He is risen! It is through the lens of this act of love that God has given us through Jesus Christ that we look today, Easter Sunday. While as a congregation we will truly celebrate when we are once more together in the flesh. Today we celebrate that even in the midst of a Holy Week that I can only describe as the entire world being one with the suffering of Jesus; even as we isolate ourselves from one another in an attempt to protect one another and indeed love one another; even now, we can celebrate this final sacrificial act of Jesus. His resurrection and promise to each one of you is that suffering and death are not the stopping point of this story; neither the story of Jesus or the story of you and me. Can you imagine for a moment Mary Magdeline and the other Mary going to Jesus grave site to pray and finding to their surprise, fear/awe, and joy that Jesus was not there? What must have gone through their heads? Was it truly possible that through this last week when they watch the Messiah get arrested, beaten and put up on a cross to be crucified that anything good could come from any of this? And yet through all of this Jesus shows us glimpses of God’s grace and love. The refusal of Jesus to commit a violent act against the soldier who arrests him, the forgiveness of Jesus of the man next to him on the cross, the concern for the woman he left behind that they be taken care of, the directive to the disciples and us to continue the work that Jesus began. The promise of forgiveness and eternal life for all of us. All these are acts of love Jesus makes even in the midst of his suffering. In our reading from Acts today we come to the understanding that these acts of love aren’t just for the Jewish people they are for the Gentiles also and that means they are for everyone. I hope and I wish that in the midst of this pandemic that the care and concern we show and is shown to us is truly for everyone. That at this time especially, we are learning how essential each and every person is in this country and in the world. The truth is we can’t spare anyone, everyone is truly sacred not only to God but to this earth, here and now. One of the ways I’ve been coping with the separation from my love during this time is by trying to learn, play and record love songs that I send to her frequently. She often gifts me with items to keep me safe and well fed, like alcohol wipes, toilet paper, flowers to plant, and today she is making hot cross buns because for me that is an Easter tradition.

 As time passes, I realize how my love for all of you has made me miss you all very much and when I see your continued passion and care for one another and for the poor and underserved of Brown County it makes me feel so grateful to be part of this body of Christ. I think of the acts of love that you have given to me. The love you show to people you bring into the church from time to time when you share with them the knowledge and thanksgiving of Jesus in their lives. There is so much you do outside the building that I just catch glimpses of or hear stories about. I know that many of you continue right now to work to feed the hungry in Brown County because your concern is more for others then for yourselves. The delight I see in your faces when you see your friends and family in our Sunday zoom services and in the zoom meetings I’ve attended fill me with joy for your love for one another. Seeing the children of St. David’s coming in and out of the picture and making silly faces or creating lego churches complete with food for everyone and a woman priest melts my heart. You all our not idle even in isolation and I know that you are continuing to pray for those that are losing jobs. You’re concerned about those who are financially hurting and you care and grieve for those that are sick and dying. You each have so many gifts and talents and ways of sharing them lovingly with St. David’s that I don’t worry too much about this church because yes, we may not be gathering physically we are still the church right where we are and nothing can stop that from happening. I want to share a few of the many examples of love I’ve seen just this from the last couple weeks: Jan Holloway puts the Scoop out every week so you know what’s going on with our worship, people and diocese. The vestry and pastoral care committees called everyone in the parish to see how you are doing. Ralph completed the stand for the paschal candle last week, and sent me picture of our sanctuary so we could have it as our background today. Verne got our roof fixed a couple weeks ago. Jim has been keeping the staff updated and paid. Donna has been organizing the Farmers Market for the new season, because there are people that need to be fed. All of you, each and every one of you astound me because you continue to do Christ work in the world to help the needy and the oppressed. You all are resurrection people and you are creating transformation for the community of Brown County. So I guess what I’m trying to say in this message of love to you is that you are deeply loved by God, by one another and by me. I give thanks for you daily and I say to you, the Lord is Risen today let us rejoice. Alleluia!