

E-DEVO

Gay Street United Methodist Church



Reflection-Rev. Karen Oehl

June 9 ,2022

Any Given Sunday

Lord, my heart isn't proud; my eyes aren't conceited, I don't get involved with things too great or wonderful for me. No. But I have calmed and quieted myself like a weaned child on its mother; I'm like the weaned child that is with me. Psalm 131:1-2

Many of you who have been liturgists or involved in worship leadership on Sunday morning have heard me say, "On any given Sunday three things will go wrong." And I always assure couples getting ready to be married that something WILL go wrong in the wedding. But then I also assure them, "Don't worry, it will be fine. You will be married, you will have a wonderful day." All too often we are so concerned about being perfect or we get distracted by something going wrong. We miss the point: We are getting married! This is our time of the week to praise God and pray for each other!

I had a professor in seminary who used to tell us, "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly." I really struggled with that. All my life I had basically understood you were not allowed to do something poorly. It had to be right. You had to get better. You should aim to be the best. But now I find this my professor's teaching echoing in my heart and soul. Perhaps it should even start each day. In a world that is unforgiving, competitive and judgmental this teaching is NECESSARY. We need to have room to try, learn, make mistakes, do some things poorly. Or even wrong. Our purpose is to do what counts, not count how much we are doing.

Do you have a person or people that you identify with in the Bible? As you can imagine, I have been drawn to the stories of women in the Bible. I like the little stories that are sometimes forgotten of Rebekah, Abigail, Dorcas, Priscilla and women not even mentioned by name. Psalm 131 is both a Psalm about humility and a woman's experience. It is one of the pilgrimage psalms—songs sung on the journey to the holy city, Jerusalem. These journeys were not just for men, but women and families and children, as we know from Luke's gospel. So you can imagine this psalm as spoken by a woman. She is not going to Jerusalem for the trip of a lifetime, or a life-changing experience. She is simply quietly expectant. Like a weaned child. A weaned child is no longer fretting and fussing when held by its mother, like a nursing baby wanting to be fed. The child can be calm and quiet and held with love.

This Sunday we will read Psalm 131 and some of the other pilgrimage psalms. Because while my journey is taking me away from Gay Street UMC, I believe that we are sharing the road to the holy city. I am grateful for the work and great days we have had together, but even more for the quiet conversations on any given Sunday about nothing great or wonderful, just life.