

Thoughts for the Park Worship Service/newsletter

This morning we are in the perfect place to be blessed and to blessed right back - by the earth, by God, each other. In just a few moments, I am going to ask you to bring your nature elements to this table for a blessing - First - I want to explain what a blessing is all about. Because when we Last week, I was in the grocery store and someone in check-out line – sneezed – a really loud sneeze. The clerk responded with “bless you”. I thought about this scene on my drive home- 'What is a blessing?' and noticing I really wanting one. Was this only an exchange between two people, or was something more present-something else? When people meet closely and truly, when a person blesses another, is God present? What is a blessing?" So before we bless this incredulous and amazing earth, and here are some thoughts –

Blessings are powerful but they are not magical. We really don't have the power to cause what we desire for -or the power to compel God. Instead a blessing (like a prayer) is how we express in word and gesture our deepest yearnings. A blessing is an **expression of hope**.

The power of blessing takes place in the very moment of offering it to someone. When you say – I bless you. Something -happens. Yet, this act of blessing is not dependent on whether something happens or not. The act of blessing happens in that exact moment you offer or receive it. Blessing is an act of giving, when a connection is created, and the faith and caring when we bless someone.

When we offer a blessing, we put out there in the universe what we pray, imagine or hope for - and can't find the exact words to speak it – blessings in that moment connect us (for that moment) our deepest links and connections with each other, the earth, with the Source of All.

Just by our speaking, I have come to believe, "orients our spirit, and orients our hearts; and transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons."

When a stranger sneezes, we habitually say "Bless you!" without much thought--yet we cross over into this thin space between what is ordinary what is sacred. When we speak our words of blessing, we are God's messengers.

One early morning, many years ago, our son, Hunter came into our bedroom with a curious look on his face. It was clear he had been up for a while. He had this little box in his sweet hands – I have a box of love for you. He handed me a small white box with colored tissue on it. He said open it! When I did – there was nothing in the box. I looked at Hunter – and he said: mom can't you see it. It says I love you I hug you and I bless you. My day was made perfect.

So let's do our blessings today. I invite you bring up your blessing – as I announce your turns. Let me warn you something amazing is happening.

First Lesson: In the Hopi oral tradition, the story says:

Once the truth was a whole body of knowledge known by all beings –people, animals, stones, plants, there was no separation. Then an imbalance came. The circle was broken and the whole truth divided. Each clan was given responsibility for a portion of the truth. They were instructed to care for this truth until such time as they could remember their wholeness and reunite the circle.

Of course, after a period of time, the clans forgot that they carried only a fraction of the truth and began to think they carried the whole truth. They began hoarding it, protecting it, trying to impose it on others. Their spirituality became religions that divided them and caused disrespect for other ways of life. They began dividing up the land and claiming clans of the animals, plants and stones for themselves. Scarcity began to dwell among the people. Masala, the messenger of the Hopi people, prophesized that there would come in an eleventh hour when all people would have to choose; to remain divided and destroy themselves and the planet, or to reunite and restore the balance of life. Certainly we are at this hour.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

Second Lesson: Job 12:7-10

7 “But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

8 ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

9 Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Creator has done this?

10 In her hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.

Reflection/Offering of gifts

1. Water

Water is the source of all life. It is pure and refreshing. It flows, cleans, and nourishes. Water is a vital element we must take care of. The water cycle intimately connects us to all of creation. This vessel of water, is essential to renewing of life. Let’s listen as it talks to us. Let us bless water.

2. Dirt

Dirt grounds all of life. It is full of minerals and unseen resources. We walk on that earth. Dirt is like water, another ingredient for life. From it, plants, trees, and all living creatures are nourished. Dirt is the foundation of growth and new life. Let us listen to the soil as it talks to us. Let us bless our dirt.

3. Seeds

Seeds, grain, give growth to our earth. They give new life. With our gentle care - seeds provide surprising gifts of nourishment for all creation. Seeds grow life. Seeds give us beauty, subsistence and birth. Let us listen as these seeds and their off shoots. Let us bless these seeds. You may also bring to the table – the result of your seeds – vegetables, fruit, etc.

5. Animal (stuffed toy)

God calls us to take care of the animals. We are integrally connected to all living things. They give us joy, relationships, and hope and life. Listen to the animals for they are talking to us. Let us bless these symbols of living creatures because they bless us every single day.

6. Finally let us bless God – Allah - Sophia – Creator. This mysterious Spirit is the synapse that connects everything together and gives harmony as we attempt to live together. She is present in our death and life, darkness and

light – despair and joy. Let us listen for this Spirit – for she is indeed talking to us. Let us bless the Source of our lives.

***Closing blessing: All creation: – each star and every flower,
– each drop of water and every person, – each and every atom, down to its
very electrons, explodes with the revelation of your sacred mystery. We
bless this earth. We promise to listen because all of nature is indeed
talking to us. And all the people say - Amen***