



Monday Musing (unless it is Tuesday): September 30th, 2024.
Wildlife...

When Karen and I go hiking, we're always on the lookout for wildlife. We watch for birds, butterflies, fish, and Oh, SQUIRREL! Yes, you've got it. After four years of hiking ever Friday, barely missing any, we've mostly seen squirrels. Sadly, we've only seen deer a few times, and absolutely no lions, or tigers, or bears. But oh look, "SQUIRREL"!

This little guy in the picture is my regular buddy on my deck. My home wildlife. And in the morning, it is, "SQUIRREL." Though I'm thinking he sees me and its, "HUMAN!"

I find it strange how we become accustomed to looking for specific things, or animals, so easily. We become conditioned to certain expectations. Like screens. Outside of the forests, and mountains, we live in a world of screens. Yet even in nature, we carry our screens with us.

Karen and I talk about how we can't go into any restaurant, subway, train station, gas stations, and more, without seeing a screen. And our brains are triggered and our heads spin, "SCREEN!" Just think, even going into someone's house, we automatically find our heads turning to the TV screen wherever it might be.

Same goes for the church. Now people expect the screens. "Oh Look, SCREEN!"
"SQUIRREL!"

Whatever would we do without screens? Yet, we used to survive quite well without them.

There are benefits to screens. We can share words and pray and sing looking up and not down. Though many folk prefer to be able to read the music. Hopefully, the new hymnbook, which will not be printed, only digital, will have the music and clearly projected too. I'm told this will be the case. Screens allow us to share and see each other through Zoom at the end of the service. And yet, screens, and projectors, and bulbs, and sound systems, computers, wiring, training, temperature control, etc., etc., take time and money too. But screens also allow us to share images of nature, beautiful pictures of mountains and forests, and oh look, SQUIRREL! Sorry. I was distracted.

That is a problem with the screens. We automatically are drawn to them. Our eyes see them. Our heads turn. We wait for the projection. We can get distracted by glitches or by blank screens too. We've just become so accustomed to screens. They're everywhere. We anticipate and expect them. We see the world, literally, through what is projected on the screens. It is the lens through which we are led. To good or bad.

We do this with the bible too. Often, we read the stories of the scriptures through one lens, or one screen, looking unconsciously for those tidbits that support our ideas or beliefs, and then when we find a nugget, its, Oh look, SQUIRREL! And we hold that verse because it says what we like or supports what we think we remember.

Reading the bible is to learn to read it in its entirety. Openly. Cognizant of our own biases, prejudices, expectations, or preconceived ideas. Reading the bible is about learning to read every word and giving every word its fair time. And it is difficult to do this when we've likely been raised in the church, hearing the stories through the Christian lens, so of course we hear and read what we expect and remember knowing.

So instead of reading the bible for the nuggets or the squirrels we know, what about reading the bible for the nuggets or squirrels that surprise us?

“Oh look, SQUIRREL!”

Heading off for a hike now, to be in the forest. No screens anywhere. We'll be looking for wildlife and ... SQUIRREL!

Peace always,

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Prayer

Creator God,
For the wonders of the wilderness,
Forests and streams,
For the wonders of wildlife,
Fish and ...squirrels...,
For all that share this earth home,
We pray for harmony and respect.
We pray for communion.
We pray for peace.
Amen.

Lectionary Readings this Week (Note: This week is World Wide Communion)

Job 1:1; 2:1-10	Job's first affliction; faith intact.
Psalms 26	Prove me, try me, test my heart.
Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12	God gave the world to humans, not angels.
Mark 10:2-16	Question of divorce; Jesus blesses children.

TR Question (theological reflection)

Where do you experience the presence of God in your living day by day?
What draws your attention, like 'squirrel', and you feel God there?