

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, October 13, 2020
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“Let the Fields Be Jubilant”

READING: Psalm 96:1-6, 11-12; Psalm 98:1, 7-9 – Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary...Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy...Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him...Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

I love this time of year! And, what’s not to love? The temperatures are most pleasant: cool at night, sunshine and warmth in the daytime. The air is crisp and fairly dry. The skies are high and blue and often without a cloud. The sun is bright but not hot. You might need a sweater or light jacket in the morning, but by mid-morning shirt sleeves are all you need. I love it!

While I was going about composing this devotion, I looked out the window of our home office from where I have a lovely view of the Knobs. I can look up to Skyline Drive and see the forested slopes leading up to it. And here and there within all that green I already see patches of orange and yellow and crimson. In another week, those hillsides will be a riot of color. The change of seasons is one of the most wonderful things about living in northern latitudes. Those living in Florida don’t get to witness this much. Folks at the equator have pretty much the same weather year-round. Hawaiians languish with the same sun and breezes and weather nearly 365 days a year. But here we get to see nature with its paint brushes and its changing landscapes.

David and the other Psalmists often call on nature itself to declare the glory of our God. They recognized the Lord as the Creator, the one who made all things, set all things in motion, and provided a world that could reproduce and sustain itself with the cycles and systems the Lord had decreed and created. They saw in the thunder of the ocean’s surf, the clapping of its “hands”. They saw in the majesty of the mountain heights the awesomeness of God. They recognized in the vastness of the heavens God’s far-reaching providence. They realized in the fields of ripening grain and the blush of their vineyards that God was blessing them with sustenance and security. Even as they worshipped and praised their Maker, they called upon nature to do the same.

We live in a world and time that more and more seems to have devolved into the worship of nature. Rather than recognizing the Creator, they praise and laud the creation. When we set aside God, something has to fill the void in the heart that this causes. In order to have purpose in life, a reason for being, a sense that one's life has value and meaning, something bigger than us has to have a claim on our time and talents. If that "something bigger" is not the God who made and redeemed us, a natural substitute is nature with all its grandeur. It was so in the Old Testament times, when every other nation and culture around Israel worshipped nature gods like the sun, the rivers, and the mountains. They looked askance at Israel, who worshipped only one God and declared him to be the One who had made everything and set all things in motion. How strange that modern, "sophisticated, scientific, enlightened" people would whole-heartedly return to the worship of nature! How sad!

We rejoice in nature and its beauty. We marvel at the colors in the sunset, the waving fields of grain, the incredible palette of hues in the autumn woods, and in the swirling snowflakes in our first winter storm. But we don't worship nature for nature's sake. We, like the Psalmists, call on nature to join us in worshipping and praising the One who made all of these things. We praise God for his awesome powers of creation and his wisdom in devising all the mechanisms of nature. So, let the rivers clap their hands, the birds sing for joy, the mountains declare His glory, and "let the fields be jubilant!" We will join them and worship Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the God who made them all and is ever worthy of our praise. Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

There will be another DRIVE-IN worship service WITH COMMUNION on SATURDAY, October 17, 5:00 P.M. Come in the safety of your vehicle, tune in to 87.9 FM, and worship the Lord with us. The service will conclude with Communion and the Dismissal Blessing to send you on your way. If it's been a while since you last had opportunity to receive the Sacrament, come.

Emily and Eric Wenning's daughter, Louisa, is going to undergo a corrective surgery soon. They are going to need some help with babysitting their younger son and daughter. They could also use some light housekeeping help while Eric is at work and Emily runs doctors' appointments and attends to Louisa. If you could spare a few hours in either one or both of those tasks, they would be most appreciative. To talk to Emily, call (567-644-2545). You could be such a blessing to this family. Thank you.