

peace be with you

# weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

*January 12, 2022*

## TAKING A RIDE IN WINTER!

This time it wasn't a boy on a red sled  
or a girl on two white skis.

Neither was it a dude on a snowboard  
or an old couple on a toboggan  
smiling from ear to ear.

You might guess that the ones taking a ride  
were in an automobile  
with the heater cranked up as far as  
possible, while wearing furry boots  
and plaid wool scarves wrapped tight.

Yet this rare occurrence last Sunday  
involved thousands of Mallard  
ducks who thought better of staying so far north  
and a brilliant one got the idea to  
ride sheets of ice flocked with snow!

The male's iridescent green heads and  
blue speculum on their wings  
shine in the sun while the females dress  
in camouflage to protect tiny brown  
ducklings come Spring.

Mile after mile these ducks enjoy the ride  
with the wind blowing through  
their magnificent feathers.

What a grand journey it was to ride south  
on the mighty river in 2022!

## *Psalm 29*

### *Psalms for Praying*

BY NAN MERRILL\*

Give praise to the Beloved,  
O heavenly hosts,  
Sing of Love's glory and strength.  
Exalt the glory of Love's Name;  
Adore the Beloved in holy splendor.

The voice of the Beloved is upon  
the waters;  
Love's voice echoes over the oceans  
and seas.

The voice of Love is powerful,  
majestic is the heart of Love.

The mercy of the Beloved breaks the  
bonds of oppression,  
shatters the chains of injustice.  
Love invites all to the dance of freedom,  
to sing the Beloved's song of truth.

The voice of Love strikes with fire  
upon hearts of stone.  
The voice of Love uproots the thorns  
of fear,  
Love uproots fear in every open  
heart.

*Continued*

**Psalms for Praying (continued)**

The voice of Love is heard in every storm,  
and strips the ego bare;  
And in the heart's chapel, all cry,  
“Peace and Glory forever!”

The Beloved lives in our hearts;  
Love dwells with us forever,  
You who awaken to the Light  
of universal Oneness  
will know the blessed joy  
of serving in the great Work  
of Love.

**Purified and Cleansed**

There are times we get so passionately involved in viewing something that we forget about all of the problems at home and in the world.

Last Sunday, we observed the Baptism of our Lord Jesus during worship with beautiful music and a memorable message by Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede. It's a joy to remember that even Jesus was baptized before beginning three years of earthly ministry. Imagine how it was for him being immersed in the Jordan River by John the Baptizer, then seeing the clouds parting and hearing the voice of God proclaiming, “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.” It must have been a glorious day that prepared him for the journey ahead.

We will likely never really know the affect our baptisms had on us. But we do have faith that the Spirit of God came upon us and our souls were purified and cleansed.

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We will likely never really know the affect our baptisms had on us. But we do have faith that the Spirit of God came upon us and our souls were purified and cleansed. The renewal process continues for a lifetime inspiring us to follow the path of Jesus and be transformed.

Contemplate the ways that the spiritual forces of wickedness have been renounced and the evil powers of this world been rejected during your lifetime. As we repent of personal and corporate sin, we join in the call to accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. Baptism is indeed a powerful sacrament!

The next time water pours over your head in the shower or in a waterfall, confess again that Jesus Christ is your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord.

*Listen! You are a beloved child of God.  
Accept and believe!*

*Marta*

Rev. Marta Wheeler

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