

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"God Is Still with Us" 1/26/22

*"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life
nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come
nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of
God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)*

It's been cold and gray out – surprise - it's January. The ground is frozen and has been covered with snow – forever. The wind moans and our bones groan. It makes me think of the hymn *In The Bleak Midwinter*. A haunting melody with words of life and hope. Into our dark days, our discomfort, Christ comes. The winter cannot freeze Him out. Being away from family and a warm bed could not stop His birth. Nothing can keep Him from coming to be with us.

Though much of nature sleeps through the cold midwinter, God is still present. New life will arrive with the coming of spring. There is no storm we endure bad enough to stop the sun from rising the next morning. Life may very well be a struggle, but God has promised to see us through. His presence is assured. His healing is perfect. His timing is right.

I read an article the other day where the UN Chief stated the world is in worse shape now than ever before. I think that's relative, but it does seem like things are not going well economically or politically. There is still a pandemic, social unrest, climate change and conflict. People still don't live in peace. There is hunger, homelessness, and hatred. People killing for no reason. We read the news and shake our heads. How can this be? How can we be so smart, so advanced, and yet live in a world where robbery, selling people, and murder is commonplace? Has God left us? Why can't we love one another – and live like it?

It is bleak. Where is hope? Where is God? Can God come into today's world and speak? Yes, God still comes to us. God comes to us today and says, "Fear not. I - am the Lord your God." The bad, the dark cannot separate us from God. May we listen and believe and hold on to the hope God gives us. A new world is coming. If we can turn to God and love one another, we can live in the manner in which we were created to live. With dignity and humility, with gratitude and graciousness. With love for each other and for ourselves. Accept and celebrate differences. Live together. Uphold and uplift others - instead of throwing them under the bus. Look at the life of Christ and chose to reflect this love to those around us.

The warmth of the sun today tends to wipe out the bleakness of yesterday. We rejoice and give thanks for clear days, soft breezes, and the inevitable sunrise.

Into our spring and summer, our fall and winter, our history, our present day, and our future the Holy Spirit, the presence of God, chooses to come and walk with us, to accompany us, and to lead us through - our bleak mid-winter. And I am persuaded nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Please pray with me: *God of the journey, thank You for Your presence as we travel through life. As we dance in the sunlight and brood in the gloom. Thank You that nothing can separate us from Your love. Thank You for Your comfort and guidance. We praise You for Your compassion which brought You to earth as a human - to journey with us. In You we have hope and we give to You our hearts. Amen.*