New Life Episcopal Church

Uniontown, Ohio



Moses sees the Promised Land

A Sermon for the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost
October 25, 2026

Rev Barbara Bond

Proper 25, Year A

Deuteronomy 34:1-12, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Moses stands on the top of Mount Nebo and God shows him the whole Promised Land. God says, “I will give it to your descendants; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.”

I wonder what Moses was thinking while he looked at the Promised Land. Surely he remembered events from his life and from the life of his people which have brought him to this perspective. Let’s listen to his thoughts:

God called me when I was a baby and rescued me from the murderous intent of the Pharoah of Egypt.

God placed me in the palace of the Pharoah for upbringing.

God sent me to the land of Midian pursued by my own sin, that I killed a man and had to leave to save my skin.

God gave me a loving wife and family.

God spoke to me out of the Burning Bush.

God called me back to Egypt to plead for my people’s deliverance.

God gave me the words to speak to Pharoah, and the power to bring ten plagues upon the Egyptians.

God brought on the Passover of the Lord, killing all first-born Egyptians and passing over all first-born Israelites.

God led us to the Red Sea and opened the way to freedom.

God gave us the law to guide our way.

God sustained us in the wilderness for 40 years.

God has fulfilled God’s promise by giving us this land and heritage.

God has chosen someone else to finish this journey.

I can die content.

And so Moses can see the long stretch of his own life and ministry (he is after all 120 years old!) and he can see the future of his people in the next stage of their progress. Moses can see the beginning of God's work with God's chosen people – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph – all those stories that we too have heard since June, the Patriarch sagas and the dramatic story of the people's deliverance from slavery, and the giving of the law. It is a long and hopeful tale. The first phase, told in detail in the first five books of the Torah, ends today. Next we will pick up the book of Joshua and the conquering of the Promised Land. But today is a truly memorable moment: the midpoint, so to speak, of the journey of the People of God. This is Salvation History.

I can see lots of parallels with our own lives. We recently celebrated the 250th anniversary of our nation, an opportunity to reassess where we have been as Americans and where we are going. We will have an opportunity to make our voices heard through the election process in about ten days. Liturgically, we will memorialize our Beloved Departed next week on All Saints Day, reading their names from the altar and giving thanks for their lives among us. Our parish is thriving. We will celebrate new members in our midst in *three weeks,* when we receive a visit from our Bishop. I am sure there are many milestones for you to celebrate personally, as well as new endeavors in your lives. Old Moses on the mountaintop is a good archetype for us, a model of past, present, and future, what God might call the Long View.

One way to lead a meaningful life is to see our lives in perspective and find good models to lead us. I look to scripture to inform me of God's action in humanity's history, and I look to Jesus for guidance in how to live today. In the Gospel for today Jesus cites the guidance of Moses and the prophets. The apostle Paul has excellent advice for how to live gently, to affirm the lives of others. I love this passage in his first letter to the Thessalonians "We were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us."

You have become very dear to me. In the eight years we have been together, we have worked, we have loved, we have celebrated, we have cherished the presence of each other. This parish has brought New Life into my life. In my thirty years of ordained ministry, you are the dearest parish in my experience. You have done this through your love of God and each other, and your care for everyone, inside and outside the parish. You embody the long heritage of God's people, and the love of God made manifest. You have blessed my life.