

New Things ~ November 1, 2009

Isaiah 25:6-9; Revelation 21:1-6a; John 11:32-44; Psalm 24

Perhaps, my favorite reading from the Book of Revelation is this morning's. Please remember that the name of this book is The Revelation to John. Not "Revelations." It makes me absolutely crazy when I hear people refer to this book as "Revelations." It makes me grind my teeth. You will be pleased to know, that while grinding my teeth I also bite my tongue and keep silence. Not an easy task.

This book is made up of a series of visions John had while exiled on the island of Patmos. Scholars now believe this particular "John" was a well-known itinerant Christian prophet, not the author of the gospel of John. It speaks of the end times and so it is termed "apocalyptic literature." People have always found this book disturbing and point to the mess in our world as another revelation of what is to come. It's easy to understand why many believe it predicts the end of the world with its dire warnings. But, there is also the hope, that, although things may become difficult, out of endings come new beginnings, new things.

Out of the death of Lazarus comes the hope of resurrection, of a second chance, of a new beginning, a new thing happening. Our reading from the Hebrew Scriptures tells us that God does make all things new again.

In our lives we can often find new things emerging from the old. It happens all around us on an almost daily basis. New ideas spring up from old familiar ways of doing things. New people enter our lives, while some old relationships may pass away. New challenges roll at us one after another and we rise to them instead of letting them defeat us, discovering new strengths and coping abilities we never knew we had.

As many of you know my 20 year old cat, Teddy, had to be put to sleep the other day. Many of you knew Teddy—you couldn't avoid him if you stopped in at the parsonage. Whether you liked cats or not, he liked you. We had been through much together. But the time had come to let him move on to new beginnings, because of a stroke that left him blind and partially paralyzed. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Pookie is beginning to discover what it is like to be the "Queen Bee" at the age of 14. She is now free to move from room to room without any sneak attacks taking place. She is finding new things in life. As I watch her enjoying her new freedom, I think of the new things that pop up in my life and I stop to appreciate them a bit more.

I think of those who have called and left a message telling me they are thinking of me, most are pet owners who have lost a precious beastie. I think of Teddy's cat sitters who tended so well to him when I would be away, Liz Blum, Abrah Carroll, Janet Gokay and Debi McKeon—Brittany and Sophia, Laura and dear Doctor Sue. On another front, I think of the pictures I receive on an almost daily basis from Wisconsin keeping me up with Isabelle's growth and development and the many costumes she has tried out for Halloween and the new things she is discovering like the wonder of her hands and what they can do. I think of the new roof being nailed onto the parsonage and the days when I will no longer have to sing "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head..." I think of the kind young fellow, one of our own teens, who appeared at my door last evening to hand out candy to the trick-or-treaters. Someone told me that he is very protective of me. This

was a new revelation for me. I think of attitudes changing as people begin to look at one another as imperfect beings and as they understand no one is perfect, no one is 100% pure, we are all allowed our little foibles.

New things happen because of change. What is the definition of “insanity?” “To keep doing something the same way over and over again while expecting a different outcome. “While we may think, from our scripture readings, that God is the only change agent, we are all responsible for our part in life. We are responsible for taking a look at our lives and tweaking the way we act and react to others. We are responsible for making ourselves better people—more forgiving, loving, caring, confident beings. When we are able to effect such change, we will begin to see “new things” come into being all around us.

-- Amen