

From the Pastor

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I love hiking. When I have the opportunity, there is nothing more refreshing to me than finding a trail away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and spending a few hours in nature. Good for the soul. Good for well-being. Good for faith life.

I'm now rethinking what I call this favourite pastime. I recently came across the following words of John Muir, the influential American naturalist. He reflects on the word "hiking":

"I don't like either the word or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains – not hike! Do you know the origin of that word saunter? It's a beautiful word. Away back in the Middle Ages people used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, 'A la sainte terre' – To the Holy Land. And so they became known as sainte-terre-ers or saunterers. Now these mountains are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not 'hike' through them."

Sauntering. Yes ... it's a better word. Overtones of the holy.

At this time of year, creation again awakes after its winter slumber. New life and new growth abound. There is indeed something of the holy about this. And with the resurrection of nature, we are reminded of our Easter hope borne of Christ's resurrection and its promise of new life. We shouldn't just "hike" through it all but instead "saunter" – reveling in the wonder and beauty of the world around us and in the faith which it nurtures. Resurrection and holiness are all around us. Let us saunter reverently.

The Rev. Bruce Chalmers