

Hear these words of promise:

We seek harm to none and harmony for all.

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true.

That even as we grieved, we grew.

That even as we hurt, we hoped.

That even as we tired, we tried.

That we'll forever be tied together,

Our people diverse and beautiful, will emerge battered and beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the shade of flame and unafraid.

The new dawn balloons as we free it.

For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

That --you may recognize as part of the poem, "**The Hill We Climb.**" by the young girl— Amanda Gorman – only 22 yrs. She wrote it and recited it at the inauguration of the new US president Joe Biden. It was quite moving—bright yellow dress –red headband.

I like particularly the ending:

" For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it."

Our theme today is Signs of Promise. This young poet Amanda Gorman is certainly a sign of promise in this modern world. In this pandemic ,she is a bright light. I went on line and read her biography. She is only 22 –inspired by Malala-you remember she was the one shot in the head by the Taliban—just for going to school & advocating education for girls. She was only 15 at the time and riding in the school bus. Later she received the Nobel Peace Prize – the youngest person ever.

Both Malala & Amanda Gorman are inspiring people of all ages. They are signs of promise.

It is so exciting to see young people fulfilling the declaration of the prophets: What does the Lord require of you? "To seek justice and walk humbly with your God" (6:8 Micah) God's Holy Spirit is alive & well— even in this sometimes disturbing world of ours.

Let us turn to the scriptures of today: **Genesis 9:8-17. READ*******

This is the well-known story of Noah who is best known for building an arc-- large boat on which he, his family, and representatives of all land animals would be saved from the floodwaters.

In this week's passage, God promises to protect and never destroy the earth again. God makes a covenant with all creation. A rainbow is the sign, a reminder, of the promise. God wants to be in a deep and reciprocal relationship with all of creation. God loves us. We love God. We want to live in God's ways. "You lead me in the path of righteousness, for your own name sake". Ps 23

This **Season of Lent** is a time to reflect on how humans have failed & also how we have succeeded in some measure. God's good creation: we humans have destroyed parts of the environment and we are finding it difficult to clean up our mess. Like the people before us, when we rely on God's wisdom, we stay the course and remain close to God to do God's will. One way we do this is to see the Signs of Promise . Be aware! The signs are all around & within us & others. By the Spirit, we are empowered.

The story of Noah is often told to children, and we might wonder where is the good news in the flood & destruction of a people? But the story is meant to focus on God's promise, the hope for new beginnings, and the care of God's creation. Young children and adults too, could likely relate to themes of being sorry for something they did, for doing something new, or doing something to take care of Earth. The story offers an opportunity to explore more about God-promises, regrets, and the care for all of creation. God of the promise invites our trust.

What **signs of promise** have you seen this week? In your world?

For myself: 1. I have new curtains in my home office. They have lovely pale green leaves on them and they are surely a sign that Spring is coming. New life & hope will be ours.--in spite of the Pandemic!

2. My friend Edmund sent an email. He is going to send me a money gram for Jackie McVicar. He wants to help support her work in Guatemala and Honduras. Edmund is 91 now, has recovered from bladder cancer and is so grateful that he is still able to do his part in the mission of Christ. He said, "We hold her (Jackie) in the Light." He explained that that is a Quaker expression. He always inspires me with his faithfulness.

3. Bill & I saw a sun spot/snow bow in the sky. You probably have witnessed them too.--all the colours of the rainbow & round in shape. It always reminds me of Noah's rainbow & God's promise to us.

"This rainbow is the sign of my covenant," said God. "Years and years from now, when people see my rainbow, they will remember my covenant with all the people of the world and with every living thing."

"As long as there is a world,
summer and winter,
seed time and harvest,
when it's cold and when it's hot,
day and night,
whenever the sun shines through the rain,
You, my People will remember my promise.
I will be your God."

Always ! Forever!

To God be the glory—now and forever!

PRAYER: Holy One, thank you for rainbows and for keeping your promise to us. You are always with us and you are always for us. Accept our great gratitude for the many blessings that you bestow on us.

Amen.

For the Merry Heart:

1. My doctor says old skiers never die—but they can go downhill quickly!

2" If you choose not to find joy in the snow, you will have less joy in your life---

but still the same amount of snow"--David Edelfelt

3. How did Jonah feel when the whale swallowed him?

Down in the mouth, of course.

My friends,

I hope you are doing well and staying safe. We have begun to have in-church services now in Bothwell. We follow the COVID rules as we did last fall. Hopefully the COVID numbers will continue to go down & the vaccinations will continue to increase.

Stay well.

Be at Peace.

Shalom, Annalee

