



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast August 9, 2020

Note on this Sunday's Chapel worship: The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Sauvé will lead worship this Sunday!

Sunday Readings (10th Sunday After Pentecost-“Proper 14” Year A)

Genesis 37:1-4,12-28: Jacob has had twelve sons and, as a result of a struggle with God, has received a new name: Israel. Now, following the death of his father Isaac, he settles in the land of Canaan

Psalms 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b: An historical psalm, which, after a call to remember God's actions in Israel's past, remembers five primary stages in Israel's journey.

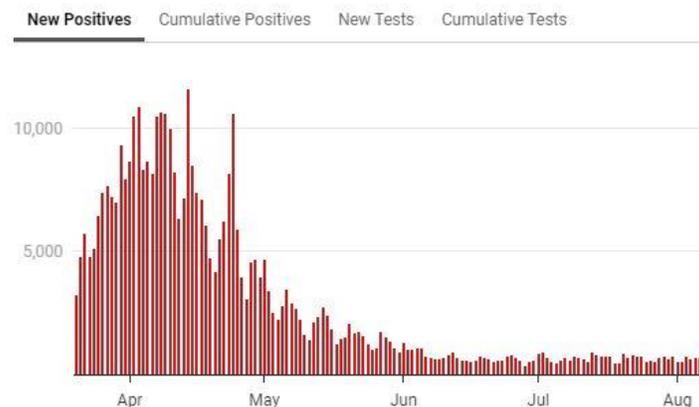
Romans 10:5-15: Paul has noted that Greeks have attained oneness with God without diligently pursuing it, while Jews have strived for such righteousness without achieving it. Their approach has been through the Law rather than directly with God.

Matthew 14:22-33: After multiplying loaves and fishes to feed five thousand, Jesus now shows to his disciples his power over the chaotic forces of the sea.

Not a sermon...

Where are we in the pandemic? I don't want to talk about the pandemic per se, but through the end of this summer, I want to illustrate how the Psalms describe various stages of the human experience – our experience in these times: orientation – disorientation – reorientation.

NY coronavirus tests and positives



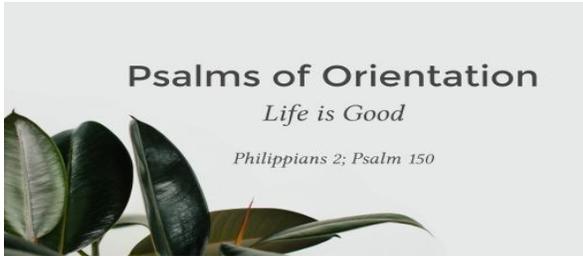
Last update: 3:30 p.m. 8/8/2020

Chart: syracuse.com • Source: [NYS Dept. of Health](https://www.health.ny.gov) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](https://datawrapper.de)

If we added “new positives” in the months of January, February, and March, the red bars would be on the black line at 0. We weren't looking for it then, but it was probably there, maybe even as many as we have seen in June, July, and August. Imagine January – February was a time in our lives of “normal.” That was our “orientation”, everything running along smoothly. Then something catastrophic came along, COVID-19, ferociously spreading in the City. As the virus attacked more and more people, worry set in, hospitals became overwhelmed, medical supplies ran short, daily routines were disrupted, schools and business started closing: we entered into unknown territory – disorientation – the map of life was torn up. As we went into summer, we saw the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. The path became clearer, and we began to think about readjusting life – reorientation or a new orientation to a new way of life. What does this have to do with the Psalms?



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Psalms of orientation reflect the ordinariness of life. Most of us spend a large part of our lives in this place. Things are settled and life makes sense for the most part. We have a sense of confidence in the regularity of life and God's creation. A number of psalms express this outlook, articulating a confidence that the world is orderly due to God's wisdom built into the world at the time of Creation.

Psalm 33 is typical of these psalms of orientation. It is a song about a world made secure by God's justice; everything about the world reveals God's faithfulness.

But life rarely stays so orderly and coherent; at times it can be brutal and irrational. We can watch our world collapse without warning, and we are pulled down into what seems a dark pit. In this pace of disorientation hangs a great sense of abandonment. The psalmist moans, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1). One response to this rupture of our equilibrium is denial. We want to believe that things are really OK, but even if we know they are not, we certainly do not want anyone else to know. Our denial forces us to cover up. We put on a happy face, yet our isolation grows intense.



This period of new orientation is not simply a return to normal where everything is coherent again. The rhythm of life expressed in the psalms is not circular. New orientation is another stage in our journey of faith. The experience of disorientation has changed us, and the experience of God's grace has transformed our life. We cannot go back again. Life becomes coherent once again, and the pilgrimage goes on. But we must learn not to forget, which is why we need to pray the psalms daily. Psalm 30 states: "O Lord my God,

I cried to you for help, and you have healed me."

These ancient prayers, the Psalms, mirror our life struggles, as our pilgrimage of faith goes on. Next week the "Blast" will focus on Psalms of Orientation.

Prayers for Chris starting chemo treatments; Richard, Ann, and Cynthia living with a cancer diagnosis; the safety and good health of residents and visitors to Raquette Lake; Vance's recovery from injury; our leaders to make wise decisions about COVID-19. Many thanks to the summer guest ministers who bless us at Raquette Lake Chapel!