



Main Street Congregational Church

145 Main Street, Amesbury MA 01913

July 6, 2025 - Sent

(Exodus 3:7-8)

God said, "I've taken a good, long look at the affliction of my people in Egypt. I've heard their cries for deliverance from their slave masters; I know all about their pain. And now I have come down to help them, pry them loose from the grip of Egypt, get them out of that country and bring them to a good land with wide-open spaces, a land lush with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

This is what is recorded in our sacred story in Exodus chapter 3 verses 7 and 8. God has taken a good, long look at the affliction of God's people and God announces that there will be something different for them. God is set to pry them loose from the grip of Egypt and get them to a good land. God's vision is for freedom and fullness of life. God intends to bring that to pass.

The Holy recognizes the horror and restriction and is active in transforming that to something of life and hope. The creative power that spoke the worlds into being, - a world inhabited tadpoles and elephants, humming birds and eagles; a land growing blueberries and sweet corn; watered by mountain streams and crashing ocean waves - that creative and sustaining power sets its sites on the affliction of enslaved people and declares they will be pried loose from the constraints of empire.

Beloved, Church, this is the story around which we gather. This is the truth that allows for hope to spread in challenging times. This is the love which brings life from death. The God of creation knows the pain that is inflicted by empire and is committed to making a way of freedom. The affliction is real and it is not the end of the story. Thank you God for staying on it, being with us, making a way where we see no way, creating a future even as current realities are oppressive and cruel. And remind us God, that you intend for us to be part of that future. You send us to be your love and justice in the world.

We read the part of our sacred story where the Holy declares and describes a future. This future comes with Moses being sent to be the deliverer of the enslaved Hebrew people. On a surface level everything about Moses being given this task is unwise. Moses himself tells God many times that there are way better candidates out there to which God replies I will go with you. God will go with and stay along side. That is enough. (Spoiler alert, after much resistance Moses says yes to God and together they get the Israelites out of bondage and to a new land).

We fast forward from Moses in Egypt to the 1800s in the United States and the woman called the Moses of her people - Harriet Tubman. She was born enslaved but lived freeing others. Her parents instilled a deep faith in her - a combination of African spirituality and Christianity and she heard and listened to God's call and guidance. Her commitment to freedom led to numerous beatings and near death times but none of that would squelch her response to God's call for freedom and fullness of life. Harriet heard God tell her "I set the North Star in the heavens and I mean for you to be free". On her own she left - singing one of the coded spirituals to let her people know what she was doing "I'm bound for the promised land on the

other side of the Jordan". She crept through the woods and encountered people who might turn her in or run her on the underground railroad. She made the 90 miles to Maryland and began life in a free state.

She was free but others were not. Her work continued. She made 19 more trips to the south to bring people to freedom. She became a spy and a scout for the Union Army. She built schools to educate freed men in South Carolina. She worked with Susan B. Anthony to support women's suffrage. Many of her prayers have been preserved and from them we learn of her being guided by God and trusting in God.

Moses of the sacred story and Moses of her people had their own calls from God and unique ways to bring freedom. The specifics of their stories are not ours to duplicate. What is ours is to remember and embrace the power and possibility that is present and active with the Holy One in our midst and making a way. What is ours is to listen for how God is calling us to help pry the marginalized from the death grip of empire.. What is ours is to not limit ourselves and list where we are not equipped but to trust in what God can do in and through us. What is ours is to not be afraid but rather claim and embrace the power of the holy at work and along side. This week I read 2 pieces which tore my heart open as they reminded me of God's sending us as God sent Moses. I will end by sharing them with you.

First from Walter Brueggamnn "The truth is that frightened people will never turn the world, because they use too much energy on protection of self. It is the vocation of the baptized, the known and named and unafraid, to make the world whole:

- the unafraid are open the neighbor, while the frightened are defending themselves from the neighbor
 - the unafraid are generous in the community while the frightened, in their anxiety, must keep, store and accumulate to keep themselves safe
 - the unafraid commit acts of compassion and mercy while the frightened do not notice those in need
 - the unafraid are committed to justice for the weak and the poor, while the frightened see them only as threats
 - the unafraid pray in the morning, care through the day, and rejoice at night in thanks and praise, while the frightened are endlessly restless and dissatisfied
- So dear people, each of you, Do not fear! I have called you by name and you are mine."

And this from Steve Garness Holmes - "Friend, you weren't merely born, you were sent. You're not just living a life; you're on a mission. Your purpose is not so small as to avoid death or even enjoy life, but to embody resurrection. To offer healing and peace. To seed the world with love. To be, in words and deeds, a proclamation—living proof—that the Reign of God is here. All the love you've received has prepared you for this. All the wisdom you've been given goes with you. You are surrounded, supported, cheered, aided by millions, unseen yet connected, and present. We are not-so-secret agents, infiltrating the Kingdom of Fear on behalf of the Realm of Grace. You are sent, guided, and protected by the Spirit of Love. Be not afraid. I am with you. Go." Holy disrupters sent. Amen.

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