

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)

Never let the presence of a storm make you doubt the presence of God.

—Craig Groeschel

You might not be lonely during the long winter months, but it is quite possible that you have friends who are.

The Bible says that we are not alone — not you, me or your friends. God is with us, and as we were reminded recently during Advent, God entered our human experience as a baby in the manger, known as “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us.”

King David experienced the closeness of God throughout his life. In his well-known Psalm 23, he writes, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me,” verse 4. These words may be a reference to David’s loneliness in his early days as regent of Israel. In another psalm he writes, “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit,” (Psalm 34:18).

For many people, especially those who are homebound or living in a life care center, one of the most distressing parts of the pandemic has been dealing with loneliness.

Visiting rules in many places have changed since the early days of the crisis in 2020. Even so, psychologists say that some of the most effective tools for helping people cope are pets, mindfulness and laughter therapy.

Believe it or not, robotic dogs have been used to combat loneliness in residents of care centers and hospitals. Yes! “Some of the most effective interventions in these settings involved weekly visits from an interactive robotic dog, which has proven to be as effective as a real dog in alleviating loneliness,” according to one study of the subject.

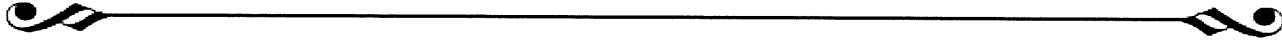
But even better than a robot dog, or a real dog, are other therapies that include laughter, educational activities, some types of meditation and strategies to develop friendships.

A strong faith is a critical component to easing loneliness and often helps us to perceive the support that we had forgotten we had all along!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart; / Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;
/ Thou my best Thought, by day or by night, / Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light. Amen.*
(from the hymn, “Be Thou My Vision,” att. to Dallan Forgaill)

*Blessings,
Liz & Pastor Ben Metz*


Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Exodus 1-4
Monday: Exodus 5-7
Tuesday: Exodus 8-10
Wednesday: Exodus 11-13
Thursday: Exodus 14-17
Friday: Exodus 18-20
Saturday: Psalms 13-15

VERSE TO REMEMBER

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

—Psalm 14:1 (NIV)

MYSTERY PERSON!

Directions: The purpose of this exercise is to discover the identity of a well-known biblical person. To do so, you must assign a number value to each letter of the alphabet, assuming that **M equals 1**. A word and number chart for you to fill in has been provided for your convenience. Complete each of the clues and then write your answer in the space below.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1

First Clue: 22-19 26-23-10-19-18 23-2 7-13-6-23-15 15-2-18 17-23-26-23-17-23-15

20-3-6 20-3-9-6-8-19-19-2 13-19-15-6-7.

Second Clue: 8-23-8-9-7 15-2-18 16-15-6-2-15-16-15-7 11-19-6-19 22-23-7

20-6-23-19-2-18-7.

Third Clue: 22-19 11-6-3-8-19 8-22-19 16-3-3-25 3-20 21-15-26-15-8-23-15-2-7.

WHO IS THIS PERSON?

Answer (spelled backward): luaP.