, but  
I believe that it's so.  
You can do this hard thing.*  
– “You Can Do This Hard Thing”

In this Holy Week, may God sustain each of you in body and in Spirit. I am grateful throughout the year for the faithful witness of our PTCA churches, in the communities and contexts and styles in which God continues to uniquely call us. This week in particular, though, I am especially mindful of each of our congregations and the people who live out those ministries. I have all week held you specifically in my prayers, with deep thanks.

We can do hard things and make it through difficult times with the reassurance that Jesus is alongside us for our whole lives.