



St. Andrew's Tidings

Sunday, May 5th, 2013

Message from Margaret...

In the very beautiful service of Night Prayer, from the New Zealand Prayer book, we read "I lie down in peace and take my rest; for it is in God alone that I dwell unafraid." Somehow, at least for me, the night is the time when I feel most afraid. But when I read and share Compline, or Night Prayer, at the end of the evening, my fears become smaller. In our gospel reading for this week, Jesus is reminding the disciples that after his death, and when he is no longer with them and at a time when they will be most afraid, God will send the Holy Spirit, who will be their advocate and guide. Jesus says: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. My first response to that is, "Well, that's easy for you to say." Quite often it is in this darkness that I feel I am in the desert. But we read in Hosea: I will lead you into the desert, and there I will speak to your heart." It is sometimes when we get to this point, that God can really speak to us.

The Jewish notion of Blessing resists the notion that life is what you make it—something you discover by the power within YOU. The power is first with others, especially certain others, to shape our beginnings and our ends. Those with the power to bless us, or to withhold blessing—friends, siblings, and parents—are the most powerful people in our lives.

Roberta Bondi, in her new book, tells a powerful story of how she came to know real blessing through a harrowing night desert experience. The name of this book is "Night on Flint River: An Accidental Journey in Knowing God." Dr. Bondi, who is professor of Church History at the Candler School of Theology of Emory University is not the kind of person you would imagine going on a canoe trip down a river, but she tells the story this way: She and her two friends Pam and Jeff had gone out intending to take a short, simple and relaxing canoe trip on the Flint River, not far from Atlanta. "Nothing turned out as we expected, and before long we were in trouble. There had been a drought sometime before which had killed many trees.

As soon as we were in the water we found ourselves entangled among their dead trunks, roots, and branches that had fallen across the river. Within hours we were in total darkness, the likes of which I have never known before. I truly believed I was living out the last night of my life." She goes on to tell how Jeff tears the ligaments in his leg, and they spend the whole night inching along the riverbed. Several times, because of her lack of experience, she does some real foolish things. It was in the midst of all of this that she literally stumbles upon the richness of blessings.

She continues, "As night came I pulled myself up, I am not proud to say, whimpering, as the gritty weight of my wet sweat suit pulled at my waist...my pants had become cold against my legs. Pam took me by the arm and helped me, patting and fussing over me at the same time...I slipped and scrambled on my hands and knees and pulled myself up the muddy bank. I noticed my hands stung and my joints hurt. "I have to sleep right now," I said to them. Worried, Pam said, "But there's no place for you to lie down, the ground is soaking wet." "I don't care," and in

less than a minute I was almost asleep...but there was a rustling and a crackling noise..and then Pam lay down beside me and so did Jeff...then a piece of slick foil floated down. "Emergency blanket," Pam said triumphantly. Pam loves camping equipment.

She put her arms around me from the back surrounding me on the spongy ground to warm and comfort me. "I love you," she said in her beautiful voice. Suddenly full of unexpected happiness, which poured out of a gift of gratitude for the very being of my friend, I answered her, "I love you, too." These were our last words before I fell asleep like someone falling down a well and into the arms of God."

Dr. Bondi reflects upon the blessings she received during this harrowing journey and says, "I have learned from experience that when something happens to me that puts me in a place of danger, delight, beauty, loss, illness, accident or pain that is far from my ordinary experience as this night was, I need to pay attention in the presence of God.

I believe that it is this presence of the Holy Spirit who is our advocate and guide, who leads us through these dark nights of the soul and leads us to experience the dawn of the new day, which lets us know that God has been with us...all the while.

WOW THIS WEDNESDAY

Nave, Sanctuary, and Chapel Reconstruction

This Wednesday, May 8th we will gather for covered dinner, and then hear from our architects, Danny Grundhoeffler and Carter Quina. They will lead us in to focus groups, which will be led by a vestry person or member of the Building Commission, to offer ideas and suggestions as to how our space can be utilized and to say what is important to you in a particular space or area. The focus groups will consist of Capital Campaign and Financial Issues; Liturgy (clergy and servers); Music, Performance and Special Events; Pedestrian walk-ways, Accessibility; Aesthetics; Chapel area use; Advertisement; Altar Guild/Sacristy etc. Please come and enjoy dinner and then offer your thoughts. Now is your chance!

LIVING STONES FOR A LIVING SANCTUARY

The Kick-Off for our new worship space renovation will be May 19, Pentecost, at the 10 a.m. service. The vestry has chosen 1 Peter 2: 4-5 as the scripture to undergird this event: "Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." From this comes the theme for our renovation kickoff: "Living Stones for a Living Sanctuary." Stay tuned to how this theme will be used as we begin our renovation. Please begin to pray each day this prayer written by Nancy Young for our project :

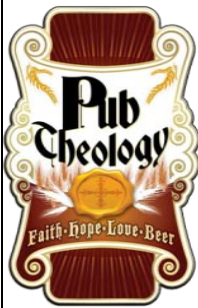
Heavenly Father, Gracious Lord, open our hearts that we may draw near to Christ, the chief cornerstone of our faith. Transform us so that, like Him, we may become living stones built into a living sanctuary. Form us, Lord, into a holy priesthood, a living spiritual house, that though the sacrifice of our lives and talents, we may show to others your goodness in calling us out of darkness into your marvelous light. Amen

Wow Wednesday May 15

The Bay County Christian Children's Choir

Please invite your friends. This will be an awesome program!!

*Pub
Theology
Tomorrow
Night
6 p.m.
"The Place"
on Harrison*



*Bring a
Bible-no
experience
necessary!*

Please keep the following in your prayers; Lee, June, Brenda, Scott, , Savanna, Terry, Connie, Jonathan, Lisa, , Sarah, Wendy, Keith, Hannah, Jazlea, Ann, Bruce, Judy , Mia, Middy, Emma, Irene, Maureen, Joey, Annette, Jay, Doris, Gail, Mary, Barbara, Travis, David, Dee, Bobbie, Cheryl, Alan, Pat, Maggie, Joan, Chris, Mike, Debbie, Hilary, Ava, Nan, Charlie, Fax, Toni, Jane, Elaine, Bobbi, Bobbie, Janet, David, JD, Rita. Lee Ann, Jean, Ruth Ann, Sandra, Nancy, Ann, Janet, Mike, Judy, Janet, Nancy, Jean, Britany, Mary. Sandra, Andy, Polly, Judy, Jonathan, Jessica, Emma, MacKenzie, Tina, Lisa, Lora, Connie, Middy, Kathy, Holly, Vincent, Sandra, Bev, Ann, Donna, Dirk, Cody, Tiffany, Sara, Hamden County Correctional, Northampton, MA., Joseph, Joe, Bill

We pray for our men and women in the Armed Forces at home and abroad; Jeff, Bowe, James, Andrew, Kenneth, Evan, Ryan, Joe, Nate, Richard, David, Brian, Jason, Billy, Mike, Joseph, Colin, Todd, Brett, Jordan

