

**INDUCTION Sermon**  
**St. Mary's Nanoose**  
**February 15, 2017**  
**John 14:11-15**

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.....

Mark Twain sure knew how to sum life up. He speaks for me when he said, " A lot of terrible things.... have almost happened to me." But really, the opposite of what he said is just as, and maybe more so, true. How many wonderful things happen in life, and we barely notice and give thanks?

There's an old Jewish prayer that goes something like this:  
*Days pass and the years vanish and we walk sightless among miracles. Fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing. Let there be moments when Presence, like lightning, illuminates the darkness in which we walk. Help us to see wherever we gaze and exclaim in wonder: "How filled with awe is this place and we did not know it!"*

When we listen to Scripture, we're helped to develop the ability to recognize the miracles and wonders in our own lives. We're reminded that life is fuller, deeper, broader and more profound than we can ever fully grasp. And we're encouraged to stop for a moment, breathe, notice what's going on around us, and allow our busy, habitual minds to be quieted and our hearts to be moved and changed.

Consider what we've heard tonight. From the reading from Jeremiah we learn that God knows, creates, consecrates, and sends us

into time with a purpose. And from Paul's letter to the Romans we learn that we are to discern this purpose, or as Paul says "the will of God," within community so that each of us can contribute who we are and what we have to the well-being of the whole – the Body of Christ.

And then from the gospel of John we hear that intimacy with God is something available and meant for us **now**; and that engaging or immersing ourselves in this loving relationship is key to our purpose here on earth. Because by simply resting into, or touching into this divine exchange, we acknowledge our belovedness, and as such, are more able to express and share the love within. And then we are more effective in fulfilling God's purpose for us.

Or, put more succinctly by a teacher I once had..... "Proceed as if you were needed."

Do you remember the Trust exercises that were popular many decades ago? Where one person would stand in the middle of a circle of people, close their eyes and let themselves fall backwards. The people in the circle would gently catch the weight of that person and pass them around the circle?

I hated that exercise. The first time I encountered it was in a highschool drama class. I pretended to enjoy it, just to be cool and fit in, but I was incredibly tense and fearful and I hoped the class would end before it was my turn.

Trust has been a long time coming for me. I've not been one for whom trust has come easily. I could give you my version of why that might be, but this is precisely **not** the point of this sermon.

The point is this. Trust means knowing that we are embraced fully and completely by God, our story is an open book, our fears and shame are known..... and that God holds everything. And if we ask, and if we allow, God uses our “everything” to good. Nothing is lost, everything is recycled. Can we trust that all of who we are, have been and will be, can and will be used by God for God’s purposes?

What happens when we trust? When we say “I have no idea, Lord, but thy will be done?”

I don’t know about you, but for me, becoming a Christian, being baptized into a community of faith began, or maybe more accurately, *continued*, a journey I never could have asked for, or imagined. It has meant stepping out into the unknown over and over again. Which is what life is really all about, isn’t it? We pretend to know what’s going to happen next and we plan like we can secure our own future but God, in God’s wisdom, opens doors we never knew existed and closes ones we try desperately to keep our foot wedged in.

Thirty-five years ago, I had no idea I was marrying a man who would become a priest. Would I have said, “I do,” if I’d known?! And I certainly never imagined that I would called and ordained myself and end up here with you tonight. Hey, I didn’t really even know where Nanoose was a year ago!

And so miracles of miracles, I’ve discovered and continue to discover how trust is key to being led to places, people, challenges and spaces in my heart that help me grow into the person I was created to be.

I don't know what I'm going to say when I sit down to write a sermon, I don't know how I'm going to respond to each new situation, I don't know what next week will bring, but when I trust, I see over and over that it's not that things always work out well for me or in the way I think best or better, but what I discover is that deep down, I have a sense of well-being. That when I flub up, I know I'm still loved. I can relax into that knowing and hold the judgments of myself with compassion and some humour. That's on a good day!

But seriously, the ability to rest into and trust, the relentless support and love of the Holy Trinity, is key to my ability to "proceed as if I am needed." Every thought, fear, regret, hope, vision and dream is held in that circle of love. Everything is cared for, everything is held.

It's taken me decades to trust this circle of love. To the extent that I'm able. Every day is different. I practice falling back against the Divine Strength with more and more confidence. And to discover there is no judgment in that circle. Just compassionate care and the encouragement to step out again, to try again, to find the words again, the energy again. "To proceed as if I am needed." Not because I'm more special than anyone else, but because I have been created to contribute my unique gifts to the well-being of the Body of Christ; to my family, to this community of St. Mary's and to this incredible world.

At the same time, this growing trust allows me to receive the gifts and care of others so my own well-being increases; my own

sense of connectedness increases, and my own ability to give in return is strengthened.

Trust allows us to see deeper into the miracle of life and to participate more and more fully because we know we are held regardless of our experience; that we are led, regardless of our own sense of being prepared, or being the right person, or knowing enough.

We may think we are serving coffee, setting up the altar, writing words for a sermon or repairing the bathroom fan – and we are – but we are actually doing something much more profound. We are learning how to trust God and each other, and how to live into this body of Christ which contains all we need and all we are.

This is the miracle we need to train our eyes, ears and hearts to see. That we have been created **in** love and **for** love. And that everything we are and everything we offer is held in this Body so beloved by God.

And that's why I need, and I imagine many of you do as well, to come to church, to participate in the liturgy, to read Scripture and hear it read out loud, to be reminded over and over again every day, every week to trust that all is well and see .....“How filled with awe is this place!” Thanks be to God.

Amen.