

Mid Week Meditation January 20, 2021

Utterances

by
Randi Alreck

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress; he brought them out of darkness and gloom, and broke their bonds asunder. Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind. For he shatters the doors of bronze, and cuts in two the bars of iron. Psalm 107:13 -16 NRSV

Oh God, OH God, OH GOD! In disbelief and horror people may have uttered these words as they viewed the storming of the US Capital in Washington, DC on January 6, 2021. Television networks broadcast the unbelievable riotous event through the day and night. More reports and photographs continue to be shown daily in news sources. It can't be wished away. It can't be denied.

When barriers have been crossed that we deemed secure, when boundaries have been breached that we believed were sacred, when cries of pain are too wrenching to hear, when acts are viewed which are too horrendous for our minds to take in, we may wish to put them aside. Walls of protection are built in our minds to shield us from such pain. This coping mechanism helps us to 'get on with things'. As time goes by it may be that we are 'over it' and have moved on. However, the memory is still there. It won't be denied forever.

The January 6th storming of the capital and the ongoing concern for safety in our country may trigger surprising and bewildering reactions. Memories of traumatic events in our lives may spring out of nowhere. Recall of times when personal boundaries were breached can bring confusion and anxiety. Scenes of past chaotic events may replay in our minds. Failed security precautions may leave us feeling vulnerable and afraid. Anger may flair towards those entrusted with our safety.

Today is the Inauguration Day for our 46th president. Preparation for this event included erecting barricades of concrete and steel to keep out

those who might launch another assault in Washington. For now, these measures serve as protection by limiting movement through the city. When these barriers are removed, people will again walk freely to enjoy the monuments, museums and beauty of the Capitol.

Although barricades in our minds can shield us from past trauma, they can also hamper our lives. Removal of weighty mental walls may require assistance.

Psalm 107 praises God for the rescue of those who suffer. God wants people to be free to enjoy life. Mental health services can assist in finding that freedom. My mentor at Fuller Seminary, Dr. Dale Ryan was an advocate of mental health services. He would remind us students of theology/pastoral care that this is one of God's tools. Dr. Ryan often concluded lectures with the statement "Let God do the heavy lifting."

Randi

Information on mental health services can be found on the North East Minnesota ELCA Synod website at nemnsyod.org. Enter 'mental health' in the search space to access the printable resource list for the Duluth area. Also, the Lake County website co.lake.mn.us lists resources in the June 2020 posts by Trisha Scamehorn.

Announcements:

SMART TEAM UPDATE

Our Congregational Smart Team met on January 10. No changes were made to our present policy, but we will meet again on Feb. 7 to consider whether we may make some at that time. While there has been some encouraging news in regard to case numbers and hospitalizations, there is still concern about possible surges in late January or early February due to holiday gatherings, school for some starting up in person again, and restaurants being more open for business. We are encouraged that vaccination is underway and very much urge everyone to be vaccinated as soon as they are able! We also continue to encourage social distancing and mask wearing; although we are all weary of such measures, they are still our best ways to continue to promote everyone's health and well being until this pandemic is truly over.

NEW OPTION FOR ONLINE OFFERING

We are now offering the option to submit your weekly offerings online. Simply click on the link on the church's home page that states "NEW: Make online donation here via Subsplash" and watch for the link on upcoming YouTube videos. Make a one-time donation, or set up a recurring offering that allows you to support the church even when you're away.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

In order to be united with your offering envelopes, please call Melanie and arrange a pick up time. Thanks!

PHOTO REQUESTS FOR ONLINE WORSHIP

We are asking people NOT to submit pictures of children without parents' permission. It is also important NOT to submit pictures from magazines, websites or sources that may be under copyright or ownership of others. Original photos preferred. Thank you!!

WHO ARE WE MISSING?

We are attempting to cast our net wide in sending out these emails, along with postings on Facebook and our church website. Additionally, we are sending snail mail copies to those who are without online resources. If you know of someone we are missing, please let us know, so we may include them too!

MASK MESSAGE FROM JOANIE LEE We continue to make masks, and realize that masks wear out from wearing and washing. Please don't hesitate to ask for replacements. We have plenty. Contact at joanielee14@gmail.com

Correction:

Endowment Committee Scholarships for College and Youth Activities

In the January newsletter, I made an error in the scholarship notice. In the notice, "The deadline for submitting requests for the Fall semester is February 14, 2021" was written. The correct text is "The deadline for submitting requests for the **Spring** semester is February 14, 2021." Sorry for the confusion.

Lawrence Burkhard