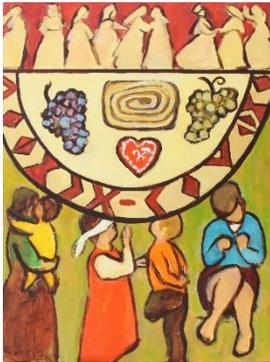


Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, May 12, 2019 – Mothers' Day

What Blessings Do Mothers Offer?

(Isaiah 66:7-13 & Psalm 139 with Refrain #1)



**As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 66:13)**

A lesson from Isaiah 66:13

All the blessings of comfort! – that's what mothers offer – it's that simple and that complex – the complexities of where and how mothering happens these days is the reason I chose this image for our reflection this morning – it's the painting used this year by the Women's Inter-Church Council for the World Day of Prayer for Christian Unity this past – the theme was 'Come, All is Ready' and the lay women who wrote the material were from Slovenia – next year, the theme is 'Rise, Take Up Your Mat and Walk,' with the material being developed by women in Zimbabwe - we've not been terrible involved in it here in this neighbourhood – perhaps we should think about doing more in 2020 – it falls on the 1st Fri in March – put last year's years and this year's themes together and you have nourishing for the journey of being ambassadors of the grace of Jesus Christ – comfort throughout a challenging journey – constant companionship as we confront the complexities of life in a callous world, marred by generations of rebellion against God's justice, kindness, and humility – a steadfast and accepting love, no matter what happens, always with the willingness to correct after the forgiveness and continuing acceptance

Provocative points to ponder – as always, too many to cram into one sermon

- Maybe we should be thinking about the idea of 'mothering' as well as the reality of mothers – it's really a matter of thinking about the quality of relationships that are going to bring to reality to the justice, kindness, and humility that the triune God desires with and among all human beings – what are the qualities in relating that generate a 'godly mothering' – four come to mind to consider this morning – characteristics of God's love, from which all our faltering attempts at mothering gain their ultimate effectiveness

- Cherishing the children – a steadfast and enduring love that encompasses the children no matter how old they are or what circumstances they are in
- Appreciation for the potential of the children – these dreams often cause heartache when they go unrealized, but the steadiness of such aspirations can be used the Spirit to inspire transformations in the children
- Safe space for the children – so important in this world that has devised so many ways of traumatizing people
- Growth in the children - continual invitation to mature into their full potential – model such an approach to life – participation in the practices that form faithful disciples of Jesus – worship, learning, fellowship, and service – the self-discipline that response with gratitude to the gifts of the Spirit named so clearly in Galatians – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, and gentleness

How does this all relate to our witness as a fellowship of the friends of Jesus?

In a simpler, smaller, and more intimate world, these ‘mothering’ qualities in our relationships seemed more readily available in more identifiable people – in the complex, expanding, isolating world of Greater Vancouver, not so much – we’re going to welcome 40,000 new neighbours within a 30-minute walk of this church in the next 20 years – most in small condo and apartment units – loneliness and disengagement from community activities – people disconnected from each other – how do we offer the ‘mothering’ influences that we have been considering this morning here in our little space of grace – how do we welcome anyone and everyone into our space of grace and nourish them to flourish? – as our mission has emerged, music is one key to this welcome, one point of connection that might lead to formation as a companion of Jesus Christ – one of the fondest memories I have of my mother is her singing me to sleep – ‘Silent Night’ – still can’t hear that carol without choking up – the power of music to mother – something to keep in mind as we continue to expand that mission – take the notes I used for our presentation to the ‘Christian Witness in Cascadia’ conference held Fri and Sat at St. Andrew’s Hall – love to hear your responses and suggestions for improvements as we continue to imagine how best to offer the comforts of mothering to our neighbours

My Notes

My Prayers

