



*Good Shepherd's new magazine for parishioners by parishioners*

## Prayer For a Cold Day

by Rick Hamlin

Dear God,

It's cold outside and I'm tired of it.

I know I shouldn't complain. I am very fortunate. I live in a house with good heating. When I turn on my faucet I get steaming hot water. I take a hot shower. At night I sleep under a warm quilt. When I go out I bundle up with gloves, scarf, wool hat and a parka. For all that I am extremely grateful, Lord.

But then the wind blows into my face, my nose drips, my cheeks burn, the cold rises up through my soles. My toes are frozen. My fingers, even in their gloves, don't want to move.

Help me, Lord, see the beauty of it. The ice on the river is beautiful, the sun sparkles on icicles hanging from eaves. There is majesty in the power of the wind, the snow, the hail. "He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. He casts forth his ice like morsels. Who can stand before his cold?" the psalmist said. (Psalm 147:16-17)

Forgive me, Lord, if I get tired of it. I feel like my body is never going to thaw out. I look at pictures of warm places and feel only envy. I want to go for a long walk or run outside to praise you... but change my mind because of the cold.

Summer will come, and I fear then that I will complain about the heat, forgetting winter. But for now, could you warm my heart a little? After all, the psalmist also added, "He sends forth his word, and melts them" (Psalm 147:18). I wouldn't mind a little melting.

Until then, let me praise you at all times, in the warm and the cold, in the thick and thin, when I'm irritated and when I'm glad. Let me be glad.

Even in this cold. Amen.

Source: [Guideposts.org](https://www.guideposts.org)

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Welcome to the Ninth Issue of  
**FLOCK QUARTERLY**

Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners

STAFF --- Graphics Editor Laura Rosato --- Content Editor Richard Reid

Welcome to the ninth issue. In our Interview feature, you'll learn a bit about prison ministry. We have a guest essay from our Provisional Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Stephen Lane. Our "A Saints Corner" columnist considers the Ichthys. In a lighter vein, there's an allegory about angels, devils and stewardship. The rest of the issue considers some aspects of mountains. Your comments are always appreciated.

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**Remember:** You're never too young or too old to contribute. Material from our children and teens as well as from adults of all ages are always welcome.

Guidelines for Contributors

*Types of Material . . .*

Essays; Humor; Bible Reflections; Interviews with Parishioners;  
Short Fiction; Original Photos and Artwork; Original Poetry & Prayers

General themes for any issue to inspire your submissions

Family; hobbies; your vocation; religion; the weather; people/things/places you remember; a great day; something/someone you're thankful for; current events (avoid being overtly political)

Special issue themes appropriate for upcoming issues to spark your creativity

*Spring Issue Themes* (published in February)

Ash Wednesday; Lent; Easter; Black History & Women's History Months; Valentine's Day

*Summer Issue Themes* (published in May)

Pentecost; Mother's Day; Father's Day; 4th of July; end-of-school; graduations; summer; vacations

*Fall Issue Themes* (published in August)

Labor Day; autumn; back-to-school; Halloween

*Winter Issue Themes* (published in November)

Advent; giving; Thanksgiving; Christmas; the new year; the ending old year; winter; Epiphany

Please make text submissions in Word format or handwritten and try not to exceed 2,000 words – but don't be intimidated by that number: shorter pieces are always welcome, too.

Unsure of your article or art idea? The Content Editor is happy to discuss it with you.

Please do not send any material in the PDF format. Always submit original photos in .jpeg format

If your original artwork is 8 ½" by 11" or smaller, it may be submitted for scanning

Issue Deadlines for Material

Spring (by January 31st)

Summer (by April 30th)

Fall (by July 31st)

Winter (by October 31st)

Email material to Richard Reid ([writer2363@gmail.com](mailto:writer2363@gmail.com)) or telephone (cell: 585-766-7254)

*You are part of the Good Shepherd flock . . . please contribute to Flock Quarterly!*

## COLUMN

# A Saints Corner: ICHTHYS

by Denise Junker



This symbol is known as an ichthys. Ichthys is the Greek word for fish. Today we also call it the "Jesus fish." We see it utilized on ads to identify Christian businesses or in editorials, including bumper stickers, both to positively represent Christians or as a way of satirizing the symbol and/or Christians. There are also other ways to spell the word, like ichthus.

The origins of the symbol are sometimes challenged but often repeated. The symbol started as a way for Christians to identify themselves to each other during times of persecution in the early Church. It is not a big leap to utilize fish for Christians since the majority of the original 12 apostles were fishermen called to be "fisher of men" and the oft cited story of Jesus feeding thousands with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. I also add from Luke 24:41-43, after his resurrection, Jesus appeared amongst his disciples and asked for something to eat - he was given some fish.

The symbol has also been given a fully formed linguistic definition. This arises from how the symbol was utilized on the burial engravings of the early Church. The Greek letters, pictured below, are the letters for the Greek spelling of ichthys (the graphic is from [ichthys.com](http://ichthys.com)). These letters end up forming an acronym for words that represent Jesus as shown. Those words form into the phrase, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

The fish symbol, and fish, in general, have not only been utilized in Christianity. Elesha Coffman in a *Christianity Today* article notes that the symbol was used pre-Christian, which possibly made it less suspicious for persecuted Christians to utilize. Abigail J. Lynch, in her blog post entitled, *Finding Fish in Faith*, shares there are many incarnations of fish in other faith systems including Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

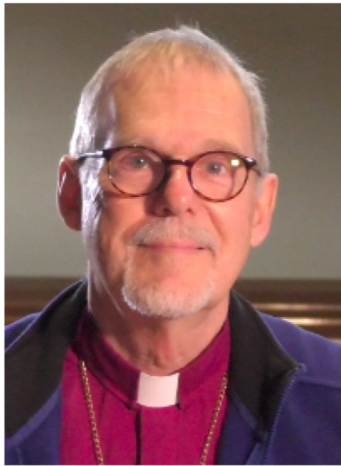
I	X	Θ	Υ	Σ
Ιησους	Χριστος	Θεου	Υιος	Σωτηρ
Jesus	Christ	of God	Son	Savior

## ESSAY

## MEET YOUR PROVISIONAL BISHOP

By The Right Rev. Stephen T. Lane

*Editor's Note: Following the resignation of the Right Rev. Prince G. Singh on Feb. 2, 2022 after serving 14 years as the Bishop for the Diocese of Rochester, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry asked Bishop Lane to serve as Provisional Bishop for Rochester. Bishop Singh is now serving for three to five years as the Provisional Bishop for the recently linked East and West Michigan dioceses. According to an article in Episcopal News Service, he is living in Stanwood, about an hour north of Grand Rapids and an hour west of Saginaw. The search is underway for a new bishop for the Rochester Diocese.*



I'm grateful to your Content Editor for offering me this chance to introduce myself and to talk a little bit about my upcoming visitation on December 18th.

I'm looking forward to being with you at Good Shepherd in December and to having the opportunity to worship with you and to hear your concerns. The Episcopal Church understands the relationship between a bishop and the congregations of a diocese as a pastoral one. Bishops are required to meet with each church at least once in three years, and during those visits, the bishop is to lead worship, examine church records, and to take part in conversation about the church's ministry. The purpose is to celebrate the life of the church and to strengthen the church's ministry both to the members and to the larger community. I understand that to mean that the leadership of Good Shepherd needs to use our time together to tell me whatever they believe I need to know about

Good Shepherd: joys and sorrows, hopes and concerns, successes and challenges. The ministry of bishop, priest and people is a shared ministry.

My title is "Bishop Provisional." There is a half dozen or so of us in The Episcopal Church, and we represent a change in the life of the church. Bishops are elected for life (mandatory retirement is age 72) and historically, bishops have tended to retire from their positions. But The Episcopal Church has been electing younger bishops for the last couple of decades and, after 10 or 15 years of work, these bishops have begun to resign to take other positions. Since we elect bishops one at a time for particular positions, there's not a pool of extra bishops available to help out while a new bishop is elected. Presiding Bishop Curry has sought bishops who are retired or nearing retirement to serve dioceses while the election processes take place. Bishops Provisional represent the transition to younger leaders at all levels of the church, and I think this is a good thing. At the same time, it's important to say that more clergy are retiring or resigning than are being ordained. We have entered a time in which there is a genuine clergy shortage.

I am a child of Western New York and the Diocese of Rochester. I grew up in LeRoy, NY, and graduated from the University of Rochester. I began working for the diocese in 1971 in youth ministry and, in 1974, went to seminary at Colgate-Rochester/Bexley/Crozier. I served parishes in Corning and Palmyra, and then worked on the staff of Bishop McKelvey (2000-2008). I was elected Bishop of Maine in 2008 and served there until I retired in 2019. I retired to Rochester and was invited to consider serving you when Bishop Singh resigned. It is a great joy to have this opportunity to serve my home diocese.

We Episcopalians are trying to be the church in a world that has undergone great change in the last two decades. Long before covid, many of our churches were struggling with declining members

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and resources. The booming economy and explosive population growth of the post-WWII years is long gone. It now takes two incomes to provide what I provided myself in 1980. Volunteer organizations of every sort are struggling with the lack of volunteers needed to remain viable, but for younger folks the free time and discretionary income required to volunteer are in short supply. Rather than waiting for people to come and join us, we must now find ways to go out and meet people where they are. That's hard for us because we love what happens inside our churches – our worship and our fellowship.

It's important for us to remember that, before the church was an institution, it was a movement, and that it exists for those who do not yet belong. We are called to love and to serve our neighbors, all those struggling to survive in the larger world. Now we have to learn new skills and to take the risk of moving out of our comfort zones to meet people on their turf and on their terms. We are called now to put into practice what we've always said: God walks with us and will bless our efforts to love God and our neighbors. It isn't easy – and we don't know, before we try, what will work – but I'm excited by the challenges of our day. I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you about them.

Faithfully,

+Steve



## INTERVIEW

## “It’s Amazing What You Can Do with Kids If You Just Listen to Them”

An interview with parishioner Dick Laidlaw by Content Editor Richard Reid

*Editor’s Note: Dick began regularly attending Good Shepherd in the early spring of 2022 so he may not be known to many parishioners yet. A U.S. Navy veteran, he holds a real estate broker’s license and degrees from Indiana University in business administration and a degree in industrial supervision from Purdue University with graduate work in business and education. He spent 25 years in various capacities in the hospitality industry. He was program chair for hospitality management at Indiana Vocational Technical College and statewide curriculum director. When he was the eastern U.S. coordinator for the Training and Placement Specialists of America (TAPS), his job placement rate was 95% with an average class size of 30 students. Dick has done volunteer work at the Monroe County Correctional Facility and the Monroe County Jail with men, women and youth using cognitive behavioral therapy, a program for adult children of alcoholics and notebook journaling. He began the Scouts Beyond Bars program in Monroe County for children whose parents are incarcerated. He manages the PRAM program (Prison Re-entry Aftercare Ministry) for the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester. He is a Board Member for the Reentry Association for Western New York (RAWNY) and serves on the advisory boards of the Juvenile Justice Council and the Industry Correctional Facility in Rush, N.Y. What follows has been edited for brevity and clarity.*



**Richard Reid:** What moved you to focus on prison ministry? Was there any particular Biblical verse that made you think about doing it?

**Dick Laidlaw:** I know there are some Bible verses that speak about caring for prisoners but I can’t say any were my inspiration. It just seemed like the right thing for me to do. I first became involved when Deacon the Rev. Barbara Fornalik who is retired, was active with it. I would visit the Monroe County Jail, meeting with men and women, young and old, getting them to talk about themselves. The technical name for what I was doing is cognitive behavioral therapy.

**RR:** That’s an impressive phrase. What does it mean?

**DL:** Cognitive behavioral therapy – CBT – is a process that helps people to recognize that some of their ways of thinking are largely responsible for many of their emotional problems which lead to rage, depression, substance abuse, and violence – which helped to shape the path that led them to incarceration. By transforming these negative thoughts into positive ones, by helping them to create more realistic goals and objectives, they stand a better chance of reforming their lives when released from prison and avoiding a return to prison. The recidivism rate in New York State is around 43%. It’s not the highest. Alaska can claim that at around 66%. The U.S. has about 25% of the world’s prisoners. Aside from the human cost of incarceration on prisoners and their families, about \$31,000 of taxpayer money is spent on keeping one person in prison each year in America.

**RR:** Those are sobering statistics. What’s being done to reduce people from returning to prison?

**DL:** Have you ever seen the 2007 movie, *Freedom Writers*? It’s based on a true story of a teacher in California in 1992 who used notebook journaling to reach the students in her classroom at a school bitterly divided by voluntary racial integration. The teacher, played by Hilary Swank, told them to write about their personal feelings just for themselves. They would not be graded on it nor did they have to show her what they wrote unless they chose to do so. Many of the students in her class held low self-esteem, belonged to street gangs, came from broken homes, and were clearly

*Continued*



destined for early death and/or prison. Writing these journals helped to change the way many of them thought about themselves and the world. It made many better students and gave them positive thoughts about their future. It made me think that the idea could be applied to our prison ministry program in the Rochester diocese.

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**RR:** I've seen a lot of movies, but somehow that one has eluded me. I'll definitely seek it out.

**DL:** For me, one of the surprises from notebook writing, was that women, both young and older, took to it more intensely compared to men. One reason was that it gave them a chance to express themselves honestly and directly in ways that the male-dominated world did not permit them to do. It has been estimated that around 90% of incarcerated women are victims of emotional and physical abuse which led to low self-esteem which led to alcohol and drug abuse, unwanted pregnancies, and crime. Given the chance to unpack their feelings, you might say they leapt higher than gazelles. For about ten years now, before school starts, I go to Wal-Mart stores which usually sells those black and white covered composition books for around 50 cents and I buy 500 of them. I've given some to Rochester Central School District teachers who administer education at the Monroe County Detention Center for student journaling and to the Industrial Correctional Facility in Rush, NY for inmate journaling. I've taken them to limited secure facilities such as the Harriet Tubman Residential Center in Auburn, NY for 16- and 17-year-old girls adjudicated and placed by the NYS Office of Child and Family Services by the Family Court. Also, to the Taberg Residential Center for Girls, outside of Rome, NY which is for adjudicated juvenile delinquents between the ages of 13 and 18, also placed there by Family Court. Research has shown that when you turn one woman around from crime, it has an eight-fold multiplier effect – sometimes on her spouse or partner, but definitely on her children, her extended family, even her neighborhood.

**RR:** That's incredible. Have you written about this at all?

**DL:** I have prepared an article about journaling for the Rochester Episcopal Diocese, but not for professional publication. As part of the most recent Board of Review at Industry Residential Center, a woman introduced me to a book written by Lauren Kessler that was recommended by her father, David Hurd, who is a federal judge in Utica. The full title gives you a good idea of what it's about: *Free: Two Years, Six Lives, and the Long Journey Home*. I've been reading it and have had a difficult time putting it down. In tracing the arduous path of six formerly incarcerated men and women in re-establishing their interrupted lives, she makes the case that a better support system is desperately needed in this country. I highly recommend the book.

**RR:** Tell me a bit about the Scouts Beyond Bars program that has been in use since 2014.

**DL:** The Girl Scouts of America have been promoting this program to its various troops which I believe first originated in Texas in the early 1990s. For our Monroe County effort, we adapted this idea and have engaged cub packs and boy scout troops who meet with their incarcerated parents once, even twice a month. For an hour or two with the incarcerated parent, they hold a scout meeting with all the usual craft and badge work and character and team building activities. It keeps parent and sons connected. The boy's caregivers and guardians are also supported with community resources. We find that when children of the imprisoned are given sufficient attention, they have a fair chance of succeeding in keeping out of trouble. It's amazing what you can do with kids if you just listen to them.

**RR:** What can our parishioners do to help children with incarcerated parents?

**DL:** One way would be to go to School Nine in Rochester and help with tutoring and reading. More than just developing basic skills, volunteers will help to instill a sense of hope in the children. They will perceive someone cares for them. Over a period of time, that perception will help them navigate through the challenging years of adolescence.

Continued

**RR:** Thank you so much for your important service to our community. For readers who are interested in learning more about this topic, can you suggest some weblinks to accompany this article?

**DL:** Certainly. Here are a few websites with additional information:

*Harriet Tubman Residential Center*

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/rehab/facilities/tubman.php>

*Office of Children and Family Services*

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/>

*Prison Ministry Advisory Board – Newsletters* (see especially the 2016 issues)

<https://www.prisonministry-edr.org/newsletter>

*Prison Policy Initiative – Youth Confinement*

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/youth2019.html>

*Recidivism Rates by U.S. States 2022*

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/recidivism-rates-by-state>

*Reentry Association of Western New York*

<https://rawny.org/>

*The Sentencing Project*

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/>

*Taberg Residential Center for Girls*

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/rehab/facilities/taberg.php>



*Dick Laidlaw with composition notebooks at the Harriet Tubman Residential Center*



# The Hunt for Green November

by Richard Reid

*Author's Note: For this story, I have drawn inspiration from the best-selling Tom Clancy novel that was made into a popular 1990 movie, both titled: The Hunt for Red October. The story focused on a Soviet submarine commander who might be defecting to the U.S. What follows is different but the submarine imagery remains. Echoes of C.S. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" and the 1946 film, "It's a Wonderful Life," both reverberate over the proceedings.*

In a suburban church near a great metropolitan city, Alice, a young, married woman, sits alone in the pew. No, there's no trouble at home: her husband's a "Chreaster" – he only joins her for Christmas and Easter. The rector has just begun his annual stewardship homily, one that has captured Alice's attention. Incredibly, she's not mentally writing a shopping list or deciding if she wants to go with some church ladies for brunch. No. She's actually sitting there listening very carefully to her rector's words about each one's responsibilities for Christian stewardship.

Meanwhile, in the Kingdom of God, Clarence, who recently earned his Angel First-Class rank, is seated in front of a heavenly sonar machine that has just started to ping loudly. The smile on his blissful, happy face widens as the frequency of the pings pushes the dial into the Stewardship Zone. Reaching for an intercom he says, "This is Clarence in Sector W, get me the 'Old Man.' Oh? Might His Son be available then? Why? Praise the Lord! I think we have a potential 'Green November!'"

The scene shifts to the Land of Fire and Brimstone. Chained to his sonar equipment, Benedict, a lost soul, stares in abject terror at the device, petrified by the incessant pings caused by Alice's intense concentration on the words of a stewardship sermon. "He'll blame me for this, I just know he will," he mutters. "Regulations says I have to contact him," he reluctantly acknowledges as he pushes the Alert button. In less than a minute, the sonar room's door is flung open with a crash. In storms Millneck, a Satanic Sonar captain.

"What the heaven is it this time, you miserable toad? I was in the middle of watching the second episode of *Highway Patrol*. It's the first new series we've had here after six years of nothing but reruns, so this had better be important!"

*[Author's note: For readers who may be unaware, modern technology and innovations have always been slow in reaching the netherworld. For example, they still haven't gotten color television. Most TV shows available there were made in the 1950s though the smart money has it that none of Sid Caesar's or Jackie Gleason's shows will ever arrive. Mobile phones are not yet known there, although I've heard that eight-track tapes and TV dinners are expected to arrive any year now. And, since you may be wondering, there's still no word yet about 1950s rock 'n roll music. But you don't have to be a prophet to think that it will remain, along with big band swing music, as one of the exclusive joys of heaven. At least, that's the chatter I've been hearing.]*

"It's not my fault. She just started . . . thinking. I was trying to distract her, but I . . . I . . . couldn't get through. There must be something wrong with this blessed equipment."

"Idiot! Why didn't you contact me at once? Look at that dial. Don't you know what could happen if she continues to think this way?"

*Continued*

“Oh, my Satan, you don’t mean a Green November?”

“Yes!” screams Millneck, “A tither!”

Sitting in the pew after the service, Alice mulls the words of her rector. “‘For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.’ Yes, I have been too complacent. I should be contributing more of my fair share to support my parish. Ten dollars a week. How many years have we been giving that same amount now – is it four or five?”

Millneck’s face shows him deep in thought when suddenly his eyes widen. “Benedict, I see the wedge we need. Push that resentment button -- now.”

“On the other hand,” Alice suddenly thinks, “at least I’m, giving money. I wonder how many of these so-called Christians around me are even giving that much? Let them start pulling their fair share first.”

Millneck chuckles and smiles, appreciating the impact of the purple button on Alice.

“Yes, Clarence, I saw what just happened. That thought was too mean to have come from Alice’s heart just then. She’s trying to reach us, but they won’t give her up without a fight. Begin evasive maneuvers.”

“‘God loves a cheerful giver.’ Of course, what am I thinking?” Alice asks herself. “There’s so much more that I can do given our household income.”

“It’s not my fault, infernal one,” Benedict squeals.

“Get away from that control panel, you sniveling slug!” Millneck roars, unlocking Benedict’s chain. “I’m taking personal charge. We’re going to Condition Yellow.”

“Clarence, I know you can handle this one. Guide Alice home to us.”

With pledge card in her handbag, Alice drives home, still reflecting on the words of the sermon. “Freely you have received: Freely give.”

“Time for the fear button. No defections on my watch!” Millneck snarls.

“You know,” ponders Alice. “With the way this economy has been with inflation and COVID still around, I wonder how secure my job will be? My company isn’t having the greatest of years. Should I really be giving away money rather than saving for a possible layoff? After all, a tithe means ten percent of our income.”

“So,” observes Clarence, “that well-worn standby: the economic fear trick. I wondered when they’d get around to that old canard. This grace switch should help matters.”

*Continued*

“What was it that the Bible said about the birds? They don’t plant seeds or gather a harvest or put it into barns, yet God takes care of them.” Alice mulls that thought while waiting at a red light. “Aren’t we worth much more than the birds? Of course, we are, being made in His own image. I must trust more in God and less in myself.”

“Holy water! Can nothing turn this puny mortal from that . . . that obnoxious carpenter’s way,” an incensed Millneck moans?

“Your wickedness, what about calling Lord Pruninghook for assistance?”

“I wish I could, but unfortunately my infamous cousin is hard at work guiding Putin and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I dare not interrupt him when he’s having such fun.”

“Perhaps an extra mouth to feed, your infernalness,” Benedict offers, standing by the tower of punch cards for the room’s huge, clunky computer.

“Idiot,” Millneck yells! “It would take too long. They’ll make a decision in a day or two.”

“A toothache. Can’t we distract her with a toothache,” Benedict asks?

“She brushes and flosses regularly,” Millneck growls through gritted teeth. “See what you can get from the computer. We’re going to Condition Red.”

“Ask and you will receive: Seek and you will find: Knock and the door will be opened to you.’ I think we can tithe. I’m sure we can plan our budget around it. That husband of mine will need some convincing, but with God’s grace, I’ll find a way. I’m going to take that leap of faith,” Alice says out loud with evident joy as she pulls into her driveway.

After nearly an hour of processing, Benedict shouts, “The computer’s coming in with a report now.” Snatching the punched card from the output slot, he says, “Look, your unworthiness, see – right there – their car’s condition. They’ll need a new one real soon.”

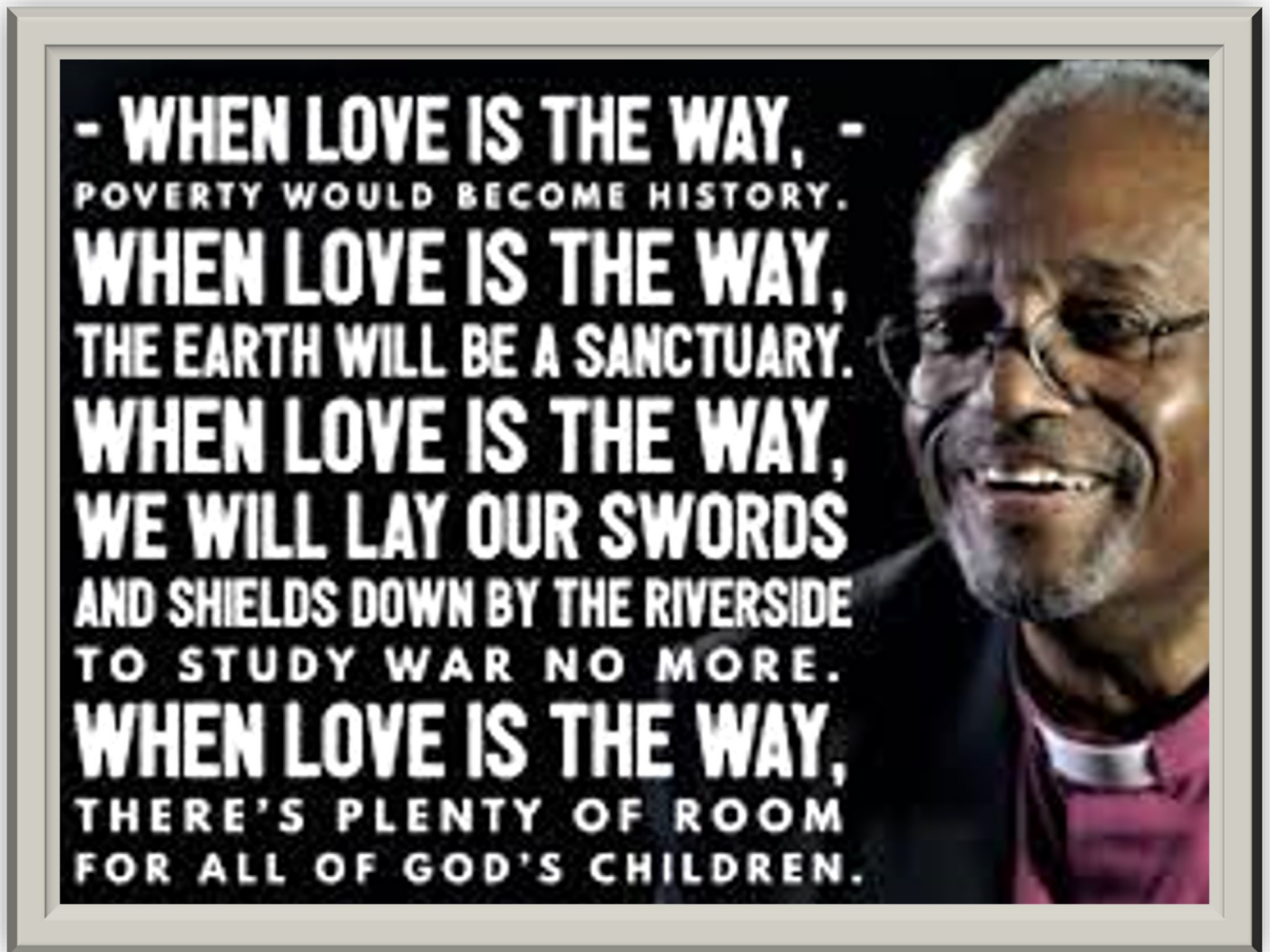
“Ah ha! That’s it! We’ll make her husband want a Porsche! No way he’ll ever agree to tithing if he thinks it will prevent him from driving that sweet baby! Back to your station and ‘nuke him with a Selfish Torpedo,” Millneck shouts, delighted at his cleverness.

Gleefully, Benedict licks his lips as he approaches his console, anticipating the rush he knows he always gets whenever he pushes that terrible red button. Savoring the moment, his middle finger slowly descends towards the launch button. Contact. Nothing. That’s not right, he thinks. Again, he presses the button. Panic rises in his voice as he blurts, “It’s not responding. There’s no launch indication! I don’t know what’s wrong with it!”

Hurrying over, believing his minion has fouled it up once again, Millneck discovers his own attempts to launch the Selfish Torpedo are equally in vain. “Lucifer!”, the sinister one explodes. “We’re being blocked! They must be operating the ‘Angel Wars’ system.” Despondent, he kicks the machine, groans, and slowly limps away from the control panel, his cloven hoof smarting. Benedict hears him say through clenched teeth, “Somebody up there hates me.”

Two hours later, following a thoughtful discussion with her husband, as Alice signs her pledge card, checking the box marked, “tithe,” a tear runs down Clarence’s beaming cheek. Softly he whispers, “Well done, good and faithful steward.”

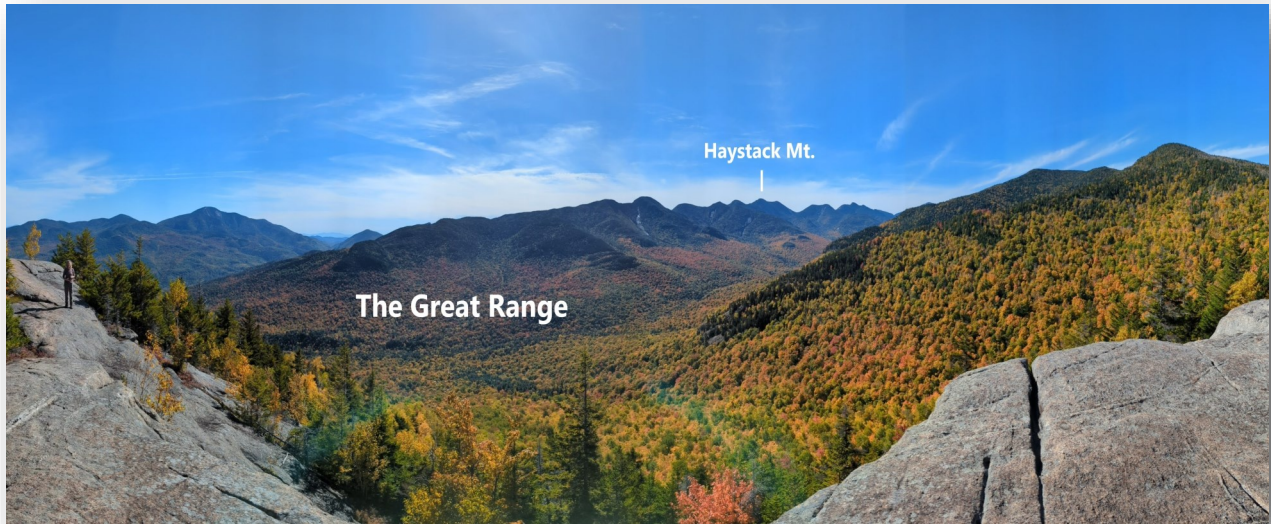
The End



*Source: Episcopal Church Memes*



## SPECIAL THEME



*Photo: Chris Nuccitelli*

# MOUNTAINS

“I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain.”  
– Martin Luther King, Jr. (final speech, the day before his assassination)

“The Mountains are calling, and I must go.” – John Muir

“A gossip usually makes a mountain out of a molehill by adding some dirt.” - Anonymous

The three quotations above didn’t quite make the cut for this issue’s “Art” section which consists of eye-catching photographs of the Adirondacks taken by Lynn Helmer and Chris Nuccitelli, plus quotations from diverse people. You’ll also find thoughtful articles by Chris and Lynn.

Lynn writes tersely yet eloquently about why she hikes the Adirondack Mountains.

Chris documents in words and photos Lynn’s ascent on August 25, 2022 of Haystack Mountain, the third highest peak in New York State. Reaching the top would place her in rarified company: those who have climbed all 46 mountains in the Adirondacks. Her first attempt was unsuccessful so the pressure is greater than before on her second climb.

To enrich your understanding of Lynn’s challenge, Chris also offers two sidebars, on the 46ers Club, and about the Adirondacks, both with helpful photographs.

Lastly, we asked Fr. Lance to write about a topic he claims he has never written about before: mountains in the Bible. He selected four of them, offering his customary insight and reverence.

This is *Flock Quarterly’s* third theme issue. We trust you will like it. Please let us know what you think of this issue and if you have a theme you’d like to see explored in a future issue. If we can find the writers for it, we’ll tackle it. Hey, perhaps you could even be one of them, maybe, please?

# ART

## DIVERSE THOUGHTS INSPIRED BY MOUNTAINS

*Editor's Note: Enjoy these photos of the Adirondack Mountains of New York State, taken by parishioners Lynn Helmer and Chris Nuccitelli, with an assortment of quotations selected by the Content Editor.*



“Bring me men to match my mountains” – Sam Walter Foss  
Photo by Lynn Helmer of Haystack-Saddleback-Basin Mountains



“Oh, these vast, calm, measureless mountain days, days in whose light everything seems equally divine, opening a thousand windows to show us, God.” – John Muir

Photo by Lynn Helmer of Winter Great Range





“Every man should pull a boat over a mountain once in his life.” –  
Werner Herzog, filmmaker

Photo by Lynn Helmer of Mist on Heart Lake



“Even the smallest mountains can hide the most breathtaking views” –  
Nyki Mack

Photo by Chris Nuccitelli



“You’re off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so . . . get on your way!”  
– Dr. Seuss

Photo by Chris Nuccitelli



“It isn’t the mountains ahead that wear you out; it’s the pebble in your shoe” –  
Muhammad Ali

Photo by Chris Nuccitelli



“Each fresh peak ascended teaches something.” – Sir  
Martin Conway  
Photo by Lynn Helmer of Cloudy Summits





“Never measure the height of a mountain until you reach the top. Then you will see how low it was.” – Dag Hammarskjöld

Photo by Chris Nuccitelli



“The summit is what drives us, but the climb itself is what matters.” – Conrad Anker

Photo by Chris Nutccitelli of Lynn Helmer of Mountain Solo



“Climb ev’ry mountain, ford ev’ry stream, Follow ev’ry rainbow, till you find your dream.” – Oscar Hammerstein II

Photo of Haystack Mountain by Lynn Helmer

## ESSAY

# Why Hike These Mountains?

*Reflections by Lynn Helmer*

There is something about the peace and solitude of leaving life behind. The intentional placing of one foot in front of the other becomes a moving meditation. This breath in, this breath out.

You trust the people you hike with to have your back and you have theirs. Stranger helps strangers. Then you share a story, and they really aren't strangers anymore. They're part of your tribe.

There is such simplicity out there. But it's not easy. This builds endurance, puts you out of your comfort zone, and develops strength in body and mind. In one day there can be so many emotions, anticipation, anxiety, peace, joy, exhaustion, wonder, and awe.

When the summit is reached the feeling is hard to describe. The mountains are breathtaking, the weather often intense. You feel on top of the world. You feel closer to God. Without the hard work to get to the top, the reward would not be quite the same. My friend, Chris Murphy said that summiting Saddleback Mountain, his first High Peak, was "life changing. I felt so tiny, everything so vast. The little things no longer seemed so important."

The hike back out is often brutal. Sometimes you are just empty, nothing left. One foot in front of the other seems to only happen with the help of God. My friend Will says, "It's spiritual. It's definitely spiritual. Otherwise, why would we put ourselves willingly through so much pain. And after it is over, we can't wait to go back and do it again!"



*Photo: Chris Nuccitelli*

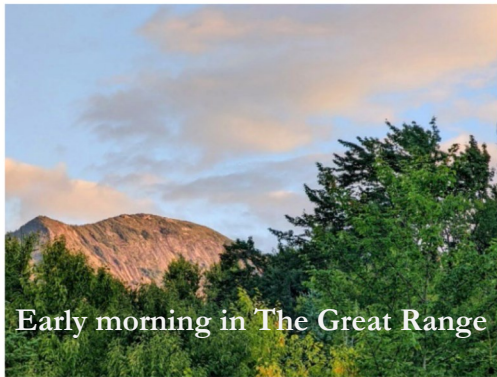


## A 46er STORY

By Chris Nuccitelli (with Lynn Helmer)

*“Wilderness is a necessity. There must be places for human beings to satisfy their souls.”  
- John Muir*

August 25, 2022



Early morning in The Great Range

**O**n this morning in late August the pre-dawn light crept slowly up and over the mountains of the High Peaks Wilderness. Consuming the northeastern portion of Adirondack State Park, this wilderness is unlike the more familiar and populated areas around Old Forge, Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. It is a lightly developed, sparsely traveled, very rugged backcountry. It is also home to the 46 tallest mountains in New York State.

In 1925, two young men from New York City, and their mountain guide from Saranac Lake, became the first documented people to summit all 46 of these High Peaks. It was also the inauspicious start to a mountain club that, for over 100 years has actively engaged in the conservation and protection of these peaks, and inspired thousands of people to take up “The 46 Challenge” – The *Adirondack 46ers*. The 46 High Peaks were originally identified as all the peaks over 4,000 feet. Subsequent surveys have revealed that four of these peaks (Couchsachraga, Nye, Cliff, and Blake) are actually just under the 4,000 feet mark. However, by tradition, they remain a part of the summits required to be considered a true “46er”.

As the morning began developing, I found myself lying in a bunk, listening to the sound of a mountain brook rushing over its bed of granite boulders only 50 yards away. Whispers began to filter in from the main hall just on the other side of the bunkroom. Six people in our group of thirteen, had gotten up at 4:30 in the morning and were preparing for a hike to the summit of Haystack Mountain. At 4,960 feet, Haystack is the third highest peak in NY and about an 11-mile round-trip hike from our camp. For one of these hikers, Good Shepherd parishioner Lynn Helmer, it would be her 46<sup>th</sup> summit and the end of an eight-year journey to climb all the High Peaks.

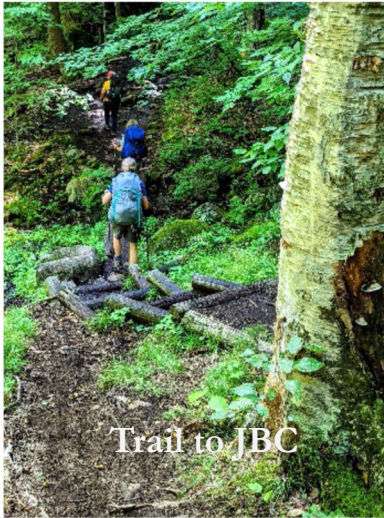
We were all staying at the Johns Brook Loj (JBL), a wilderness camp operated by the Adirondack Mountain Club ([adk.org](http://adk.org)) that sits along the bank of Johns Brook. The trailhead to JBL starts at The Garden parking area 2 miles south of Route 73 in Keene Valley, NY. The 3.5-mile hike in from the trailhead is relatively easy, even with a 20-pound pack, and winds through stands of Birch, Aspen, Maple, huge granite boulders, and myriad creek beds, while gaining 900 feet of elevation.



The Garden Trailhead

JBL can sleep up to 28 people in four separate bunk rooms. The bunkrooms each open into the main dining hall. Behind the dining hall is a surprisingly well-equipped commercial kitchen powered entirely with propane flown in by helicopter every few weeks. The limited electricity produced by JBL's solar panels is reserved for timed lighting in the main hall, porch, and wash sinks. There is running, potable water to refill hikers' bottles and reservoirs and is available for anyone passing through the area. There are two latrines – basically glorified indoor outhouses - with 55 gal barrels of waste being flown out and properly disposed of as needed.

*Continued*



Trail to JBC

JBL also sits at the intersection of several major trails to the mountains of the Great Range. Mountains with names like Upper and Lower Wolfjaw, Saddleback, Basin, Marcy, Gothics, and Haystack. “It is a very special place for me”, says Lynn. “I’ve had some of my most profound mountain experiences while here. It is a crossroads for all kinds of people exploring the Great Range. I love meeting them and hearing their stories.”

Compared to camping with full pack and tent, Lynn continues, “It’s a great step up in comfort from a tent, and reduces 25% of the weight you must pack in. Having hot meals made for you at the start and finish of the day is truly a luxury. And the food is amazing!” All the food for consumption, and all its resulting waste, must be packed in and out two or three times each week by the three people who staff JBL. “The staff accommodates all dietary preferences, making meals such as vegan shepherd’s pie, Indian curry, and a version of pulled pork using jackfruit for the non-meat eaters”

Pulling on my fleece jacket I wandered into the main dining hall and grabbed a cup of coffee. An adolescent daylight filled the windows and provided the only illumination, save for the headlamps several hikers wore. Just enough light to see daypacks being packed, then unpacked, then repacked again as the hikers catalogued the food, water and essentials they would need that day. Whispered laughter interrupted nervous anticipation. A map was unfolded on a table along a window and three women (Dianne, Jude, and Lynn) began to discern the trail. Many trails to the High Peak summits are unmarked. The word ‘herdpath’ is used frequently to describe many of these ‘trails.’ Dianne and Jude had climbed Haystack a while before on their 46 quest.



Main Dining Hall

1<sup>st</sup> Haystack Attempt

Lynn had come to within a mile of the Haystack summit four years earlier before a severe thunder and lightning storm forced her party to turn back. Lynn remembers, “Standing on the summit of Little Haystack the hair on our arms was literally standing on end. We could see the Haystack summit. It was so close! But the storm was bad, we were soaked through, it was getting late, and we had already climbed Saddleback and Basin that same day. So, we made the right decision to turn around.” There is a saying in the mountains: ‘Courage is knowing when to turn around’. Easier said than done, I imagine. Lynn continues “Slogging back through the mud and rain in the dark, we arrived back at JBL minutes before the staff planned to contact the rangers to search for us.”

Today’s attempt looked more promising as the sun started peaking up over the ridge between Upper and Lower Wolfjaw. Team Haystack set out at 6:30am. Lynn, Dianne, Zach, Jude, Allison, and Will were in for quite a day.

Lynn remembers when she finally made the commitment to be a 46er. “I didn’t want to be a ‘peak bagger’. You know, someone who rushes from peak to peak just to get them done. But I was intrigued by the possibility that I might actually be able to do this. It was more about the challenge than the pressure to complete all 46.”



Lynn continues, “I made a really good friend who helped mentor and support me. Dianne really encouraged me. During COVID in the summer of 2020, we climbed eleven peaks. At this point, with more than half of the 46 already done, I felt that now I HAD to do it! The end was in sight! I could see it! When you are on a long journey it’s sometimes hard to see the finish line. But eventually you do! When we reached the summit of Haystack, Jude and Dianne presented me with a 46er patch. Dianne and I hugged and looked at each other with tears in our eyes.”



Lynn and Dianne



Haystack Summit

It’s now 6:15 in the evening, almost twelve hours after Team Haystack departed. Instead of climbing Haystack the remaining seven of us had opted to climb Big Slide Mountain (27th highest peak at 4,240 feet.). Big Slide is a moderately challenging hike, much shorter than Haystack. We were back at JBL by 2:30, enjoying canned beer we had carried in. The beer was crisp and cold from its overnight bed in Johns Brook. The weather was beautifully cool with billowing cloud cover only adding to the texture of the Great Range. Great hiking and climbing weather.

A helicopter rescue just below the summit of Haystack earlier in the day added a bit of drama as my group watched the rescue from our summit on Big Slide. A text message from Lynn assured us they were OK and it was not one of them. Interestingly, a summit in the High Peaks is often one of the few places in all of the Keene Valley where you can get a cell signal. In this case, an experienced ADK hiker had taken a bad fall and injured his leg. He was fortunate that both a cell signal and accessibility allowed the helicopter rescue, as opposed to being dragged down the mountain for hours on foot in a makeshift stretcher!

Bets were placed on Lynn’s return. Factoring in the perfect weather and knowing how much Lynn absolutely relishes the dinners at JBL, my bet was that she would move heaven and earth to be back for the 6:30 dinner bell. I was beginning to rethink my reasoning when Lynn and Will broke through the trees onto the path leading up to the loj. Lynn’s weary smile underscored her success. As she climbed the last three steps onto JBL’s expansive porch, she ran a gauntlet of hugs, kisses, and tears. Will followed and swore under his breath that it was the hardest thing he had ever done and was never going to climb another one of ‘those’ mountains. Almost believable except he had made the same pledge weeks earlier after climbing to the summits of Santanoni and Couchsachraga. Haystack is the fifth summit in Will’s 46er journey.

Dinner was shared ‘family style’ in the main hall by our group and ten others also staying at JBL. It was followed by an incredible evening of stargazing and appreciation of God’s great works. Even though Lynn has completed her 46, she looks ahead to spending more time in these mountains, “her home”, and helping others on their 46er journey.



Triumphant Return



## SIDEBAR #1

## The 46ers

In 1918, Robert and George Marshall, two young men from a well-to-do family in NYC enlisted the unlikely help of Herbert Clark, a mountain guide from Saranac Lake, NY. Starting with Whiteface Mountain, they climbed all 46 high peaks over a period of seven years, documenting these largely unexplored mountains. They finished on Mt. Emmons in 1925. Robert Marshall went on to found The Wilderness Society in 1935. Mount Marshall, the twenty-fifth highest peak in NY, is named after him.

Tony Goodwin, Editor of *The ADK Trail Guide*, recounts, “Once the list was out there people started paying attention. Soon there was a group from Troy, NY of very avid climbers who were all from Grace Methodist Church. Their minister, Reverend Ernest Ryder, would excuse them from Sunday service if they would hold some sort of religious ceremony on one of the summits.”

This group soon formed *The 46ers of Troy*, the precursor to today's *Adirondack 46ers*. A leader of this group, Grace Hudowalski, became the first woman to climb all

46 in 1937 and recently had the former East Dix Mountain (#42 at 4,026 ft.) renamed Grace Peak in her honor. Celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the *Adirondack 46ers* is an all-volunteer organization. In addition to their role in mentoring and acknowledging hikers who have summited all 46 High Peaks, the organization also provides trail maintenance and stewardship, outdoor skills training, and more.



The Marshall Brothers and Herb Clark  
(used with permission of The Adirondack 46ers)



Grace Hudowalski on East Dix Mt.  
(used with permission of The Adirondack 46ers)





**Sidebar #2****A UNIQUE ALPINE EXPERIENCE**

The peaks of the Adirondack's high country offer spectacular vistas and an exciting environmental experience that crown the geography of New York State. Some 20 million years ago, for reasons that remain obscure, a dome about 150 miles across began to rise. Erosion created a system of parallel valleys, wearing away the sediments on the surface, and exposing the billion-year-old rocks below. The Adirondack mountains as we know them today formed through glacial movements of the last ice age, about 1.2 million years ago.



Adirondack Granite Slides

The Adirondacks are not part of the Catskills or Appalachian Mountains. They are relatively new mountains made of old rocks and are still growing faster than erosion is wearing the surface away. Adirondack mountains continue to rise at an estimated rate of about one foot per century. Unlike many mountain ranges in the continental

United States, these mountains do not run along a continuous line. They seem almost haphazardly scattered throughout the Adirondack preserve.

This unique geological landscape also supports an incredible diversity of plant life and weather. Experienced climbers coming from other part of the country often comment on the amazing variety of trees, plants, minerals, and ecosystems. Mountains in the Western US, as well as the mountains of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine tend to be monolithic stands of pine, oak, or aspen eventually giving way to very sparse alpine summits. The High Peaks, on the other hand, grow from a mix of beech, aspen, maple, locust, oak, pine and spruce that give way to an endless variety of lichens, moss, fungi, and micro-life, as well as spectacular rock slides in their alpine zones.



Star-tipped reindeer lichen



## ESSAY

# Mountains

by Rev. Lance Robbins

The beauty and majesty of mountains are a subject I'd like to explore with you all. Especially during this time of the year when the hills and mountains surrounding all of us are rich with the tapestry of color. Why are mountains so important to us? Why do we like to climb them? Do they hold a special significance for us? Are they symbolic in any way, or just the way it is? Is there a spirituality to mountains? I'd like to explore these thoughts briefly with you.

First, a few examples of how mountains have played a significant role in our biblical narrative.

**Exodus 31:18** *"When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets or the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God."*

Here on top of Mt. Sinai, Moses receives what have become known as the Ten Commandments. A defining moment in the life of Israel and for all of us as well. Why did God choose the mountain to give the commandments? Perhaps it was where Moses could leave behind all the distractions surrounding him and have the quiet to converse with God. It is on the mountain top that we can see things in greater perspective and have the solitude reflect and pray. It is on the mountain that we have a clearer view of the world and our place in it. When the busyness of life is left behind for just a while, we sense God's presence in our lives.

**Isaiah 52:7** *"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation."*

We view those persons on the mountain top as ones with authority, and we admire those who have taken the time and effort to climb to the top. They have proven themselves to be trustworthy and strong, especially if they have a message that will touch the lives who will hear the message. To begin to announce good news on the mountain is to be like a new Moses who receives a message from on high and yet comes down with this news to enrich the lives of us all.

**Matthew 5:1** *"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them."*

So begins the Sermon on the Mount as it has become to be known. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is the new Moses, the fulfillment of the law, the one who brings us all into a new and life-giving covenant with God. Just as Moses went up on the mountain to receive a directive from God, here Jesus goes up on the mountain to give a new teaching, the beatitudes. In Matthew, this is the first of five great teaching discourses, echoing the first five books of the Hebrew Scripture, the Torah.

**Mark 9: 2-4** *"After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them."*

*Continued*



In what we call the Transfiguration, we catch a glimpse of God's presence with Jesus as he was transfigured before the disciples and his clothes become dazzling white. It is here that Jesus hears and reassuring words of his Father through his voice in the cloud stating, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him." It is on the mountain that Jesus prays, away from the crowds, away from his work, if only for a short time. Perhaps it is on a mountain that we can perceive and hear God's still small voice. Perhaps it is on a mountain that we are reminded that we are in fact, God's beloved as well. It's important to note however, that Jesus, despite the wishes of Peter, does not remain on the mountain. He comes down to continue his work and ministry.

With this deep tradition of mountains in our biblical foundation, it has become part of the fabric of our daily lives. When we have encountered a wonderful or life changing moment, we call it a "mountain top experience." Such moments are often rare, and often unexpected. When this happens, we all wish to stay in that moment, forever hoping to enjoy the thrill and excitement. Sadly, just as Jesus came down from the mountain, we too, cannot remain there forever. We come back down to daily life, to the mundane demands and expectations. Always remembering the experience and perhaps taking the event to guide and inspire us.

Even better yet, we know the beauty of mountains that surround us here and especially evident in the Adirondacks, just northeast of us. They reflect some of God's most beautiful works of creation, indeed they remind us of the sacred nature of our world. In the Celtic traditions, there is a sacredness in all that our God has formed. And indeed, the whole world is a reflection of its Creator.

In our spiritual life, our journey toward wholeness involves many mountains, both literal and figurative. We indeed need to climb mountains some by our own choosing, some not. Some are easier than others to climb. When we reach the top, we are pleased that we made it but aware at some point we must come back down to the valleys. A difficult task, responsibilities given to us, demands that seem almost too difficult to bear, are all mountains that we climb. And climb we do, ever growing in the process, ever wiser, and stronger for the endeavor. And we come back down again, continuing our journey until the next mountain presents itself.

It's never wise to climb mountains alone, it is so much safer to have the help and comfort of other climbers. Let us be grateful for those who have climbed with us in the past and those who will climb with us in the future. Let us always help others who are on a climb of their own and who could use our assistance.

Both beautiful and challenging, mountains are a gift. It is where we find quiet, away from the busyness of life, it is where we find peace, it is where we hear the still small voice, it is where we are reminded that we are God's Beloved, it is where we find joy in creation. It is where we look up and say, "Thank you, God."

