



Dear Friends,

There has been a lot happening this week, but I am looking forward to two things. The opportunity on Friday to spend time together remembering and giving thanks for the life of Gladys Bergersen. We are going to farewell her with lots of love and great singing!

And I am looking forward to sitting back in the pews on Sunday and hearing Pastor Derek Bradshaw share his community's experiences of doing mission in Warrandyte, Victoria.

Thinking about mission, and how we approach mission, I came across this wonderful reflection by Amy Frykholm, the author of a 'contemplative biography' (there are very few facts to go on) about the 14th century theologian, Julian of Norwich, author of *A Revelation of Love*, the first written by a woman in the English language.

Frykholm writes:

*Like the personified Wisdom of Proverbs, Julian turned the whole heavy world of religious obligation — all of its shoulds and have-tos, musts and or-elses — on its head. She wrote, for example, **"Our soul must perform two duties."** When I first read this passage, my whole striving Protestant self-geared up to add them to my already extensive spiritual to-do list.*

*What were these two duties? **"The one,"** she writes, **"is we must reverently wonder and be surprised.... The other is we must gently let go and let be, always delighting in God...."***

During the pandemic my little church in Leadville, Colorado opened an ambitiously large food pantry in the unused sanctuary. Working with community partners, we strategized how to obtain funds, and we stocked the pantry week to week with hundreds of pounds of potatoes, cans of beans, and eventually, as we got the system down, meat, milk, eggs, and

fresh produce. It was (and remains) a challenging operation, and I am not saying that we've always done it with wonder and great delight, but a friend and I made a pact as the pantry started to grow of its own accord: we would only do those things that gave us joy. If something about the pantry became a heavy burden, we'd step back and let someone else take it or not do it at all. This wasn't our food pantry: it was the Spirit's.

We likened this discipline to crossing a mountain stream: In trying something of this magnitude, we were constantly in danger of falling into resentment, overwork, fatigue, and eventually coming to dislike our neighbours instead of learning to love them. To cross a mountain stream, you must seek those few rocks that will remain firmly in place, that are flat enough to afford a foothold. We likened our development of the food pantry to looking for these "joy" rocks. What can we do with enough joy, enough letting go, enough delight that we can stay steady while we cross this stream? If we saw ourselves falling into obligation, we'd ask, "Is this a joy rock?" If the answer was no, then we looked for another route.

Julian is right: delight, surprise, and wonder are spiritual disciplines.... It is from this expansive sense of delight that we find Julian's delicate and nuanced understanding of the Trinity....

First there is being: the goodness, love, and divine inspiration of our very existence and the existence of all living things. This is the part that Julian associates with God the Creator, and to which she refers in her famous passage about the hazelnut, "All things being because of the love of God" (Chapter 5). Then there is the goodness, love, and even difficulty of our journey, our travel through this life. She calls this traveling our "becoming" and associates it with God the Son, the Incarnate Word, who walks with us as "our mother, brother, and savior" (Chapter 58). Finally, there is our fulfilling, the work that is done in us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is "faithful to complete it" (Phil. 1:6). And the Holy Spirit, especially of all three persons of the Trinity, is the one who, like Wisdom in Proverbs, delights.

Carrying this delight into our daily lives is the challenge of honouring the image of God in ourselves and in each other.

As Derek speaks to us about mission this weekend, as we continue to reflect on mission over the next few months, can we think about how carrying delight into our daily lives becomes our way of honouring the image of God in ourselves and in each other?

Grace and peace

Belinda