



A Meditation for the Third Tuesday After Easter

*“For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace;
the mountains and hills before you shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”* (Isaiah 55:12-13)

It began with the rise of the bleeding hearts in my garden and quickly spread to the forget-me-nots. Then the daffodils caught it and passed it on to the tulips. They in turn gave it to the dogwood blossoms. They will pass it on to the lilacs. and so it goes on and on. You don't need a face mask to catch Spring. You don't need to practice social distancing when it comes to lilacs. You can inhale their fragrance close up.

Isaiah wrote his words of hope to people who were in exile from their homeland, from everything familiar and loved. They longed to return and possibly feared they might not. “This won't last,” Isaiah promises. “The blooming of your lives will happen again, because God would never let you be cut off from joy forever.” Isaiah's promise is for what comes in the future, which in the now seems impossible.

Isaiah's promise also is for now, for what is happening right before your eyes. There are two kinds of pandemics going on. One seems an invisible, never-ending litany of loneliness and fear and uncertainty. The other is one of joy and delight, one you can see and touch, smell and hear.

In a nest above my back porch sparrows feed their young. New life. I worry that the babies will fall from their home, but I still love to hear their persistent calls to their parents for food. Some fear is necessary for caution, but it need not overwhelm delight. Take heart! Catch the songs of the earth coming to life and the clap-clap of new leaves blowing in the wind! Catch resurrection!

Prayer:

Praise to you God of all Creation for the joy of blossom and bird-song, green grass and warm sun—for blessings seen and unseen that make hardship bearable. You always bring life, even in the midst to trial. Thanks be! Amen.

Pastor Kate Bottorff