

Genesis 1: 26-24
Psalm 69, 8-11, 18-20
Matthew 10:24-39

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St. Peter's Glenside
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What Love Requires

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable to thee, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. AMEN

Good morning and welcome to all of you from all of us at St. Peter's Glenside. I'm Laura Palmer, priest associate here at St. Peter's and I'm very glad you are able to worship with us this Father's Day on Zoom. To all fathers and dads we honor you this day, whether living in this world or the next for the love and dedication you shower on your families.

One of the most familiar passages from scripture is "there is a time to dance, and a time to mourn..." from Ecclesiastes. In the ancient BC era, before Covid, that meant something different than it does right now. It meant that we could catch our breath between the dancing times and the mourning times. Now it feels like we're living in a constant state of whiplash. One moment our hearts celebrate—as we did on Monday with the 6-3 decision from the Supreme Court upholding the rights of LGBTQ people to be free from discrimination in the workplace-- a stunning victory for human rights.

But the next day, news came to us at St Peter's that our rector's family on their second day of vacation was hit with a traumatic loss; the tragic, unexpected death of Carol Barr, the wife of Emily's brother, Andy Barr. Carol was 39 and the mother of 7 and 9 year-old daughters, Eleanor and Mary Clay. Carol Barr died from an undiagnosed cardiac condition. As word spread, our St. Peter's family has been reeling, hearts breaking for the entire Barr family, whose lives are closely woven into our own.

Two days later, another Supreme Court ruling was a cause for rejoicing as nearly 700,000 Dreamers...children brought to this country by their immigrant parents and...were told that for

now, they can stay, free from the threat of deportation from the only home most have ever really known. We've lived a fearful few months. But the "dreamers" have rarely been free *from* fear and anxiety never knowing if they might be forced to leave their families, schools and jobs and sent back to countries foreign to them.

But these bursts of good news, true triumphs of social justice which we all celebrate, come against a backdrop of unfathomable pain and grief which we have barely been able to integrate into our psyches, let alone mourn and mourning needs to be done.

The Covid-19 pandemic has stripped us bare. Those of us spared the devastation of the loss of someone we love, have been hit with other losses, deep and profound. We are staggering through a cancelled world.

And then, the murder of George Floyd beneath the knee of a white police officer shunted the pandemic to the sidelines as we all were forced to confront the evil that is our American heritage of white supremacy, institutional racism and police brutality. A week after George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks was shot to death in Atlanta.

The gravity in our world feels gone.

Which is where Jesus meets us, in our terrible grief and pain. We are living through "A Master Class in Grief" writes Washington Bishop Mariann Budde, whom most of you will remember as the bishop who decried the use of a church in her diocese in a photo op.

Budde writes:

None of us can choose the grief we must endure. But we can choose to cultivate what lies within us through the mystery of grace and the power of love; our God-given desire to make the world better in the wake of ruined houses to make meaning from the most painful of losses It's not the loss itself that become meaningful, but how we live and who we become as a result of it.

Budde believes Jesus is a master teacher in this master class of grief we're all immersed in. Just as his followers, we are not immune to human suffering or spared anxiety or grief, says Budde. "In fact, the prepared us for the exact opposite...which is that the way of salvation is through suffering, not around it."

How are we to live then? It's quite simple, in the end. "...listen for his voice," writes Budde. It's the one that rings true—not with false promises or escape but with the real promise to see you through what you did not choose. Lean on him now because he loves you. He is on the side of making things better, bringing meaning out of this mess we're in. When you, in your love for others, join in that making better, making -meaning work, you are the embodiment of his love. You are."

This, my friends, is what will carry us through. When the gravity feels gone, ground yourself more deeply in Jesus. He's waiting for you, arms outstretched, now and always.

And when you've found your footing again, let the words of our presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, lead your forward with his words: "As followers of Jesus, we are to ask ourselves, 'What would love do? Then we are to go and do what love requires.'"

AMEN

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