

Offering #50 April 30, 2021 Keeping in touch through this pandemic. Gratitude, Trust and Hope are the underlying themes for today. "Languishing, the Mood of the Month" is our "Aha" moment. There are more gardening tips from our Zany County Gardener and two of my favourite salad dressings, recipes to savour.

When Dag Hammarskjold, Swedish diplomat and Secretary General of the United Nations was elected to his post in 1953 he expressed his faith and convictions below. Tragically he died in a plane crash at 56.

For all that has been, THANKS, for all that is to be, YES.

***Echoing this gifted leader I say,
" For all that has been, THANKS, for all that is to be, YES.***

The offering is your gift to me. Each week I take the lead from you, from readings, reflections, commentaries and douse them with imagination and passion and there we have it, "The Offering". Thank you for your encouragement and support. "Yes", for what continues to unfold.

With blessings and affection, Deacon Kate Ann

Lessons on Loyalty and Trust

Recently I read Christopher McDougall's book "Running with Sherman." Tales about Sherman the donkey and his adventures.

Reading about Sherman brought back memories of our cattle raising days. There was a stage in our cattle business when the growth of our herd was being threatened by coyote predators. Expectant cows would find a thicket of cedars in which to give birth and then tuck away their newborn. The newborn calves fell easy prey to the coyotes.

**100 acres of pasture and 80 head of cattle was a huge challenge for us to patrol. "Except for a donkey" proclaimed one of our friends !
"You need a donkey!"**

Several days later Max, the donkey, arrived. After a few tense hours of introduction, Max set about to do his work. He knew why he was there. Protect the little ones and create order with the others. He instinctively knew what to do. Max would gather the calves, like a mother hen with her chicks. He would find a corner of the pasture, nestle the calves in a group, and there he would sit in such a way the calves could not run past him. Max operated on common sense.

The author Christopher McDougall, writes “Donkeys operate on one frequency, trust. They do nothing on faith, but everything on certainty.” Max possessed both the instinct and experience to navigate a herd of cattle and tend to their safety.

My admiration for this amazing donkey grew every day, he took his job seriously. Max could be fierce with the coyotes and protective with the calves, gentle with a child’s hand feeding him grain, and brilliant in directing cattle to safety when they escaped through an open gate leading to the 401 highway. Yes, I loved this donkey with his shaggy grey fur revealing the donkey’s signature dark brown cross distinctly on his back. I know why Jesus picked a donkey to ride into Jerusalem. That donkey had a job to do.

I could tie a halter on Max and attempt to move him forward, his front legs would lock and it was like trying to pull a cement wall, not a muscle would flinch. If I had carrots or apples he would trot along happily. We were pals. When he spotted me coming out to the field he would come running singing his joyful hee-haw love song.

Then one day after watching over the cows and calves, Max fell into a deep sticky bog. When we found him and brought him to the barn he was exhausted and it was determined he had fluid in his lungs. The next day I sat in the sunshine on a bed of clean straw. Max’s head was leaning comfortably against me as his breathing became laboured and he peacefully died. I think about the lessons he taught me about being loyal and trustworthy. He was a steadfast friend and teacher. I was lucky to have him in my life.

Deacon Kate Ann

“Aha” Moment

The Mood of the Month – ‘Languishing?’

The Reverend Canon Dr. Barbara Robinson

**Come, you disconsolate, where'er you languish;
come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal.**

1779-1852, Ireland

Thomas Moore

It has been years – perhaps decades- since I've sung the deeply personal, even agonized 19th century hymn quoted above. But I thought of the lyrics this week while reading an article in the New York Times . The journalist was describing a kind of broad based malaise which many seem to be feeling as the pandemic drags on – and on. He writes...'

'At first, I didn't recognize the symptoms that we all had in common. Friends mentioned that they were having trouble concentrating. Colleagues reported that even with vaccines on the horizon, they weren't excited about 2021....It wasn't burnout — we still had energy. It wasn't depression — we didn't feel hopeless. We just felt somewhat joyless and aimless. It turns out there's a name for that: languishing. Languishing is a sense of stagnation and emptiness. It feels as if you're muddling through your days, looking at your life through a foggy windshield. And it might be the dominant emotion of 2021.'

Hmm. Well, if I am honest I've felt some of this. I've done some languishing. I felt it this week as the weather turned cold and I fretted about the effect of snow on branches about to blossom. I'm doing my share of 'muddling through' days without focus.

Is it the letdown after the glorious warmth of early April and the triumphant joy of our Resurrection worship? Is it because we are simply not at all sure what is coming next or what we ought to expect?

My mind went to the first Easter season. I wonder if, in the immediate aftermath of the Resurrection, Jesus' friends experienced some languishing? They had endured weeks of escalating conflict, culminating in the grief and horror of the Cross. They had processed the shock of an empty tomb. Perceptions were repeatedly challenged by the baffling wonder of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. They'd even been directed into a kind of lockdown – to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4) for a mysterious 'promise of the Father'- the gift of the enabling Holy Spirit.

I've noted that one stabilizing tool Jesus seems to have given them through their time of uncertain waiting was to direct them back to a focus on their Scriptures.(Luke 24:27,44, Acts 1:3)

And I have found, in my own languishing, that reading the Psalms has a remarkable way of kickstarting my prayers and lifting my spirits. They prompt me to gratitude but not without allowing honest venting. They are invitations to the disconsolate, to ' all who languish '. They are God's gift of language for times when it feels like there is not much to say.

So my sisters and brothers in Christ, let's read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen BCP

Wishing you a good week- with maybe, less languishing !

+ Barbara

Sautéed Fiddleheads

The Crazy County Gardener

Spring has arrived now for sure. The rains predicted for this week will make everything jump. I am watching for the orioles who should arrive by the beginning of May and of course the asparagus in abundance. I picked the first 5 roadside spears of asparagus. That was nature just teasing me. I picked some fiddleheads and made a tasty dish. The green onions I used are a perennial onion in my garden that beats anything out of the ground in early spring. The fiddleheads are just starting to emerge.

3 cups	fresh fiddlehead ferns, ends trimmed
4	green onions
2 Tbsps.	avocado oil
1 Tbsp.	butter
1 clove	garlic, minced
½ tsp.	sea salt
½ tsp.	black pepper
1 Tbsp.	fresh lemon juice

- 1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook fiddlehead ferns in the boiling water until barely tender, 7 to 10 minutes; drain, throw away the water and rinse fiddleheads.**
- 2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Soften the onions. Stir in the prepared fiddlehead ferns, garlic, and the salt and pepper. Cook and stir until ferns are tinged lightly brown and tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and sprinkle with lemon juice.**

My package of squash seeds had only 14 seeds! I can do better than that! My experiment began. I purchased 2 butternut squash and removed 20 seeds from one squash and wrapped them in paper towel, 18 out of 20 seeds germinated in 5 days. The seeds in the bottom of each of the two squash halves, one covered with old coffee grounds and the other covered with earth. The one covered with old coffee grounds was the winner - 53 germinated seeds in almost two weeks. What a difference! Love these experiments. The bottom line is in wet paper towels, they are cleaner and faster than those grown in the bottom of the squash. Enjoy the bug free fresh air of spring.

God bless, Zany County Gardener

STRAWBERRY, CASHEWS AND SPINACH SALAD (Serves 6)

Ingredients

- 8 cups of baby spinach**
- 1 English cucumber, peeled and diced**
- 4 cups strawberries, hulled and halved and or quartered**
- 2/3 cups salted cashews or candied pecans**
(Candied pecans: prepare by toasting 1 cup pecans in a frypan on medium, for 5 minutes, then add 2 T. of maple syrup. Cook 3 minutes longer, sprinkle lightly with 1/16 tsp salt (cool on parchment paper)

Maple Syrup Balsamic Dressing (this is amazing)

Equal parts of maple syrup and Balsamic Glaze

1/3 cup maple syrup

1/3 cup "President's Choice Balsamic Glaze" purchased at No Frills or Independent Grocery Stores

Assemble on individual luncheon size plates:

Baby spinach, diced cucumbers and strawberries

Sprinkle candied pecans or salted cashews on top.

Lightly drizzle dressing on salad mixture

WEIGHT WATCHER CITRUS VINAIGRETTE

Delicious with spring mixed lettuce or use head lettuce, add chopped tomatoes, olives and feta cheese to make a quick Greek Salad.

1/4 cup avocado oil (lighter flavour than olive oil)

1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon finely minced onion

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp ground pepper