

The UPDATE

A Message from Timm High

...you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me."

Deuteronomy 26.5-11

Continued from the UPDATE

To the Saints engaged in God's mission within Riverside Presbytery, greetings;

Blessings on you as we are immersed in the season of Lent once again. The text above is one of the four lectionary readings for this Year C of the Lectionary cycle, and is described in the New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV) as "A basic confession of faith in the form of a story."

And what a story it is! For most of us this is one of the formative stories in our own faith formation. Recently I picked up "The Exodus", by Richard Elliott Friedman, author of "Who Wrote The Bible". He is an emeritus professor of UC San Diego, and is currently the Ann and Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Georgia, and a scholarly writer. This book is an attempt to examine the claim that the Exodus was not a historical event, but simply a story. It's his take that there was an exodus out of Egypt and those who departed were what we know as Levites. It's a fascinating read if you're interested.

How have you been a 'wandering Aramean?' Who among your ancestors (spiritual or otherwise) have been? What are among the 'first fruits' you recognize and give thanks to God for in your own life? I'm also struck by how the LORD is the actor in this story. The story of Lent is, in part, a reminder of how the LORD has delivered us from affliction and has been present to and for and with and through us in marvelous ways. How do you understand your confession of faith as a story?

Thank you for your witness to God's mission in the person of Jesus through the passion and purpose of the Holy Spirit.

Blessings and Be Well! *Timm*