

FEBRUARY

"Rivers of Living Water" by Deaconess Adrainne Gray

Hymn Suggestion

"When Pain of the World Surrounds Us" (ELW #704) or "When in the Hour of Deepest Need" (LSB #615)

Scripture

"On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."'" John 7:37-38

Devotion

Rivers of living water - this is what my family watched for in Jerusalem, a place that is internationally known as a place of conflict.

My family - two teens, my husband and myself - saw that few freely sought the living water -- especially when it seemed that all that remained was a stony, dry riverbed. When people say, "there is no peace in the Middle East" we are reminded that there is peace available to all in the City of Resurrection if we are willing to be witnesses to the quiet, subtle examples of peace among God's people.

Living where they had daily access to biblical places such as the River Jordan, Jacob's Well, the Pools of Bethesda and the Sea of Galilee, my children found them seemingly meaningless as they saw young men and women their age denied dignity in and around these very sites because of their ethnicity. Many of these holy sites are cut off to some Palestinian Christians by a separation wall.

The pressures, injustices, tensions, and militarization made our children weary at times, and incredulous that peace will ever come for their friends and church members. How then did we keep our children hopeful in our Lutheran values to follow our Gospel lessons to love one another; especially extended to those who they



saw harming the other? How did we help our children find balance and love in the unstable surroundings of Jerusalem?

We began by actively looking for peaceful interactions among the ethnic groups –Rivers of Living Water. I encouraged my children to look critically at our neighbor's difficult reality, but I also asked them to keep their eyes open for Rivers of Living Water. When we spotted acts of kindness and humanity, we would stop and drink in the moment.

Those moments sustained and reminded us that Jesus had not abandoned Jerusalem, nor any other place.

Question for Reflection & Discussion

- Where are you being called to find rivers of living water?

Prayer

God of peace, flow through us, calling us to listen, watch, and go to the river's edge and our thirsts will be quenched. Amen.

About the Author

Deaconess Adrainne Gray lives in Atlanta, GA and is the Communications Officer for Communion Relations at the Lutheran World Federation. She also serves the LDA as Director of Recruitment. She served four years as an ELCA missionary to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land in Jerusalem.