



A *Special Raquette Lake Chapel Reflection* July 4, 2021

Remembering those who helped during our storms:

Rev. Talitha Arnold, senior minister of the United Church of Santa Fe (UCC), commented in a recent reflection that “had it not been for the Roman Centurion, Julius, Christianity may not have spread around the world.” She was referring to the forced, ill-fated journey St. Paul and other prisoners to Rome to stand trial in an imperial court.

Luke writes in Acts 27:1, “When it was decided that we were to sail for Italy, they transferred Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort, named Julius. ...” Almost immediately after setting sail the sailors encountered storms at sea. They tried avoiding the storms, throwing cargo overboard to lighten the load, but the storms were relentless. They drifted afloat, ship out of control. For fourteen days they ate almost nothing and did not know where they could go for safety. Then ..

“In the morning they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned to run the ship ashore, if they could. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; but the centurion [Julius], wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.” (Acts 27:39-44)

While Julius was not mentioned again in the New Testament, we at least know his name and can recognize that his actions to save the prisoners helped spread Christianity within the Roman Empire and ultimately around the world.

On this Independence Day we would do well to remember all those brave citizens who began a new country which enables us to practice our religion freely today. We know some of the names of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, but, as our military cemeteries attest to, there are many “unknown” patriots whose shoulders we stand on today.

Let us Pray: Dearest Lord, help us remember and give thanks for those who brought us through our storms. Amen.

Special prayers: Please pray for strength and renewed health for Harry and Trudy; for the families and victims of the building collapse in Florida.