

Lenten Devotional March 14, 2018

Scripture

Genesis 50:15-26

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them. ²²So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's household; and Joseph lived one hundred ten years. ²³Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were also born on Joseph's knees. ²⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵So Joseph made the Israelites swear, saying, "When God comes to you, you shall carry up my bones from here." ²⁶And Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Devotional

The Rev. Rebecca Hickok '93, Pastor, Waverly Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. / Field Education Supervisor

An hour before the Christmas Eve service. Choir rehearsing in the sanctuary. Greeters gathering up bulletins and candles before arriving at their stations. Communion being arranged. Sound levels being checked. All systems go until the teen in charge of putting out the luminaria runs up to me, a worried look on her face. "I've looked everywhere and I can't find them." Down the stairs to the social hall. "Why do I smell burnt coffee?" I ponder aloud. "AA is setting up," the teen tells me. "AA?!" "AA?! What are they doing he. . . oh . . . it's Sunday night." And it hits me. Soon 27 children will arrive to get ready for the bathrobe drama and 250 people will start streaming into the sanctuary. AA? Tonight? No. Uh uh. Not possible. I walk over to the people setting up chairs and setting out pamphlets. "I'm so sorry, You can't meet here tonight. It's Christmas Eve. I mean, there will be children down here running around and lots of people upstairs and the parking lots full and" . . . and I see their faces, strained and stunned. And I stop. And I start again. "And it will all be fine. You'll be down here and we'll be upstairs and it will be fine." And it was. Angels and shepherds and donkeys and drunks. All thrown together one Christmas Eve. In a place of God.

Prayer

In this season of Lent and throughout the whole year, thank you, Sweet Baby Jesus, for rearing up out of the cradle and gobsmacking us when we forget one of our most important jobs: showing hospitality. Amen.