



Week 5 | February | Stillness of Winter

Sometimes it takes extremes to snap us out of our lethargies, our take-it-for-grantedness, to pull back the veil, to see in sharp focus just how fragile, how precarious, all of this is.

Sometimes the cold slap is just what we need to rise to deepest attention.

- Read Acts 1:1-8, 2:42-47, 4:29-31
- Read Revelation 5:1-14
- Read Stillness of Winter, pp 164-178  
(*Field Notes to Survival Astonishingly*)

It's hard to keep doubt from seeping into our soul. But just when it seems to drain our hope, the rhythms of heaven and earth unfold to blessing beyond blessing. Hope breaks through to sing a *holy hallelujah from the wings of creatures*. We can claim it, embrace it, and give it our deepest attention. Then, once we defy doubt, seize our hope, and catch glimpses of life as the victor – trust enters in and calls us be beacons of faith.

Discussion/journal prompts –

1. Our book calls the shifting of the season is a blessing. Which is your favorite season? fall, winter, spring or summer? What is it about your favorite that makes it so?
2. This, the shortest month of the year, might just offer a long view of ourselves. Coupled with the advice to stay home during this pandemic, we have an opportunity to learn a lot about ourselves. What lesson(s) are you learning about yourself? What do you know now that you didn't before?
3. The extremes of life remind us that life is fragile, and we are wise to not take so many things for granted. List the top three things you are learning to never take for granted again?
4. Candlemas is a Christian holiday that primarily focuses on Jesus' early life and celebrated on February 2 – same day as Groundhog Day. In both events, light is significant; how does light help to guide you?
5. The book of Acts describes the life of the early church. How do you describe the life of our church, today? What excites you about being part of a church, as flawed and wonderful as it might be?
6. Revelation is a dramatic, visual movielike script that carries the story of salvation through the worst evils in human experience, before inviting believers to join the glorious celebration of eternal life in heaven. What are the words or images you use to describe heaven? Are there movies that come to mind in which heaven is revealed?

Before next week, read *Stillness of Winter* pp 179-193 (Brigade to Joy).