

## Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 20, 2021

By Mary Nettles

It was after midnight.

My daughter Jessica was in labor and had been for several hours. Her mother in law and I were dozing in uncomfortable chairs and her husband, Chet, was asleep on a fold away bed. Jessica was hooked up to a monitor that kept the nurses informed about her well-being and the well-being of her son who was working to be born. I heard her call the nurse. The nurse came in and checked our girl. She called another nurse to come into the room. By this time we two grandmothers were awake and watching the drama unfold. Something was going on. We didn't know what, but a storm was beginning to gather. The nurses were calm and business-like. They gathered around Jessica and checked her lines, listened to her baby. They changed her position, looked at the baby monitor one more time. Our little boy was in distress. By this time my co-grandmother and I were engaged in panic praying. Both of us were backed up against a wall, staying out of the nurses way, keeping quiet, knowing whatever was happening was being handled by very capable professionals. But panic praying none the less.

Hey God? Can you fix this?

One of the nurses quickly bumped my son in law and said 'wake up dad', and went back to her tasks at Jessica's side. I ventured over to where my son in law was sleeping so soundly. (How do they do that?) I shook him awake and said 'I don't want to scare you...', which judging by the look on his face scared him a great deal. Reminding me to pray once more....hey God?

The disciples pray a panic prayer- teacher do you not care that we are perishing? They are in a panic and expect Jesus to be also. The fact that Jesus continues to sleep makes them feel he doesn't care.

Panic had blinded them. Fear blinds us too.

Pastor Mark talked about miracles and being open to seeing miracles last week. Jesus stopped the wind by telling it to hush and be still. Plainly, that was miraculous. It seems that miracles happened a lot back in 'Bible times'. What about today? Where are our miracles today?

Well, for me there is a little boy named Hendrix who was born that day battered and bruised but healthy, thanks to the calm competent people who came to our rescue.

Peace! Be still!

There is the miracle of a trip to Lutheridge for kids who may not venture out of our city otherwise.

Why are you afraid?

There is the miracle of Dianne Barbee finding a safe home, thanks to her association with this little church.

Have you no faith?

There is the miracle of food for those who have none through the work of harvest hope food bank.

Jesus' friends were in a panic and expected Jesus to panic too. They misunderstood his calm as not caring about them and the dire situation they were in. Panic has a way of distorting our understanding of events. Panic pushes us to act in destructive ways. Panic blinds us to the miracles that happen even now.

We are invited out of the storms of this life into the calm of faith in God. We are invited to be the calm in the storm, to be miracles in this stormy world.

The Psalm goes ' then they cried to the lord in their trouble, and he brought them out from their distress; he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they had quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

Our little boat, this church, has navigated the seas with us aboard. We have seen miracles here. We have been strengthened by our fellowship with God and with that great cloud of witnesses that surrounds this place. Strengthened to withstand disasters. Strengthened to even be a miracle and reach out to the world to share the comforting calm that has been shared with us. The peace that passes all understanding. Christ is present with us through others and through his very self. even though we may leave this particular boat, Christ's presence will not abandon us. And I think that is mighty good news.