

The Anglican Parish of St. Peter and St. Paul

August 9th 2020

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

“Nourishing Faith and Community”



Musical opening Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Words of Welcome

The Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

And also with you.

Almighty God,

to you all hearts are open all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Collect: The Rev Gail Rodger

Almighty God, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church. Open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy, and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The Proclamation of the Word

Reading One: Genesis 37:1-4 and 12-28 *Peter Saunders*

Reading Two: Matthew 14:22-33 *Mavis Pillar*

Sermon: *The Rev Gail Rodger*

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight O Lord, our rock and redeemer.

As we have talked about before Matthew is writing to his community of Jesus followers trying to encourage them. He writes to establish Jesus as the Messiah, which we have here at the end of the passage. A second purpose, of course is to teach about the nature of God and the role of disciples in the world. So we have had a number of parables followed by miracles stories. As we hear the miracle of walking on water story, I would like highlight a couple of points about the language and metaphor that is used by Matthew to look through a hermeneutical lens at the messages given to the disciples to whom it was written, and so also given to us.

The first one is right at the beginning of the story. Jesus insists that the disciples get into the boat. Insists is the polite term. The term forces may be more accurate translation. Jesus forces the disciples to get into the boat. To place it in context, we tend to think they have just come from a wonderful pot luck; a frolic by the seaside and the miracle of feeding the 5000 has taken place. All have eaten, and all have had their fill. There must have been joy and contentment. The crowd is dispersed and the disciples are instructed quite forcefully by Jesus to get into the boat and get to the other side of the sea. They begin to sail across when the wind picks up. I have a very short humorous clip that I think reflects how this may feel. [play clip]. Yes, one moment you are happy and jumping in joy, enjoying life to the fullest and the next you are neck deep into it. I wonder if this is how the disciples felt as they had just experienced one miracle, the feeding of the 5000, and were now headed across the sea and battling the squall that had arisen. They are not scared by the storm. Unlike the previous Matthean story of

the seafaring disciples waking a carpenter to help with a life threatening storm, in this story the emphasis is on the metaphor of the sea.

In the creation story of the Torah the sea is a place of chaos. The chaotic sea is a part of the creation story that all the disciples would have known. The beginning of the world is watery chaos covered in darkness. Jesus insisting that the disciples go on ahead in the boat is message to all disciples. He is launching them into the world. Today our meditative piece is called I Feel the Winds of God Today which has these lines. “If cast on shores of selfish ease or pleasure I should be, Lord let me feel thy freshening breeze and I’ll put back to sea”. We are called to be workers in the world, bringing God’s love to all those around us, even when the winds are blowing and the boat is battered. For those hearing the story in the days when it was written, the words may have an understanding that in battling the storm, the disciples are battling darkness or evil or the underworld. No wonder the disciples thought they saw a ghost. Today the darkness is not supernatural but is intolerance, racism, or inequality, it is in callousness, cruelty, and hatred. When we are buffeted by these things, we must not retreat to ‘shores of selfish ease’ as the hymnist writes but continue to be in the world making our voices of tolerance, understanding, and empathy heard. We must continue to stand for consideration and kindness.

Jesus says. “take heart; it is I; do not be afraid”. The word heart in this context is related to courage or confidence. So saying take heart is the same as saying Have courage. Then Jesus’s words reveal his presence with, among, and for them. While we translate what Jesus utters as “It is I,” the Greek is more sparse, succinct, and significant and reads “I Am.” Neither the disciples nor Matthew’s audience would mistake the pronouncement of the divine name. The

‘it is I’ statement is in the present tense. God is here. After having revealed his presence and identity, Jesus then encourages the disciples once more to leave fear behind, the often heard Do Not fear is repeated here by Jesus. As the power of God is seen, fear is the natural response, and so often in the biblical writing the message is love not fear. From that encouragement, Peter steps out in faith, and then it seems, utterly fails. I think many of us can relate to Peter’s experience. Faithfully stepping out of our own comfort zone only to be hurt, or to feel like we have failed, or to feel overwhelmed. And yet it is during this very vulnerable time that we can feel closest to God. When the focus of the story is on the nature of God being always present, Peter - by simply trusting that God will catch him has not failed but shown an expanding faith. Peter is meeting Jesus in the middle of the storm. God is met in the tumult of life. In the troughs of the waves as much as the peaks. Just as Jesus reassures the disciples and reaches out to grab hold of Peter, so also God holds us with compassion. I would suspect that Matthew was not trying to be funny here, but that Peter, whose name means rock stepped out of the boat and then sank like a stone has a certain humour for me.

The message is to live with courage and hope, taking chances, risking ourselves in relationship, seeking the welfare of the community around us, all the while remembering God is always there. Jesus sends us out into the world, encouraging us to overcome our fears, and holding each of us through forgiveness, mercy, comfort, and grace.

Amen

Musical reflection I Feel the Winds of God Today

Announcements

Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

Prayers of the People: *Lynn Schumacher*

The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for Quiet Hearts

Blessing that Bears the Wind, the Wave by Jan Richardson

That we will risk
the drenching
by which we
are drawn
toward the voice
that calls us,
the love
that catches us,
the faith
that carries us
beyond the wind,

the wave.

Doxology

Glory to God,

whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.

Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Weekly Cycles of Prayer

In our Anglican Communion, we pray for the Province de Anglican church in Rwanda, The Most Rev. Laurent Mbanda - Archbishop of Episcopal Church in Rwanda & Bishop of Shyira;

for Linda Nicholls, our Primate, Mark MacDonald the National Indigenous Archbishop, Melissa Skelton our Metropolitan, Territory of the People Anglican Church - Bishop-elect Lincoln McKoen., and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada.

In our diocese, we pray for Logan, our bishop, & Ansley, the diocesan administrator. Congregation of S. Columba, Tofino.

In our region, we pray for the Sisters of Saint John the Divine, in our parish we pray for Nathaniel Sukhdeo, Lawrence Surges and Hilary Mackey , Frances Thomasset, Betty Ann and Lew Townsend; and J. Ann Walker.

In our community we pray for Our Place Society, The Mustard Seed and the homeless in our society.

<p>We worship on the traditional lands of the Esquimalt, Songhees and other Nations of the Salish and Coast Salish Peoples. We, who came from many lands to join the line of those worshipping here, commit our Church to continue the journey of truth and reconciliation with our First Nations' neighbours.</p>
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CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

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