Mid-Week Reflections
March13, 2019

Thoughts About Us…

Last Sunday I used part of worship to offer some clarity surrounding the recent decision made at the 2019 Special General Conference. Today I am attending a District Clergy Gathering at Lowman UMC to hear more about next steps. I will continue to keep you informed and encourage you to visit www.greatplainsumc.org or www.umc.org to learn more. My understanding is that God's love for all people is vast. Most likely, that means God is much more inclusive and forgiving than we are on many, if not most days. We do have work to do. And, we will need to trust God's guiding Spirit in the process.

Understand that nothing has changed here. I am committed to welcoming all families and fully embracing the family however it might be defined: a mom and dad, two moms, two dads, one mom, one dad, a grandparent, grandparents or several generations together under the same roof. No matter what the living arrangements are, we are all children of God and are called to love God and one another. That's what we will continue to do at Shawnee Heights UMC. It is all about love.

Our family has seen what that looks like. It looks like our grandchildren embracing friends who have an adopted daughter, and stating rather matter-of-factly, "Oh, she has two mommies." And love looks like our daughter-in-law serving as the surrogate for our daughter and son-in-law as they anticipate their first daughter in July. Our Topeka grandkids think it is wonderful that their mommy is helping grow their cousin. Love does take work. Love is not always what we thought it would be. Thank God for that.

Seriously, I am so grateful for God's extravagant love and forgiveness…of me and everyone else. It is God's love that grounds me and urges me to love just as God loves. This Sunday is the second week of our Lenten Series, "Embracing the Uncertainty in Unsteady Times." This week the sermon is titled, "The Uncertainty of Forgiveness." The guiding scripture is Matthew 18: 21-22. I invite you to ponder that scripture and this short quote from author Magrey de Vega, "Forgiveness is nothing less than kingdom-building activity. A single act of forgiveness not only helps build the kingdom of God in the cosmic, universal sense, but it can also help build God's kingdom within your own heart, mind and spirit. …Studies have linked the ability to forgive and move past grudges to reduced blood pressure and stress levels. Being able to forgive can lead to a decrease in pain, depression and anger in patients with chronic pain."

As an act of worship this Sunday you will have an opportunity to forgive. We will each be given a sheet of paper to write a confidential note of forgiveness. Those notes will be placed in a basket near the altar. Doing so is an act of letting go. Doing so is the first step in forgiving those who caused us pain and may still be causing us pain. It is a process that eventually frees us from the hurt and allows us to no longer be defined by that hurt. I look forward to celebrating God's empowering love for us Sunday.

Coming Up:

March 13th: Worship Team is meeting at 5:30
                Finance Team meets at 6:00
                Choir gathers at 6:30

Saturday, March 16th   UMW Brunch at 9:30.

Sunday , March 17th SHUMC Chili Cook-off.
        After worship we will share a meal together. We will enjoy soups and chili in a friendly completion. So bring your best to enter the competition.
Also…deserts will be judged. Everyone is welcome to participate and partake of the delicious food. Be sure to use this opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to join you for worship and fun at the SHUMC Chili Cook-off.

        March 17th 2:00- 6:00 donations for the I Care Food Pantry Garage Sale may be taken to Southern Hills Mennonite Church at 511 SE 37th.
        Donations will also be accepted the 18th and 19th from 8:00-6:00

        YOUTH FUNDRAISER…
        Don't forget to purchase a "brick (or two)…to support our SHUMC Youth Mission Trip to Florida this summer. Also…they are happy to do your "necessary" spring clean-up jobs. More information is in the gathering area.