

Canon Davis Memorial Church
380 Russell St. North, Sarnia, Ontario, N7T 6S6
(519) 344-9531 • <http://www.canondavis.com>
4th SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY • January 31, 2021
Deuteronomy 18:15-20 • Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13 • Mark 1:21-28

Dear Friends,

The year was 1958. The occasion was the Graduating Seniors' Class Trip. The tradition — travel to Washington D.C. The mood — one of excitement. There was much marble to see. We were visiting the core, the nerve centre of the most powerful nation on earth.

Everywhere it seemed there were monuments and statues. We could not only see where the President lived, we went on a guided tour of the White House. Street photographers seemed to be everywhere. They were so bold. They would take people's pictures first and ask folk to buy them after the fact. Countless did.

Many tried to climb the stairs of the Washington Monument. Not all succeeded. There was quite a view from the top floor. Very near by was the reflecting pool, other monuments, and the Potomac River. Also, many of the government office buildings were visible above the tree tops. What an amazing space we were visiting.

The first evening, I decided to go for a walk to the Capitol Building and back to the hotel again. As I moved ½ way or so in my hike, I noticed that I was becoming increasingly alone. When I got to the building's marble steps I passed one security guard. He then quickly disappeared.

All became quiet! The marble structures, lit up by the bright floodlights, cast sharply contrasting shadows. In the distance, I heard faint footsteps. I decided my hike was quite long enough and made my way back to the hotel without incident.

Little did I know what it would be like if I tried to take that same walk, some 63 years later! What if I ventured out to hike around the Capitol on January 6th of 2021? I think we all know the answer to that question. It wouldn't be pretty! The danger would not only be a threat to people simply out for a walk — it would also be seen as threat to the nation as a whole!

The outrage about the mob assault on and in the Capitol Building was/is understandable. The symbolism of this building and its importance to the people cannot be over estimated. It is in the minds of many Americans a building of religious significance. Frequent references were made by public officials to it being a 'temple to democracy'.

I have to admit that my ears perked up with this reference. I will tell you why. The use of the term 'temple' is important to me. It is not a simple case of over the top hyperbole. It is in my mind of more concern. Why? Because in my opinion, it gives the Capitol building an inappropriate religious significance.

Now some people may understand the distinction between matters of faith and that which goes around imitating as having religious importance. I believe the Capitol Building is a case in point. No matter how else one sees it, it is not a building implied to be dedicated to a particular religious group.

Instead of looking to this building as a source of religious wisdom, people would do well to recognize the Capitol for the importance it has in the affairs of state — not as place dedicated to worship. For it is a place designed to foster the well-functioning of an important democracy. As such this and every nation would do

well to encourage a certain critical view about what happens there — a critical view designed to identify improvements to be made and flaws that need fixing. It would be a mistake for people to see it as a temple where critical thought might be stifled. The greater good would be for this great building to be a place that forever seeks to protect the existence and rights of those who worship freely anywhere within the nation.

It is at times too easy to make idols out of tools, and temples out of non-religious structures. As we continue to worship Christ, may our sacred worship inspire us in promoting lives of justice, peace, and love; setting an example as people go about their week in the everyday world of nations and their communities.

The blessings of our loving Creator God be upon you and those you love.

— *Ray+*

You are invited to go each Sunday and/or Wednesday to the link:

tinyurl.com/StAlbans-CDMC

That is the link to St. Alban's Anglican Church in Burnaby B.C. Follow the instructions. You will find links to the Rev'd Greg Jenkins officiating at an Anglican church service with children's focus, church music, readings, prayers and a sermon.

If you are also interested in joining their weekly Bible Study, contact Rev. Greg at revgregjenkins@gmail.com He will be more than happy to be in touch about joining in with their group by ZOOM. I hope you will find these services help to deepen your faith.

We are joining with many parishes in our deanery in providing telephone support to our members and friends. This support is designed to keep us up to date, while not requiring a computer. A CDMC Pastoral Letter will be read this week through our phone ministry. 1-888-229-5422