Thursday, June 25, 2020 Prayer Service

*In Praise of Small Kindnesses*

Opening Prayer:

In the midst of the pain and anguish of these times, we pause to remember the powerful impact of gesture of love. “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted.” Ephesians 4:32

Opening Song: Loving an Forgiving #654 Verses 1 & 2

Reflection: In Praise of Small Kindnesses Siri Liv Myhrom

Today’s is a soft meditation
in praise of the enormousness
of small kindnesses.

Like the café worker who waved enthusiastically
to my father as he walked in the door of the coffee shop
like she was expecting him,
like he was a regular in this hipster enclave
instead of a septuagenarian
in khaki shorts and white tennis shoes.

He met me here on my workday
so I could help him format a document —
something he couldn’t figure out how to do at home
no matter how many buttons he tried,
something my mother always did for him
in the decades after he gave up his trusty typewriter.
So he arrived at the coffee shop
vulnerable and exasperated in that way
that only technology can make us feel:
like slow, dependent children — and
sorely missing my mother.

Like the barista who didn’t blink
when he ordered his coffee the wrong way,
when he said la-TAY instead of LAH-tye,
who took his order from our table
as if we were in a sit-down restaurant
and she was our waiter,
who smiled the whole time like a halo of warm light,
softening the space everywhere,
who made him feel like he belonged.

You cannot know
how those small gestures matter,
unless you are him,
unless you are me, watching,
unless you see his shoulders relax,
in that way that we can do only
when we feel safe and seen enough
to let go,
and his eyes dampen,
the tiny liquid pools held in at the rims,
barely noticeable, as he smiles and says,
She always knew how to do this for me.
For years she did this.
She would have been 69 today. How I miss her.

Recall a moment when you were the recipient of an unexpected gesture of kindness. What did the experience evoke in you?

How might you be more attentive in your daily life to how you can be an instrument of kindness, love, compassion? What might prevent you from seeing these opportunities?

Silent Reflection:

Closing Prayer:

May we carry into this evening the mantra “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted.” Amen
Closing Song: Loving and Forgiving #654 Verses 3 & 4.