



'Till We Meet Again!

Week of August 8 and 9, 2020

REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020:

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11

Greetings and peace
my friends!

This morning I woke up to witness yet another tragedy within our larger community. Dr. Rachel Levine, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, who in my opinion, has offered the commonwealth incredible and insightful leadership through the current global pandemic, has publicly responded to a number of attacks made against her on social media, and in news outlets because of her gender identity.

My guess is that a few who are reading this reflection are already angry that once again I will speak to the issue that I am about to speak to. Yet, I will say anew, what has been said before from the pulpit, from various reflections, in both private and public conversations. The ground at the base of the cross is LEVEL, and we, God's children here on earth are called to advance God's simple and direct proclamation of LOVE in this world!

Dr. Levine has acquitted herself both responsibly and professionally in the public square. Her concerns and her goal in life, at

least from my perspective, seems to be to seek the common good of the people of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania in regard to health. In her own words she says, "I have no room in my heart for hatred and frankly I do not have time for intolerance. My heart is full with a burning desire to help people and my time is full with working towards protecting the public health of everyone in Pennsylvania from the impact of the global pandemic due to COVID-19."



Now I ask you my friends, do those who make hateful, joking, or vile comments about Dr. Levine's gender identity or do Dr. Levine's own words seem more consistent with our Scriptural understanding of how God desires we live within the world. You be the judge!

I have been honored and privileged to count among my closest friends of this world people who identify themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ community. I have been honored and privileged to serve in defense of this country with women and men who self-identified as "African American, Hispanic, Asian. Trust me when I say that all the people whom I have met and experienced in my life; those whom I call "friend", and those who I saw as "enemy", have the same kind of blood running through their veins, which run through my own. All the people of this world have similar feelings, we feel the pains of insults, we feel the profound sense of shame that the world inflicts upon us at times, and we know when we are among people who accept us and value us for simply being our genuine and authentic self that our gracious Lord

has created us to be.

THE GROUND AT THE BASE OF THE
CROSS IS LEVEL! YOU BE THE JUDGE!

Did Christ not come to the world in human flesh to share with the world how much we are loved and valued by our God? And if we are loved and valued by our God do, we not believe that God loves and values all human life, indeed all of creation?

THE GROUND AT THE BASE OF THE
CROSS IS LEVEL! YOU BE THE JUDGE!

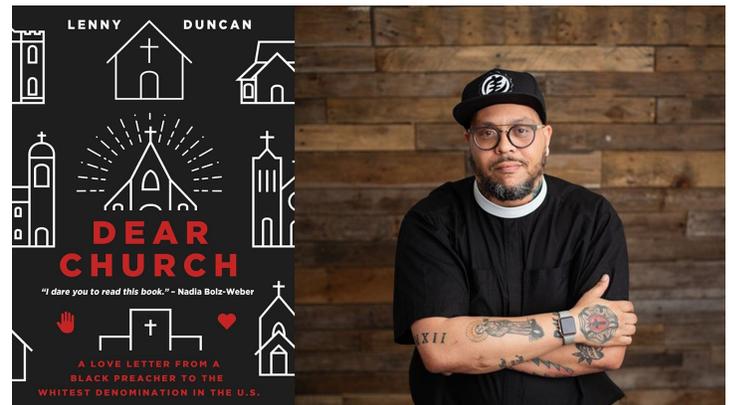
Did not Christ willingly offer His own mortal life to demonstrate for all the lengths that God would go through to model what true unconditional love looks like in the face of human judgment, persecution, and hatred? And if our God goes to such great lengths to insure that the world would once and for all know of the graciousness and mercy of our Lord, do we not believe that our Lord desires those of us who would call ourselves “Christian”, to share a measure of the same kind of graciousness and mercy to those around us in the world that has been shared with us?

My heart is burdened by what I see and experience in the world around me. Yet, I have hope my friends! I have hope because people like Dr. Levine model for us all how we are called to treat one another. I have hope, because many among you have hearts that ache like my own with the evil and vile judgements cast upon good people. I have hope, because only through God’s own words and life are, we able to appropriately share with one another and with the world around us how faithful people are called to live in relationship with God and with one another. I have hope, simply because in my heart of hearts I genuinely believe that THE GROUND AT THE BASE OF THE CROSS IS LEVEL! How about you?

Until next time!

Keep trusting God, keep washing those hands, and be at peace with our God and with one another!

PJ



REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020

IT IS US

Several weeks ago, in a segment of Pastor’s Unplugged, I mentioned a book I had just started reading called, *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.* by Lenny Duncan. It is a powerful book that talks about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with both praise and lament. Duncan is ordained in our church and his story is inspiring and challenging. He talks about his life on the streets as a teenager where he both used drugs and was a sex worker. He talks lovingly about the first time he walked into a Lutheran Church just outside of Philly and the love and acceptance he found within that community of faith.

Duncan also challenges us to live into the theology and God we proclaim. He talks passionately about the ways that our country believes God is dead and how we have allowed nationalism to keep us locked into Holy Saturday. We, collectively as a society, have become the very ones who crucified Jesus. Our nationalism has prevented us from celebrating with joy Easter morning and in turn has made us timid and fearful instead of alive and actively witnessing to the power of the God we proclaim. I want to share an expanded quote from the book.

You want to resurrect your church? You want the ELCA to continue to be relevant and full of life? Are you tired of the narrative of decline? Then get the hell out of Holy Saturday, Church. Stand with Jesus at the dawn and resist. Resist

closing our borders from the world. Resist the narrative that only wealth can make this world whole. Resist war and all its manifestations. Resist nativism and the national delusion that we are more special than any other land or people. Resist anyone who tries to tame your Jesus and downplay his revolutionary message. Resist the idea that the ballot box or either party will save us. We are the ones we have been waiting for. Resist anything that doesn't line up with the arc of the gospel; resist vehemently, as if your lives depended on it- because they do. Pages 108-109

Wow! We are the ones we have been waiting for! Those are powerful statements that Duncan makes. He challenges us in so many ways on very issues that are currently in our public discussions. We have an awesome God who has always stood with the oppressed and the poor and calls us to do the same. I believe that we need to own our part in the decline of the church in society and we need to stand with Jesus once again at both the cross and the empty tomb. I commend this book to everyone. For me, it has reminded me of who I am, a loved and forgiven child of an amazing God. May it empower us to repent and to move forward as the hands and voice of God in our world.

In Peace,
Pastor Suzanne

Duncan, Lenny. Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S. Fortress Press: Minneapolis. 2019.

**GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS
CALLING ALL THRIVENT MEMBERS.**



There are Thrivent Action Team funds not being accessed that could provide outreach to the community in these difficult times.

Please contact the church office (610-867-1519) if you need help from a member of the God's Work.Our Hands Team to

plan a project for your Action Team, help you make the application and help lead the project.

SEPTEMBER DAY OF SERVICE.



The GWOH Team is busy planning activities for our UPG Day of Service. Please save and bring in your clean grocery

and pharmacy plastic bags to our outdoor Worship at the Lutheran Center on August 9. We plan to crochet them into durable, waterproof sleeping mats for our homeless neighbors. And, in the process, the plastic bags will be kept out of landfills. We need 500 bags or more to make one 2.5 x 6.5 size mat so please start saving. Thanks for your help and, if you would like to make the mats, please let the office know (610-867-0519).

POCKET CROSSES.

At our outdoor worship on Aug. 9, the GWOH Team will have plastic forms and easy directions for making small pocket crosses. We hope you will consider helping.

CARD SHOWER

ANN MARIE DEMYAN

A member of Light of Christ, Ann Marie Demyan, was in a serious motorcycle accident recently and will have a long recovery. If you wish to send a get well card, she is at St. Luke's Hospital, 801 Ostrum Street, Room 459, Bethlehem, PA 18015 and on July 29th, she celebrated her 26th birthday. Please keep her in your prayers and thank you for sending her your best wishes.

ELIZABETH AMPIETRO

Please help Elizabeth Ampietro celebrate her 93rd birthday on July 31, 2020.

GENE LUFF

Please send get well wishes after a fall to Pine Run Rehabilitation Center, 777 Ferry Road, Doylestown, PA 18901