



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
— Stockbridge, Massachusetts —

Make it Plain

December 15, 2019

SCRIPTURE: Habakkuk 2:2-3

²Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. ³For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.

REFLECTION: “Making it Plain ... for the Runners”

****Note—this reflection was part of an intergenerational service where we built a Christingle in preparation for the coming of Christmas.****

These days, how many of you feel that you are running all the time? How many of you feel that from the moment you get up in the morning until you go to bed, you don't stop moving? Anyone out there? For a season of waiting, for a season of anticipation, for a season of quiet and peacemaking, perhaps of all the seasons, all the times of the year, this one becomes the season of running. From here to there -- never quite done, one more present to get, one more decoration to put up, one more Christmas card to send out – we run. And both myself and Habakkuk would tell you to stop. Stop running for just a moment. Stop running and settle in. As your pastor, I'm going to tell you to stop running and settle in because it is good for you. It is good for your health. It is good for your mental health, and most of all, it is good for your soul. Because, you see, this story of Christmas, this radical in-breaking of God's love is trying so desperately to catch up with you. Do you remember the 23rd Psalm? It says goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life. It is so desperately trying to catch up to you. Would you just stop for a minute, that it might?

But here's the other reason. In our reading for today, it says that we are to make the vision clear and plain. We are to take that vision and put it on tablets so that the runners can see it. These runners would be people who are bringing good news throughout the kingdom. Habakkuk wants to make this vision of what is happening at Christmas – the meaning of God's love incarnate – so plain and so clear that everyone who is running about like a crazy person can see that vision and can learn it and can spread it.

And here's the thing. That message will get spread by choirs like the one that sang last night, singing beautiful songs into the night. The message of Christmas will get spread by people like me who preach from pulpits. But the true way the Christmas message will get spread is if all of you live it. Do you remember what Jesus said? They will know you are my disciples, they will know that you follow me by your love. Slow down enough that you can actually love. Because here's the thing. If you're running, those who are running couldn't possibly see what you're doing. Somebody has to be stationary. So Habakkuk is reminding us on this day to slow down, to take a break, that all those people who are running around might catch a glimpse of the vision of God, might catch a glimpse of love incarnate. And like the world before us, be utterly transformed.

Did you know that every Wednesday morning, we gather for morning prayer? A group of us gathers to share the fullness of our lives. In Advent, we use a prayer to start that service every week, and I want to share it with you. It comes from a psalm that starts this way: Be still, and know that I am God. I want you to shut your eyes for a minute, and I'm going to share the way we pray that single line. And then I want to lead you in just a moment of silence. Would you shut your eyes? Be still, and know that I am God. Be still, and know that I am. Be still, and know that I. Be still, and know. Be still. And be still.

Amen.



The Rev. Brent Damrow, Pastor



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