



# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week, we keep all involved in peace for Ukraine in our prayers*

## An outreach opportunity

Wine To Water is a non-profit, working in Ukraine and neighboring countries to distribute water filters to families displaced and under attack in this crisis. Their networks are with local ground leaders devoted to helping in this humanitarian crisis and they support their courage.

With infrastructure and supply chains disrupted in the region, people depend on surface water from rivers, rain or untreated sources. Filters give families and shelters a way to prevent waterborne illnesses common in war and refugee camps. The filters also avoid dependencies on single use plastics which add to the environmental disaster created by a global crisis.

St Thomas will be supporting this effort. On Maundy Thursday, our altar of repose will be decorated with succulents. Since succulents can survive harsh conditions such as extreme temperatures and water scarcity, they are associated with resilience and survival. Starting on Good Friday, these plants, associated with everlasting love, endurance and loyalty, will be available for a donation.

More information about taking home these plants will be coming soon. In the meantime, you can check out [winetowater.org](http://winetowater.org). Read the inspiring story of an ordinary bartender turned humanitarian. And, there is cute merch...and wine for sale!

## ALL are Welcome

### *Lenten Season Worship Schedule*

<b>Sunday</b> 8:00 am Rite 1 spoken	<b>Sunday</b> 10:30 am Rite 2 with music	<b>Sunday</b> 5:00 pm Lenten service with Holy Eucharist	<b>Wednesday</b> 12 noon Intercessory Prayer	<b>Thursday</b> 7:00 pm Evening Compline
--	---	---	---	---

# TAKING IN THE CROCUS

by Kenneth Hansen-Jones

For close to two weeks now, I have been meaning to write something about the crocuses in the Grove. It seems a straight-forward assignment, and yet I have had the worst mental block, an almost palpable resistance to writing anything. In fact, I must admit that as I write this, the eleventh hour is rapidly approaching. Ask not for whom the deadline tolls....

Why, you may ask yourselves, is this proving such a struggle? That, at least, has an easy answer: Ukraine. To say that it has weighed on my mind these last three weeks would be an understatement. How can I, even as an avid gardener, write up something about flowers when an innocent Ukrainian could very well be killed by the time I finish writing this sentence? I am despondent about Ukraine, and about my own inability to help this battered and beleaguered nation.

So, as part of my flustered efforts to figure out what to write, I reread John McCrae's famous World War I poem, "In Flanders Field:"

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

McCrae's poem, the events in Ukraine, and the beautiful crocuses in our Grove swirled in my mind for days, struggling to form some coherent story that was worth sharing with you, and that didn't merely take up space in this week's Carpenter's Helper. I don't know that I have succeeded in that goal; it is for the reader to determine whether reading this has been a good use of their time. However, I can say that something came of the whirlwind in my mind, something that had been staring down at me, and had been staring down at the Grove itself, the entire time.

*I saw the cross atop St. Thomas.*

There were many who cried at the Crucifixion of Christ. I'm sure some wept themselves into exhaustion over the three days between his death and his Resurrection. Those were three hard, truly godless days, marked at the beginning by the disappearance of the sun itself. Yet, the very rock of the Christian faith, the foundation on which the Church has been built over the last two millennia, is that after massive loss can come the greatest resurgence. Death and injury need not be final. The blood of soldiers can nurture a beautiful and delicate flower. Maybe, somehow, I can set aside my despondency over Ukraine long enough to muster up some faith that when all is said and done, Ukraine's most brilliant and beautiful days are ahead, not behind.

This piece hasn't really been about the crocuses, has it? For that, I apologize. At the same time, maybe it has been about the crocuses, all the while. After all, they have returned to us after a fairly bitter winter. We lost them last year, and now they have returned to us. Beauty, like Christ, never truly leaves us. Neither, it would seem, do flowers, be they poppies in France or crocuses right outside our church. We can let their beauty mean something to us, to wash over us and feed our souls so that when we find ourselves paralyzed by an inability to help those who so desperately need it, or when the vagaries of life have inflicted injury upon us, we can help ourselves, and remind ourselves that there is no beauty without ugliness, no joy without pain. That is the quintessential nature of our existence, and exactly the reason why everyone should take some time to go enjoy our crocuses. St. Thomas is well and truly blessed to have them.