Dear Ones in Christ,

I greet you in the name of the One who is Love. Let us quieten our hearts to hear God’s word for us today.

Today’s Lectionary psalm in Psalm 105: 1-6, 37-45

1 O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. 3 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD  rejoice. 4 Seek the LORD  and his strength; seek his presence continually. 5 Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered, 6 O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob,  his chosen ones.

37 Then he brought Israel  out with silver and gold, and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled. 38 Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them  had fallen upon it. 39 He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. 40 They asked, and he brought quails, and gave them food from heaven in abundance. 41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river. 42 For he  remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant. 43 So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing. 44 He gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples, 45 that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws.  Praise the LORD!

I imagine in the midst of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years that people were not in the mood to praise the LORD. There was lots of heartache and grumbling and wandering and weeping. The leaders were weary of complaining people and even challenged God as to why they were in this mess.

It’s later on, much later, that the psalmist sat down remembering how the presence of God was seen. He calls all to give thanks, sing praises, remember the works and miracles. Of course, like the old saying goes “Hindsight is 20/20.”

We’re in the midst of a different kind of wilderness during this pandemic. There are days I think I cannot bear any more grief and heartbreak. This week alone a dear friend, who I sat beside in A.A. meetings for several years, died by suicide. A young priest (age 30) died by suicide. Then last night heard of the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. It seems at times like all the good ones are dying while the evil ones prevail.

The psalmist reminds us that the world does not have the last word. We may not see it right now but the LORD is bringing us through this just like the LORD brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. We want to get there now to the land flowing with milk and honey. We don’t want to have to suffer or see others suffer anymore. We’re tired of the “pharaohs” of the world.

Let us ask for what we need. Let us cry out to the LORD. Let us wander and weep. However, DO NOT LOSE HOPE for the LORD is leading us and bringing us through this wilderness. If you need help, ask for it. If you need prayer, let others know. If you are hungry and cannot pay your bills, message me and I will get you help.

I invite all of you to spend time recalling how you have seen God’s presence in the last 6 months. If you cannot see, then call others and ask them how they see God. Someday someone, maybe even you, will write a psalm about this time and will call all to Praise the LORD for how we were brought this time. Maybe it’s time to start writing now.

Please join me in prayer: God of the moon and the stars, guide us through these trying times. Lift our hearts and ease our burdens. Give us courage to reach out to one another with the truth of where we are right now. And let us sing your praise. In Christ’s name I pray, Amen.

Rev. Janice Stamper