

CHRIST THE LORD EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PINOLE CA

The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost July 12, 2020

*"The Good News"*

Rev. Dr. Lois Williams

Good morning everyone, please excuse today's reflection as it is a bit raw. For those of you who do not know, I co-officiated a family memorial in the garden of St. Timothy's, Mountain View, yesterday for Judy Kiffmeyer. With the COVID rules in place, everyone was careful and safe. Please know that we will be holding a celebration of life for several of our beloved members as soon as safety measures allow us to do so.

Having arrived early to the St. Timothy memorial garden, I had a few moments to sit outside and soak in the beauty of God's creation all around me. I am sure many of you have found solace in nature, your yards and gardens, your in-home plants and projects, the beauty of nature you can see from your window, and other various ways as we all look for relief in this time of isolation.

It occurs to me that most of the human population has lost track of their place in the world. Now I have no doubt we tax this earth far more than she is capable of repairing at times, but we are also a very small consideration as a species, on a very fragile planet, at a specific time and place. I believe we are being called to re-evaluate our place in the grand scheme of things.

Our opening hymn "When Morning Gilds the Skies" expresses the Universe singing its praises to God, Son and Holy Spirit. *Venite* or Psalm 95 sings "For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." But, of course only humans can ask are we loved or more important than the birds of the sky?

That is a trick question, you know. There truly is no answer. We are not above the creatures or Mother Nature herself, we are not below either, we are however, co-creators of our world, and in knowing that, must spend time considering what we would like to create.

We are in a pandemic, human beings have been inconsiderate of nature and each other, and we are left here in our present situation. Sorry if I am not calling out the good news yet, but we do have to realize our relationship with each other, nature, and God, and know how it affects everything else.

Our Psalm today sings of rain, and preparing grain, and fields that over-flow. Humans may plow the fields, but it is God who supplies the very air, sun, and rain in the right amounts to thrive. And yet, human beings in their ignorance try to rape mother nature into over-performance or think they can out-science God.

The Old testament reading from Isaiah says it best, stating the true response from God is that everything shall accomplish that which for which it is purposed, and succeed in the things for which God has sent it. And here is where the Good News comes in.

It is somehow comforting to know we are not that big a deal in the scheme of things, and to think we are is rather self-assuming and arrogant. Although many people think that human beings on this earth are the be-all and end-all, and everything else need submit. That is not the way of God, and not a good way to co-create.

Put in perspective, your life has meaning. God has purposed your purpose. Your life has meaning to you, your family, your friends, your community, and you have free will to use whatever resources you desire to create a life. But you are not God, you belong to God.

Some lives will last for just a little bit – no one is at fault. Some lives will produce abundance in various ways, and some will not. Some people will find themselves

scattered to the winds, and others huddled and put out. And yet some of those choices are yours, some are not. Some adventures are co-created with God, and some come down to a plan that only God can see unfold.

Yes, evil may snatch some away, some will have faith that never roots, some will try as they may, but their efforts will become stifled, but this is for reasons that only God understands.

The Good News is that you are not responsible for everything going on in the world right now. Did you need to hear that? This is what I heard in the garden yesterday. Maybe it was only I who was supposed to hear it. You are not and can not be responsible for everything. Again, did you hear that? I certainly did, and I am finding more and more people need to hear those words. You are not responsible for what is happening in our world. You can only be responsible over how you handle it.

The Good News is that you can take this time and discern what you are called to do in the name of co-creating with God. You can work on yourself, with your family, friends and community. You can even choose to do nothing, if that is where you are at this time in your life. There truly are no real requirements.

The Good News is that God's got this, he always has. The lifetime of Jesus included a Roman occupation, several famines, thieves, religious scoundrels, beggars, the wealthy, basically the good, the bad, and the ugly. Our lifetime reflects the same. The world continues to spin around the sun due to God's good grace, and humans remain struggling to co-create a world where there is peace and harmony, yet everyone still wants to get the biggest piece of pie.

God knows your heart, God knows the soil in which his words, and more importantly his love is planted. He sends both warm weather and the cold, sun and rain, good and bad, and we tend to our garden and see what happens. Remember, before the seeds are scattered, God already knows where they will

land. When there is struggle, God is hardening you for even tougher times, but you will be prepared. You will find the outcome exactly what God has purposed.

The Good News, is that you only have to tend your own garden, and accept what God sends you. Take advantage of not being in charge, take refuge in not stopping change as God unfolds the future. You yourself can not see another's heart, and worrying does not seem to change much.

Yesterday, in the garden, amongst Judy's ashes, and the beautiful flowers, with the eagle flying around the neighborhood, I saw the glory of the Lord, and I sighed. Exhaled. We know how to tend our gardens, our faith, our families, our communities, and we will do so, but we are not responsible for the result – only our blessed intention.

There is hymn that was e mailed to me from a friend entitled "Be Still My Soul" that keeps ringing in my ears. I share a verse.

*Be still, my soul, The Lord is on thy side  
 Bear patiently, the cross of grief or pain  
 Leave to thy God, to order and provide  
 In every change, He faithful will remain  
 Be still, my soul, thy best thy heavenly friend  
 Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end  
 Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake  
 To guide the future as He has the past*

*In You I rest, in You I found my hope  
 In You I trust, You never let me go  
 I place my life within Your hands alone  
 Be still, my soul*

Let the seeds fall where they may... take rest in faith that God's got this. This is the Good News. Exhale. Amen...