**Contemplative Service for Wednesday,**

**May 10, 2023**



*photograph by Lee Jeffries*

**First reading**: I Samuel 1: 21-28

The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and remain there forever; I will offer him for all time.”Her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Holy One establish yourword.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with an offering. She brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh, and the child was young. 2Then they brought the child to Eli. And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence praying to the God. For this child I prayed, and God has granted me the petition that I made to my Divine Friend. Therefore I have lent my child to God; as long as he lives, he is given to the God.”

**Music**: “The Seal Lullaby,” by Eric Whitacre, performed by VOCES8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TL7HkwnzENo

**Second reading**: from *The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran

You often say; I would give, but only to the deserving.

The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture.
Surely the one who is worthy to receive each day and each night is worthy of all else from you. And the one who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill their cup from your little stream.

See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving.
For in truth it is life that gives unto life—while you, who deem yourself a giver, are but a witness.

**Music**: “Sing Gently,” by Eric Whitacre, performed by VOCES8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvdvDoUXEP0>

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*As God is our father, so truly is God our mother.  Our father wills, our mother works, our good Holy Spirit confirms, and therefore it is our part to love our God in whom we have our being, reverently thanking and praising God for our creation, mightily praying to our mother for mercy and pity, and to our Holy Spirit for help and grace.  And so Jesus is our true mother in nature, by our first creation, and he is our true mother in grace by his taking our created nature.  All the lovely works, and all the sweet loving offices of beloved motherhood are appropriated to the second person, for in him, we have this godly will, whole and safe forever, both in nurture and in grace, from his own goodness, proper to him.*

*—Julian of Norwich*

**Communal Blessing**

Let the empty hand give—the warmth of its pulse, the cool of the fresh air that circulates around it, the memory of touch. Giver, introduce us to the gift that is invisible and yet dear, the gift that enters into our deepest desire, and show us how that this most precious thing is fulfilled when we relinquish it. Our life, our loves, our giving birth to wholeness. Eyes, hands, mouth open: receiving and letting go. So may it be.

**Music**: “All Seems Beautiful to Me,” by Eric Whitacre, performed by VOCES8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmJMJMnV1mI>

*May you be at peace, fulfilled in receiving and in sharing all that life brings to you.*