



'Till We Meet Again!

Week of January 9 and 10, 2020



REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2020

***"I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.***

***I rejoiced the day you were baptized
To see your life unfold.***

***I was there when you were but a child
With a faith to suit you well."***

Lyrics to "Borning Cry" John C. Ylvisaker

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year my friends!

Today I found myself reflecting quite a bit on one of the lines of this popular hymn, "with a faith to suit you well."

I wonder what is a "faith that suits us well?" Is it a faith that finds us completely devoted to living out our Christian calling 24 hours a day, seven days a week? If indeed this would be the case, I wonder if "things" would get manufactured? I wonder what kind of financial resources people would have. I wonder what if everyone, everywhere, were completely devoted to living out a Christian life 24/7 what the

world would look like?

Then I thought about various "faithful" Christians that I have known over my life. For some of these sisters and brothers in Christ their faith was best viewed on Sunday mornings, but they would rather not be seen on Friday evenings as they "partied hard" to shake off a difficult work week. Of course, others "faithfully" placed what could only be considered very generous financial gifts in the offering plates at church. These large financial offerings may have been an incredibly small percentage of their income, but in comparison to the general congregation these offerings sustained church buildings. Still other "faithful" Christians that I've known spend an incredible amount of time devoted to prayer, Scripture reading, and reflection, but find being part of a larger community of faith or "organized" religion not necessary.

"a faith to suit you well", what a great thought to ponder; even more so when the author suggests that this faith was present when we were but children.

Hmmm... perhaps that's the key. Perhaps we need to recall our faith before our formal education, before we have been "mainstreamed" into our culture as adults, before we learned what is right and acceptable in a community of faith and just were the children we instinctively were created to be.

Yes, that kind of faith refreshes my spirit! The faith that allowed me to share some of my "priziest possessions" with my friends simply because they were my friends. The faith that allowed me to give every penny I had available to a friend who ran out of money on a vacation, simply because I knew I would be ok. The faith

that allowed me to give time to a friend who was experiencing incredible sorrow even though it meant that I missed an important meeting at school which would benefit me. Yes... perhaps that is the faith that suits me well!

In any event, whatever the “faith that suits you well,” will probably look and feel different than the faith that suits me well. That’s simply how God works. I believe God loves diversity. The youngest to the oldest. Woman, man, white, black, straight, gay, American, Russian, Christian, Muslim, whatever boundaries humans put in place, God transcends those boundaries. Simply put; God love us all. God loves those people who naturally speak what’s on their mind and God loves people who find themselves too meek to speak their mind. God loves people who easily speak and share with others about their faith and God loves people who speak their faith without ever saying a word.

So, on this New Year’s Eve day, I would ask each of you... what is the “faith that suits you well?” Whatever your answer, remember the third verse of this hymn “I’ll be there to guide you through the night, complete what I’ve begun. When the evening gently closes in and you shut your weary eyes, I’ll be there as I have always been, with just one more surprise.”

On the last evening of 2020 we can rest peacefully knowing that God has been... is... and always will be accompanying us on our worldly pilgrimage! (at least that’s what my well-suited faith tells me!)

Until next time

Trust God, keep washing those hands,
and ponder your faith!

PJ

REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY JANUARY 5, 2021

INSPIRED TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE

1 Peter 4:8-11

⁸Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰Like good stewards of the manifold

grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

¹¹Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of

God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Happy New Year and welcome to 2021. Feels a bit funny to write and say 2021 but I guess we will get used to it quickly as we do every new year. As I have shared many times, I do not do new year’s resolutions. I never seem to keep them and so it seems pointless to spend the time trying to determine what I need to change or add or do to be better in the new year. For 2021 I am just going to try to accept who I am and be the best I can be.

Some might say that is a resolution and maybe it is, but I think of it more as a lifestyle and not something I want to focus on for a specific period of time. I want to embrace and accept who I am. Hopefully, as I learn to embrace myself, good and not so good, I will be more accepting of others. We are all human and as such we all have wonderful attributes, things we wish we could change, and perhaps even things we are not proud of in our pasts. Someone once told me that you do not get to be, pick any age over 20, without having some things you would rather forget. We are all a conglomeration of all that we have been and done throughout our lives.

I was once much thinner than I am now. I have done diets and been successful only to put the weight back on and then add some more. I want to appreciate my body and what

Above all, love each other deeply, because

Love

covers over a multitude of sins

~1 Peter 4:8

it allows me to do. I am active and able to golf and walk and do other forms of exercise. I want to accept my body as it is and focus on being healthy. Getting rest, getting regular exercise, and eating nutrients that my body needs. I am not going to stress over what our culture says about weight. I invite you to do the same.

I am blessed to have many different relationships. I am close to my family, I have a boyfriend, I have lots of friends, and I have a relationship with God. I count all of you as brothers and sisters and treasure our relationships. Some I have known for several years and some I am just getting to know. While it is hard to physically be together during the pandemic, I am hopeful that at some point in 2021 we will once again be able to gather and be together. I want to spend time listening, I want to learn your stories and share mine. I want to celebrate our similarities and embrace our differences. I want to recognize every person I meet is a child of God. I invite you to do the same.

I know that I am a beloved child of God and so are you. Spending time to converse with God, study scriptures, and learn more about my faith is important to me. I want to grow and develop into the Christian that God is calling me to be. I know that first I need to listen to what God is saying. We also need each other to find our strengths and develop our skills for ministry in the world. I want to be the best Christian I can be. I invite you to do the same.

These are not things to be done in 2021 and then checked off the list. We may not always feel it or realize it, we are blessed beyond measure. I want to praise God for all God's blessings. And make this a way of life centered on God and living the life God has given me to the fullest. I invite you to do the same.

In Peace,
Pastor Suzanne

LIGHT OF CHRIST OFFERING ENVELOPES

LoC offering envelopes are ready for pickup. If you would like your offering envelopes, you can

pick them up on Mondays, January 11 and 18 between 10:00 AM and noon in the new fellowship hall.

WORD IN SEASON

Word in Season is available and can be picked up on the back porch of Light of Christ.

ANNUAL REPORTS

ATTENTION ALL COMMITTEE HEADS

If you have not already submitted your annual report, annual reports were due January 8. Please email your reports to church@stpetersbethlehem.org. Thank you!

PRAYERS

Daily: Pray for the Synodical Staff.

Thanksgiving prayers for Ann Marie Demyan and Clayton Christianson who were recently united in marriage.

THIS WEEK IN THE UPG JANUARY 9—JANUARY 17

Saturday January 9

4:45 PM Worship
("LiveStream" Facebook from St. P)

Sunday January 10

Worship available on YouTube
10:30 AM 46ers Zoom
11:00 AM Sunday School Zoom Jr/Sr

Monday January 11

7:00 PM Coffee & Conversation (Zoom)

Tuesday January 12

Wednesday January 13

7:00 AM Fellowship Meeting

Thursday January 14

6:30 PM Bible Study (Zoom)

Friday January 15

Saturday January 16

4:45 PM Worship
("Livestream" Facebook from LoC)

Sunday January 17

Worship available on YouTube
10:30 AM 46ers Zoom