Sunday Wonderings for Sunday February 9th, 2025

Debris removal began last week on our church site. I posted images on our Facebook page, commenting, “The machines wait to clear what once was a sacred space where folks gathered to worship, came together as a community in shared experience, and felt the joy of knowing our connectedness to one another.” This step, the removal of the ashes, is making space for what is next. In grief and joy, we watch and wait for transformation to begin.

There were various responses to the post, from those reminiscing about past times to those expressing relief at seeing forward movement. Standing at the fence, observing the change, I thought about lament, that biblical practice of naming our grief. Grief and joy. It all fits, as we are told.

This is an image of a solar light that hung in the backyard of the manse. I took a picture of it at night (below). Though broken, it insists on shining! A light that refuses to be put out. A friend described it as "ominous and hopeful. Kali at work." Not familiar with Kali, I checked with Google. I learned that Kali is the Hindu goddess of death and rebirth. She expresses the dual nature of the destruction that must come before new beginnings and symbolizes the strength of female power. She is also the goddess of time. It seems fitting— all birth (and rebirth) requires a time of gestation, a period of growth not always visible to the human eye.

Grieving can be imagined as a time of growth not easily visible to the eye, or even to one's own self. It involves acknowledging the present reality. Religious texts, poetry, and music all offer expressions of grief. Jesus said, "Blessed are those that mourn." The Psalms and Lamentations are books of poetry on grief, leading the authors to reaffirm their faith. Psalm 137 is a lament by the Israelites who were taken captive to Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion." It acknowledges their sorrow and the importance of remembering their faith. This act of remembering was challenging but provided them with hope for the future they could not yet see.

To lament is to remember with hope. To lament is to acknowledge the passage of time. It is faith at work. To grieve loss is to lament. There is no one way to grieve, no set time or limit. Each of us is invited to find our own way and in our own time. And while grief is experienced individually, we are freed to enter it when held by the hope and love of the whole community. In the experience of community, we know God's abundance with us.

This Sunday, we celebrate the abundance in Jesus' call. Simon and others cast their net into deep waters and receive more than they imagined. In our recovery journey, let's remember our faith in the One who promises more than we can imagine, giving us strength to lament and hope in the places where God calls.

We are not alone,

We live in God's world.

On February 9th, we gather for worship at Alpine Summit Lodge, located at 509 Turret Street, in the education room on the second floor to the left of the elevator. For those unable to attend in person, virtual participation via Zoom is available using the weekly link below. For those on Zoom, please bring bread and juice to join in the celebration of communion.

Here's our Zoom Link:

Time: Jan 19, 2025 10:00 AM Edmonton

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87173038086?pwd=OcbjuF7Mg9njaxxge12FXsAFf2H9Xl.1

Meeting ID: 871 7303 8086

Passcode: 533905

Blessings

Rev. Linda McLaren