

peace be with you

weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

Encounters in Nature

It's been so long since our last
encounter and in this season

you so quietly sleep
I mistake you for dead.

What were my expectations
and fears of seeing you this way

with not a bright shade
or color in view?

The greys blanketing the sky
and icy wetlands pond will not

awaken anyone
from hibernation.

Such mystery is hidden
in the layers between the dried

grasses rooted deeply
in the earth where wee mice

Continued

January 18, 2023

Matthew 4:18-22

18-20 Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass." They didn't ask questions, but simply dropped their nets and followed.

21-22 A short distance down the beach they came upon another pair of brothers, James and John, Zebedee's sons. These two were sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, mending their fishnets. Jesus made the same offer to them, and they were just as quick to follow, abandoning boat and father.

Sermon-By-Phone

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

Encounters in Nature

Continued

reside and fuzzy cattails stand
at the ready to dole out seeds

to hungry winter sparrows
who live in branches twisting and
reaching their way upwards.

Noticing now, gaps in fallen
trees and stumps and wonder if I

peek in there a red
fox or masked raccoon

might stare back and surprise me
with a screeching "boo!"

Protected from the numbing
cold, cottontail rabbit and
squirrel

quietly rest and together
breathe the soft, slow snore
of the winter forest.

From the Desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler
January 18, 2023

A few days ago, I went to Huron Haven Nature Center. It had been a while since my last visit. Back then, everything was lush and green. There were toads croaking and two green herons swept across the wetlands.

In the quietness of nature areas our souls are cleansed, and we can imagine the gift of starting anew. We might hear the voice of Jesus, saying, "Follow me." In taking the first steps, the stories we tell ourselves change. The grace-filled gift of knowing God is with us always is enabled.

Jesus was away from where everybody knew his name. Yet, there was something about his sacred energy that caused responsible people to leave behind their everyday work and follow. And they didn't even know where they were headed yet!

If this is a good time, quiet down and travel to the inner space of your heart where the Spirit of Christ meets your spirit.

Breathe and pray the words of Jesus and respond:

Pray while breathing in, "*Come and see.*"

Pray while breathing out, "*Show me the way.*"

Trust that Jesus guides us in right ways. After all, he knows and loves us better than we manage ourselves. His footprints show us the way of love. Sit quietly and ponder how you can be light and love to your family, at your workplace, wherever you hang out, and your church?

Prayers of love, strength, hope, and guidance for each of you on the path of discipleship,

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler