



Hands

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I've been thinking a lot about hands, especially the hands that I long to hold. Because of the pandemic, hands are for one primary action: washing. We sing Happy Birthday or say the Lord's Prayer to help us know when we've thoroughly washed our hands. If they're not raw and cracked, we're not doing our job.

With this focus on cleanliness, our hands have been forced to give up human touch. We don't pass the peace in person; we don't shake hands with neighbors we meet when we're out and about...because we're not supposed to be out and about...and even if we are, we cross the sidewalk to avoid our neighbors. We keep our hands clean and away from our faces to slow the spread of the virus.

One of our church members shared with me how much she misses her grandchildren. She saw them from a distance on Good Friday. With her mask and gloves, she walked over to the car in which her grandchildren sat with their parents, sealed behind glass. She placed her gloved hands on the car windows, and they mirrored her. It is the closest thing to touching they will do for the near term.

At a local library, the children's librarian still does storytime, but has moved it to an online session. At the end of the story, she offers a wave or fist bump to the kids, and they return her goodbye the same way. My fitness instructor has started dance classes this week by Zoom. During our first session, she came up close to the camera and gave us a high five, her palm nearly covering the screen. It felt great!

We speak of the work God's mighty hands. In this Easter season, we place our hands in Jesus' wounded side and touch the nail holes in his hands. We share the surprise that the tomb is empty because Jesus lives! Then, we are invited to become the hands of Jesus in the world.

What would Jesus' hands do in the midst of a pandemic? It might seem sacrilegious to suggest Jesus – fully God – would respect a Safer At Home order. I believe, however, that Jesus – fully human – would not flaunt the order by putting the Lord to the test. Instead I think his hands would go through the same washing routine. I think they would give electronic high fives and fist bumps. They would wear gloves.

They would also pick up the phone and dial friends and family who might feel isolated. They would likely keep the corner food pantry stocked for those who were hungry. Jesus' hands would no doubt use money generously to contribute to social services and charities that are filling the gap for those experiencing unemployment. They would probably send emails to legislators asking for changes in laws and programs to make them more just.

I'm just surmising, of course, based on what I've read about Jesus. You will have your own ideas for how Jesus' hands – now, your hands – will offer Good News. We have adapted in our worship during this time. Now we have the chance to adapt in our outreach. Let us know what you're doing! We'd love to share it on Facebook and in Fresh Impressions. May God bless your hands as an instrument of love.