

Be Transformed

August 23, 2026

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Green

This is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it! And let us have a pop quiz. I bet you never expected that in church, did you? But here we go.

What was the name of the baby found along the banks of the Nile? Moses. Correct.

That was easy. Now for one a bit harder. Name the two midwives who disregarded Pharaoh's edict to kill all Hebrew baby boys, and who delivered Moses.

Pharaoh gave this horrific order to curtail the rapid growth of the Hebrew population who were enslaved in Egypt. It didn't work. It just made God bless the community more.

But back to the question. What were their names?

They were Shiprah and Puah. Don't worry if you didn't know the answer. I didn't either when this question appeared on the Bible content part of my ordination exams. It had me stumped, and my friends as well.

It's noteworthy that the midwives' names live on in the ongoing story of salvation because women were often written out of the manuscripts by the male authors of the time.

But here in the story of Moses, all we have are women defying authority. We have the midwives as the heroines who prevented a genocide. We have Moses' mother who hid her baby the first few months of life, before putting him in a basket made of reeds and floating him in the Nile. We have Moses' sister watching the basket bobbing on the banks of the Nile to ensure her baby brother is safe. Then we have the daughter of Pharaoh who adopts the babe as her son and gives him the name "Moses," which means "drawn from the water."

Each decisive, risky and faithful act of these women builds upon the next, ultimately transforming the Israelites from the enslaved to desert wanderers to recipients of the Promised Land. And that is how a better tomorrow is created — in stages and with the help of people working together. Bringing about change isn't a solitary act.

The world, which is always in some stage of transformation because God is never done with us, needs your hands this day to deliver hope or weave a basket of safety or raise a child whose voice will say to a pharaoh, "Let my people go."

We all have a part to play in heralding in God's kingdom. May your name be one that is remembered in the who's who of God's children who dared, risked and spoke up.

Gracious God, Your plans for a better tomorrow will never be thwarted. Peace will reign. Justice will prevail. The outcasts and forgotten will be welcomed. And so, Great God, here are our hands. Bless them and use them in transforming Your broken world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's *Sunday Bulletin*.)