Dear Ones in Christ,

I greet you in the name and love of our Lord. Let us calm our hearts to hear God’s word for us.

Today’s psalm from the Lectionary is Psalm 116; a psalm of Thanksgiving for healing.

Psalm 116:1-4; 12-19

1 I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. 2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. 3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD:  "O  LORD, I pray, save my life!"

12 What shall I return to the LORD for all the LORD’s bounty to me? 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, 14 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones. 16 O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds. 17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD. 18 I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, 19 in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem.      Praise the LORD!

We often cry out to God for help when we are sick. We ask others to pray for loved ones who are sick. We can feel the snares of death circling for many during this pandemic. We speak much about those who have died.This psalm reminds us that we are to pause to give thanks when healing comes and for those who are living.

The psalmist asks, “What shall I return to the LROD for all the LORD’s bounty to me?” Then the psalmist tells all the ways he will love the LORD and give witness because of God’s bounty to him.

The verse that struck me is verse 15, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones.” In the midst of thanking God the psalmists recognizes those who die and it is precious in the LORD’s sight.

Not everyone is healed the way the psalmist longs to be, and he states that. Not everyone is healed from COVID-19 or other illnesses. My dear friend died early this morning. Yet, I am reminded that her death is precious in God’s sight.

I will leave you with the psalmist’s question, “What shall I return to the LROD for all the LROD’s bounty to me?”

Please pray with me.

Most loving and faithful One, who knows and loves us as we are, we give you thanks for the healing we see, even as we grieve the death’s of others. Lead us to find ways to thank you for the bounty you give every moment of the day. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Rev. Janice Stamper