

Psalm 46

New Century Version

God is our protection and our strength.
God always helps in times of trouble.
So we will not be afraid even if the earth shakes,
or the mountains fall into the sea,
even if the oceans roar and foam,
or the mountains shake at the raging sea.

There is a river that brings joy to the city of God,
the holy place where God Most High lives.
God is in that city, and so it will not be shaken.
God will help her at dawn.
Nations tremble and kingdoms shake.
God shouts and the earth crumbles.
The Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our defender.

Come and see what the LORD has done,
the amazing things God has done on the earth.
God stops wars everywhere on the earth.
God breaks all bows and spears
and burns up the chariots with fire.

God says, "Be still and know that I am God.
I will be praised in all the nations;
I will be praised throughout the earth."
The LORD is with us;
the God of Jacob is our defender.

Be Still and Know
June 7, 2020
Rev. Wendy Vander Hart
First United Church of Christ, Northfield, MN

May God still speak through these words of scripture and sermon.

A Psalm for today patterned on Psalm 46.

God is our protection and strength. God always helps in times of trouble. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trial. God is our keeper, our redeemer, the one to cry out to when the world hurts. God is our rock, our shelter, our source of power. God shows up, stays beside, and gives us reason to be brave.

So we will not be afraid even if the earth shakes, or the mountains fall into the sea, even if the oceans roar and foam, or the mountains shake at the raging sea. Therefore, we will not fear though all around us changes faster than we can comprehend. We will not panic as nature shifts with climate change, or

© First United Church of Christ, Northfield MN

unrest takes hold in city streets demanding justice, or marchers shout and decry violence or our 401K sinks, or we are furloughed, or our way of life modifies to make room for something new trying to be born in our midst. We will not be anxious though Covid-19 threatens, and Covid-1619 exposes our racism, white privilege and white supremacy. We will not be frightened by the other. We will not be scared about the unknown. We will not worry about the future.

There is a river that brings joy to the city of God, the holy place where God Most High lives. There is a spring of life that nourishes the soul and inspires a people to band together as one. There is balm that heals division and unites creation. There are waters that wash and refresh and baptize with the purpose of delighting the heart of God. There is a source of hope that streams amidst the hearts of humanity where God dwells.

There is a city imagined by God where streets are peaceful and everyone has enough. There are a people gathered and patterned on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus where the common good reigns above me, myself and I. There is a community inspired by the Holy Spirit to work for justice, not for some, but for all.

God is in that city, and so it will not be shaken. God will help it at dawn. God is in the midst of the Cities. God is at the corner of 38th and Chicago Ave, Lake Street and Northside Minneapolis. God is in Atlanta and Louisville and Tacoma. God is on the border. God is in detention centers and jails, holding cells and prisons. God is in Northfield and Dundas and Nerstrand. God is in Israel-Palestine, Syria and Iraq. God is in Wuhan and Hong Kong and Myanmar. God is in First UCC and Mount Zion Temple, the Lao Buddhist Temple and Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center. God is in the Poor People's Campaign, working through ISAIAH and Black Lives Matter, SURJ and NAIA, Standing Rock and Latinix Coalition. God is in you and me, here and now.

Nations tremble and kingdoms shake. God shouts and the earth crumbles. Human beings fail, they do not come together. Self-interest lords, greed conquers, politics languish with inaction. We hurt our neighbors with the best of intentions, the impact of those actions bear out in pain, sexism, ableism, trans-phobia, heterosexism. Governments trample, education is lax, rights are abused. God speaks into it all, are we listening?

The Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our defender. God IS with us; the God of Jacob and Leah, Moses and Miriam, Abraham and Sarah is our living quarters. The God of Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha, the God of Republican and Democrat, Libertarian and Green is our haven. The God of heart and head, the God of body and spirit is our sanctuary.

Come and see what the Lord has done, the amazing things God has done on the earth. Take a long look, glimpse what God has done and is doing. There is evidence everywhere and in everyone that God is alive and well. God always works through people. When things are bad, look for the helpers and you will see God. When hope is sunk, spy the glimmers of transformation and you will see God. When all seems lost, grasp the small victories that add up and you will see God.

God stops wars everywhere on the earth. God breaks all bows and spears and burns up the chariots with fire. Peace always surges ahead. Weapons rust, soldiers grow weary, military might crushes for a moment. Peace and love always win- thank God. With the long view, with eyes on the prize, the arc of history always bends toward justice. This is God's doing and it is marvelous in our sight.

God says, "Be still and know that I am God! I will be praised in all the nations; I will be praised throughout the earth." God says, "remember in what you are grounded." Remember where your strength lies. Remember where you are renewed in spirit. Remember me. God says, be still and let my spirit mold you, make you, shape you, use you. God says "desist from your striving, rest, take heart I am here." God says, "be still, but not passive, there is much to speak about, act upon, live for in my name." Be grounded and know that you are not alone. God says, surrender your anxiety and partner with me.

The LORD is with us; the God of Jacob is our defender. God, Immanuel, is with us. Somehow God is our champion, advocate, guardian and guide. Some way God has our back and leads us forward. Blessed be God, forever and ever. Amen.