

**My Sermon from Sunday November 21, 2021, 'The Reign Of Christ' ~ "Beginnings & Endings"**

*May my teaching drop like the rain, like showers on new growth. For I will proclaim the name of the Lord, ascribe greatness to our God! Amen.*

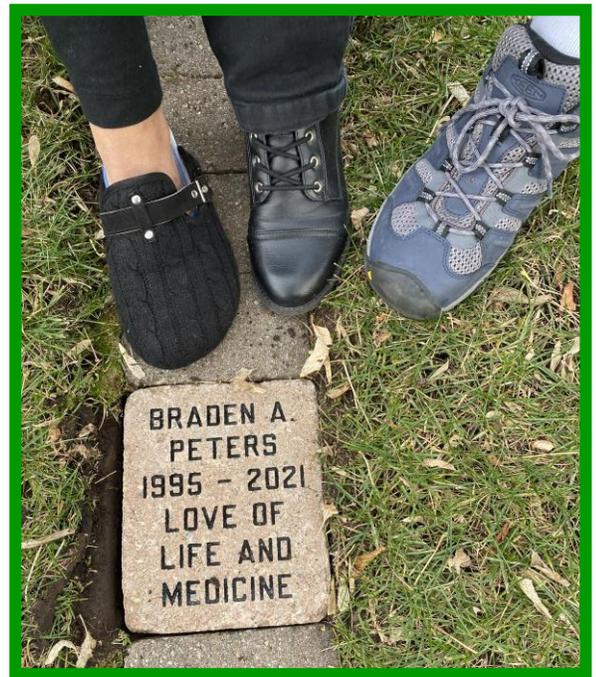
These words are from the **Song of Moses** in the book of **Deuteronomy**. (Dt 32:2-3)  
When I was a little girl, I used to love fairy tales. And the truth is that I still love them today and the wonders of the rides at *Fantasy Land* in *Disney World* will always speak to me. Fairy tales have distinct beginnings and distinct endings.

You all know the beginning: *Once upon a time . . .*

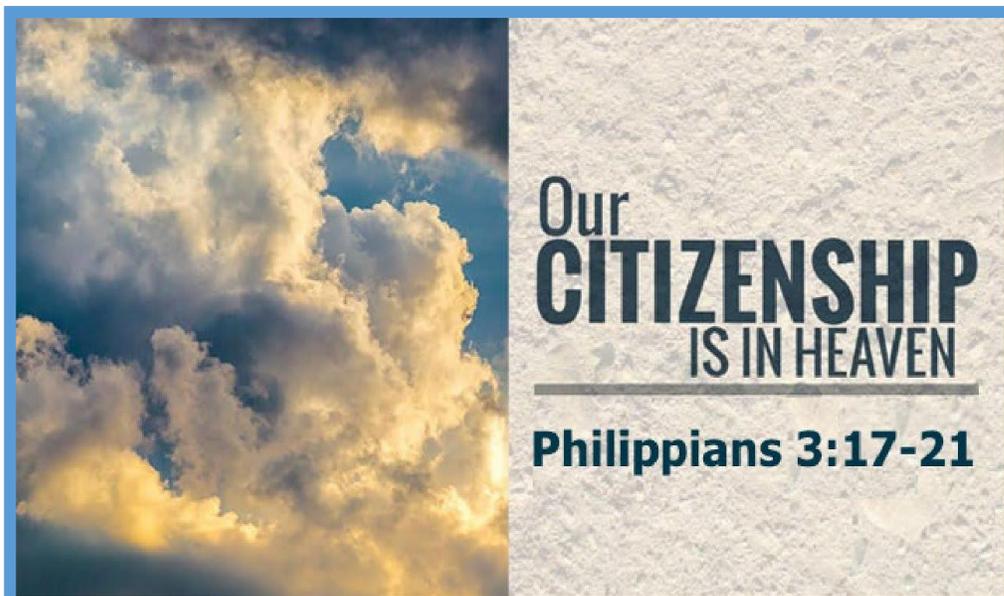
And you all know the ending: *And they lived happily ever after.*

Events in our lives here on earth have beginnings and endings. School days, education, childhood, length of time our children are with us at home, vacations, even church services have beginnings and endings.

Our life here on planet earth has a beginning, when we are born, and an ending, when we die. On Friday afternoon, I put in a labyrinth stone for **Braden Peters**, who died in March and he was not even 26 years old. A **NOSM** medical student. A brilliant scholar. Here is his stone in our labyrinth with one foot of his parents **Dan** and **Tanis** and his sister **Callie**. I wanted to take a photo of their feet as in his short life, Braden left a massive footprint upon the earth, a footprint of dedication and desire to serve humanity through medicine.



Beginnings and endings. Even my 10 year passport has a beginning date of October 25, 2016 and an ending date of October 26, 2026.



This is the way our life here on earth works. I am a citizen of Canada and more importantly I am a citizen of heaven. In his letter to Christians in Philippi, the apostle Paul writes "*Our citizenship is in heaven*" (Philippians 3:20).

What does it mean to be part of the kingdom of heaven?

I love the gospel passage for today that includes part of the conversation between Pilate

and Jesus before Jesus is crucified. Jesus tells Pilate that *my kingdom is not from this world*. And a bit later, Jesus says it again *my kingdom is not from here*. (John 18:16).

What does it mean to be part of Jesus' kingdom? Today is the last Sunday of the church year and we call today **THE REIGN OF CHRIST**. We celebrate our heavenly citizenship and we celebrate that with Jesus, there are no beginnings and no endings.

**St. John the Divine** got it right in his vision of Christ that was faithfully recorded in the last book in the Bible, the Book of Revelation.

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God."* Revelation 1:8

God's kingdom is eternal and encompasses all our earthly beginnings and endings. Locked in our finite bodies and our finite minds, we cannot grasp eternity or a world without beginnings or endings. That will have to wait until we die.

The key question to ask ourselves now is: how do we live as citizens of heaven? How do we embrace the kingdom of God in a world of beginnings and endings? How we acknowledge that on earth, beginnings and endings are acceptable and a fact of life and yet combine them with the eternal reality of God's kingdom.

The last Words of King David give us insight:

*"The Spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue."* (2 Samuel:2)

We are called to be Ambassadors to Christ, and to speak words of peace and justice and to act with love.

Beginnings and endings. After many decades of serving a monthly lunch at *Shelter House* by people from St. Paul's, that ministry has ended. A new ministry has arisen and the idea for this new ministry came to parishioner **Carol Anuik**. In just a couple of weeks, she has gathered a volunteer community of about a dozen people to go to the *Underground Gym* on Victoria Avenue every Saturday to sort through donations of clothing. **Peter Panetta**, manager of the *Underground Gym*, is starting a clothing distribution where all the clothing will be given to those in need free of charge. What a ministry! What an action of love! If you would like to help, please contact the church and we will connect you with Carol. Bless you Carol.

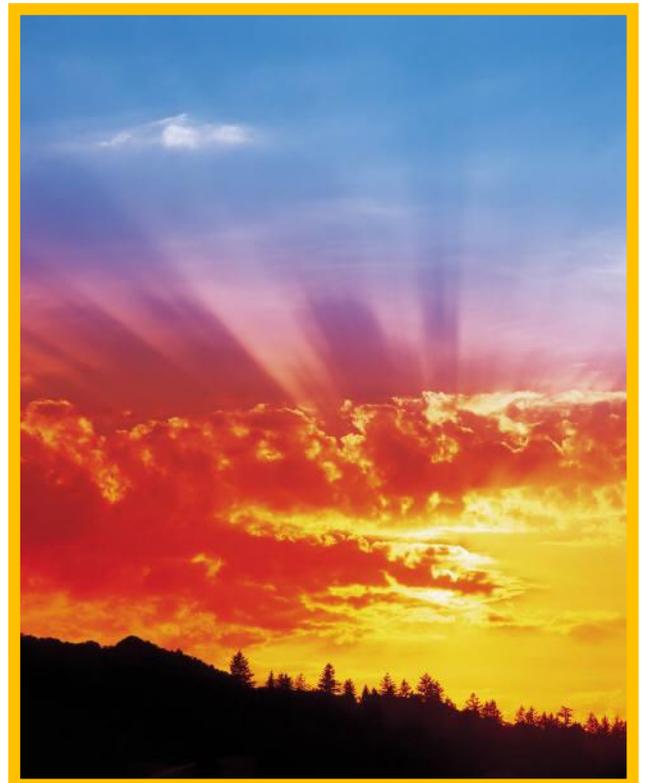
King David states this eternal fact about God:

*"One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning gleaming, from the rain on the grassy land."*  
(2 Samuel 23:3-4)

May you and I be like the light of morning.

There is a wonderful wisdom story called **'The Wise Woman's Stone'**:

*A wise woman who was traveling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream. The next day*



*she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation. The traveler left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But a few days later he came back to return the stone to the wise woman.*

*“I’ve been thinking,” he said, “I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me something more precious. Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone.”*

*Author Unknown*

This story embodies a requirement for our citizenship in the kingdom of God. Be generous.

Jouni and I have now completely emptied my Dad’s condo in *Waverley Park Towers*. Jouni is not here this morning as he rented a ‘U-Haul’ and is driving, with our son **Paul**, a few pieces of furniture down to our children in Toronto and Ottawa. He told me that loves the V-8 engine in the U-Haul! We gave all the rest of the furniture, dishes, and clothing away to people in need. We have helped to furnish a home for a new minister, who will be at *St. Paul’s United*, and his family arriving from Africa. The rest we gave to the Christian store, *Twice as Nice*. Beginnings and endings.

When we live knowing that we are embraced by Christ’s reign and held in God’s tender loving care we can hold fast to the promise and withstand and enjoy all the beginnings and the endings. We can embrace the joys of the birth of children and grandchildren and we can weather the storms of painful endings. We can celebrate the beginning of relationships and the ending of final exams. We can embrace all the beginnings and endings that God sets before us. What beginnings and endings give you joy? What beginnings and endings give you sorrow?

Christ reigns over us and we are his! We have the promise of our salvation and eternal life.

*“To Christ who loves us and freed us from our sins  
by his blood and made us to be a kingdom.” (Revelation 1:5)*

And in the words of the psalmist,

*“Let your faithful shout for joy!” (Psalm 132:9)*

Jesus said to Pilate,

*“My kingdom is not from this world.”  
(John 18:36)*

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

*Archdeacon Deborah+*

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