



## Faithful Endurance as a Soul-Filled Act

November 16, 2025, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Hanover, MA 02339 || Proper 28C || Isaiah 65:17–25; Cantic 9; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13; Luke 21:5–19 || The Rev. Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, Esq.

On this grey and mild morning we find ourselves with another heaping serving of scripture that narrates havoc, uncertainty and destruction. Every stone of the beautiful Temple in Israel will be crushed, wars and natural disasters will upend the social order – but the good news for our ancient siblings and for each of us is that from the chaos and disasters we are promised a new earth – a new way of living, where armies and enemies will break bread, where the lamb will lie down with the wolf, where generations will live forever, where joy, justice and peace will reign.

The conundrum for us this morning, is to understand how we navigate the time from here to there. How do we spend this challenging time in the midst of this uncertainty?

There is a great mantra that calls on us to “Be the change you want to see”....This isn't big news that we are called to be peaceful, kind and a connected people.

The encouragement for us this morning is that we are to take heart, and not tire, or become exhausted by doing these important, and perhaps time-consuming right things. Paul speaks directly to us with loving encouragement, “Brothers and sisters” he soothes the people of Thessalonica, “do not be weary in doing what is right.”

God may be making all things new, but WOW can it be distracting and easy to lose track of the progress toward God's Kingdom. This morning we are reminded that while we may be looking around in wonder or bafflement, we are not called upon to endure difficulties or disruptive times simply as suffering servants. God expects us to **be in this current moment** and pay attention to our souls – our divine sparks that reside within each of us. Our unique

and beautiful shiny souls that animate our days and can connect us directly one to the other and directly to God.

This morning Jesus reminds us that doing our best, next right thing, and continuing to be the people of God, informed, if not flummoxed by the expectations Jesus lived out, is our job. We are called to become comfortable to be set apart from the chaos and disruption that surrounds us – navigating our way through man-made disruption, because in doing so, we are feeding our souls. In Luke, as I just read, Jesus says “By your endurance you will gain your souls.”

What might be soul-nourishing for you? What does it look like to connect with and protect your divine spark? Perhaps it looks like finding time to connect through prayer or community to one another and to God. It may mean picking up a book and giving thanks for the miracle and opportunity for transformation offered through the written word. It may mean taking a walk in nature, counting the sounds, or clocking the impact on our senses. Perhaps sitting and watching the waves or ripples through any body of water.

What is it that feeds, or nourishes or connects you to your soul? If you are unsure, this is your week! We are called, as a people, to engage in those behaviors and activities that soothe, honor and magnify our souls especially in the midst of uncertainty. Take heart and know that the soul does not require grand, flamboyant gestures. It is strengthened by steady faithfulness. Small acts of kindness, integrity and generosity. The small acts that are the antithesis of despair. A thank you note. A call out of the blue. A shared meal, visit, or kind word spoken in love and offering connection.

Those acts are what makes endurance bearable, even productive. Faithful endurance is not about gritting our teeth, it's about keeping our souls supple with trust and hope. God is still creating. Christ is still present, the Holy Spirit's super power is that she can breathe life into weary or broken hearts!

If you are new to this community, I think that it is important for we newcomers to understand and appreciate that St. Andrew's is a model of faithful endurance. Both as a remarkably accomplished worshipping community that convened 300 years ago, but more recently, in the absorption and continuation of this community as it navigated deaths, loss, COVID and clergy turnover. Each of you who took responsibility or leaned in during these unplanned transitions, with small faithful acts and perhaps larger gestures or investment of time, talent and treasure, kept this community going, bringing us to the joy and spiritual nourishment that we offer one another joined together in this sacred space, or on-line today.

As we mark this morning as the penultimate Sunday after Pentecost year C, (Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost) we are approaching the season of Stewardship and Advent. A season where we are encouraged to take stock of our own gifts and where God is calling us to invest.

Our new stewardship committee has met, and among the blessings that each participant brings to this endeavor is curiosity and commitment to our understanding of God's abundance and hope. In the next several weeks, we are reminded that our financial pledges to St. Andrew's are a physical manifestation of our hope and joy for the future that God intends for this community.

We are called to reflect, with gratitude, upon the recent history that our community has endured – has faithfully navigated, with neighbors, family and friends uniting as a, perhaps sometimes wobbly community, yet always a faith-filled gathering that has endured political and social upheaval, LITERAL wars, and personal losses and divides. And yet, rooting ourselves in the history and engaging in the spirit led exercise of imagining the future, the Stewardship Committee will lead us through the upcoming season with many ways to fill your soul and live out your faith.

Like the original listeners for Luke's gospel, we don't know what exactly what the future holds, but as people of faith, we are confident that God is in the mix – that to do the next right thing is an open invitation to each of us. When we meet the world's uncertainty with our fully nourished souls, any time is a holy time and endurance is a faith-filled act.

May each of us find ways to name and nourish our souls, so that in this world that so needs our loving presence, we may each be part of God's steady heartbeat of hope. Amen+