

Rejuvenation

Psalm 104

Romans 12:1-4

John 2:1-11

Isaiah 40.26-31

Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God?"

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

AMEN

Rejuvenation Sunday is not a regular Sunday in the church calendar. It was born of the last Board Meeting on May 11th. As a quick recap for those who were not here for breakfast, I reported at that time some of my observations and a plan to adjust some things on the one year anniversary of being your pastor. And the idea came forth that what we need to kick these changes off would be to have a rejuvenation Sunday! And that is today. So, I changed the scriptures around for today and chose what I felt was rejuvenating Hymns – and I asked Frank Plummer if he knew any particularly rejuvenating Preludes and Postludes and music during communion. So the stage is set.

But the question then comes – will all this work that has been done for this day really make any difference? This congregation has been through a lot in its 170 years. It has had its heydays and its low-days. Those long timers here can recount when this congregation had so many more members and programs than it does now. And there have been those who would love to have brought their grandchildren here but there was nothing to offer them. Will anything we say or do today make any difference tomorrow on the future of this church?

Yes. Yes indeed it will. Steve and I have witness numerous occasions in our own lives and in the lives of many other congregations where one person has made a world of difference. One inspired and focused, rejuvenated group can definitely turn the tables around on that mystery called "fate." The trick is – to not make it all about us – but to make it all about God. If what we want to do here is only to make this old building survive in perpetuity – we will fail. If what we want to do here is only about getting more people here so that we can have more money in the coffers, than we will fail. But if what we do here is about finding a way to let those who need us, **know** what we have to offer - in the way of love, joy, inspiration, acceptance, forgiveness, grace and holiness – then God's Will, will be done. And it will be done, most likely, in a way that we cannot plan for it or be prepared for it. We can plan all we want – but what happens will be different than we expected.

The funny thing is – if we don't plan anything – nothing will happen. Motion begets motion! We may not be able to control it – but something *will* happen and we *will* be prepared to watch and wonder - and then struggle to keep up!

We have come here and taken the time and the energy – and some of us have taken vows – to be blessing in the name of God for this congregation; not because we have our own special club here – but because we take Christ’s calling very seriously. We are just one part of the body of Christ – and we will be that part the best we can. Because here over the centuries people have discovered some truth – some mystical presence – some guiding awareness that has made all the difference in their worlds. And they have wanted to spread the word with Hyattstown Christian Church.

This congregation has ministered to so many and done so out of a generous spirit – never out of a desire to get anything in return. Some have noticed that the gift was amazing and returned here – others have gone on and hopefully been blessings to others. But God’s power of renewal has been evident here.

From our Psalm we heard, “When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.” It is the preservation and constant revitalization of God’s Spirit that we wish to keep alive in this community and that is the reason that we do what we do. If God is with us – the renewal of this congregation is guaranteed. And we have heard – we know – that God is with us.

God is with everyone – always – we just have to find that sacred spot and allow ourselves to be aware of God. From our Epistle we heard, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. . . . For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” Since I first started getting to know about Hyattstown Christian Church I have sensed this about you. How you relate to each other- how you love and care for one another – and yet, and not to sound like a Monty Python movie – each and every one of you is different! Who knows the proper response right now? (“I’m not!”)

I really do believe that this new phase of ministry at Hyattstown will succeed – because it is almost as if each of you has something essential that this congregation needs to revive. You are all unique and all ready to give. But you know what the main reason is I believe we will thrive? It is because of the Gospel reading, the miracle of the water turning into wine at Cana. “Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.” Revealing God’s glory is what we are all about – but doing it in the form of joyous parties and celebration – as the first miracle – that is the answer!

What this congregation has to offer the world is that we have all suffered – and we have found ourselves with each other rejoicing. We have been encouraged and found ourselves understood. We needn’t hide anything from each other and that communion has brought us joy. I do believe that if Jesus Christ were to walk in that door right now – he would feel his Spirit here and feel quite at home.

That being said – as a theologian I have to point out something. The triune God is already here – and quite at home. I believe with all my heart and soul that this congregation will be renewed, there is no reason to doubt or fear.

Because, as we heard in our sermon text, “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

AMEN