

“On the Brink of Everything” — 48-07
PAUSE TO CONSIDER: REFLECTIONS ON SESSION #7

1. The videos that accompany the songs written specifically for “On the Brink of Everything,” by Carrie Newcomer and Parker Palmer are breath-taking. I have included the song “Sanctuary” to this Pause to Consider. Click on the image to



open the link. What follows is the text supporting Ruth’s Opening last night.

[Introduction to Carrie Newcomer’s Song, “Sanctuary”](#)

In the album booklet, Newcomer says about her song, “Sanctuary”, “this song was written after a conversation with my friend Parker J. Palmer. I asked him, “What can we do when we are personally or politically heartbroken?” He responded, “We take sanctuary. We gather with those we love, in places like Brown Chapel. We remember, we share stories, or we sit in silence until we can go on.”

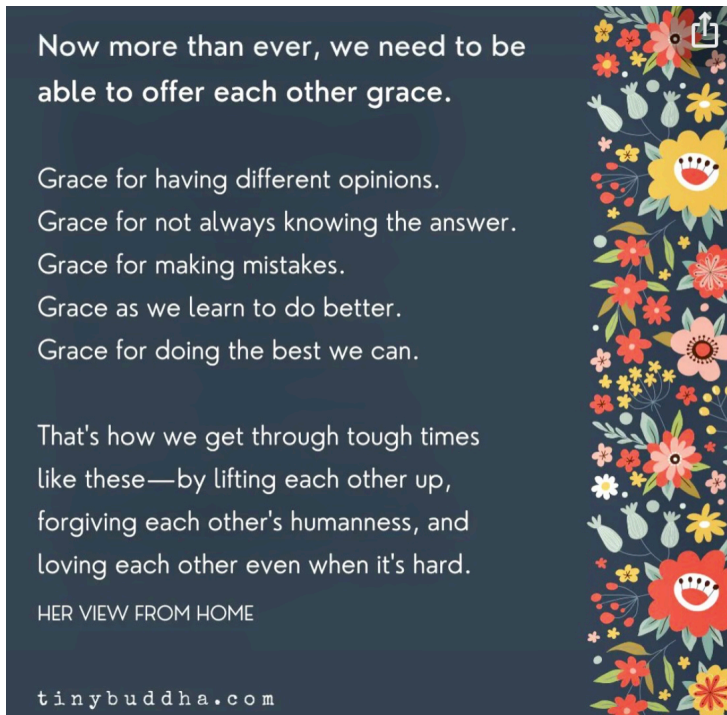
For those who are not familiar with Newcomer’s reference to “Brown Chapel” (like me!), Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Selma, Alabama) was a starting point for the Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965. The nation’s reaction to Selma’s “Bloody Sunday” march is widely credited with making the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 politically viable in the United States Congress. This Act prohibits racial discrimination in voting, and was signed into law on August 6, 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. (Source: Wikipedia)

Prayer following “Sanctuary”:

O God, We pray for sanctuary for ourselves and for those we care about. We also pray for sanctuary – physical *and* spiritual – for the people of Ukraine – the displaced, the dispossessed, the terrified, the wounded, the dying, the families of the slain, the fighters. And we pray for the scared Russian boys who have been sent to fight against Ukraine against their will. May there be lasting peace in their world soon.

In Jesus’ name, Amen

2. Karen’s Closing last night stressed how important family is in our lives and related her ongoing conversation with her sister despite their diverse opinions. Here is the text that she has sent us:



From: Maria Shriver Sunday Paper

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Dear God, please help us dig deep, rise above, and answer the call to unify as people. May we witness our brothers' and sisters' bravery in Ukraine, see ourselves in them, and show up for each other with that same kind of bravery, strength, and unity. Amen.

<https://mariashriver.com/we-dont-all-have-to-like-one-another-but-we-can-have-compassion-political-analyst-kirsten-powers-on-how-to-stay-centered-around-those-who->

[drive-us-nuts/](#)

3. Wayne suggested we take a look at Robert Frost’s poem about walking on a snowy evening — a poem that we may have memorized in school days of yore!

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

BY ROBERT FROST

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

4. A quote that came to mind as we considered “The Winter Woods” poem by Palmer and listened to him talk about the importance of nature as a sanctuary comes from Broadview, April/May: “Theology is the study of GOd, religion is the worship of God and mysticism is the experience of God.” Rod Carley from North Bay, Ont. shares his experience with the mystery of God in his article, “A Sneak Peek at Heaven.” p.38 I look forward to the next Broadview Book Club zoom meeting at which three or four of the featured authors will be present to answer questions and add to their written piece.

5. Housekeeping:

- We celebrate coming together in person at service. We met on Ash Wednesday and again on Sunday, March 6, for the First Sunday of Lent.
- Still hoping for volunteers: Consider your “Growing Edges.” Opportunities exist at St. David’s and through Calgary Alliance of the Common Good.

<https://www.calgarycommongood.org> You might like to subscribe to CACG to receive their regular newsletter. Otherwise, click on the link found on [sduc.ca/Ministries/adultspiritualdevelopment](https://www.sduc.ca/Ministries/adultspiritualdevelopment). We need volunteers!!

- As I work on this document, the Rev. Dr. Bill Phipps memorial service is on youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/hillhurstunitedchurch> . The service will be available to view all day so maybe you will have a chance to think about the gift of Bill Phipps to Calgary and beyond.

6. Take a reflective look at the eleven discoveries addressed by Wayne last night. Parker, in this chapter, refers to the 45th president often without mentioning his name. A conclusion shared by Wayne is that Palmer, “like many, sees tragedy in his country today but he seeks to turn that into triumph” and then Wayne offered examples from US history where tragedy was turned to triumph!

“Seeking Sanctuary” came up several times in what Wayne had to say... “Finding solace and support in our rough and tumble world.” Likewise, so did anger and its value — “from a death-dealing force into a power for new life.” It gave us cause remember how anger in our lives and professions have indeed become an energy. Even when I asked google for an image blending spirituality and anger, I had several images from which to chose. The overwhelming idea was of passion for positive causes. The topic of Fake News and an earlier reference to our living in a post-truth world raised all kinds of comments and reflected concerns.

Parker’s optimistic hope for the future is highlighted in Wayne’s comments about overcoming, in not fearing diversity but using it to make our lives more vital, smarter, more creative and for increasing our personal resilience.

7. Some ideas to be reflected upon:

- “I write not to change your (political conventions) but to encourage you to express them as citizens of a democracy have the right and responsibility to do.”

- “Our fear of ‘otherness’ will be our undoing unless we the people learn to value our differences and allow our tension to **pull us open** to something new.”
- “Keep reaching deep for something better.” — like silence, the woods, a friendship, a poem, a song...
- “All of us together are smarter than any one of us along.”
- “Everyday is Thanksgiving.” — yes, gratitude is important but Palmer reminded us that his dad’s motto did not make room for the contradictions and paradoxes in our lives. (and in his life.)

8. We have three sessions left with two of them focussing on the book. One of the things that this session has reinforced for me is the strength and depth of our group. Our openings and closings have been so powerful and our break out room discussions so meaningful. Such a blessing you are.

9. Enjoy Reading Chapter Six: Keep Reaching In: Staying engaged with Your Soul and we will see you soon.

10. Check out OVERVIEW subpage on MINISTRIES/ADULTSPIRITUALDEVELOPMENT page if you wish to review many of our previous book studies or last night’s powerpoint.

- **Bible Study** on Thursday mornings on ZOOM at 10 a.m. is on I Corinthians. Chapter 12 - the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Amy’s Wednesday Morning pastoral care session at 10:00 a.m. is a very welcoming place to be Wednesday morning.

11. Some links you might like: <https://couragerenewal.org/wpccr/parker/videos/>

On Being Project: <https://onbeing.org>

<https://www.newcomerpalmer.com/home>

[sduc.ca](https://www.sduc.ca)

Thoughtfully yours, have a great week and enjoy Chapter 6.

Brenda 402 510 1993