



peace be with you
weekly devotional

from the desk of Rev. Marta Wheeler
SAINT PAUL BENSON

From a Distance

A pleasant view as the sun rises
this morning
casting a golden light
upon the meadow.

From a distance
outlines of trees are seen

the difference
between red buds and peach trees
cannot be perceived.

Come closer, experience
purple and white lilac DQ cones
dripping from the branches
with tasty, sweet scents.

Spirit calls us closer where
fuzzy lines of flowers are defined
and interactions take place.

Mother taught me to draw
near enough to feel the energy
of ones who want to
share once again

God's constant, unconditional Love
encouraging me in my faith walk
and renewing a right spirit within me.

May 10, 2023

John 14: 15-21

I Won't Leave You as Orphans

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion, who will be with you forever. This Companion is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can't receive because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be with you.

I won't leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

With Mother's Day coming up this weekend, I can't help but reflect upon my own mom. When I was a child, my four siblings and I sat in the front of the sanctuary. Each week we filled out the visitor cards using the sharply pointed, yellow golf pencils. Now I consider my mother a saint for that hour. We squirmed on the unpadded wooden pews as she tried her best to keep us quiet. She helped us find the correct pages in the hymnal for Psalms and songs, while attempting to get something out of the sermon to help her through the week. Mom got a little peace when we sang in the cherub choir. And she had a good view while sitting in the premium front row pews. Friends at church and the worship service played a vital role in not feeling separated from the love of God even when difficulties arose.

You may have noticed that there are close up seats that provide the best view of boy playing the grand piano or seeing the candles lit with precision. We wonder, will the Christ candlelight the first try? In the premium pews it's easier to stay engaged with the liturgy, pastors, and choir.

Once I knew a strong woman who would sit in the back pew each Sunday. Sadly, she learned to sit there in order to avoid preachers that were using the Bible to harm others and condemn her gay son. She needed a quick escape route when she felt unsafe and unloved. Over time, healing and trust helped her move up towards the center of the nave.

My vantage point in life provides a good view of my mother and father as well as others who provided nurturing. It's a good place to be. Remembering their goodness and forgetting the anxiety that caused our mother's hair to turn grey while still in her twenties.

We are grateful for the ways you have already and continue to encourage others.

God's nurturing peace and love to you,

Marta

Rev. Marta Wheeler