

“Hello Hope. It’s Me, Mayflower”
December 2, 2018

Hope is the peaceful feeling we get when we vision possibility. It’s peace, like a river ambling across our beautiful earth, providing sustenance and a home to creation, providing respite and calm in the midst of what sometimes feels like chaos. Hope is wanting something with all of you, knowing you may not get it, yet still daring to want it. Hope is a rainbow-colored peace sign, telling us we wish all to be welcome at our table, in our community, where there is enough room for everyone. Hope is standing up against hate and gun violence and choosing to love instead. Hope is visioning the world in our hands, in our diverse and multi-cultured hands, hands that touch even 2,000 miles away in the capacities that we care for our environment. One of our young Mayflower members wrote on the back of his 4X4 image: “hope is a love that exists all over the world and will always be found.” An ice-breaker that’s been used in Confirmation class is: If you were a super hero, what would your power be? Honestly, I think hope is a kind of super power we can all tap into. What is hope to you? How do you envision hope?

Today, we heard about Mary, a young girl, at the time. We aren’t talking a young woman. No. A girl, most likely somewhere between 14- 16 years old. This young girl was chosen to bring a new hope into the world. It’s a kind of hope the ancient near-easterners didn’t know they could have. It was a hope for non-empirical rulership, a hope for equality and justice for the marginalized, a hope for a time when everyone had a fair chance at living a life of abundance. Though she was scared at the prospect of being the bearer of this newness, she was said to exclaim: “I’m bursting with God-news;

I'm dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened— I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, he God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others." (Lk 1: 46-47, Message). I wonder what you would do if you were undeniably faced with the task of being the bearer of hope? What might that look like for you? (Place images on letters)

Less than a year ago, on February 18, 2018, a new bearer of hope around the same age as Mary found herself in the public eye. Emma Gonzales, a student at Stoneman Douglass Highschool, became the megaphone for gun control after her school was yet another tragic recipient of homeland terrorism. Like Mary, Emma might not have been as prepared as what we might think someone should be in a roll of bringing about massive change. Emma's mom described Emma's fast-track to the national spotlight like this: "it's like she built herself a pair of wings out of balsawood and duct-tape and jumped off of a building."

Daring to hope doesn't always mean we know what we are doing, or have it all figured out. In fact, daring to hope is quite the opposite. Having hope means we don't have answers. What we do have though is a vision. And, having a vision can be messy because we don't always know how to make that vision a reality. What visions of hope do you have? What might it look like to act on those visions of hope? (Place images on letters)

It occurred to me the other day that we've had a pretty long string of grey days. Having so many days in a row without sun can be rough! And greyness is often not very fun. Greyness can take on a lot of different meanings. Greyness can mean that we are experiencing a ton of clouds that keep the sun from giving us nutrients that helps us feel good. It can also mean ambiguity, liminality, unsteadiness, times of not being sure, not being able to clearly see what is in store for the future. We can experience a kind of greyness in our lives sometimes, too. Like, substance abuse, transitioning jobs, maybe you are a senior about to graduate high school, or college. I wonder what hope for the future looks like for you? What might that look like? (Place images on letters)

In a way winter, especially in the Midwest, can be a bit like Captain Obvious, reminding us during strings of greyness that we just don't know. And, not everything is sunshine and spring breezes. But, daring to hope, daring to have a vision even though we don't know if that vision will come to realization, can be like a shot of vitamin D. And, look around! We don't have to dare to hope alone.

Sarah Miles, a deacon at St. Gregory of Nissa in San Francisco, and kind of a superhero in a lot ways says this: "I was a middle-aged lady, set in my ways, when I decided to be baptized. And when that water poured over my head, I realized the big problem with my new religion: God actually lives in other people. I couldn't be a Christian by myself. I couldn't choose who else was my [sibling]." (Christian Century, August 2018)

Hello Hope. It's me Mayflower. A diverse band of devoted individuals, called to live hope daily through caring for our neighbors. We didn't necessarily choose each other to go it along this journey together, much like Mary, who didn't throw her hand up and

volunteer to be the agent for radical change in a world of turmoil. We dare to hope together because we share common visions for what the future could hold. We can't always see the outcome of our actions. But, we keep believing through the ways we show up literally everywhere working toward equality and abundance for all.