Trust and learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

In the name of the Holy Trinity, love, lover, and beloved.

We listened today to the beautiful poetic language from the Song of Solomon. This love song captures the essence of a deep intimate relationship between lover and beloved and provides an invitation for spiritual intimacy with the Creator for us as well. This reading is often used in weddings, and we have also heard these Wisdom tradition Voices through the Easter and Ordinary time Women's lectionary we have used this Easter and Pentecost.

The imagery in this poem of the lover leaping upon the mountains and bounding over the hills depicts urgency and excitement. In our own spiritual lives, this speaks to a longing for a deeper connection with The Creator. The Creator-Lover speaking directly, extending an invitation to arise, and come away. The invitation to "come away" is to a place of intimate relationship. The Creators deep desire that we trust, and step away from the distractions of the world, and experience renewal, love, and grace.

We hear colorful images of a changing season: winter has passed, the rain is over and gone, spring and summer flowers appear, the voice of the turtledove is heard. A time of resurrection, joy, and abundance. A season of spiritual growth and intimacy with The Creator.

Just as the spring flowers appear on the earth, The Creator desires us to bloom in fullness. We are called to bear the fruits of the Spirit and radiate their fragrance to those around us.

The Creator invites us, the Beloved, to arise from our complacency and stagnation. We are invited to awaken from spiritual slumber, to shake off the concerns and tasks that hinder our relationship, to rise up in love, trust, and intimacy.

We long for season of refreshment and the assurance of The Creator's faithfulness and longing for us, the beloved, to experience the harmony and melody of love, even amidst the challenges and difficulties of life.

Song of Solomon reminds us of The Creator's passionate love and deep desire for an intimate relationship. We are invited to arise from our spiritual slumber, to come away and to experience the fullness of Their love and joy. May we respond to this divine invitation with open hearts, embracing a new season of intimacy and renewal that is prepared and waiting for us.

From Matthew we hear Jesus sarcastically comparing the generation of his time and most certainly ours, to people whining like spoiled children. Clearly frustrated with meaningless excuses, Jesus highlights the importance of recognizing and responding to prophesy and wisdom, regardless of the form she presents herself.

John the Baptist came among them, living an ascetic lifestyle, people accused him of having a demon. Despite John's righteous and devoted life, people found fault in him. He was accused of being possessed by a demon because of his austere lifestyle. Our rejection reveals then and now resistance to his call of repentance and an unwillingness for transformation.

Jesus came, engaging in eating and drinking with others, he was labeled as a glutton and a drunkard. Jesus was rejected, criticizing his close relationships with those considered societal outcasts. Then as now, missing the opportunity to receive the wisdom, relationship, and salvation He brought.

Matthew's Gospel confronts us with sobering reality our response to Jesus, John, and other voices of prophets and wisdom. Just as the people of Jesus' generation we, too often fall into the trap of failing to embrace The Creator's calling.

We are challenged to move out of our comfortable traditional behaviors. Jesus calls us to repentance, transformation, and towards compassionate engagement with others.

Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened to come to Him for rest. The invitation is open to everyone, regardless of circumstances or struggles. The rest that Jesus offers is not merely physical but extends to the depths of our souls, providing opportunity for healing, renewal, and peace. We are invited to 'learn the unforced rhythms of grace'.

Taking on Jesus' yoke and learning from Him enables us to navigate life's challenges with Holy guidance to experience the transformative power being beloved. Jesus is a gentle and humble teacher who invites us into a partnership where the yoke is easy, and the burden is light.

Both readings emphasize a personal invitation to an intimate relationship, rest, and renewal, with the Holy Trinity of love, lover, and beloved. I suggest that the pivotal question is, are we willing to trust these invitations?

Trust is a foundational thread that is intertwined throughout both the Matthew and Song of Solomon passages.

Lifejacket. Robin Meyers Underground Church

We certainly live in Harrowing times:
We have Lost trust in our government, supreme court, police
We have lost trust in the possibility of civil conversations with those we disagree with.
We are bombarded with distorted information,
We have experienced 3 consecutive days of planetary heat exceeding historical records.
We are so divided that weather news providers have been threatened with their lives and forced to resign.
We have become numb to mass shootings with indifferent governmental leaders.
We observe the growing attacks on immigrant, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people.

Each Spring, as the flowers appear and the turtledove's voice is heard, we patiently wait for The Creator's appointed time for growth, restoration, and the fulfillment of Their promises.

The annual resurrection of fruits and blossoms exemplifies The Creator's faithfulness. Trusting in that faithfulness provides us the opportunity to confidently arise and come away knowing that we will be provided the abundance, wisdom, courage, and harmony we long for in our lives.

Our individual trust is fundamental in responding to Jesus' invitation to come to Him for rest. We trust that He has the power and willingness to provide the rest our weary souls desperately need.

Jesus assures us that He is gentle and humble in heart. Trusting allows us to surrender our burdens to Him, knowing that He will share them with compassion and wisdom.

We trust that the way of love will lead us to the restful peace which we seek, even when our preconceived notions are challenged or require us to step out of our comfort zones.

We are promised an easy yoke and a light burden. Our trust enables us to release our burdens, knowing that He will provide and show us the way.

To be sure, I recognize the irony of an easy yoke as an image. Too often it has been the symbol of slavery, servitude, poverty.... however, it can also be a symbol of committed intimate shared vision, partnership, and collaboration. We can imagine that sharing the yoke with Jesus is breaking our slavery or addiction to individualism and self-reliance and moving towards collaboration.

Wedding: love, intimacy, trust.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.
May no force or circumstance attempt to separate what God has lovingly brought together. May their commitment and love be unwavering, transcending all challenges and trials that may come their way.

As we at Saint John's have entered into a trusting process of examination, curiosity, experimentation to imagine together a wild future centered in the way of love, consider these words adapted from a prayer attributed to Bishop Oscar Romero....

This is what we are about, the Yoke we are called to share.....

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything, we are liberated in understanding that.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an
opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master gardener and the gardener.
We are gardeners; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

Rex McKee