

Good News Daily
for St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
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Sunday, January 11

John 1:1-34 *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.* (v.5 NLT)

During my summers in Maine, I loved to sit outside in the dark. We were far away from the lights of the city, so the stars glittered like diamonds in the sky. The best part was that I could see the tiny sparks of light emitted by lightning bugs.

I was always amazed that something that small could generate a light strong enough to pierce the dark night. No matter how dark the night, the lightning bug's spark shone bright. That tiny light chased away the darkness. It gave me hope.

Jesus is the Light. The light he shines, in the dark times of our lives, is hundreds of times brighter than a lightning bug spark. His light gives us strength, hope, and brings healing into our lives. Darkness can't exist where there is light.

So, if you feel like darkness is closing in remember to look up to see the spark of Jesus' light. It will bring you hope.

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalms 146, 147; Hebrews 1:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Langtang - (Jos, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Stanley Fube

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. John the Baptist, Mt. Carmel, The Rev Brant Hazlett, Rector; Milambo Parish: Rev. Emmanuel Mabula, Tabora, Tanzania; The Parish of the Most Holy Trinity & Missions, San Juan de Miraflores, Peru, The Rev. Julio Montoya, Vicar General.

Monday, January 12

Ephesians 1:1-14 *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.* (vv.4-5)

This Scripture changed my life. Canon Jim Holbeck and his wife Carole had come for a month-long healing mission at The Healing Ministry at All Saints Church. During a prayer session, Canon Jim prayed this Scripture over me.

My whole life, I had struggled to believe that I was loveable. It wasn't that nobody had loved me—they had. I just never felt like I was worthy of being loved. I thought I had to act, say, and be a certain kind of person to be loved. And I never seemed able to do those "certain" things properly. Hence, I was unlovable.

When Canon Jim prayed that Scripture over me it touched a part of my heart I didn't know existed. I was beyond humbled that God had actually chosen me before He made the world. He actually wanted to me to be part of His family. For the first time, I had hope that I was lovable.

That prayer began a healing within my heart that continues to change me every day.

Isaiah 40:12-23; Psalms 1, 2, 3; Mark 1:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lebombo - (Southern Africa) The Very Revd Carlos Simao Matsinhe

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Kiezha, wife of The Very Rev. Sean D. Ferrell, Champaign.

Tuesday, January 13

Mark 1:14-28 *Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me..."* (v.18)

Heartland is a Canadian television show about a teenage girl that works with wounded (emotionally and physically) horses. She teaches them to trust her. Once they trust her, they know that wherever they follow her they will be safe.

When I first walked through the doors of the Glennon House, I was an extremely wounded woman. There were very few people I trusted. The idea of trusting God, who I couldn't see with my eyes, seemed kind of crazy. In order to follow where He was leading me, I had to step out of my comfort zones. I had to walk away from everything that was familiar. The defense mechanisms, I had used as a crutch, had to be left behind. My addictions had to be left behind. Even some of my relationships had to be left behind.

Through inner healing, I've learned that I can trust God. He will never ask me to follow Him someplace where He won't protect me. Some of the places might not be comfortable, but I will always be safe with Him.

Isaiah 40:25-31; Psalms 5, 6; Ephesians 1:15-23

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Leicester - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Timothy John Stevens; Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Leicester - The Rt Revd Christopher John Boyle

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, we ask for power, but even more for grace.

Wednesday, January 14

Psalms 119:1-24 *Please don't give up on me!* (v.8b)

I grew up in the Church. Whether I knew it or not, the seed of faith had been planted in my heart. In my teens, I began a journey that led me far away from the Lord. Yet, I still found myself praying to God when I was in difficult circumstances.

When I began my journey back to the Lord, I struggled with the idea that God would welcome me back with open arms. Then somewhere, I heard that God sees us and embraces us even when we are "diamonds in the rough." Those words gave me hope. So, I wrote a poem (prayer) to God begging Him not to give up on me. I also asked Him to help me see myself through His eyes—as a *diamond*:

*Please, don't give up on me
I may be battered, bruised,
and just a tad used—
but I'm a diamond concealed
beneath the layers of life*

God answered my prayers. He never gave up on me! He also continues to help me see myself through His eyes...not mine.

Isaiah 41:1-16; Ephesians 2:1-10; Mark 1:29-45

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lesotho - (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Adam Mallane Taaso

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Very Rev Kathryn G. Jeffrey, Carbondale; Birthday of Sandy Moore, wife of The Rev Mark E. Evans, Lincoln.

Thursday, January 15

Mark 2:1-12 *While he was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."* (vv.2-5)

At the age of 32, I had a stroke. The good news is that it made me realize that I needed to make some serious changes in my life. First and foremost, I needed to return to a relationship with the Lord. Shortly after the stroke, I had a series of severe cluster headaches that lasted for months. A friend of mine suggested that I go to the Tuesday evening healing service. I was really nervous about going to a healing service. It sounded kind of wacky and scary. My friend continued to encourage me to go. Her faith that

God was our Healer gave me the courage to go. Like the four friends of the paralyzed man, it was my friend's faith that got me to that first service.

I'm truly thankful God used her faith to bring me to the place where He would begin the process of healing in my life! I am also thankful that God placed her in my life exactly when I needed her.

Isaiah 41:17-29; Psalm 18:1-20; Ephesians 2:11-22

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lexington - (IV, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Douglas Hahn

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord God, we ask for knowledge, but even more for imagination.

Friday, January 16

Mark 2:13-22 *When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."* (v.17)

For years, I struggled with an eating disorder. I was constantly fluctuating between being obese and being a healthy weight. While this was not a healthy pattern for my body, it was worse for my emotional state.

The heavier I got, the more I isolated myself from the world. Then, when I lost the weight, I became a social butterfly. I refused to let people see me when I was obese. I would only allow them to see me when I was thin. In my mind, when I was thin I projected a "she's got it all together" persona. For me, being obese meant that my life had gotten out of my control.

When I came back to the Lord, that same kind of skewed mentality almost prevented me from having a relationship with Him. I had decided that until I got my "act together," I couldn't have a relationship with God. I figured He wouldn't want someone who was a wreck. It was shocking to hear that God wanted me to come just as I am...no clean up required!

Isaiah 42:1-17; Psalms 16, 17; Ephesians 3:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Liberia - (West Africa) The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Bau-Bau Bonaparte Hart

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O Lord, as this day (begins) (ends), I (we) give thee thanks.

Saturday, January 17

Isaiah 43:1-13 *"From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can snatch anyone out of my hand. No one can undo what I have done."* (v.13)

Do you remember the first time a young child placed their hand in yours? The way they looked up at you with trust in their eyes. They knew that when their hand was in yours they would be safe. When they were holding your hand they knew that you wouldn't let anything happen to them. That child knew that, without a doubt, you wouldn't let go of their hand until it was safe to let go.

Then there were the times when your hand was held by someone who made you feel safe. For me, as a child, it was the hands of family members. As a teenager, it was the hand of my first boyfriend. As an adult, it was the hand of my husband.

However, it wasn't until I held the Lord's hand—in relationship—that I realized what true safety meant. It doesn't mean that we won't ever experience difficulties. It means that when we have difficulties, God will be walking by our side holding our hands; no difficulty can snatch us out of His hands.

Psalms 20, 21:1-13; Ephesians 3:14-21; Mark 2:23—3:6

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lichfield - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Jonathan Michael Gledhill;

Lichfield - Shrewsbury - The Rt Revd Mark James Rylands; Lichfield - Stafford - The Rt Revd Geoffrey

Peter Annas; Lichfield - Wolverhampton - The Rt Revd Clive Gregory

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Save us and help us, we beseech thee O Lord.

by Kirsten Aufhammer

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