The Holy Trinity - Leadership Letter

Dear Friends,

The Psalm for this week is one of my favorites...Psalm 8. This is a psalm of creation, of praise and wonder. It is not lengthy so while I suggest 1-2 verses each day, I suggest you read the entire psalm each day and then focus on the specific verses. Read it silently. Read it aloud. Read it in different translations. Let its words work themselves into your heart and your mind and your spirit, that you would be filled with joy.

Day 1: Read Psalm 8:1-9 Before the psalm even begins, you may notice an unfamiliar word. At the beginning of many psalms there is a note of authorship (Psalms were the hymnal of the Hebrew people and, as we like to know who wrote the music and words, this info is frequently included). This psalm is attributed to David—poet, shepherd, king. But there is also a note that reads to the leader: according to Gittith. If you scratch your head in confusion, well...you're not alone. No one really knows the meaning of Gittith. As I mentioned this is a hymnal of sorts, so we can assume this is a note for a worship leader/choir director. It may indicate a particular tune or even an instrument. While we don't know the exact meaning, we are reminded that this is a psalm, a song, for worship meant to be shared in a gathering of the faithful. This is a song of praise that begins above the heavens, moves through the moon and stars and galaxies into human beings. This praise doesn't stop with humans but then extends into all creation. While the order is somewhat different, I hope these words evoke for you the wonder of creation as we read it in Genesis. I hope you are filled with gratitude as you consider the beauty of God's world.

Day 2 Read Psalm 8: 1 and 9 This Psalm speaks in large part about the human condition, but it doesn't start with human beings. It begins with God's glorious power. It is a hymn, an expression of faith, an act of worship and it begins and ends with the same words. The first word and the last belong to God. This celebration of the awesome glory of God, had the distinction of being the first biblical text to reach the moon when the Apollo 11 mission left a silicon disc on the lunar surface. On this disc were messages from 73 nations—including the Vatican who chose these verses as their offering. How appropriate...for in them we find an eloquent proclamation of the sovereignty of God over earth and heaven, and galaxies and the unexplored reaches of space, as well as a remarkable affirmation of the status and vocation of human creatures who are invited to explore and tend and be partners with God in the nurturing and living of creation.

Day 3 Read Psalm 8:2 This is a psalm of praise and a celebration of God's glory. It explores the big questions: Who is God? What is God like? Where is God? God is at the beginning and at the end, with humans embraced by this awesome God. Surrounded by God and God-questions, we come upon more questions: Who are we? Why are we here? What was God thinking when God created us? This center section begins with a reminder that compared to God we are as helpless as infants. And yet...as weak as we are God needs us. God takes our stammering attempts at understanding, our feeble gestures of praise, our sometimes-childish attempts to manage our own lives, and God uses all this to create a structure of love. God takes our weakness and turns it into strength. Like parents celebrating the first word of an infant or the first step of a toddler, God rejoices in us. Each prayer we utter, each hymn we sing, each expression of love is taken by God and used to build a structure of joy and peace.

Day 4 Read Psalm 8:3-5 Framed in this envelope of praise we call Psalm 8 is a celebration of wonder and awe and exaltation, for God is great. God speaks and life bursts forth. Light pierces the darkness and color and sound fill the empty spaces with beauty and wonder. And there we are right in the center of all this praise. We stand gazing into the star-studded skies attempting to comprehend the vast distances, and at the same time looking into ourselves—dumbfounded that God cares personally about each one of us. And if that weren't enough, God loves human beings so much, that God stooped down and clothed himself with flesh and bones, becoming one of us so that we might understand not only how much God loves us, but what it means to be human. Being human includes doubt and suffering, exhilaration and contentment, temptation and exhaustion, satisfaction, and pleasure. As we look to Christ, we see that being human means we may suffer and know disappointment. And it means that we can take all the joys and pains of life and allow God to transform them into kingdom light.

Day 5 Read Psalm 8:6-8 What does it mean to be human? Does it mean to be weak and unimportant, or grand and wonderful? Have we forgotten our smallness or our greatness? I think we have lost sight of both...we have forgotten our place. Through industry, technology, politics, economy, we try to order our world so that we can fool ourselves into

believing that we are masters of the universe. We forget that we are connected to all the other parts of the created order—that we are just one part of God's great tapestry of creation. We need to be reminded of that smallness. We need to hear God's voice working its way through the cacophony of busyness and tumult saying, "Plant fields, build roads and houses, fill the earth with your little creations—but don't forget to look up and see the heavens, the work of my fingers. Look up and pay attention. See the flowers blooming in the sunshine. Hear birds chirping and babies laughing and dogs barking. Smell the crispness of an apple, the sweetness of cinnamon, the fresh scent of a summer breeze. Look up—and you just might encounter me."

It is easy to forget how insignificant we are. And it is equally easy to forget how grand. We have been made partners with God in caring for this earth and all its splendid creatures. God has entrusted us with the work of creation-tending. God has given us intelligence and creativity and energy and strength so that we can use all these gifts in this awesome responsibility of caring for the earth. We don't have to be perfect, but we do have to take seriously the central importance of humanity in God's plan for creation, loving and reaching out and caring for this world out of "our place"—the heart of God. We are to respond with awe before the creator, and with wonder at our place in creation, relearning gratitude, and humility...and courage and joy. That's what it means to be human—to live as creatures of the earth, our eyes filled with the glory of God.

Day 6 Read Psalm 8:1-8 Your place is in the heart of God. You are a stunning creation with a part to play in the healing and upbuilding of the universe...like a prism refracting God's light of love throughout the world. Sounds daunting, doesn't it? But we can take on our role because God doesn't hand out orders and then leave us alone. Instead, God tends our hearts. When all hope is buried, God works miracles. God ministers to our brokenness, binds our wounds, plants strength where we are weak, waters our souls with the river of life. My God, my God, how wonderful you are. There is nothing like you in the whole earth. I look up into the sky and I see your star-spangled glory. I gaze up and out into infinity and I wonder: Who am I? Why do I matter? To my wonder you choose me—you choose us—to be your partners. You share the secrets of the universe with us. You trust us. You trust us to look at creation through your eyes of love—seeing the butterfly and elephant, pansy and maple tree as belonging to you. You trust us to love and give and serve—all people, all creation. My God, my God. How amazing you are.

Information and Updates for the Week Ahead:

-We are very grateful to Rev. Janet Hoover for her continued contributions to our weekly newsletter with reflections on the Psalms. If you have a favorite Psalm, please let us know and Rev. Janet will include a reflection in the weeks ahead.

-It has been so encouraging to have such a large number of Zion congregants continuing to participate in our weekly worship. This past Sunday 41 households in our Zion family worshipped together at 10:00, either via Zoom, cell phone, or our virtual Service of the Word. Many thanks to those making it possible for us to continue worshipping together, especially our supply pastors—Rev. Janet, Rev. Jen, and Deacon Patsy, worship assistants John, Beth, and Ryan, Mary Senn, Kim and Jim Marscher, Jen, Sara, and Kristen. We are also grateful for the support and wisdom of Rev. Anita Mohr, our transition pastor.

Our Sunday 10:00 AM worship service on the Zoom platform continues this week for those with internet access via computer, tablet, or smart phone.

To join this Sunday's service, same log-in info as last week: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09 Meeting ID: 843 5484 0714, Password: 022654.

Or by smart phone, One tap mobile, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654# US (New York)

-IF YOU DON'T HAVE INTERNET ACCESS, you can use ANY phone and call 1 646 558 8656 US (New York), Meeting ID: 843 5484 0714, Password: 022654. Last week 8 households joined the service over their landline or cell phone.

-If you are interested in serving as a worship assistant or providing special music for upcoming services, please contact Jim Marscher, chair of our Worship & Music committee.

-You can continue participating in Zion's virtual Sunday 10:00 AM worship service by utilizing the Service of the Word template provided later in this newsletter. Feel free to use the Service of the Word at any time during the day/week if you aren't able to join us in spirit at 10:00 AM on Sunday.

-Jen's Craft Time continues each Sunday at 11:00 AM following worship. This time is JUST FOR KIDS. Jen also offers a story time each Wednesday at 7pm. If you are interested in having your children participate in either/both programs, please email Zion's Nursery Attendant, Jennifer Pierce, at pierce883@yahoo.com for your separate Zoom invitations! Fun for all ages!!

-Personnel changes—Mike Stevens (sexton and Sunday morning transportation provider) and Matt Aceto (technology coordinator) will be departing the Zion staff in the next few weeks due to the increasing hours in their full-time jobs and other demands on their time. We appreciate the important contributions that both Mike and Matt have made to Zion over the past several years. We are pleased to announce that Shawn Lockwood will fill both the sexton and technology coordinator roles for Zion starting in the very near future. Shawn served in the sexton role for Zion several years ago and we are glad to welcome him back to the staff.

Our call committee continues to meet. Progress is being made on the initial draft of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), an important first step in the process of looking for Zion's next pastor. We will be contacting the Zion congregation soon to seek your input on this document, along with our recently revised Mission and Values Statements.

-We have formed a task force to begin planning for our safe return to "in-person" worship. A representative from each major committee at Zion plus congregants with expertise in issues related to the pandemic will meet via Zoom on June 4. Thanks to Ron Kowalczyk, Bob Lambe, Lynn Moretz, Jim Marscher, Kim Marscher, Sara Silva, Wendy Stevens, and Jeanne Gymburch, who will join Mark in this important work. Our council leadership will also participate in a Zoom meeting offered by Bishop John Macholz, bishop of the Upstate NY Synod of the ELCA, on June 3 for congregation presidents to discuss the safe return to "in-person" worship.

-The local chapter of the Red Cross expressed their gratitude to Zion for hosting a recent blood drive in our Fellowship Hall on May 21st. The drive yielded 34 units of blood. The Red Cross has already asked if they might utilize the Zion facilities again for future blood drives.

The second reading on this past Pentecost Sunday was taken from 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, and talks about the various "spiritual gifts" with which our loving God blesses us. Verses 4-6- read (Lutheran Study Bible), "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates them in everyone." In the midst of this terrible pandemic and the racial tensions and inequities tearing at the fabric of our country, we witness the contributions of so many, each using the special gifts they possess, for the greater good. In the field of psychology, we often speak of the notion of the "gestalt," the idea that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The contributions of each one of us, to both Zion and to the world beyond our doors, when added together make the impact bigger than the simple addition of one to another. Our actions can have a multiplying effect. We invite each member of our Zion family to think about how you might contribute to our efforts, to and for one another, to help all make their way through this challenging time. Please contact us if you have ideas about the ways you would like to use your gifts in service of the greater good. We can and will do this together!

May the peace of Christ be with each of us! Mark Thompson and Kristen Burson Church council co-presidents

The Holy Trinity - June 7, 2020



SERVICE OF THE WORD
GATHERING

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, \pm one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Reconciling God,

We confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through + Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life. We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere. Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy the thirsty and give us the life only you can give. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! #413 Verses 1 & 3 -Mary Senn

Vs. 1 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, merciful, and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Vs. 3 Holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee, though the eye of sinfulness thy glory may not see, only thou art holy: there is none beside thee, perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

Prayer of the Day

God of heaven and earth, before the foundation of the universe and the beginning of time you are the triune God: Author of creation, eternal Word of salvation, life-giving Spirit of wisdom. Guide us to all truth by your Spirit, that we may proclaim all that Christ has revealed and rejoice in the glory he shares with us. Glory and praise to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE WORD

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:4

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Edgy, Radical, Subversive: The Story We May Be Missing –Rev. Jennifer DeWeerth

A few weeks ago, I was listening to my backlog of podcasts on my phone. The podcaster was interviewing Michelle Obama's former speechwriter, Sarah Hurwitz, about her career and her new book, called *Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life-in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)*. The story was that growing up Hurwitz had attended two boring incomprehensible services every year at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a long boring Seder, and then a less than meaningful Bat Mitzvah, her conclusion was, "There's nothing to see here; This isn't where I'm going to find meaning or spirituality."

But then, just by chance she decided to sign up for an adult Judaism class where they studied the Torah. She was absolutely shocked and amazed at what was actually in these texts that she had barely learned about in her very thin encounters with the tradition as a young person. She says to the interviewer, It's not this thing people think it is "This is an *edgy*, *radical*, *subversive*...tradition."

I was intrigued when I heard that. What, specifically, was she talking about? What she now believes is the "core, animating, beating heart idea" of Judaism is the line from the Torah that says that we are all created in the image of God, the same text we read today. What she learned when she dove deep into the study of her own tradition is that what being created in the image of God actually means is that:

We are all infinitely worthy, We are all equal to each other, and Every person is totally unique.

But isn't that just obvious, a shared value, don't we all believe that? "No we don't," she says. "There's not a single person who believes that. Because if you believed that, why would you ever walk past a homeless person on the street and say, "I'm sorry, not today?" If that person were the President or a celebrity, you'd stop. If there was just a *laptop* on the street, you would stop. We don't fundamentally think that a celebrity and a homeless person are infinitely worthy, totally equal, and unique. We think of them differently in terms of their wealth, status, and fame. And Judaism is a *protest* against that differentiation of people."

Here's the thing: the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament are both full of these radical, edgy, subversive ideas. They don't just challenge our contemporary consumeristic, individualistic worldview. They were subversive even before they were written down, when they just circulated as oral traditions.

Here's another example, also from the Genesis text we heard today. Where is this long story coming from, that we know so well, a story of the creation of the earth over six days, a story of how *good* every part of the created world was, even at its origin, how precious and carefully made? It turns out the creation story in the Torah, in Genesis, is a counter-cultural protest of the people of Israel against the creation story of their Babylonian captors. While their oppressors saw the origins of the universe as violent and bloody, the Israelites told their children a different story, a story rooted in goodness and blessing. And that story shaped everything else about who they would become, who they wanted to be, how they taught their children, all the way down the lines through the Jew, Jesus, and to us.

And that's how we ended up with this subversive story of creativity, goodness and blessing. We inherited a story about how each one of us is made in God's image, worthy, equal, and unique. Psalm 8, appointed for this Trinity Sunday, which I hope you will read after worship today, perhaps outside, standing under the open sky, says, in part:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established. what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

What does it mean that we are so wonderfully made and what does it mean that God cares for us? Is it just pablum? or this "edgy, radical, and subversive?"

I participated in the George Floyd solidarity march in Utica last Sunday. It was a huge turnout, even under challenging conditions with many people concerned about social distancing. And it was powerful. Black Lives Matter. One Black life *matters*. Like Judaism, it is a protest against the reigning worldview that says some people matter more and some matter less. But what if each of the bodies that we see so easily brutalized in those videos of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery is actually infinitely worthy and beloved? What would it look like if we really believed that? What would we need to do about the white racism that lives within and all around us if we truly grasped the subversive radicalism of the *imago dei*-that we are made with love in the image of God-worthy, equal, unique?

Remember Sarah Hurwitz, who discovered, when she finally chose to look, how deep the spiritual well of her Jewish tradition really went, how different it was from the surface level exposure she'd had previously? It makes me wonder what we might be missing in our tradition, what ideas and values would emerge if only we were willing to see? They might not be what we expect. They might be edgy~at the edge of the values of our society with its materialistic, individualist, consumerist priorities. They might be radical, deeply rooted in something we have barely begun to explore. They might be subversive, counter-cultural, beneath the secular surface where we live so comfortably most of the time.

For example, it might be hard for us to see that the planet we pollute and abuse, is God's gorgeous creation entrusted to our care. It might be hard for us to see that every person is worthy, equal and unique, made in God's image. It might be hard for us to see God in the world and in our lives for any number of reasons, perhaps most obviously, because most of the people, media, and culture around us believe that God is an irrelevant artifact of ancient tomes. But in spite of all the blocks on our awareness of God's presence, our edgy, radical, subversive Christian faith *insists that we are capable of seeing it.*

The best analogy I've ever heard for this is that we humans are like the Brazilian amphibian fish whose eyes have two lenses, one for seeing under the water and one for seeing above the water. But most of us most of the time have cataracts on our second lens. We commonly do not perceive the world of the spirit. (Marcus Borg) We look at the heavens, but we don't see the handicraft of God. We look at the person on the street and we don't see a beautiful, equal, unique masterpiece made in the image of God. But we could.

There IS "something to see here." It's just not what we expected. It's edgy, radical, and subversive. The work of our life of study and prayer and worship and service together is to remove our spiritual cataracts so that we don't miss it. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Anthem: Rock of Ages -Hastings/Wilhelmi

Prayers of Intercession

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

God of community, you form us as your church. Guide our bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized in sharing your life-giving good news with all the world. Strengthen us to be bold in our proclamation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of counsel, all authority belongs to you. Encourage the leaders of this and every land to seek peace, equality, and unity. Instill wisdom in advocates who work toward justice in often ignored communities. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of care, you created us in your image. Help us see your likeness in one another. Open our eyes to see and attend to all who face oppression and suffering. Console, heal, and nourish all in need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of companionship, you accompany this body of faith. As the rhythms of summer begin, protect all who travel, renew all who will enjoy a time of sabbath, and shelter all who will not be protected from the sun's heat. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit especially: those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Paul, Gail, Fran K, Doris Hennings, Edie Marie, Suzee, Donna E., Michael Gilleece and family, prayers of comfort for Jon, Donna B., Debbie, Diane, the Nelson family, Helene, Your Neighbors clients, Dave, Jordan, Alison, Bill & family, Theresa, Barbara C., residents of the Presbyterian Home, and Paul Van Allen, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thanksgiving at the Table

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken unto the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Holy God, We Praise Your Name #414 Verses 1 & 4 -Mary Senn

Vs. 1 Holy God, we praise your name; Lord of all, we bow before you. All on earth your scepter claim, all in heav'n above adore you. Infinite your vast domain, everlasting is your reign.

Vs. 4 Holy Father, holy Son, Holy Spirit, three we name you, though in essence only one; undivided God we claim you and, adoring, bend the knee while we own the mystery.

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, ‡ Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you. Thanks be to God.

Enjoy this 7th recipe exchange provided to us by chef Jon Daly!

Smoked Mozzarella Pasta Salad - Yields: 8-10 servings

Ingredients: Amounts:

Smoked Mozzarella large dice ¾ pound Parmesan Cheese grated ¾ cup Tricolor spiral pasta 1 pound

Spinach julienne ½ cup Red bell peppers julienne 1 large

Mayonnaise 3/4 cup Red wine vinegar 1/4 cup

Parsley chopped ¼ cup
Red onion small dice ½ cup
Garlic minced 1 tbsp +2 tsp

Sour cream 1/4 cup
Black pepper 1 & 1/2 tsp
Lemon juice 1 tsp
Honey 1 tbsp
Tabasco 1/8 tsp
Kosher salt 1 tsp

Directions:

- 1. In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook pasta until just tender to the bite. Drain and cool. Place in a large bowl.
- 2. Add smoked mozzarella, parmesan, spinach, red peppers, red onion, and parsley.
- 3. In a separate bowl, assemble dressing by adding mayonnaise, sour cream, garlic, red wine vinegar, honey, lemon juice, tabasco, black pepper, & salt. Whisk together
- 4. Add dressing to pasta mix and toss together gently, using a rubber spatula.
- 5. Refrigerate until Service.

You can add diced grilled boneless chicken breast to this salad, and it makes a nice summer entrée.

Two Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for two volunteers to make weekly phone calls to Zion members just to check in and say hello! If you'd like to volunteer, please call or Email Sara at 315.316.8288 or SSilva@zionluth.com.





