

DAYBREAKING NEWS

Reflection by Pastor Thomas Kiracofe – Special Hymn Reflection by David Rowe

May I Come In?

Sunday afternoon I went to the grocery, yes, I had a mask on and worked at staying as far as possible from others. There were several items I needed and since I was there, I headed for the half price left over Halloween candy. I know shame. I stocked up on candy (how else can I keep this physique.) Darn, my favorites were sold out, but I made do with what was there. Making my selections I couldn't help but notice that while at one end of the candy section the other end was an employee busily stocking Christmas items. It hit me, with Halloween we are in the holiday season, full blast. Oh my gosh! We are in a pandemic what will the holidays be like? I know you're with me, you have been thinking about this as well. What are we to do? My family has gathered with friends we met in 1969, as young families, and even though we have been hundreds of miles apart, we have managed to be together for 50 years at Thanksgiving. This year it's going to be zoom, sadly, tradition broken. What about immediate family? We don't know, you are still with me, do we get together with our kids, their kids, other family and friends who are nearby?

We are in a strange and difficult time, confusing, frustrating, depressing; what are we to do? It's where we are even with the holidays. As I think about this my mind turns to Moses. Remember that story, get your Bible and turn to Exodus. God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, out of captivity, slavery, against the powerful Pharaoh. Moses had to be confused, frustrated and frightened. What am I going to do?

I need to shorten the story for here so read the story. Moses addressed those frighten, confused people who, as he, saw the situation as impossible, saying: "Do not fear, Our God is with us, see the salvation of the Lord." While not in that particular situation we are in a time many see as impossible. Are we not people of faith, full time! Hopefully we do not only have faith in the good times, when life goes as we like it but, I trust, we have faith in the difficult and strange

times as well. We can get through this remembering our God is a God of love who promises salvation and release from bondage.

Lloyd Ogilvie wrote in Lord of the Impossible, there is a prescription for perplexity in the Moses story, tested and lived; “1. Fear not, 2. Stand firm, 3. See the salvation of the Lord, 4. Keep still, 5. Go forward.”

Let’s gather all that stuff that makes us think these are impossible times and give it to God, the One who parted the sea and allowed the Israelites to march through to the Promised Land. We can do it! The holidays, this year, may be dramatically different and, probably, should be. Bring on Thanksgiving and Christmas; we can get through this still being thankful for all that the blessings and love we have received and celebrate the birth of the One who loves and frees us. Take the prescription mentioned above and stop lamenting what may not be this year, be creative as to how to make this holiday season a celebration of our loving God in new ways for us, our families, friends and those beyond our circle.

Blessings, *Tom*

Preparation for the week: Exodus 3:

¹³ But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”^[a] He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD,^[b] the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’:

This is my name forever,
and this my title for all generations.

¹⁶ Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt...

Hymns: Many of you may know the following hymns by heart or go on line to youtube.com and type in the name of the hymn and sing along:

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past” #117 in The United Methodist Hymnal

“Be Still, My Soul” #534 in The United Methodist Hymnal

Prayer: *Gracious and Loving God, help us to attain peace of mind and strength through these difficult times. Too often, we have allowed anxiety, fear, and the bearing of needless burdens to weigh heavy on us and cloud our minds. Help us to clear ourselves of these heavy weights that clutter our pathway so that we are unable to live as you have created us to be free from the bondage that these obstacles hold us. May we be strong, loving and faithful servants to enable others to find your peace and love for themselves. Amen*

Please note that Sue Teel has moved to her daughter's house located at 5065 West Monterey Street; Chandler, Arizona 85226

Community Prayers

Prayers for Sarah Burke, Paula Carmosino, Lee Smith, Sue Teel, Ruth Wymer, Lee Wymer & Tiffany Rodriguez (Betty Trabue's granddaughter – awaiting test results). If you have additional prayer requests, please let the church office know so that we can get it on the prayer chain.

Giving

Thank you for your continued support for the work and ministry of Aldersgate United Methodist Church – mailing address is 3530 North 32nd Street; Phoenix, Arizona 85018-5609.

A Brief History of an Old Hymn

Hymn #369 - Blessed Assurance

This most beloved hymn was written in 1873 by Phoebe Knapp. Mrs. Knapp was the wife of the organizer of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. It was written about the time the Knapps were having a large pipe organ installed at their home. When their friend Fanny Crosby was visiting, Mrs. Knapp played the melody on the piano (because the organ wasn't ready yet) Ms. Crosby immediately came up with the words "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine." Ms. Crosby was blind and this song reflects her walk of faith.

Assurance of salvation is a Protestant doctrine; particularly that of the Methodists. John Wesley believed that all Christians have a faith, which implies forgiving love.

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