



Welcome

Welcome to the Bryn Mawr newsletter, Spiritual Reflections. The idea behind the content is to deliver news and information to and from Bryn Mawr's parishioners and the good work we are doing in the community and on our own spiritual journeys. Please feel free to share with us your own spiritual reflection to publish in the newsletter each month. We hope you enjoy!

Message from Reverend Elaine

Dear Friends,

I suggested to the session a few months ago that we consider focusing our newsletter on spiritual reflections. I believe we all have spiritual experiences continually, however, we miss many of them in our busy lives. It seems that stress is the most common ailment of our lives, and we could heal some of it by pausing for a few moments to just breathe and become aware of how our bodies feel. Too often we are in our heads and ignoring the rest of our physical selves, missing important communication that can enrich our lives. God is always waiting for an opportunity to connect with each of us, maybe through music, a scene in nature, a comment from a loved one, a film, a book, etc.

I made spiritual connections on my vacation by reading a 500-page novel. This book is one of the 100 novels that were picked by viewers for the "Great American Read" on PBS. It is titled *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. I love books as I have found many teachers and friends among authors and could relate to the main character of this novel, who is a very lonely little girl, until she learns to read. The power of the written word also relates to Parker Palmer, who found a significant spiritual teacher, Thomas Merton, one year after Merton's death.

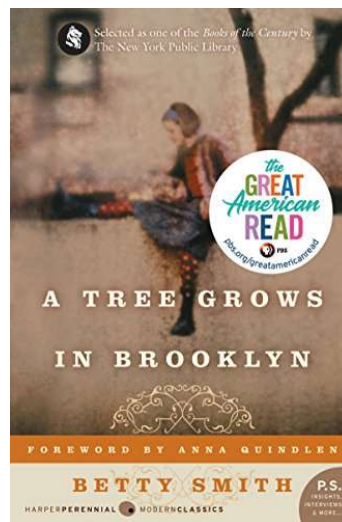
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn took me with rich and vivid detail into the early years of the 20th century, into the longings of immigrants, and into the mind and the heart of a hungry child, living and loving in poverty. This author made me more aware of my own humanity and how I am deeply connected to others, those that came before and those today, who are having similar experiences. Human beings deep down, want to live

and flourish. All parents desire more for their children than perhaps they received. They leave their countries when conditions are unbearable, make difficult and perilous journeys, always hoping to be able to help create a better situation for the next generation. Smith points out through the characters in this novel, that the main key to create a better future is through education. As someone once said, "Education has freed more people than all the wars fought in human history."

Education is so important for the spiritual life. Unfortunately, the church has not done a very good job of assisting in the growth and development of adults over the years. And it seems to me that the reason the church is having a limited impact on the culture at the present time, is for this very reason. If we as adults in the church just continue on the same path, refusing to expose ourselves to new ideas and thoughts, our numbers will continue to decline. What is necessary for change, which seems to be a fact of life, is risk. This can create fear. However, if we are willing to challenge

ourselves and our community into a future that is unknown, we will have to learn and experience greater trust in God. And it won't be easy. Jesus, our main teacher and model in the Christian tradition, had a very difficult life on earth. It was his profound faith, not belief, in God that gave him the courage to follow his call. Too many so-called Christians talk about what they believe and say little or anything about what they experience in relationship to a Loving God. Experiencing God affects every aspect of life: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. It is when we work to integrate information from all these aspects of our lives, that we can truly grow into being more authentic Christians. By the way, this growth needs to continue our entire lives.

Deep Peace, Elaine



Spiritual Reflections

Reminder: Look Up!

A Spiritual Reflection by Deb Roever

I love to walk! I love to walk my dog. I love to walk during my lunch break. I love to go for hikes (my favorite places to hike are Devil's Lake & Copper Falls). Walking makes me feel at one with nature and can sometimes be a spiritual experience for me. As I've gotten older, my balance and/or my ability to "catch myself" and stop myself from falling seems to be getting worse and worse. While I never used to fall, now, every little acorn, twig, crack in the sidewalk, etc., can cause me to lose my balance and end up on the ground. Consequently, I find myself staring at the ground in front of me as I walk.



After a while, I started noticing that I was not going for many walks any longer. I realized that I just wasn't looking forward to them. I decided to force myself to go for a walk one day at work on one especially nice day. As I was walking, staring at the ground, I seemed to be getting more stressed, rather than less. I stopped at a bench to sit and think for a few minutes, and I heard the words "Look Up" in my mind. I looked up.

In front of me was Lake Mendota, ducks, sailboats, and the reflection of the Capital on the water. My stress lifted instantly. It seems, when I look down at the ground as I walk, my brain seems to ruminate on work, problems and the stressors in my life.



Now, when I go for a walk, the first thing I tell myself is "Look Up!" I still need to look at the ground more often than I used to, and sometimes have to remind myself to Look Up during my walks, but

it has made all the difference. Instead of dwelling on my problems, I look around and see all of the beauty of God's creation, and I smile.

This is really a great reminder for life in general. When we get too focused on our problems and worries, we need to remember to Look Up. We remember that we are not alone, and that all things are possible through Christ. Say a prayer, and hand your problems over to God. Life, like my walks, will be so much better!

Adult Education Classes – November 11

Join us for another Expanded Adult Education Class after Worship on November 11th. Pastor Elaine will be discussing another of Marcus J. Borg's books, The God We Never Knew. You do not need to have read the book to attend, but it might inspire to you read it! Here's a quote from the book: "The Christian life is not about pleasing God the finger-shaker and judge. It is not about believing now or being good now for the sake of heaven later. It is about entering a relationship in the present that begins to change everything now. Spirituality is about this process: the opening of the heart to the God who is already here."

The October class was a smaller, but lively group. Several of us plan on reading the book discussed at that class, Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time, also by Marcus J. Borg. Deb has a copy that she will be lending out, once she's done reading it.

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

This year Cottage Grove's Ecumenical Thanksgiving service will be held at Hope Lutheran Church at 6:30 on Wednesday evening, November 21st. Pastor Elaine, Mitchell, and many members of Bryn Mawr will be participating. If you would like to join the choir for this service, the rehearsals are on November 8th and 15th from 6:30 – 8:00. It is a joy to sing with many voices from several congregations. It is always a wonderful service. Whether you wish to sing with the choir, or join the combined congregation, please join us!

Food Pantry Focus



Most everyone knows that we house the Cottage Grove Food Pantry right here at Bryn Mawr. To better support those served by the food pantry,

we are starting a "Food Pantry Focus" week. The second Sunday of each month will be our Food Pantry Focus week. A list of specific needs (our wish list) for that month will be posted/published in advance. We would love for members and friends of the congregation to bring any items on the wish list, or any non-perishable food or toiletry items on that Sunday. If you forget, you can either bring your items another week, or give a monetary donation. Checks can be made out to "Cottage Grove Food Pantry".

Spiritual Reflections

Food Pantry Cont.

Since we have the Holiday food baskets coming up, the items on the wish list for November are:

- Brownie Mix
- Canned Sliced Pineapple
- Boxed Cereal
- Peanut Butter-18 oz
- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Instant Oatmeal Packets
- Hot Cocoa Packets

Our first Food Pantry Focus week will be Sunday, November 11th. Please consider bringing at least one item to contribute to the pantry. A box will be waiting for our donations.

If you are unable to donate this month, and/or want to assist in a more hands-on way, please consider helping with the setup/staging of the Thanksgiving Food Baskets after Worship that Sunday, November 11th. Many hands make light work!

Family Movie Night!

Bryn Mawr is hosting a Family Movie Night:



When: Friday, November 16th at 7:00 p.m.

What: We'll be showing the movie, "All Saints", with discussion to follow.

Where: Drumlin Residences, 107 E. Reynolds Street in Cottage Grove.

Notes: Feel free to invite family & friends!
Bring your own snacks & beverages, if desired.

Prayer List

Concerns:

- Karen and Preston Baker (Karen –breast cancer returned, Preston-stomach issues from past surgery)
- Diane, Wendy McNall's mother, who has health concerns
- Jeanne and Herb Evert (Jeanne as she recovers from thyroid/carotid artery surgery, stroke)
- Kathy Farwell recovering from thyroid surgery.
- John & Stacie, as they grieve the loss of their beloved dog Nikko.
- Jim (friend of Stapleton's) who has gastroesophageal cancer, started radiation and chemo
- Joey, Jeff Stapleton's cousin, diagnosed with brain infection
- Andrew Tuten's friend, Carter Gehl, killed in car accident and the Gehl family

- Karel Moore, heart transplant on July 31 and recovering at daughter's home in Fond du Lac
- Judy Phillips brother, Bud, recovering from knee surgery.
- Larry Rhead's brother Earl, and Jack recovering from health issues.
- Louise Rhead's granddaughter who is pregnant and T1 diabetic
- Esther Stapleton who is dealing with kidney issues
- Sharon Pristash and family (Shelley's close friend whose father passed away 9/3)
- Pete Pullen, health issues
- Teresa, Shelley's step-mom, diagnosed with melanoma and undergoing immunotherapy treatments
- Lauren Truman (Leslyn Spinelli's daughter), diagnosed with melanoma and undergoing immunotherapy treatments
- John Tuten's family in the passing of his brother, Michael
- Mary Jane Ubbelohde (recovering from eye surgery)

To help keep the prayer list updated, prayers will remain on the list for two months and reviewed at the monthly Deacon's meeting. If you wish to have us continue praying for an individual or family, please let one of the Deacon's know so we can add them back on. All other prayers involving a world situation, community concerns, groups, governmental, disasters, etc. are prayed for during church. Due to confidential reasons, please be sure the person you want on the prayer list has given us permission to do this and a prayer request card has been submitted with this marked on the prayer card.

Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

We will again be ordering poinsettias to decorate the church for the Christmas season. If you would like to order a 6" poinsettia(s) at \$8.00 each, please pay by cash or make check payable to "Bryn Mawr" and place money in pew envelope and mark "flowers". You may put order in collection plate.

Deadline for ordering is Sunday, November 11.

_____ Number of plants (*assorted colors*)

_____ Total Amount Due (*cash or check payable to Bryn Mawr*)

_____ Paid

Name _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

You may take any plants you ordered after the Christmas Eve Service. Questions . . . contact Shelley Rausch at 608-219-7414 or shelleyhaw@aol.com