



Wednesday Prayer

16th Sunday after Pentecost – Eagles and Butterflies

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—

who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.

Psalm 103:1-6

This song of praise by the Psalmist declares a deep-rooted hope in God's active presence throughout times of suffering. I am especially drawn to the phrase "so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." I've been watching out for eagles as signs of God's presence, love and comfort in this past year since my father died. I've seen them in unexpected places, not just high in the sky soaring overhead, but resting in an open field and looking over my way or surprising me flying up from a low tree branch just 20 feet ahead of me while on a kayak ride. Maybe my dad's youth has been renewed like the eagle's.

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31.

Symbols of God's loving comfort can come to us in many ways. The butterfly is a symbol of transformation, hope, and rebirth. Many organizations that work with survivors of sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking use the butterfly as a symbol of letting go and emerging into a new way of being, a freedom of the soul and a beauty of the spirit's resilience.

*"God can restore what is broken and change it into something amazing. All you need is faith."
Survivor of childhood abuse and sex trafficking ~ now a victorious mother and advocate*

What symbol of God's presence do you find in nature? Share your experience with a young person in your life and ask how they experience God's presence.

God, the beauty of your creation provides us symbols that you are with us through all our times of suffering. Open our eyes, lift up our gaze, and help us to see your active presence in our lives. Help us to share your restoring power as we interact with the children and youth in our lives who need our care and support. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

*If you're attending the Women of the ELCA triennial this September in Phoenix, come see me in the Exhibit Hall! I'll have resources, activities, and prizes to share!