

Bethany

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

3501 W 1st Ave ◆ Denver, CO ◆ 80219



Like prey in the animal kingdom, we humans, when we are afraid, tend to hide.

I don't mean the kind of afraid that you are when you see a spider and you stand up on the table shouting out the person you live with to come dispose of it. I mean the kind of afraid you feel when you see a child in danger. When you hold the hand of a dying loved one. When you look in the mirror and are so traumatized by all that life has thrown at you that you don't even recognize yourself.

That kind of fear.

It was that fear that Peter felt, that day, that Black Friday, when he denied knowing the man who had given him everything - a calling, a family, a purpose. Peter hid from the horror that Jesus - Peter's friend and mentor, his *God* - was meant to be executed. No matter that they had been preaching justice, love, inclusivity. Peter wanted to distance himself - to hide - for fear that he, too, would be arrested.

It is a fear that I think we are all feeling during this second pandemic spring. Will there be enough vaccine doses? Who else has to die? Why - when we have prayed, and fought, and given of ourselves - does this continue to threaten us? For us, Easter can't come quickly enough. The promise of new life, of renewed hope, of mended relationships, and a healthy summer.

As Peter looked into the empty tomb and felt his heart grow to bursting, he realized that perhaps, just maybe, he could be relieved of the deathlike grief and guilt that had been plaguing him. He felt hope. This is the promise of Easter.

When he was young, my son told us that there was a lion living under the radiator in our living room. To help him not be afraid, we purchased a stuffed lion that became his buddy. The fear was replaced with love and hope and the laughter of a small child. Jesus wants that same love and hope and laughter for us, for all of us. Let's press on toward that promise.

Love, Pastor Denise



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Who was Saint Patrick?

Slave, traveler, evangelist, abolitionist, and saint. A scant 400 years after Jesus' birth, the priest known as Patrick took the Great Commission seriously, to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth by converting the frightening barbarians of that scary outpost known as Ireland.

According to tradition, Saint Patrick was born in Britain (different sources say England, Scotland, or Wales) to Roman parents around AD 387. When he was around 16 years old, Patrick was kidnapped by Irish marauders who sold him into slavery to a Druid herdsman named Milchu. Patrick remained in Ireland for six years. During this time, Patrick learned the Celtic language and became acquainted with the practices of the Druids. He later wrote that he became close to God during this time and prayed every night for his deliverance. He ran away after hearing direction from an angel and walked 200 miles to catch a boat back to Britain. Afterward, Patrick was sent to France to begin his training for the priesthood despite the long break in his formal education. When he achieved priesthood, Patrick was assigned to Britain, but his dream was to return to Ireland to convert the pagans.

Patrick was especially proud of bringing Christianity to Ulster in the northern part of Ireland, and founded the Cathedral of Armagh, which still stands on a hill he selected. Patrick was one of the first people in the history of the world to publicly denounce the institution of slavery. Slaves had no voice—those in power owned slaves, and the church didn't condemn slavery for another thousand years. Patrick, however, had been there, done that, and his identification with the downtrodden helped him convert those who were ignored by the powers that be. He was also an early feminist, actively evangelizing women in an age when many missionaries discounted or feared them.

St. Patrick died in 463 (we think) on March 17th, which became his feast day, as is the custom for saints, although St. Patrick was never officially canonized by the Vatican, as his sainthood predated formal canonization.

Experiencing the Holy: Lent and the Psalms

My daughter is a high school English teacher. From her, I know that poetry has more terms associated with it than Denver has new apartment complexes (for instance - "enjambment" anyone?) I also know that when you ask 14-year-olds to write poetry, they will all - every single one of them - write a haiku.

Poems are such an interesting way to tell a story. From Shakespeare to Eliot to the Psalms. I find beauty in the brevity of words - but it takes, for me, three times as long to figure out what the poet is saying than if I were reading a narrative. Comparing these three poets, we discover that they all use a have lines that leave you hanging on until you read the next line. Our brains naturally pause at the end of the line instead of at the punctuation - and that's because these poems are really meant to be read aloud.

I invite you to take a moment to read these poems, pausing at the end of each line.

"Psalm 32:3-4" (King David, 587 BCE)

When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.[b]

"The Wasteland" by TS Eliot (1922 CE)

April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.

"Winter's Tale" by Shakespeare (1609 CE)

Nine changes of the watery star hath been
The shepherd's note since we have left our throne
Without a burthen: time as long again
Would be find up, my brother, with our thanks;
And yet we should, for perpetuity,
Go hence in debt: and therefore, like a cipher,
Yet standing in rich place, I multiply
With one 'We thank you' many thousands more
That go before it

How was that? Difficult? I find it difficult. What does this poetry have to do with experiencing the Holy? What does it have to do with church?

The Bible is full of descriptive language in which we can stumble and have difficulty with understanding metaphors (or enjambment!), or even descriptions of a time we have no experience. The Bible, like poetry, should be read with an intentional mindset of reading between the lines - not for any sketchy inuendo - but, for the truths that lie in the use of words. Much like the words of the Parables that Jesus used as a teaching tool, so poetry teaches us.

As we move further into Lent, I invite you to take a look at the Psalms. Look for words or phrases that speak to you; messages of self-reflection and hope. I'd love to hear what you find!

March 2021

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

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Bret Rohrer
BIRTHDAY

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11AM Worship
COMMUNION

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Carson Kaiser
BIRTHDAY

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11AM Worship

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11AM Worship

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11AM Worship

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31

PALM SUNDAY

Norma Jean Coffelt
BIRTHDAY

Lectionary Readings

March 7, 2021

Exodus 20:1-17
Psalm 191
Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22

March 14, 2021

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21

March 21, 2021

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51:1-12
Psalm 119:9-16
Hebrews 5:5-10
John 12:20-33

March 28, 2021

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Philippians 2:5-11
Mark 11:1-11
Mark 14:1-15:47
John 12:12-16

Liturgists

March 7, 2021

Lataine Shaw

March 14, 2021

Eva Staley

March 21, 2021

Kathy Caughran

March 28, 2021

Lataine Shaw

We are aiming
for outside
worship on Easter,
if the weather is
good. Stay tuned!

