

MINISTER'S MINUTE

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Morning Prayer

God of the quiet, God of the silence be with us in prayer.

God of the questions, God of the unknown future be with us as a calming presence.

God of the unexpected, God of time past, present and future, bring us closer to you.

We pray to you and ask for a little help when we begin to lose our faith, when we begin to become disheartened. When we are scared and anxious. Guide us back to you.

We pray to you as so many others reach to you in prayer, so we ask that we may become the answer to someone's prayer. We ask for help.

We are looking for miracles, a way through this current world situation. Help us find your perfect love and light in the midst of unrest and fear.

We pray in Jesus' name,
Amen.



Fearful words, anxious heart, worrying mind, isolating actions, these are all things that can mean a HUGE change in our moods, our habits, our self-care and our relationships. Most of all, these things tend to lead us to change our relationship with God. In this time, I just have one thing to say: It is okay to be afraid, it is okay to worry, it is okay to know fear. This means you are alive, thinking, and consciously aware that not everything is as it should be. Even those who are trained to deal with emergencies are struggling in this pandemic; after all we are only human. I have not been trained for anything like this so indeed this is like building a train on the tracks as it speeds ahead. One thing that I keep reminding myself of, is that amidst all of this, yes, God is present and yet it feels harder to find a moment to connect to God. This means it is even more important that we try to, whether through prayer, song, reflection, writing, singing, and even silence.

Being that we are in the season of Lent, it seems curiously fitting that we are distancing from things that we normally would have no reason to stop. We are distancing ourselves from routines, norms, practices, sports, date nights, concerts, coffee time, dinners and gathering. We are so good at gathering as the church, in fact we are the experts at getting people together! This is going

Sunday Scripture

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel chooses one of Jesse's sons as king.

Psalm 23

God is my shepherd.

Ephesians 5:8-14

Live as children of the light.

John 9:1-41

Jesus heals the man born blind.

Task: Consider writing your own version of Psalm 23.

God is my shepherd, everything I need is taken care of: good food to eat, sweet water to drink, safe place to sleep! When my soul is broken, God restores it. When my path gets twisted, God returns me to the right ways by the Holy Name! When I walk in shadowed places, where death is waiting for me, I will not be afraid. I know that you are with me, God. I am comforted by your guidance, by your readiness to defend me. Even in the presence of those who would do me harm, you make sure that I have enough, and more than enough! You mark me as yours. I am certain that your goodness and your mercy will always be in my life, and I will be a part of your household forever. A part of your household, forever!

-Richard Bott

to be tough! We are fasting from the normal that we may or may not realize that we take as a "sure thing". In Lent, many Christians give up certain luxuries in order to reflect, lament and realize the experience of Jesus during his 40 days in the desert. Jesus was weakened, yet strengthened by his time of fasting. In this time I have to believe that we too can be strengthened by this time of fasting from normal activities. How? I only hope that will be revealed in time, but I have a feeling it has to do with finding out a new purpose for ourselves, especially as Christians.

In John 9:1-4, one scripture reading for today Jesus heals the man born blind. Now, it can remain a really good story that brings us comfort and it can also offer us deeper message that God is asking us to witness. This can be many different faithful interpretations. As disciples of this faith we try believe in that which we cannot see, and that which we cannot know for sure. We also know that we need healing in many ways including but not limited to our physical bodies. We truly need healing for our hearts, our inner softer parts, our minds, our pride, our spirits, our vulnerable inner child. Some of us are still working and on the front lines, some are home, being careful, some are out and about when necessary. Some are reaching out to neighbours, chatting on the phone, sending snail mail, taking photos or doing word puzzles. We are all part of this and if anything this pandemic reminds us that we were never alone...in fact it reminds me that we were always in "this" together.

We can find our own purpose in the midst of this. I know it does not seem obvious as we are all in different stages right now. Yet we are not helpless, we are adapting. We are not alone, we are together just in completely different ways! We must try to turn to compassion and understanding. We must look for the most vulnerable, there are children who are not safe at home these days, there are health care workers who are exhausted and desperate, there are vulnerable people who are more are more vulnerable. In a world that is already difficult we must notice who needs us even more now. We are constantly navigating a world that shows us its brokenness, but nevertheless we pray, we believe and we steadily move forward into whatever tomorrow will bring. Why? Because God is our shepherd.

Psalm 23 offers one of the most recognized sentences ever, "The Lord is my Shepherd." This psalm identifies that we are not

always safe, we are not always in places of light, but that God is with us. Now, faith sometimes feels hard to maintain, it can waver when we are wavering. Sometimes difficulty makes faith stronger for some!

I saw a photo the other day that showed a man beside a rather huge sheep. The caption shared that this sheep had been lost for 6 years and it hadn't been sheared from the wool it grew. This sheep had become so extremely soft and fluffy that the wolves that hunted it couldn't even bite into it! The lesson may be that we do not have to become hardened to survive, we just need to be extremely soft and fluffy! Now whether or not that brings you a chuckle, in my mind this sheep is a lesson for us as disciples and followers of Jesus.

Yet what I believe is that we need to lean on our faith in these times of unknown. Let's rise to the occasion and create a twentieth century Christian. Let it be real, genuine, honest, fun, and creative and new. After all, God reminds us that the old will wash away and the new come into being. We are the disciples of the Word, the Word that says, I am with you, love each other as I have loved you. The love that is here now between us must also bring with it the wisdom to figure this out together, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day.

Peace be with you, Rev. Emma

Sunday Fun: Can you find Gwen the wonder dog?

