

I find that I really like beginnings. That sense of newness – a new page with no mistakes on it yet - to kind of quote Anne of Green Gables. But it's not just that – in fact, as I think about it, it's not that at all. It's not a yearning to be perfect. You are looking at someone who knows how to make mistakes.

I realized this again just recently on a trip with some colleagues from the presbytery office. A couple days in, my colleague came down to breakfast and as I asked her how she slept she chuckled. "Well," she said, "I was just settling in last night, getting comfy, looking forward to some good sleep when I decided I needed some water. So" she said," I reached over for a bottle of fizzy water. As I turned the cap, all snuggled up, anticipating a treat before bed – I mean I don't have fizzy water at home - the bottle just exploded. I turned the cap too quickly, forgot about the bubbles that could have been shaken up. There was water everywhere. On me, in my hair, on the papers on the nightstand, on my pillow and blankets." She looked at me with a smile and a bit of a twinkle in her eye...."I thought of you" she said.

I suppose it's good to be understood, to be seen. I am, you see, a wee bit clumsy. Kind of absent-minded sometimes. I get deep in my thoughts and forget sometimes about the practical stuff, and I could only agree with her – yup, that is just the kind of thing that would happen to me.

But I have learned enough over the years to know that mistakes are inevitable. And while I don't seek them out, I have come to accept them, and realize that they are in fact valuable, places where we do some of our best learning.

No, newness is not, for me, the possibility of entering a place with the opportunity to get everything just right. It's the invitation to learn that newness brings - that's what I love. The invitation to explore, to understand, to grow to love a new context, to see what God is up to in new places and new ways. That's what brings me such joy.

So, it's been a lovely week of beginnings this week. Getting to know the rhythms of the office here a little bit. Being able to say hello to some of you. And starting to explore Enumclaw and the area around us. There will be much, much more of this. It's going to take some time. And really, it's my prayer that this Spirit of learning together never leaves

us. I want to get some time in the coming weeks and probably months with each of you, as you are willing. I'll be reaching out to grab coffee or a meal or a walk. I want to hear a little bit about you and your story: what are the things you love, what are the things you hope for or think about as you make your way here in this community, and in the wider community - and what do you see, what do you hope for, even worry about when you look up the road ahead.

Jesus in this gospel from Mark lets the disciples have a glimpse of what the road ahead for them contains, but they are not interested in exploring. They don't ask any questions. The Spirit of learning is not apparent amongst them. We do not know exactly why as Jesus shares what is ahead, they start arguing instead of seeking to know more....why they turn their attention instead to squabbling over who is the greatest amongst them. The text just isn't explicit about this – about the why – though it does say they were afraid.

Now that part – that part makes sense. It makes sense in that when we get scared and confused, when we feel uncertain about the future, or maybe don't like what we think we see coming, we tend to try to lock things down. We tend to try to find ways to make ourselves feel secure, and we tend to look for power and assurance in the face of things that make us anxious.

It's not the only time that the disciples respond this way and wrangle over this question about where they rank amongst Jesus followers. Not the only time that look over their shoulder, and scrap among themselves, worried about their own position. But I have a lot of sympathy for them. This new thing that Jesus is introducing to them - the death of their messiah, and the resurrection, with them, really with them, in the here and now – well, that, *that*, is really new and confusing. Not at all how they thought their particular story would go. A future of non-violence and yielding to death instead of one where their messiah harnesses the power of armies to impose God's will? God with them who would sacrifice themselves and show vulnerability, who would suffer and be with them into a future that is utterly new and confusing? That is just how this story is meant to go!

Beloved there is a word for us here, as we face the twists and turns of the way ahead, as we encounter the unexpected and scary parts of this journey with God, the things that make us anxious and unsure. Jesus reminds us that in these places, we are to come together as a people of faith, come together with love and curiosity, turn to God and each other with our questions and vulnerabilities and resist the temptation to give into fear and prioritize our own power and security. We are asked to remember the bigger story,

that great and ancient story of God who has promised to hold us, and even when we can't see or understand the way ahead, never let us go.

As we think about our beginning together, I would like over the next 10 weeks until advent – yes only 10 weeks – to spend time during worship with the Gospel stories that the Revised Common Lectionary offers us. And we will make our way on the new path together pairing the gospel texts from the lectionary with texts from elsewhere in our scripture that speak also of the great and ancient story of God within which all of the particularities of our journeys are set and held. We will do this and remember together the nature of God who holds us secure.

Isaiah 55 is one of those texts. It's a rich and evocative reminder of God's abundant provision. Provision that we do not have to work for, but which is given as a gift of grace to all. It reminds us as we face the way ahead that God has made a promise, a promise that can never be stopped - a promise to be ever for us, ever ready to love and invite us into God's kingdom - the promised realm of peace revealed in the way of Jesus. A Kingdom where all are welcomed and loved.

And this text powerfully reminds us that God's way are not our ways. They are in the end too mysterious for us. We the created cannot possibly know all that is God. We walk with a God who is always doing something new, always asking us to learn and relearn, but whom we can trust with our whole lives. This is our legacy.

As we start to get to know you, in these next ten weeks, and beyond I want to explore with these texts and with you this theme of legacy. I noticed when I first met you all as part of your Thriving Congregations work that the word legacy appears in this description of Calvary's particular charism. I see the description in lots of documents, and it was hanging on the wall behind the desk in the Pastor's office when I got here: "A legacy of worshipping God and serving others since 1892."

To provide a legacy is to give of ourselves in a way that makes a long-lasting impact. A legacy is a story of the past, but it's not just a story to look back on with nostalgia and fondness, it's the story of the past that makes us who we are now. Our legacy as people of God is that we exist in the eternal impact of God's own grace and provision. God's activity in our past makes us who we are now and sets us up to follow God's calling into the future.

And as a community of faith, this community is held in the legacy of past generations as the people of this church responded to God's grace and provision. The story of this church's past makes it who it is now and sets us up for where God is calling us into the future. But our legacy as people of God here at Calvary is not just the story of the church's past. If you are a more recent participant in the life of Calvary your story matters too. God has been active in your life and in the life of the communities of which you are a part. God has been working with grace and provision to make an impact on you, and you bring this to our collective story. These legacies that we hold, collectively and individually, they ask us a critical question – they ask us how we are going to use them to make an impact now and into the future.

I would like to explore the first part of these questions with you all these coming weeks in worship and in our conversation outside of here. What are the legacies you have received? What in particular has been gifted to you and to us? What stories make you who you are, not just as an institution, but as people, God's beloved.

Now I am just going to whisper this one part now – we don't have to dive into this right now or before we are ready, but we should be honest and say that sometimes, we have to admit, there are gifts we wish we hadn't been given, mistakes made by ourselves or others that we have to overcome and God-willing learn from. Maybe we'll get to some of those parts of our legacies and explore how God is with us, loving us and teaching us, in these things too. We can take our time, but as we explore these legacies together, I have faith, that we will get a glimpse together of God's ancient and great story, a God who has never let us go and a God who invite us into a life-giving future.

So, we are on our way together dear church – a beginning rooted in the story of the past – your story, our story, God's story. I am excited to go this way with you. Let's enter in like little children – with curiosity and trust in the one who made us. Let's be encouraged beloved that God has already made a way for us. Not a way with no mistakes in it, but a way of love and learning, a way grounded in the deep love of God who tells us we are enough and a God who has a life-giving and abundant future for us all.

Amen