

2022 Fall Kick-Off: Pastor Patty's Prophecies
Luke 15:1-10 September 11, 2022 by Patty Friesen/Patrick Preheim

“Find your way back, don’t let this life drive you crazy,” sings rock star Beyonce. “Find your way back, come back home before the street lights on.” As we find our way back into choirs and potlucks and Sunday school and communal life, we remember what we have lost - time with loved ones and opportunities and we remember what we have found - a deeper trust in God that helped calm our anxiety and build our resilience. We’ve found a new way of doing church - pickle ball and more outdoor services, committee work on Zoom that saves a ton of travel and gas. We may have opened up to the idea that there is truly no place, no person, no situation through which God is unable to speak. And maybe God can even speak through humour in the following Prophecies by Pastor Patty.

Today’s reading comes from the 94th chapter of the extra-canonical book of Osler Mennonite Church since their conception in the year of our Lord 1928.

I, Patster Patty, imperfect prophet of the Lord was ambling along the banks of the River South Saskatchewan when the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Mortal, I will give you visions of what was and what is and what will come.” And the first of the visions came. There appeared to me four beasts arising out of the deep: COVID-19, UK variant, Delta variant and Omicrom. These four horsemen of the apocalypse were traversing the earth on winged steeds and the devastation was terrible to behold.

And I wept. How long, oh LORD, how long—I cried out? A voice replied, For a year, another year, and probably a little longer yet - who knows? But hear this, O mortal, in this time of testing some will become hunks, some will become monks, some will become chunks. You, O mortal, are beginning to look a bit chunky—so stop binge-eating your pandemic feelings with potato chips in front of the TV, oh mortal.

The vision continued. Four evangelists appeared to stand against the four horsemen. These evangelists bore the names of Doctors Wong, Neudorf, Mujahajim, and Shahab. They were offering words of wisdom and hope. They sought to non-violently do battle with the beasts. There was precious little assistance from the imperial magistrates, but the evangelists witnessed on. In this, Oslerites heeded the word of the evangelists. They closed worship and live-streamed. They Zoomed until they bloomed. They masked and distanced in public. With this the first vision ended and I was in awe. This being the first month of the pandemic plague.

Months later, I was recovering from yet another ZOOM meeting and the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Mortal, prepare a place for my people to worship in my sanctuary. They shall neither be too near nor too distant. They shall neither be too great in number nor too little. You shall follow the Health Authority guidelines but you shall be even more cautious. The sanctuary shall be measured and then sectioned with name tags. Hand sanitizer shall be ever present. Masks shall be mandatory. These are a people precious to me, Oh mortal, I have called them by name and they are mine. Welcome them home and take care of them.” I replied, “How, Oh LORD, will this come to be? The Lord said, I will raise up for you a church controller. His name will be Doug McKinnell. He will wipe down the pews, rope off sections of the sanctuary,

and otherwise tend to my biddings for the well-being of my dwelling and make numerous announcements about all these measures. I am telling you this, mortal, so that when it comes to pass you will know it has been my hand. And with this the second vision ended. This being the sixth month of the pandemic plague.

In response to the second vision, the doors of the church eventually opened cautiously, and then more bravely, and then even more so. Children were once again appearing in person: partaking of Sunday school and youth group. Everyone picnicked in the churchyard with their Bring Your Own Brunch. There were scenes of hope. Then the Oslerites gathered to worship outside amongst the Buhler flowers and those gathered sayeth unto me, "take this deep fat fried rollkuchen and eat it" so I took the deep fat fried rollkuchen and I ate it. And then I ate another. And another. And then I fell into carbohydrate infused trance in which the heavenly voice spoke again, "Mortal, there shall be a LED lighting of my house to make it like the sun since there is nothing else for the Oslerites to do during this pandemic anyhow so get up on those scaffolds." Therein the vision ended. This was in the twelfth month of the pandemic plague.

In the seventeenth month of the pandemic, I was doing dishes and a fourth vision came to me. Mortal, you must go electric. My people languish with the heavy gas powered grass trimmer. This shall not be, mortal. They shall drill through the sub-basement concrete wall and dig a trench to the garage for electricity. My house shall be electrified, oh mortal, so do not fear the carnage or the coffee cups or the grinding sounds you hear from the trustees below the floor. My house shall be electrified and while you are at it - maybe you should put in a charging station for electric vehicles as well. Therein the fourth vision ended. I fell on the kitchen floor in awe and terror covering my head with a dish towel.

In the twenty-fourth month of the plague, I was shoveling snow and yet a fifth vision came to me. The executive were gathered for a meeting and a northern gannet from the Atlantic Ocean descended upon the church staff and plucked Pastor Nora from our midst. It was glorious and terrifying at the same time. I cried out and the gannet spoke. Do not worry mortal, she will be fine. I am taking her to a better place—Newfoundland. There I will continue teaching her the ways of wisdom, compassion and service through Canadian Mennonite University on-line. Stunned, I questioned, but who will be shepherd of the younger sheep? The northern gannet spoke again, One who serves the greater Mennonite clan named Zach Dueck will contribute. And I will sustain the willing spirits among you as you continue to nurture the young and teach the youth. Do not forget, mortal, I love my people and you are mine. As the gannet flew away into the sunset and the vision ended. And herein so far endeth all the visions. Hallelujah - for the poor prophet/pastor cannot taketh anymore visions. Amen.