When I hear the verses of Psalm 23, I cannot help but first think of death. For some reason, the 23rd Psalm is linked very intimately with the ceremony of our passing from this life and into the next. This is, of course, because of the 4th verse, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...” This verse brings to mind imagery of the hovering, omnipresent fact that death is inevitable. It is the one commonality that all creatures will experience - regardless of phylogeny, niche, wealth, or education.

But, Psalm 23 also reminds me of autumn. And, I don’t think it is just the tone of death and dying that puts me in mind of autumn. Although, I do grant that for some, the two are linked. Dying and the fading vibrance of autumn can accompany each other, in quite a comforting manner, actually.

A few days ago, I was walking from the GSC to the Commons, and I overheard a student in front of me say to her friend, “…but everything is dying. Fall is, like, the saddest. Everything just turns brown and dies, you know. We should just skip fall.” I was not surprised by this comment. Many people think of autumn as an end, the dying and passing of the year, the reminder that the year ages and passes on, just as the biotic inhabitants of the seasons. In literature and
poetry, autumn is often associated with this tone of melancholy, and indeed, Psalm 23 does, for me, resound a certain melancholy.

I recently came across an archived essay in The Guardian, dated 1840. The author, listed only as “Alison”, reminds us that, “the winds of autumn teach us that decay is the fate of all mankind.”

“There is an "even-tide" in the year - a season when the sun withdraws his propititious light - when the winds arise, and the leaves fall, and nature around us seems to sink into decay. It is said to be the season of melancholy; and if by this word be meant that it is the time of solemn and serious thought, it is undoubtedly the season of melancholy; yet it is a melancholy so soothing, so gentle in its approach, and so prophetic in its influence, that they who have known it feel, as if instinctively, that it is the doing of God.

A few days ago, and the summer of the year was grateful, and every element was filled with life, and the sun of heaven seemed to glory in his ascendant. He is now enfeebled in his power; the desert no more "blossoms like the rose;" the song of joy is no more heard among the branches; and the earth is strewed with that foliage which once bespoke the magnificence of summer. Whatever may be the passions which society has awakened, we pause amid this apparent desolation of nature. We sit down in the lodge "of the wayfaring man in the wilderness," and we feel that all we witness is the emblem of our own fate. Such, in a few years, will be our own condition. The blossoms of our spring, the pride of our summer, will fade into decay; and the pulse that now beats high, with virtuous or with vicious desire, will gradually sink, and then must stop for ever.
When the winds of autumn sigh around us, their voice speaks not to us only, but to our kind; and the lesson they teach us is not that we alone decay, but that such also is the fate of all the generations of man.

In such a sentiment there is a kind of sublimity mingled with its melancholy; our tears fall, but they fall not for ourselves; and, although the train of our thoughts may have begun with the selfishness of our own concerns, we feel that, by the ministry of some mysterious power, they end in awakening our concern for every being that lives. Yet a few years, and all that now bless, or all that now convulse humanity, will also have perished. The mightiest pageantry of life will pass, the loudest notes of triumph or of conquest will be silent in the grave; the wicked, wherever active, "will cease from troubling," and the weary, wherever suffering, "will be at rest."

And so, the melancholy of autumn is also reassuring in its hope, and in its promise of rest, and in the abundance it brings. Author Samuel Butler rejoiced in the melancholy transition of summer into autumn, and the ripeness of the harvest bounty, “autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits,” he says. Autumn is abundance, and wisdom, and color, and stillness, and while perhaps melancholy in its tone, it manifests the same calm reassurance as Psalm 23. The green pastures and the still waters; the restoring of the soul and the table prepared with abundance and a cup that runneth over. So be reassured that even in the presence of death, the dying of the year and the knowledge of the fate of all mankind, we can rejoice and be calm. After all, according to William Cullen Bryant, “autumn [is] the year’s last, loveliest smile.” And, surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives.
Holy Communion  
Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Prelude  “Be Still My Soul”  
by Rebecca Bonam  
Mary Toso, flute; Marilyn Schempp, piano

Welcome/Announcements

Invocation

Opening Prayer

Hymn  “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”  
ELW #502 vv. 1-3

Scripture  
Psalm 23

Sermon  
Carrie Hall, Biology

Hymn  “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”  
ELW #502 vv. 4-6

Holy Communion

Dialogue

L: The Lord be with you.  
C: And also with you.
L: Lift up your hearts.  
C: We lift them to the Lord.
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. 
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 
Give us this day our daily bread, 
and forgive us our trespasses, 
as we forgive those who trespass against us, 
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever 
and ever. Amen.

Distribution  “Two Communion Hymns”  
by Donald Busarow  
Mary Toso, flute; Marilyn Schempp, organ

Blessing

Benediction

Holy Communion  
Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Prelude  “Be Still My Soul”  
by Rebecca Bonam  
Mary Toso, flute; Marilyn Schempp, piano

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Distribution  “Two Communion Hymns”  
by Donald Busarow  
Mary Toso, flute; Marilyn Schempp, organ

Blessing

Benediction
Postlude                “Toccata in Seven”                                            by John Rutter
Marilyn Schempp, organ

Dismissal

WORSHIP SCHEDULE
Fri, Oct 17 Worship Service, 10 am, Leah Murfield

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP AT ST DYSMAS: An opportunity to worship and fellowship at the
South Dakota State Penitentiary the evening of November 6th. Sign-up
forms are due October 17th. Come see Patty in the Chapel Office with
Driver's ID in hand to get signed up! Truly a safe, eye-opening experience!

Tonight - October 15 at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Paul and Sam Ogdie will have
another informational meeting on walking the CAMINO DE SANTIAGO in
Northern Spain. The meeting will be held in HUMN 301. Afterwards (for
those who are interested) we will be showing the movie "The Way" that
tells the story of an individual walking the entire Camino. Stay as long as
you can and bring an interested friend. The deadline is nearing and if you
or a friend have interest, please come and ask questions.

Come listen to one campus’s unique CAMPAIGN FOR AWARENESS OF
SEXUAL VIOLENCE, and then participate in a discussion with Beth
Torkelson, Assistant Dean of Students, and Beth McDuffie, Adjunct
Professor of Religion, about sexuality at Augustana: what’s important,
what’s problematic, and what simply needs to be talked about. Bring your
questions! Tomorrow - Thursday, October 16, at 7pm in the 3-in-1 room.

BETTER TOGETHER AUGUSTANA COLLEGE (BTAC), our interfaith ministry
on campus, will have its next meeting on Thursday, October 23 at 7 pm in
the Halverson Room (of the Commons). We will update you on upcoming
events and engage in interfaith storytelling. Email Elise Sperling or Lynette
Apio with any questions you have about BTAC!

HAVE A SAFE & RELAXING FALL BREAK!!

Augustana (SD) Campus Ministry