

“Praise, my soul, the God of heaven, glad of heart your carols raise,
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who, like me, should sing God’s praise.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the Maker all your days!

Frail as summer’s flower we flourish, blows the wind and it is gone,
but, while mortals rise and perish, God endures unchanging on.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the high Eternal One.

Angels teach us adoration, you behold God face to face,
sun and moon and all creation, dwellers all in time and space.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise with us the God of Grace!” (VU 240)

Grace & Peace to you, Dear Friends,

I’m sure that you, too, look forward to the day when we can sing God’s praise with full voice – and **no mask!** I think most of us have what has been coined, “**COVID fatigue**”. How we long for life to be more normal once more. This week the Stay-at-Home order has been lifted and we await further direction on June 14 to see what the next stage is.

The theme from the scriptures this week is **LEADERSHIP**. When we are discouraged, it is so easy to complain about our leaders—from the P.M, to the Premier of the Province—or perhaps the top Medical Officer. Upon reflection we realize it is not an easy task to lead and no one has a crystal ball to see into the future to make the wisest & best decisions for all the people.

What qualities make for the best leadership?

As Christians, we turn to the scriptures of today. **READ 1 Samuel 8:4-11, 18-20** to gain insight.

(See it printed in the scripture attachment)

Leadership is a daunting task. Responsibility upon responsibility can be overwhelming. We may try to model ourselves after society’s heroes, but we know that authentic leadership comes when the Holy Spirit guides us. --Empathy & compassion are coupled with healing and harmony.

We remember Jesus and the prophets: “What does the Lord require of you?

“To seek justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

I suspect we have all been guilty of ‘whining’ at some point in our lives. You want something and you ask for it and then your spouse, parent, friend tell you ‘no’. So you try complaining more forcefully in the hopes that they will give in. Even as adults we sometimes try this childish behaviour. This is exactly what happens in the scriptures of today’s reading.

The story is told of the prophet and judge Samuel. Samuel was a great leader for the people of Israel. The people of Israel did not have a king; they had judges who led them and helped them to live in God’s way. Samuel was one of the judges. When someone had a problem, they would come to Samuel. Samuel would pray, listen to God’s answer, and then offer a fair solution. In a way, **through Samuel, God was the ruler & leader of the people of Israel.**

However, Samuel was getting old, and the elders or leaders of Israel were worried about the future. Who would do Samuel’s job when he no longer could? The elders said to Samuel, “You are growing old; we need to plan for the future. All the other countries have a king to rule over them, we want a king, too.”

This hurt Samuel’s feelings, and he was unhappy. He went and prayed to God. God answered, “Right now, I am their ruler, and I am fair and just. If they choose a king like other countries, that person might not be fair and good or make good decisions. Warn the people of this, Samuel. But they need to make their own decisions.”

Samuel went back to the elders and warned them, but the elders told Samuel that they didn’t care, they wanted a king. So, Samuel anointed Saul to be the king.

The people had whined as they wanted something different. So God (through Samuel) let them make their own decision. The people got what they wanted; Saul became the new ruler, and the people celebrated. But in the end, it didn't work out as they hoped. Saul was not a good king. Saul made a lot of mistakes.

Eventually, God's plan does come to fruition: David is anointed king and it is through his lineage that **Jesus is born**—the true Holy One of God. And here is **our authentic model for leadership!**

Whether we are a leader—or a follower, we all truly seek wholeness.--not wanting to be at odds with ourselves, others, or our God. One of the stories that I read this week talked about this brokenness that humanity lives with. It is Terry Valluy who writes: **"It's broken!"** Tears streamed down his son's face as water poured out of his snow globe, and the world inside was destroyed. This small toy, which had brought him so much joy, could not be fixed and now was a source of sorrow. Terry says, "I wonder if this is how God feels seeing the brokenness of our world. But unlike my son's snow globe, our world isn't being thrown away. God has a plan to redeem it, one that's already been put in motion through the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Terry's son's broken snow globe was edged with glass and too dangerous to be kept. Likewise our world is often filled with trials, suffering and wrongs which can bring unhappiness & even danger. But God does not abandon us. **"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you"**. (Hebrews 13:5) Terry concludes: "While it may be simple, it's not easy. Although it's not always easy to get up early each morning to spend time with God, every time I do my day is better for it. God's word helps us grow in faith and reassures us that God—the good Leader, is redeeming the brokenness in this world".

"God IS the leader"--the best one!

AMEN!

Our Prayer: Eternal God, Help us to follow you more closely. Grant us patience, grace and mercy, and empower us to extend the same to others we come in contact with. Indeed, it is your Holy Spirit that is "like a rock, under our feet, like a starry night sky, over our head and always our home evermore, --now & forever.

Amen.

For the MERRY HEART: These came in the email with the title **EMPATHY**. --Some wit & wisdom.

1. **Jim was traveling in Kenya and he met a refugee from Zimbabwe He said he hadn't eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. So Jim offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating.**

The first thing the man said was, "We can share it.

2. **Yesterday, in the gentlest voice, my 8-year-old grand daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I smiled and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?"**

Because that's where I keep all my stuff.

3. **Sylvia watched her dog get run over by a car, she sat on the side of the road holding him and crying. And just before he died;**

He licked the tears off her face.

4. **Today, when I witnessed a 27-year-old breast cancer patient laughing happily at her 2-year-old daughter's antics, I suddenly realized that, –**

I need to stop complaining about my life & start celebrating it again.

We are still hoping to have the Joint Board on June 20 at 2:00 and perhaps an OUT DOOR SERVICE on June 27—stay tuned!

Live fully

Love generously

Be all God calls you to be

Til we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand. Peace to you, Annalee