



NEW LIFE

April 2017

*See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves
is heard in our land.*

Song of Songs 2:11-12

"The rains are over and gone," Solomon said, and I'm sure they soon will be here in Vancouver, though winter weather is slow to leave this year. Today, as I write this on the seventh of April, the cherry blossoms have come out, much later than usual. But joy of joys, they *are* out!

I took full advantage of their presence, spending much time beneath the blossoms, capturing them with my camera. Standing underneath the pale pink blooms with the sunshine pouring over them overwhelmed me. I became quite breathless as I pointed

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my camera up into the magical canopy. Humbled under this virtual heaven, I worshipped, amazed at the God who had created such beauty. For a moment of childlike imagination and wonder I thought of what a wonderful place this would be for angels to hide.

This beauty is part of springtime's celebration, a celebration of new life and growth. It's something we very much need after the dark and cold of winter. And it seems that the way spring sunshine brings forth blossoms to the trees, God's sun shines inside us too, bringing new beginnings and hope. He encourages us to leave behind all that was distressing and gloomy.

As I look up into those heavenly blossoms, I can't help but feel lifted up—up from where I had been for far too long. Wonderful how God gives us nature to help us respond in this way. Quite amazing how He is reflected in the beauty He shares with us.

In the way the natural world celebrates and goes through rebirth, we too can experience renewal when we consider Jesus Christ and His resurrection and what that means to us. In an Easter sermon, Rev. Kit Billings reminds us that "every one of these wonderful blessings associated with spring represent and reveal to us the positive and beautiful changes that happen to us when the Lord comes to us anew and afresh!"

Are you feeling distant from the renewal Christ can give, even now? Not quite able to take in what it is He offers? Don't despair. God is with you. His sunshine is entering your heart, prodding seeds that are lying dormant, waiting for the moment when they too will begin their growth. Give them time. There's promise in those seeds. God has not forgotten you.

marja