

Looking for the light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

by Caitlin Wallace-Rowland

My husband and I are only two weeks into working multiple jobs from home with an almost 2-year-old. Life is chaotic and strange and we yell too much and Laurel watches too much TV. But we've also spent a good part of the last couple weeks transforming our backyard — building planter beds, mulching, weeding, laying sod, and planting herb and vegetable gardens. At the end of the days I've been physically and mentally exhausted. But I've spent more time outside on a daily basis in the last two weeks than I have since I was a child. What would have taken us a year of weekends to accomplish has happened in a matter of days with the time spent at home. Despite the exhaustion and work and parenthood, I've felt fuller than I've felt in a long time. In the middle of so much uncertainty, it has been nice to be home, together, and to be taking care of our spaces.

During this time of sequestering, I can't help but think of a friend of mine, who several years ago, was diagnosed with cancer in her 30s, requiring treatment that forced her to put the rest of her life on pause. She suddenly and unexpectedly had to quit working and stay at home while taking cancer treatments and recovering from the toll they took on her body. During this scary time, she did something that will forever stand out to me — she started drawing. In the moments she could steal away from her sickness, she drew and painted and cultivated a creative practice that she'd never had the time for before. At the end of her treatments, when her cancer was in remission and her life was returning to "normal," she was able to look back at that time and see the beauty in it — it was like she'd had a sabbatical just to discover something within herself that she hadn't seen before.

To quote journalist Mary Schmich's mother (in her book of the same title), "You have to be old to appreciate the beauty of your life. *Even the terrible things seem beautiful to me now.*"

Maybe it's the eternal optimist in me (or the artist), but I'm always looking for the beauty in the world. I've found that it is always there, waiting to be found. And I don't think we have to be at the end of our lives to see it — we just have to open our eyes.

I know there is a lot of chaos and uncertainty in the world right now. Isolation, job layoffs, sickness — but I hope amidst it all, we can all find something of beauty in this time of our lives — be it a creative practice, a slower pace of life, a deeper sense of reflection, a greater appreciation for the people that take care of us, or the treasuring of the time we spend with others. I hope that once everything returns to "normal" we'll look back on this time as something that stays with us long afterwards, I hope we find some perspective that forever changes us.

Where can you find beauty around you? How can you cultivate this time to be a beautiful one? Can you add a creative practice, spiritual practice, meditation, mindfulness, or some other element to your days to help you appreciate this time?

Let us read today's Lectionary verse together as a prayer to the Lord:

Psalm 146

1 Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

2 I will praise the Lord all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.

4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.

5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.

6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.

7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free,

8 the Lord gives sight to the blind,
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

10 The Lord reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord.

Amen.

And, if you need a little extra joy, here are some flowers:



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If you would like to contribute to our daily devotionals, please email Pastor Sarah, sarah@scapc.org.

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