

July 21

I was thinking while we were singing about the words “surrounded by many” that the Bishop is here. The bishop is here every Sunday. We just don’t physically see him. Our loved ones who’ve gone before – I think it was Carol Henninger who said to me that Bill still comes to church every Sunday and so does Paul Carlock and Jane Newcomb and a lot of other people. We don’t see them, but they’re here. Heaven is here. We’re stuck in the physical so we’re not as aware as we could be. Just because we don’t have the physical presence to hang onto doesn’t mean they’re not here.

I know that’s a fun song, but I had the sense that we’re that army, and even though we are small, the Lord thinks we’re great. He thinks we’re great enough to use, and He utters His voice before us, and He’s pleased because we’ve listened. We’re that army, guys.

We’re all feeling the loss of not having the Bishop’s presence with us. Tonight even in the words of that song is the message of the incarnation the Bishop is to this province. He felt compelled, and rightly so, to be with his family, his congregation this night and through the day tomorrow. He was a very present help in time of need. He was being a physical incarnation of Christ to his congregation. And though we may feel a loss in all that, we should take comfort that he takes his role as the icon of Christ very seriously. He did that for us. You may not remember that when Rebecca died the Bishop cancelled everything for the next two days and immediately got in the car and drove. And he was with Fr. Nick that very night, the physical presence of Christ with our brother in his time of need. We couldn’t ask for anything better out of a Bishop. So I commend him and I commend him to you that he did what he needed to do today. He is where he needs to be today, and we should thank God for the incarnation he is to us – Christ in our midst.

I feel like the Lord’s saying that we’re exactly where we need to be this evening also.

By the way, I think I said the wrong name, it’s Shirley Young. Lord, we commend Shirley Young to Your never-failing care, and we commend our Bishop to You. We praise You for the ministry You have called him to. We pray You will comfort him and strengthen him right now as he ministers to his congregation. And we thank You that we have a Bishop in the CEC who is also the pastor of a local flock. That’s a wonderful gift to all of us. Thank You, Father.

I think I have an addition to Amanda’s word about the army of the Lord. During the praise and worship and actually right now the tip of the sword is lit from the candle. I got the sense while we were praising that we were the tip of the sword of the Lord. That’s why we can be even a motley group, not necessarily the strongest people, not fighting with guns or swords, we’re fighting with praise. We’re the tip of the sword when we praise Him holding back the darkness.

Furthermore the tip of the sword is what pierces. When we praise we pierce the darkness.

When Bill blew the shofar, I had a vision of the blast going all through the heavens through the darkness...