

Looking for the Light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Thursday, April 23, 2020

by Harriet Riley

Read:

Psalm 116:1-6 The Message (MSG)

I love God because he listened to me,
listened as I begged for mercy.
He listened so intently
as I laid out my case before him.
Death stared me in the face,
hell was hard on my heels.
Up against it, I didn't know which way to turn;
then I called out to God for help:
"Please, God!" I cried out.
"Save my life!"
God is gracious—it is he who makes things right,
our most compassionate God.
God takes the side of the helpless;
when I was at the end of my rope, he saved me.

Reflect:

I love this version of today's lectionary reading from Eugene Peterson's *The Message*. Time and time again we have faced the end of our rope during this pandemic. Whether we are parents trying to teach and entertain young children while working full time at home, or elders confined to the house alone, or teenagers missing time with friends, or hospitalized patients separated from loving families, we all cry out to God for help right now. I am also thinking of healthcare workers, delivery persons, grocery store clerks and others who are on the front lines of this crisis moving forward each day with God's help. Sometimes each of us feels like we are just hanging on by a thread.

God saves us in so many ways each day if we just open our eyes to all the ways we are thrown a lifeline from God. Each day on my walk, I look for beauty in nature – dew on a yellow rose glistening in the sunlight or the bright green of the new leaves on the trees in the park. The blue skies and sunny days reassure me of God's



presence. I also find God in music. And not just hymns or sacred music. To me, all music is sacred.

Today I am acutely aware that this would have been the start of our city's annual rite of spring – New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. For fifty years local residents have joined visitors from around the world at the Fairgrounds for two long weekends of pure musical joy.

I've been going out to the Fairgrounds on the last weekend of April and the first weekend of May almost every year since 1981. I've come to New Orleans from wherever I lived for a few days of "festing." Last year, my first full Jazz Fest back in New Orleans as a resident, I went to a personal record of seven days of Jazz Fest. The diverse music, the amazing food, the colorful art, the joyful crowds all make this a place of worship for me. It feels like holy ground. I thank God for the music lifting my spirits every time.

This year, as we face a year without Jazz Fest, when we can't gather together and when so many hurting in our community, I will listen to the music on WWOZ. I will remember past celebrations and especially this performance of "Amazing Grace" by Aaron Neville at the close of Jazz Fest in 2010, which sums up our hope in God. Let us allow the music to sync our hearts together in joy and gratitude. I will let the music show me God's grace. Will you join me?

Ask:

Where do you find God's grace when you are at the end of your rope? What music or songs are especially uplifting for you?

Pray:

God of Song,
Help us to remember your help in the past and guide us to rest in your faithfulness today. Thank you for going before us into the future. Be with all those who are hurting and need your assurance today. Thank you for your amazing grace.
Amen





To send us your prayer requests, click on [this link](#) and our church staff and prayer group will add you to our weekly prayer list. You will have the option to specify your request as confidential.

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

www.scapc.org

Disclosure: The recipients of this message are associated with St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church (SCAPC), either by way of membership, visitation, expressed interest, or participation in SCAPC's programs. If you no longer wish to receive email from SCAPC, please click below to unsubscribe. This will exclude you from ALL church emails, including meeting notices.

St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church | 1545 State Street, New Orleans, LA 70118

[Unsubscribe {recipient's email}](#).

[Update Profile](#) | [About Constant Contact](#)

Sent by events@scapc.org