

November 2017 Pastor's Page

I don't know whether it's the same for you, but as my favorite season seems to be fading all too quickly toward the one that starts with a "w," I have found myself giving thanks each time I begin to pray. I think that's appropriate, since thanksgiving is more than a national holiday late in November!

I love the changes of season in Minnesota, and autumn in particular seems to give me pause to share my appreciation with God. I know that fall means extra work—tying up those loose ends before winter's inevitable arrival, bringing in the harvest that supports this region, and mowing or raking up all the beautiful leaves once they glide gracefully from the trees—but it's the colors, cooler temperatures, and lower humidity that inspire me. God is surely at work as the crops and trees trumpet the end of a growing season. Even at night, when the fall colors aren't visible, the harvest full moon (Oct. 5 and coming again on Nov. 4) speaks volumes of God's handiwork.

Recently in one of my worship resources I came across a Call to Worship based on Psalm 19, and its portrayal of nature's majesty stuck with me in the following days. As I traveled the area to attend meetings and visit with those unable to be with us on Sunday, I thought to myself how accurately the Psalmist (and those who had translated for this liturgy resource) conveyed what draws me to this wonderful time of year:

*The heavens are telling the glory of God,
all creation speaks volumes of God's handiwork.
Each sunrise proclaims God's faithfulness
and the night reveals the Creator's awe.
Without a word being spoken, all creation bears witness
to the goodness of the Lord.
So, too, may we join in witness with all creation.
May the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts
be God's signature in the world.*



Perhaps more important than the descriptive images of nature are the words that (in paraphrase above) conclude Psalm 19. In that final verse the Psalmist offers a prayer of his own, one that Christians have often adopted as an opening or centering prayer to begin a time of worship: *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”* (Psalm 19:14) Those are words to live by!!

As we go about our days—no matter what time of year, no matter whose company we are in, no matter how tired, stressed, or worried we are—we must always pause to decide whether the thoughts in our hearts, and the words about to come out of our mouths, are acceptable to GOD. If they are not, then we need to pause and consider what God is saying and doing in our lives. It's not a question of whether “little ears are listening” or “what so-and-so will say.” You've probably passed the age where your mother could wash your mouth out with soap, but as Paul reminds us in Romans 14:12, “So then, each of us will be accountable to God.” In the end, what matters is whether what we're thinking and saying are acceptable in God's sight.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, now and throughout the changing seasons.

Yours in Christ's service,

Rev. Cory Germain