

A Reflection for the Third Sunday after Epiphany-January 25, 2026

By Jennifer Irving

A couple of weeks ago, I think I misspoke during our worship service. You see, during my reflection, I said that “Spirit moments”, (and by Spirit moments I mean those seeming coincidences—when something happens and it creates an “aha” moment—when you seem to receive a message from the Holy Spirit, or when “All things work together for good” in ways you didn’t orchestrate yourself, or when just the person you need to hear from calls, or just the song you need to hear comes on the radio, or just right video shows up on your reels to answer the question that has been niggling you—what some might call a sign and is life-giving for your soul) And I said these “spirit moments” happen very rarely! And maybe that is partially true because I think often times we just aren’t actually paying much attention to the ways the spirit moves and lives and breathes in our lives—all those multi-faceted holy spirit colours that create the light that is all around us—and frankly, the doom and gloom of the world around us and the everyday despairs that overwhelm us don’t help us much in our quest to experience “Epiphany”. The light of the Holy Spirit colouring the world with rainbows. But I want to walk back what I said. Because despite how rarely we might clock them, Holy Spirit moments aren’t rare. They aren’t rare at all. In fact, I might even go so far as to testify that God is breaking into our world in human and divine ways every single moment.

For example, June chose to have us sing as our Congregational Anthem “Will Your Anchor Hold” despite having never once talked to me about the fact that what I was feeling called to speak about this morning about God’s love that holds us together and unites us and anchors us even when the storms are raging, dividing us and pulling us apart.

And that has happened to June and I more than once hasn’t it June? A big thank you to June for being with us with her music ministry today while Megan is away (Go Leafs!)

You see, this has been The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and it has had me thinking all week about what it is that unites us even in the midst of everything that divides us.

I love the reading from Matthew for this morning—this one depicting Jesus collecting disciples and creating this group of followers that he’s going to have fishing for people to create a real community of people to walk the way together speaks to me of exactly what it is we need to survive this life—we can’t do it divided and alone. We can only do it together.

I started watching a new show this week (I know you’re probably wondering where I find the time but if you saw the state of disrepair my house is in, you’d understand completely). It’s called “The Pitt” (a medical drama – perhaps some of you have watched it too?). It just started a second season so I have lots of episodes to catch up on. But in one of the early episodes of season one, a teen dies after an accidental overdose and one of the doctors asks “How do you get through the loss of a child?” and the charge nurse answers “The same way you get through anything—by leaning on family and friends.” and it just struck me how simple and how true I have found that statement to be in my own life.

And it struck me that it was something Jesus knew as well. And wanted for his followers. A community to lean on for support and care. Whether it was 12 disciples or later a community of baptized in Corinth who could help each other to remember what was really important—not who you were baptized by but in whose name – even if they did need a little jog to their memory from Paul.

Even in the midst of all that is terrible that is happening south of the border right now, we have this testimony of hundreds of clergy of all different denominations (talk about Christian Unity!) coming together to protest peacefully. The Right Reverend Kimberly Heath, The Moderator of the United Church of Canada, shared these words of Sarah Brouwer with this sentiment “Grateful for American colleagues engaging in peaceful protest. Praying strength and an unshakable hope.”

It's difficult to describe all that we are holding right now in Minnesota, and particularly in my neighborhood. I have never been more terrified and I have never felt more embraced by people of faith and goodwill. Yesterday I hosted overflow clergy at [St. Paul's United Church of Christ](#) — people from Oklahoma to New York came with 6 days notice. I believe it's 700 from out of state, total! [Jim Cochrane](#) ran out and got boots for a guy who thought wool socks and running shoes were enough for -21 degree march today. [Scott Jones](#) came by to be with us, and [The House of Hope Presbyterian Church](#) bought lunch. Our PCUSA Co-Moderator [Tony Larson](#) has been in touch with me. [Glen Bell](#) of the Presbyterian Foundation has connected. [Justin Sabia-Tanis](#) from [United Theological Seminary](#) and [Mallory Everhart](#) from the [MN Conference UCC](#) jumped in last minute to lead training. Temple Israel is hosting Mariann Budde this morning for a prayer service. Too many colleagues from the [United Church of Christ](#) to count are organizing. Friends and family from around the world are praying. And today, more clergy and people of faith turned out at MSP airport to shut down business as usual, in peaceful non-violence, to stand in solidarity with our neighbors. Emmanuel is truly God with us, and among us. Please pray for us today.

We join the chorus of prayers remembering that we are not alone, never alone. It is when we come together in love, honouring what is different about each of us, even as we hold on tight to what it is that makes us that same and unites us, that we change the world for the better and demonstrate to everyone the power of community.

I like to imagine those people of faith in Minnesota joining hands as they march and singing together the words of our Psalm for this morning: “Wait for the Lord, God’s day is near. Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart.” and being strengthened as their voices joined together as one.

May we too find ourselves turning to one another with faith, hope and love, strengthened as we sing together as fishing for people to walk with us into the light filled with compassion. And together may we see the signs and experience those “Spirit Moments” that strengthen our hearts in love. Amen.