

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 15

Psalm 98 *Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things.* (v.1a NIV)

Truly the Lord has done marvelous things and all one has to do is to stop, look around, and take in all the beauty that is so close at hand. In *The Message*, this verse goes: “Sing to God a brand new song. He’s made a world full of wonders!”

For many years I’ve raised and released butterflies—monarchs, gulf fritillaries, and black swallowtails. The journey from a little egg on a leaf becoming a tiny caterpillar that grows and grows, then transforms itself so magically into a well-camouflaged chrysalis that may look like dried leaf or a branch or a gold-rimmed green lantern, just fills my soul with joy and wonder.

Truly the Lord has done marvelous things and created a world of full of wonders. Give thanks to our creator God as you look at the next breathtaking sunrise or sunset, bright and clear full moon, beautiful rose, or even that pretty butterfly fluttering around your yard. Take a moment to see God in all creation and experience the wonder.

Amos 9:11-15; Psalm 63; Thessalonians 2:1-3, 13-17; John 5:30-47

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Sokoto (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Augustin Omole; and El Salvador (*Central America*) The Rt Revd Juan David Alvarado Melgar.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Harrisburg, The Rev Timothy A. Goodman, Priest in Charge; Kaliua Deanery, Tanzania, Rev. Nason Muhuta, Rural Dean; the Mission of Santas María y Martha de Betania, Ilo, Peru, Rev'd Victor Condori, Vicar. Lord, help us to live each day with a sense of our true value: our value in your eyes, our Maker and our Redeemer.

Monday, December 16

Psalm 41 *Blessed is he who has regard for the weak. The LORD delivers him in times of trouble.* (v.1)

On two separate occasions after leaving work, I’ve passed by what seemed like a chance encounter. Some parts of downtown provide respite and opportunities for people down on their luck, perhaps homeless. Often intersections during rush hour are places where some of these people stand, usually with a cardboard sign, obviously asking for food or money. My cynical side often challenges my more compassionate side that questions whether to give eye contact or even a dollar. After all, the Coalition for the Homeless is less than a mile away and meals are available there.

One the aforementioned occasions, I was traveling a side street when I came upon two men. One, who appeared homeless, was sitting with his few possessions

beside a lumber warehouse. The other man talking to him, wearing black scrubs, was obviously leaving work at the nearby hospital. The hospital worker had a backpack with him and was giving the destitute man a bottle of water as they talked. Several weeks later I passed them again, almost the same scenario with the backpack opened, some containers/bags and several bottles of water in view. This time, the hospital worker had his hand on the other man's shoulder. What were they saying? What relationship do these men have? I don't know, but what I witnessed was one man's "regard for the weak" and it touched my heart as I recalled Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Zechariah 1:7-17; Psalm 52; Revelation 3:7-13; Matthew 24:15-31

ANGLICAN CYCLE: South Ankole (*Uganda*) The Rt Revd Nathan Ahimbisibwe; Eldoret (*Kenya*) The Rt Revd Christopher Ruto.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.

Tuesday, December 17

Psalm 45 *You love righteousness and hate wickedness, therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.* (v.7)

The Lord loves righteousness and hates wickedness as the psalmist says. Being human, we fall short of perfection on every level and acknowledge that we are sinners by our own very nature. In another of today's readings, Matthew 24:42, we are warned: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

It's so important to seek forgiveness as well as to bestow forgiveness in those relationships in need of such. Recently, I lost a very dear friend and a coworker. Although she had been battling cancer for several years, her death came quite suddenly. She worked on a Friday and then called in on Monday. By Wednesday she was in hospice and two days later she died. We need to appreciate each day as it comes remembering it is a gift, something we have not earned but have been given. Use it well and give thanks in all situations.

Zechariah 2:1-13; Revelation 3:14-22; Matthew 24:32-44

ANGLICAN CYCLE: South Dakota (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd John Tarrant; El-Obeid (*Sudan*) The Rt Revd Ismail Gabriel Abudigin.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Maurice C. Lee, Stone Mountain, GA; and Thomas Larison Phillips, Champaign, Ordination to the Priesthood. Gerald W. Raschke, Springfield, Ordination to the Diaconate.

Wednesday, December 18

Psalm 119:49-72 *Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in suffering is this: your promise preserves my life.* (vv.49-50)

Many years ago, I came upon a little saying that became etched in my heart and has provided guidance to me, personally and professionally. It is simply this: “Without hope the heart would break.”

My hope is in God who created the world and all that is in it. From early childhood I’ve been given this hope, this faith, and for that I’m eternally grateful. As Isaiah states, “but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.”

It’s so important to have hope, especially during moments that may seem hopeless. For over twenty years I’ve worked with families whose dreams for a healthy baby are shattered upon hearing the words “spina bifida.” It can seem overwhelming and hopeless at the time but, thankfully, there is hope, there is much to celebrate. These children are precious, brave, and loving. They bless not only their families, but this seasoned nurse. It’s my privilege to help these families find hope when it seems so far away. Together we journey into a future that will perhaps be different than expected, but beautiful and good nonetheless, remembering David’s words in Psalm 139: “For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

Zechariah 3:1-10; Revelation 4:1-8; Matthew 24:45-51

ANGLICAN CYCLE: South Kerala (*South India*) The Rt Revd Dharmaraj Rasalam; Ely (*England*) The Rt Revd Stephen David Conway, The Rt Revd David Thomson; Embu (*Kenya*) The Rt Revd David Muriithi Ileri.
DIOCESAN CYCLE: Robert D. Harmon, Mt. Vernon, Ordination to the Priesthood.

Thursday, December 19

Psalm 50 “*Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.*” (v.14-15)

Expressing appreciation and gratitude is a choice we make, and it seems to provide a hopeful, healthy way to live in this world. Even “during the day of trouble” there is always something for which to be thankful.

Over the years at our healing service, people are invited to share how God is healing or blessing them. Initially that was awkward for me as a cradle Episcopalian, but I’ve learned that by sharing with others, not only am I blessed but often someone thanks me for what I shared. Having a grateful heart is a conscious decision, a way of seeing and acknowledging all that God does for us. Our very lives are pure gift, totally unearned and undeserved. He loves this imperfect person so much; how can I be anything other than grateful?

Zechariah 4:1-14; Revelation 4:9—5:5; Matthew 25:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: South Rwenzori (*Uganda*) The Rt Revd Jackson Nzerebende; Enugu (*Nigeria*) The Most Revd Emmanuel Chukwuma, Enugu North - The Rt Revd Sosthenes Eze.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O Father, help us to discover the realms of your love and to show this love daily in our labor for thee.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Jack White's birthday.

Friday, December 20

Psalm 40 *I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.* (v.1-3a)

This verse means so much to me for I know the Lord has “heard my cry” over and over again. There are times in life when our foundations seem to shake, to loosen—when everything that was solid seems to fall apart. Years ago, it was my marriage that ended in divorce, then the diagnosis and long-term illness of my dear coworker and friend who died after a brave 3½ year battle with cancer, then the yearning of my married son and his wife for a baby—only to be met with the grief of infertility and most recently a diagnosis of cancer. Life can seem overwhelming at times.

Thankfully, God's faithfulness through life's journey has strengthened my faith and my dependence on Christ. When I cry out, when I pray, I know my prayers are heard; I know I am loved, and I know God wants only the best for each of us. Life is not without difficult chapters, but knowing God is my rock, my strength, my protector, and my friend, gives me hope and courage to soldier on. There are always blessings and lessons learned. My heart is grateful as I praise God for holding me close. He is faithful.

Zechariah 7:8—8:8; Psalm 54; Revelation 5:6-14; Matthew 25:14-30

ANGLICAN CYCLE: South West Tanganyika (*Tanzania*) The Rt Revd Matthew Mhagama; Esan (*Nigeria*) The Most Revd Friday Imaekhai.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: James O. Cravens, Sherman, Ordination to the Priesthood

Saturday, December 21

Psalm 55 *Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.* (v.22)

This verse is similar to the verse discussed yesterday and perhaps that is why we hear similar themes repeated in the Psalms. Life is a journey and each person's path unique. When I began attending the healing service at our church, it was with the hope of my marriage being healed. I've continued all these years because there is always a need for healing, and it can happen in unexpected ways. My marriage wasn't healed but my heart was. I've also found a community of caring and faithful persons who believe that Christ heals today just as he did over 2,000 years ago.

The healing ministry is going through changes as one group follows a call to go to a downtown location to minister to those in need. The ministry at my home church will change too. Change brings angst and uncertainty, but thankfully we have had time to ponder, pray, process, and ask questions, with the realization that the healing ministry is growing and will serve even more people. Different is just that—different, not bad. What a difficult lesson that's been for me to learn over the years but, as I trust in the Lord's faithfulness, I realize He is and has always been there for us. This important ministry will now touch the lives of many more people. Thank You, God.

Zechariah 8:9-17; Revelation 6:1-17; Matthew 25:31-46

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Etche (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Precious Nwala; Etsako - The Rt Revd Jacob Bada.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Feast of Title for: St. Thomas', Glen Carbon; and St. Thomas', Salem; Elliott Blackburn, Mason City, IA and Mary Christine "Mollie" Ward, Bloomington, Ordination to the Priesthood; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. George W. and The Rev Sylvia L. Howard, Mt. Vernon.

by Suzanne McKee

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Pray for the sick and those in distress: Margret L., Allan H., James G.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: Charlie C.

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Barb W., and Margaret P.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar.