Dear friends,

Recently, an incredible writer, preacher, poet, colleague, scholar and man of faith, Walter Brueggemann, completed his earthly journey. Walter, in addition to all the above, was most profound in his role as a prophet of God. In his preaching, teaching, writing, and poetry, indeed in his life, he pointed people back to God, constantly reminded them of God's call to us to live lives of justice, peace, compassion, mercy, and kindness, and pushed us to live lives of obedience to God's call to care for the least of these.

His words are important to Christians of all ages, stages, and situations, but I think his words ring true in even more powerful and provocative ways in this time of our nation and world. In the poem below, he calls us to remember that in the middle of chaos and uncertainty, God designates, calls, and sends God's people (that's us!) into the fray as agents of God's will and God's peace.

His poem notes our human anxiety and frailty. He reminds us that every agent God calls has this same vulnerability and yet are still summoned to do God's work in the midst of the raging kingdoms and trembling empires around us. I invite you, therefore, as we move into this holiday week, to consider what it means to know that God is calling, summoning, counting on us to work for the healing of this fraught and fragile world.

May Walter's poem point you to the God who sent Jesus to save us and free us from sin, gives us courage to follow Jesus, and who never leaves us on our own.

May God give us strength for the journey, today and always.
With love,
Mindy

On Reading Samuel

Kingdoms rage;
empires tremble;
cities totter.
    You speak assurance;
    you designate human agents;
    you say, "This is my beloved Son";
    you say, "This is my anointed."
Right in the middle of chaos,
    you designate human agents who do your will.
And we are not sure:
    We would rather it were you,
        directly,
        straight on and visible.

But you stay hidden in your holy splendor,
and we are left with human agents
about whom we are never sure.
So we name Jesus, “Son of David”;
so human and frail, even if kicked upstairs;
so vulnerable, even if transformed in song
and creed.
And then, in a flash, it may dawn on us:
You call and designate people like us, your agents.
Kingdoms rage ... and we are called;
empires tremble ... and we are designated;
cities totter ... and we are summoned ...
like the first David, like the second David ...
us vulnerable, frail, anxious, your people.
And we are dazzled. Amen.

Walter Brueggemann, *Waiting In Gratitude: Prayers of Joy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2024).