

Mid-Week Reflections

February 7, 2018

Thoughts About Us

I am not a serious football fan. Yet, I do on occasion watch and I did so Sunday. What an event! All those folks, spending a bunch of time and money to watch the game, and of course the half time show intrigues me. You know some of them did not have the best view. And, some understood less about the game than I do. Even so, they were happy to be there and participate in the rituals of the game.

So I wonder, why we are willing to spend huge amounts of money for tickets and parking and food to attend this event in person so we can watch two opposing teams use their skill to defeat the others. Is it the competition? Is it that they can do what we know we cannot? I honestly think a bunch of it is a feeling of belonging.

There is a profound loyalty that "fans" of any sport have. Calendars are filled out with the home games and all other social and work activities revolve around them. For many it isn't even about *attending* the game but about participating as a fan in the comfort of our own homes. There is still a sense of belonging and being part of something bigger than ourselves, something that we are proud of and dedicated to and enjoy. It's awesome and yes, it is a wonderful distraction from all that is not so very wonderful.

I have to ask, what about us? Are we proud to be part of something bigger than ourselves? Do we have a feeling of connection and belonging. Does being part of a faith community transform our attitude and bring us joy? It should, shouldn't it? After all, we are all about embracing God's love, and loving in response to it. How great is that? We are God's beloved.

Seriously, maybe we need to model worship more after sporting events. How about tailgating before worship? What about team colors and cheers? Food and beverages (non-alcoholic)? Really, how could we embrace the culture to make worshipping together something we all really looked forward to and prioritized? I'd love to hear your input. We could have food during worship. Is that what is missing?

Here's what I know. Worship changed my life. So did individuals who told me about God's presence in their lives. Summer camp helped me grow. Sermons of faithful preachers transformed me. UMW guided me and encouraged me to use my gifts. And serving as a youth group sponsor demanded that I clarify my own belief so I could share it and talk about it with questioning teens. I cannot imagine not being actively involved in a faith community. It defines who I am.

I also know there are many who are yearning for acceptance and belonging and sense of purpose in their lives. Heck, we all are. And, I know this, the church is the place to find that. We are just a week from the beginning of Lent. A week from today is Ash Wednesday. I hope you will be here at 6:00 for a time to remember and return to God. Then, I hope you will make plans for an intentional change in how you live and love for the weeks leading up to Easter. What will you do to live out God's love? What will you give up or sacrifice so you can and will love others more completely? I look forward to hearing from you. Who we are is not who we remain. God is always helping us grow to be who God knows we can be.

Coming Up:

Tonight at 5:30 Worship Team....anyone is welcome to join us.

6:30 is Choir....also everyone is welcome.

Saturday at 8:30 is an ICare Retreat at Southern Hills Mennonite.

Topeka District of Great Plains Conference from 9:30-2:30 at Topeka First.

Sunday is UMW Sunday. They are allowing me the privilege of preaching. The text is Genesis 9: 8-17 and the sermon is "Never Again." Expect to see rainbows.

Monday, February 12 Trustees meet at 6:15

Giving statements are in the Gathering Area on the Information Desk.

Ornaments from our Memory Tree are now in a basket in the Gathering Area.

Don't forget: we provide a nursery for children younger than kindergarten during the last half of worship. Please pray about how you could be part of this important ministry for our children and their families.

May we find the joy....
and may the snow go elsewhere.

Blessings,
Barb