

# The Joy of New Life

by Heather Paton

*New life is what the season  
of Easter is all about.*

The world looks new through the eyes of my one-year-old daughter. Each time she hears a train go by, she gets excited. Each time she sees a bird in the sky, she smiles. Each time she climbs the stairs, she claps her hands with glee. So many new things are happening that give her joy; it is amazing to see. My first year as a parent has given me many new things to learn too. Mostly, it has filled me with overwhelming joy at all that is growing and alive in my little one. Each day seems to have something new in it as she learns simple things like where her tummy is or how to make a new funny face. Even though she's no longer a newborn, it feels like I experience new life through her

all the time and it fills us with great joy.

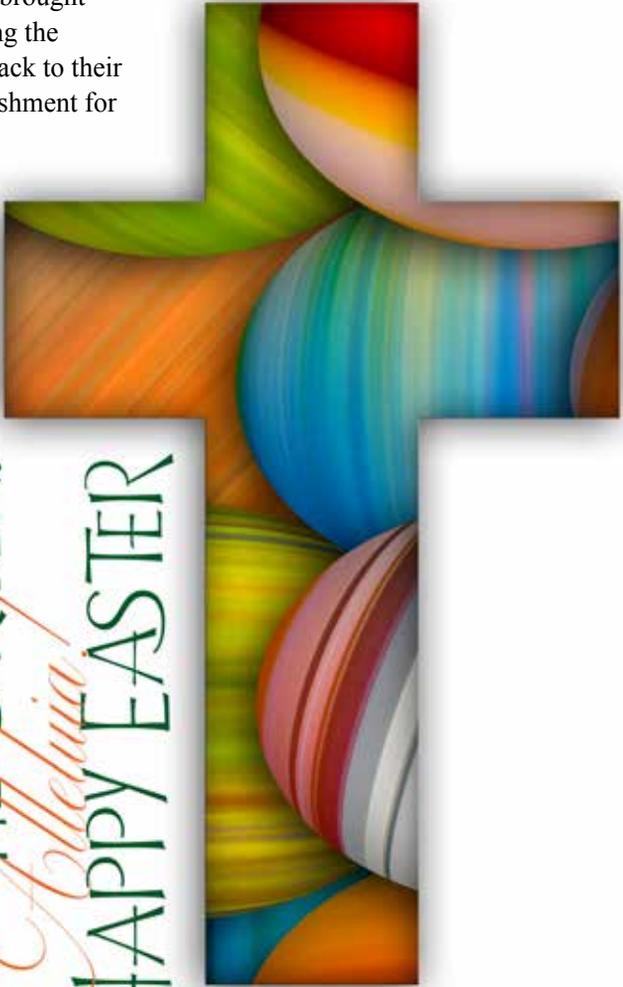
New life is what the season of Easter is all about. We read the disciples' baffling accounts of witnessing the joy of new life, of being filled with fear and joy at Christ's resurrection. During the season of Easter, we celebrate this core of our faith together. Jesus is alive! We have new life in him! This new life is a gift that is not always as obvious as a new baby or a resurrected Saviour. It can take some paying attention to see the new life that is all around us.

Although I am a first-time parent, I recall witnessing the joy of new life at other times in my life too. I think of

long hot days in Malawi volunteering with The Presbyterian Church in Canada when the water had been cut off in our little housing compound. We had been rationing what we had left for a week or so, which meant no daily showers, and the dishes were piling up. Finally, a truck with a water tank arrived, and everyone brought their buckets to fill and bring the desperately needed water back to their homes. The relief and refreshment for everyone in our little community were profound. The adults were splashing the cool water from their buckets on their hot faces before hoisting them to their heads for transport. The kids were joyfully dancing in the puddles that were left behind. Everyone was smiling and grateful. It felt like life had been restored after a long drought. In Malawi, they have a saying, 'Madzi ndi moyo' which

means 'water is life'.

I remember the teens from my two-point charge that went to Canada Youth finding new life in community. While they had attended the monthly youth group, this was the most faith-intensive/-focused/-filled thing



HE IS RISEN!  
*Alleluia!*  
HAPPY EASTER

they had ever experienced. Their joy overflowed as they told stories of great crowds singing together in worship, of bedtime check-ins that were filled with laughter, and of small group discussions that ignited their faith. Sharing in this experience together, as a group from a small church in a small community brought them so much closer together. It gave their friendship and their faith new life. It was a joyful thing to witness as their minister.

Closer to home, I think of how the blossoms and sprouts of springtime are signs of new life that yearly bring us joy. Especially after a long Winter, the tiny buds and splashes of colour mean warmer days are ahead, good things are to come. This growth seems to symbolize the passage of time as well. As the seasons cycle through, we are reminded of the gift of life that is ours for experiencing once again. Though the years go on, springtime shows us that there is always newness, always growth that comes out of the wintery, cold places in our lives. New life can be found in the potential for forgiveness

and letting go. Relationships with others and ourselves can be restored. New life can be found in the new opportunities out there for us to take—new things to try, old hobbies to improve, ways to share our gifts. New life can come in to receive the blessings that have previously gone unnoticed or forgotten, like the taste of your favourite food or the presence of an unlikely/constant friend. Or the hopes and dreams for what is to come. These are ways we experience new life today, new life that brings us joy.

The most common piece of advice I have been given as a new parent is to treasure every moment because it goes by so fast. I'm grateful for that reminder every time I hear it as it helps me see how far my daughter has come from being that wiggly newborn bundle to a climbing, clapping, kiss-blowing toddler. It helps me remember the joy her life has brought me. But perhaps this advice is for all new life that we witness. New life is worth treasuring. Don't let it pass you by. For Christ gives us new life each day—to live, to embrace, to celebrate. Let us live this life with joy.

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