

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler
SAINT PAUL BENSON

The Longest Night

Taking off on the trail
as the last light of day
recedes beyond the horizon

hoping to find myself and
this being that I call God.

For a while, fear has tightened
shoulder, back, and belly
over what has been and what
I perceive will be.

Like an owl that sees more
clearly after dark, I
know that even the desire to

walk the path is a sign that
God is working in my soul
so, with my hiking pole, I go.

Along the way star-filled
heavens fill my soul with
such jaw-dropping awe that I nearly
trip when gazing up.

Continued

December 14, 2022

Isaiah 35: 9-10

There will be a highway called the Holy Road.

No one rude or rebellious is permitted on this
road.

It's for God's people exclusively impossible to
get lost on this road.

Not even fools can get lost on it.

No lions on this road, no dangerous wild
animals—nothing and no one dangerous or
threatening.

Only the redeemed will walk on it.

The people God has ransomed will come back
on this road.

They'll sing as they make their way home to
Zion, unfading halos of joy encircling their
heads, welcomed home with gifts of joy and
gladness as all sorrows and sighs scurry into the
night.

Sermon-By-Phone

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Each week, a timely message and scripture
are available simply by making a phone call!

The Longest Night

Continued

This dark cave draws me in
where my mind can cultivate
peace and focus on the present.

In the stillness, I welcome
the moist space where I don't
feel the need to put on a face

that is pleasing to others
and can release all that binds
my heart, mind, and soul.

On this longest night
difficulties seep into
the floor of the hallowed space.

Tuning into my own
slow breaths and then
surprising even myself

I hear laughter that
is my own.

Heart-warming memories
arise of loved ones that dwelled
under the rock of my heart.

Accepting and welcoming
the warmth of the Divine
I curl up in this soft, safe space.

For the moment I am calm
and when dawn breaks, I'll unite
with others on the path
as we journey towards holiness

From the Desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler
December 14, 2022

As winter solstice approaches in the coming week, the shortened length of days becomes more apparent, and we can't wait for more light!

In past few days I've been in contact with various people who are experiencing grief. For many the sense of loss intensifies during the holidays. There is the grandmother who can't bring herself to bake cookies for a while. A grandfather whose toy boxes remain unconstructed. The quilter who can't bring herself to pick up a needle and thread.

And lostness of young people whose Christmas tree remains undecorated. I heard from a beautiful young mother who cries for her mama who can't be there to hold her newborn babe.

We pray for all these that there will be a day when broken hearts slowly begin to mend and a way will be found to go on. Even the sky will appear differently, as the blue will be seen and not only dark clouds.

At Saint Paul, we hold you in our prayers and have hope that with God's help everyone will live each day as fully as possible.

May Glad tidings of comfort and joy bring you peace,

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler