

*peace be with you*

# weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler

SAINT PAUL BENSON

*February 22, 2023*

## Counting Birds

Tom, this man who persevered for three days to rig and hang a bird feeder on the proper branch

let me know that this past weekend was the exciting Audubon Society's Great Backyard Bird Count!

Now, I really can't identify a nuthatch from a gnatcatcher but could at least keep a tally.

A notepad wasn't needed, for the first twenty minutes there were only empty nests in view

yet I really was trying my best to see the possibilities of spring to come and was pleased

to see buds still hanging on to the magnolia tree we've been reporting on for at least two weeks now.

Continued

## **Psalm 103:15-18**

The days of a human life are like grass: they bloom like a wildflower; but when the wind blows through it, it's gone; even the ground where it stood doesn't remember it.

But the Lord's faithful love is from forever ago to forever from now for those who honor him.

And God's righteousness reaches to the grandchildren of those who keep his covenant and remember to keep his commands.

## **Sermon-By-Phone**

**402-210-2091**

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

# Counting Birds

continued

Those eight inches of snow made it even more thrilling to hear the familiar whistle that you would

recognize too, especially as the whistler restated his intentions with sheer boldness.

Cupped hand shielding eyes from the midday sun, the brilliant red of one cardinal reveals in the leafless tree.

I am happy enough with my official bird tally last Sunday on a February afternoon

ONE bird's whistles fill my soul with hope for mysteries unfolding in loving Creator's holy time.

From the Desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler  
February 22, 2023

Each Lenten season I pray about what I might commit to a spiritual practice. There were years that involved fasting from food, but these days my body does not that tolerate that so well. Every year I ponder what would help me be a more positive and faithful Christian. This year my goal is to fast from negativity, gossiping, and hanging on to annoyances. Each time I am less than positive, UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) will benefit as a quarter will be plunked in a jar. Now that I've publicly announced this, hopefully people won't taunt me in order to increase the missions offering. 😊

Walking affects our well-being. In solitude we might recognize what draws us away from God. Only then will healing through

repentance lead to transformation. We need not fear our time in prayer, for God judges us with kindness. Spirit immerses us with love!

Once again, listen to the Psalmist chant the lovely words and repeat them to yourselves:

*God's faithful love is forever ago and forever from now.*

May our faithfulness, honor, and respect for God encompass those we love, and even more so those we don't yet understand.

We pray for you to receive and give through the abundant life of Jesus Christ,

*Marta*

Rev. Marta Wheeler