

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their course, what is man that you should be mindful of him? The son of man that you should seek him out? (*Psalm 8:4-5*)

What indeed are men and women that God should seek us out? We are a fickle, recalcitrant bunch. We flail about being occupied by one thing and another, divided on this or that, until at some point we are confronted with a disaster or an injustice so egregious that we have to turn our attention to it completely.

And that is what has happened to our country in the last few months. Gone are our worries about the price of gas, gone is the concern over people who are texting and driving, we don't even care what fashion colors are "in" this spring. All has paled under our two devastating and life altering tragedies which will define this point our history, the Spring of 2020; the time of the global pandemic and the murder of George Floyd.

Both of these life altering events in our nation have affected us deeply, have changed our minds about many things and have demanded that we take a good look at ourselves, not only the actions of other people (it's easy to point those out) but our own actions. We need to look in the mirror. How much are we responsible for the way the virus Covid 19 has devastated our neighbors and us? How much are we responsible for the way we turn away when confronted with the injustice of how our neighbors of color are treated in our society?

When I am told by some that we don't need to worry about that here. We don't have discrimination here, I think to myself, well, that's partially because we live in a bubble. We don't see the injustice if it's not on our doorstep. Many of us have been spared from the worst of the pandemic here in our idyllic countryside. We have natural social distancing we say. And most of us have been spared from seeing daily stings and unfair practices and slights that people of color endure every day because, let's face it, most of us here in the countryside are white. Our white privilege is our ability to live in a place like this and not have ride on a crowded bus or subway to work and not have to live in a tiny overcrowded apartment in a city in order to make ends meet.

We need to care about these things. We need to care about people. God cares – God is mindful of us. Think about our essential workers here in the countryside who are put in danger's way by the virus. There is discrimination here too. I have witnessed it. Protests have erupted as far away as the other side of the globe and as close as the White Hart Inn in Salisbury. We are being asked to give a damn about people, and not just "people" but persons...each person...and to stand up against injustices large and small in our communities, our country and in the world.

Last Sunday we were called to mourn because we have had many deaths to mourn. Just one week later we are now up to 110,000 dead from the coronavirus. This week we are called to action – by

Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, and by our God who is the One who created all in all, the One who came to us as a man, died on a cross and rose again, and the One who is in us, around us, beneath us, above us every minute of every day.

Here I hold A Bible. Many were appalled as our president held aloft a Bible last Monday in front of St. John's Church in Lafayette Square, Washington DC. What is more appalling, though? Is it holding up a book and taking a picture, or is it what was done to peaceful protesters in Lafayette Park. What is most important is that we not focus on the spectacle of the photo op, but on the people who had their right to gather to protest taken from them. AND the thing to focus on is WHY they were protesting: yet another death of a black person by white police officers. Thank God there are also many, many good police officers in this country who are humane, caring and concerned about our community's safety. Let this be the turning point for our country. Let us learn from our terrible mistakes of the past and do something to fix the prejudicial ways of the present time.

There's no sense getting upset about someone holding up a Bible. It is not the actual pages and cover themselves that are so important. It is the truths, commandments, covenants and promises that are contained in it. And let's be frank; we may all have a Bible on a shelf in our home, but when was the last time you took it down and opened it up and read it? Now if you say, "yesterday," or "last week" or even "last month" well, good on ya!

I know 14 people who opened up their Bibles this last week and read from the Book of Esther. By the way, it's good book about the injustice of arbitrary and cruel rulers, and about the ways to be faithful to yourself and your religion despite misogyny and prejudice. It's kind of relevant.

So, I ask you to do something. Read this Book which was so central in the controversy this last week. There's no better place to start than at Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 as you heard Bill read this morning. What does God say about all creation? That it is good. He made male and female in his own image and it is good. People made in His image are of every creed and every nation, of every color and every language. And God said that it was and IS good.

We will be reciting the Nicene Creed in a moment. We have put the Creed aside during the Easter season. But today, especially, as we recognize the Trinity, and as we are told by Jesus in our passage from the Gospel of Matthew, to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it is appropriate to remember what we believe.

Now, I know some of you are cheering at your computer screen as I say this, "Finally we are back to our Creed!" and some of you are groaning at your computer screen, "back to that anachronistic Creed again?" I would like to remind all of you, Creed lovers and Creed disparagers, and everyone in between, that just like the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd psalm, beloved texts all, there are prayers that we say together that bind us to each other and to God. Christians all over the planet are attesting to their faith in the Father who created, the Son who rose to bring us life and the Spirit who guides us. The details of your personal faith are just that, personal. Just as we don't ask literally for bread every day in the Lord's Prayer, and we don't ask literally to set a physical table in front of ____ (fill in the

blank with whatever name is appropriate for you.) We don't need to take literally all the phrases of the creed. We all understand our God as a Trinity of persons and a unity of being.

There's so much that divides us today – our belief in who should wear a mask and when, our understanding of when it's right to use physical force against certain protesters, our discussions of what we must do to reopen the country.

Let's lift up what unites us. We Trinitarian Christians can be as one today as we say, "Christ have mercy." And "Lord, hear our prayer," and "We believe in God the Father almighty."

We unite when we hear Jesus say, *"and remember, I am with you always to the end of the age."*
Matthew 28:20