



January 16, 2023

### **A New Year! Back 'Up North'.**

It is 'my turn' for Faith Matters and as I mull about what to write I want to share two pieces that crossed my 'desk' in the past few weeks. I hope they speak to you as well. Pat

#### **Psalm 8:**

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (NRSV)

"While much of biblical literature is addressed to us as people, the psalms are often addressed to God. One of the best ways to appreciate the psalmic expression is to write one yourself as if you were addressing God in the form of a letter. . .

Dear Holy One,

As the door closes on one year and opens to another, I gaze up at the sky dazzled by the immensity of the creation you have made. How small are those stars in the sky to my feeble eyes! And yet how tiny am I in comparison to these fiery giants of the cosmos. I look out across the waters of Lake Michigan, and the generations that have risen and receded into memory on your watch are as endless as waves rippling over those fresh waters. I am left wondering in such vastness: who are we and what is our worth?

In this moment that we have, this year of 2022, I have tried to live faithfully, as though what I say and do matters. In doing so, I have endured challenges, and there have been times my feet have slipped. Just when I count myself out, I must admit the unmerited grace and overflowing compassion I have received from loved ones and strangers alike. In my community and the world at large, I have observed heroic acts of courage and justice-seeking, from Ukraine to Iran to the streets of our city. I have seen the dignity of individuals restored in the halls of our church building. I have seen us slowly but surely come out of our pandemic slumber. For all this I give thanks. Yet I also witnessed detestable acts of violence from Uvalde, Texas; to Highland Park, Illinois; to beloved Chicago. I look at it all and wonder who are we trying to be and what is our worth?

And then I remember you and the many ways you walked beside us all this year. You did it just like you walked with our ancestors through years of high joy and carried them during years of deep despair. You called them to do something about the brutality in the world. And you give us all responsibility to care for the land, air, and sea and all who dwell within. In the words of Howard Thurman, you have put a crown over our head, and we spend our lives trying to be tall enough to wear it. This is no small task, but I know with you, O God, nothing is impossible. So above all, I say how majestic, how unimaginably marvelous is your love in all the earth.

With deepest gratitude,  
An imperfect servant crowned with glory and honor

Exercise: As we usher in a new calendar year, I invite you to take stock of the mystery, majesty, and challenge of our lives and draft your own letter to God. “

Christmas Devotion, written by Joseph L. Morrow <<mailto:jmorrow@fourthchurch.org>> , Associate Pastor for Evangelism and Community Engagement, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois, December 31, 2022

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“Believe it or not it’s a good thing we get older! We get to sit upon a mountain of experiences giving us an unparalleled perspective. We get to marvel at all the events that have been woven together creating our life. We get to remember all the people who have left their fingerprints on our being....

“And may you come to realize that as insignificant as you seem in this great universe, you are an important part of God’s plan.” Irish Saying

Woodberry Crossing newsletter - Winter 2022

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**Faith Matters** would not have been but for Bob McQuilkin’s creative and wise mind and leadership. Our thanks go out to Bob as he leaves this legacy to the St. Andrews congregation by passing it on to Rev. Margie Osborne. She will now schedule and motivate those who write their thoughts on “Faith Matters” to share with us. Bless you Margie for taking this on! Please remember how lovely it is for those of us who write to hear from you when our thoughts touch your hearts!

~Written by Pat Sheafor



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