



What Time is It?

A Meditation for the Virtual Stated Meeting
Presbytery of Philadelphia | May 16, 2020

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RUTH: Called for such a time as this. That sounds really great, doesn't it? Princess Esther, the Old testament Persian star being challenged by her uncle Mordecai – encouraging her to lean into the daunting and seemingly impossibility of possibilities before her – that just maybe she – ordinary woman – could help save her people. It's clear from this biblical story that she was indeed called for her time – a time when history's eyes would tell of her reluctant but faithful courage.

KEVIN: Called for such a time as this. That does sound great – and the Bible is rich with stories of God's unexpected and frankly, uninvited call on prophets and leaders – Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Samuel, David, Ruth, the early disciples – person after person being called to rise to the challenge of giants in seemingly impossible circumstances. Normal average people called to be part of the extraordinary narrative of hope in what felt like a narrative of despair.

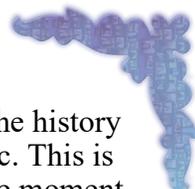
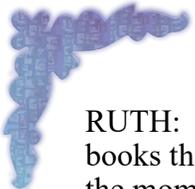
RUTH: Called for such a time as this. Our own modern history reminds us the courage of a few whose faith gave them the audacity to bring hope in situations that seemed insurmountable by any human calculation – Presbyterians in our city putting pen to paper against the tyranny of what had been their homeland; Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany, Rosa Parks, a seamstress in our own nation, Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Person after person somehow rises up against circumstances that are littered with injustice, violence abuse, indifference to the other –

KEVIN: They clearly seem to have been called for such a time as it was. History looks back at these individuals and affirm how movements were birthed out of a moment. So here we are at this moment. But what moment in time is it? And precisely what time is it?

RUTH: Well for the past 10 weeks, it has been a time of anxiety, fear, rapidly evolving and devolving information. It has been a time of death and illness as the members of our churches and their leaders find themselves forced to deal with death in ways that cheat us from expected closure and ritual of grief.

KEVIN: What time is it? It is a time of profound uncertainty as this pandemic ravages the global community and our nation – causing us to isolate and stay away from even those we love, for fear of spreading a virus that is cruel and seemingly insatiable. I don't know about you, but I don't remember saying yes to this call from God – to lead at this time. Nope, this was not in my playbook.....But.... this is the moment in time we've been given.





RUTH: This is God's time to us. It is a time to write with our lives what we want read in the history books that look upon the response of the church during this unprecedented time of pandemic. This is the moment in time we've been called to rethink how we gather as a people of faith— it's the moment when we've been called to live into the great commandment— as we love one another and our neighbor in the world in ways that just two months ago would have seen unlovable.

KEVIN: So what time is it? It is a time of stepping boldly (even reluctantly) into a new normal— reaching forward— building it together. It is a time of creative worship using the digital platforms in sacramental ways that point to the gospel. It is a time of leaning into the truth that this new normal will not be over anytime soon.

RUTH: And we've witnessed you leaning into this time— as community after community - large and small - has embraced zoom and Facebook worship; as you have creatively considered ways to care for one another; as you've experimented with how to continue growing the faith of children, confirmands; of inspiring and equipping through art, music and prayers - now shared with the world. So what time is it?

KEVIN: God has clearly declared it is our time— it is a time to consider and embrace that like our sisters and brothers before us, we are being called to lean into the daunting and seemingly impossibility of possibilities before us. And that just maybe - like those before us, we— ordinary humans— could help lead the church in these extraordinary times. May history look back on this- our story— and tell of our reluctant but faithful witness for a time such as this.

RUTH: INVITATION TO CHAT ROOM: Friends, and now it is your time - you will be randomly sent into chat rooms for 8 minutes— we invite to pass the peace of Christ— and to share one experience or moment of hope you have witnessed during this pandemic.



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