

peace be with you weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler
SAINT PAUL BENSON

Set Aside Doldrums

Muted browns and greys have a tendency
to sap my spirit
as the brush is dipped solely
in earth-tones on the neighborhood canvas
before the first snow of 2022 falls

here we survive the darkness by awaiting
the spectacular
moment when the horizon turns pink
and orange, then a sliver of white moon
slides across the north-eastern sky.

Even if grey clouds cover the dome of
the atmosphere above
I'll not despair because your
eyes of dark brown, blue, grey,
or green, lift my spirits and I can't help but smile

as you stir the steaming pot of stew on the stove
while darkness settles in
without you realizing.

Sipping a cup of cinnamon tea
and sinking under the patchwork quilt
my soul is soothed in the solitude of home.

Continued

November 30, 2022

Isaiah 11:1-10

A Green Shoot from Jesse's Stump

11 A green Shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump, from his roots a budding Branch. The life-giving Spirit of God will hover over him, the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding, The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength, the Spirit that instills knowledge and Fear-of-God.

Fear-of-God will be all his joy and delight. He won't judge by appearances, won't decide on the basis of hearsay. He'll judge the needy by what is right, render decisions on earth's poor with justice. His words will bring everyone to awed attention. A mere breath from his lips will topple the wicked. Each morning he'll pull on sturdy work clothes and boots and build righteousness and faithfulness in the land.

Continued

Set Aside Doldrums

Continued

It is in this space that I pause to breathe
exhaling fear in my heart until it lessens
and creative ideas sprout up that
could make a difference
if I set aside the doldrums and
reach out to others with hope and peace.

In the past weeks the prophet Isaiah speaks up clearly for our times. I pray these verses for a young, vibrant pastor, who's welcoming and giving church was vandalized. And I pray again, when hearing negative voices and violence toward the LGBTQ community and Jewish and Muslim peoples. Isaiah is referencing the peaceable kingdom of the Garden of Eden. There are times we get anxious about the state of our world. And then, we see glimpses of peace and the aliveness of God who works within ourselves and others.

Throughout scriptures we understand that we have no faith unless it plays out in our lives. We are co-creators with the Divine. When our minds are clear of our personal concerns, ideas of how to love and serve others arrive in dreams and thoughts. It is our choice how we will respond.

Last Sunday evening my longing to see bright lights in the night was filled when visiting the display at Lauritzen Gardens.

The Christmas trees made of poinsettias was beautiful. Yet it was the display of many sparkling, well-lit angels that I really didn't want to leave. Their brilliance in the darkness that made me wonder. How can I be an angel to others? A bright light bringing the good news of Jesus' birth! Small acts like smiling and looking into the eyes of another, writing a note of encouragement, making a phone call, or participating in one of the many giving ministries at Saint Paul are ways of sharing that our faith is alive and gives us hope.

We pray for you and hold you in the bright light of Christ's love,

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler

From the Desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler
November 30, 2022

Isaiah 11:1-10

A Living Knowledge of God

6-9 The wolf will romp with the lamb, the leopard sleep with the kid. Calf and lion will eat from the same trough, and a little child will tend them.

Cow and bear will graze the same pasture, their calves and cubs grow up together, and the lion eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will crawl over rattlesnake dens, the toddler stick his hand down the hole of a serpent. Neither animal nor human will hurt or kill on my holy mountain.

The whole earth will be brimming with knowing God-Alive, a living knowledge of God ocean-deep, ocean-wide.

10 On that day, Jesse's Root will be raised high, posted as a rallying banner for the peoples. The nations will all come to him. His headquarters will be glorious.