

Pastor's Log 11-11-20

Why, O God, have you forsaken us?

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us give thanks and rejoice in it!

There I was in the attic, hard at work at the computer when I heard the noise. It was louder and more deep throated than the incessant whine of the leaf blowers all around. "Not now," was my thought. "Why now?" Yes, it was the sound of the borough equipment vacuuming up the leaves from the street. And where were all the leaves from my yard? Still spread across the yard. I rushed downstairs with my lament, "Why now, O God, why now?" Hurried out to get my leaf blower and rake and began to move leaves to the curbside.

As I worked, I began to realize just how beautiful the day was. The warmth of the sun, the bright colors of the fall day, the gentle breeze, all came together to still my mind and my soul. "This truly is the day the Lord has made. Let us give thanks and be glad" began to sing in my mind. The interruption, the disruption to the day I had been working through became a true blessing.

As I continued to work, I began to think about how I, and perhaps we, see each day as ours. And when things happen that would claim my day (like the borough crew deciding today was the day to clear my street), I get upset because my plans are set-back, my day is ruined. And while my disruption was a minor inconvenience, there are others that change our lives. But the day is still the Lord's day. And I give thanks for that.

The disruptions, the challenges to how we live and see our selves are real and vast in these times. For many of us the challenges of this pandemic have truly changed our perspectives on life. I now know what it means to leave my home fearful that I may contract something that could end my life. Perhaps that means that I might have just a little more understanding for the person of color who has known that fear every time he leaves his home and gets in his car. Climate change, the brutality of our politics, the reality of our prejudices, all provide us with our lament, "Why have you forsaken us, O God?"

But there is an interesting thing about the lament. It is based in faith, in trust in the Lord. In a certainty that God will respond. The lament in its biblical form has a structure to it:

Address to God: The address to God a brief cry for help.

Complaint: God is informed about problems or concerns that individuals or a community experience.

Confession of trust: Confidence in God.

Petition: Appeals to God for deliverance and intervention.

Words of assurance: God will hear.

Vow of praise: God's will intervene.

The reality is that this world in which we live is God's. We live in this understanding, but not all understand it in the same way, and not all of us treat the day as God's. It is the day that belongs to God, and not the hardships. We are pretty good at creating those for each other. Our certainty is that the God who gave us the day, will also be present with us as we work through the trials and challenges of our daily life.

See what happens when the borough decides to pick up the leaves on my street.
Speak your words of lament for all that this world suffers. God is faithful and will respond.
Then give thanks, for this is the day of the Lord.

Grace and peace be with you,

Pastor Paul

Catching the Light



Being married to an amateur photographer, I have grown more aware of light. Light is so important to my husband, that at times he wakes up in the wee hours of the morning in order to catch the morning light as it breaks in upon a particular landscape. The resulting photographs, often striking, he frames and displays in our home. In this way, an extraordinary, captured light can retain a timelessness. And the splendor of it is easily revisited.

But there are times when light eludes documentation. Riding home from the Pocono mountains as a family, we began to watch for those places where a slant of late afternoon sun bursts upon a stretch of field, or joyfully dances upon waters' surface. Usually we were not disappointed, and there was a recognition that no one would try to "keep" them. Moments of light-play such as these - best enjoyed for the time being - fade as memory fades. What lingers, however, is a sense of gratitude for having experienced them.

Although I prefer moments of lived experience of light to light's memory, sometimes I can't resist attempting to capture a beautiful scene. Last week, I took this picture of trees just outside my front door. An immediate thought was to recount the story of God's presence in the burning bush. But then my reflections deepened as I recalled the words of psalm 130: *If I say, the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night, even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.* Then I tried to wrap my mind as well as my heart around this God whose presence is so much glory that it brightens even the daylight.

Sometimes I am startled by an intense awareness of God being with me. And I am, for the most part, glad for such experiences. But what assures me most is the presence of God with me in days and times which are not necessarily extraordinary in any way. To experience God's goodness and steadfast love, and to be mindful of it as archived in the stories, images and teaching of the scriptures - such is both experiential and archival faith. Thus, it is living in the assurance and knowledge of the constancy of God, no matter what.

Pastor Ann

Casting Our Vision for the Ministry of Christ

Join the conversation on Wednesday November 11, 18, 25, and December 9, as we gather via Zoom to explore together what God has in store for the Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church. What has the Pandemic taught us about the call to do Christ's ministry? What future has the blending of two congregations into one prepared us to do in the name of Christ? What is our community crying out for that we have been provisioned by god to respond too? How will we present ourselves in witness to the presence of God in this world? Join in one, or all of our conversations at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86079729283>

By phone dial: 1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 860 7972 9283

November 22nd Congregational Meeting

The Session has called a meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church to be held immediately following worship on November 22, 2020. The purpose of the meeting is to elect members of the congregation to serve on the Session, the Board of Deacons, and the Congregational Nominating Committee.

Veterans Day 2020

At the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month peace was declared in the war that was to end all wars. That is the day each year that we pause to remember the veterans, both those who served this nation, both the living and the dead. On this Veterans Day let us all remember and give thanks to God for those who have served this nation in time of war and in time of peace. Let us pray that the day will come, and come soon, when we will wage war no more.

Here are the Zoom links for our gatherings

Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church at Worship

Every Sunday, 10:00

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/910100569>

Or by telephone dial: 1-929-205-6099, if asked, enter the Webinar ID: 910-100-569

+1 929-205-6099 US (New York)

Sunday Morning Bible Study - 9:00 AM Led by Sam Bonner

<https://zoom.us/j/564813133?pwd=WxV3dk5zYlkvUGJDUUEwZEc2R3REdz09>

By phone dial: 1-646-558-8656 and enter when asked the meeting ID: 564-813-133

Sunday Afternoon Adult Ed. Led by Pam Hoffman and Sandra Austin

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81923102879>

By phone dial: 1-929-205-6099 and enter when asked the meeting ID: 819-2310-2879

Tuesday and Thursday Chat's with Pastor Ann

Tuesdays at 10 AM to 11 AM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81010467123?pwd=UDNqWG5pN0t3MFJUeDN5SFcvQnpzd09>

Meeting ID: 810-1046-7123 Password: 271785 By phone +1- 929-436-2866 enter password: 271785

Thursdays at 7 PM to 8 PM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/960150849?pwd=bTdYTVV3S1M0R2xmenZSWlc5MnhMUT09>

Meeting ID: 960-150-849 Password: 079496 By phone: 1-929-436-2866 Password: 079496

Wednesday Evening Vision Conversations with Pastor Paul 7:00-8:00 Nov. 11, 18, 26, Dec. 9

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86079729283>

By phone: 1 929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 860 7972 9283