

Hudson Church Epistle

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

Greetings,

Today, I am sharing with you a reflection posted on the WI Annual Conference District by the North East District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Kate Croskery Jones. Many of you know DS Kate, our former District Superintendent. For those who do not know DS Kate is in her sixth year as a member of the Appointive Cabinet and was appointed to serve in the North East District. She is a competent, capable, and caring leader, and prior to entering full-time ministry DS Kate practiced law in both Illinois and Wisconsin.

DS Kate special interests are in healing and justice and served on the staff of JustPeace and Women and Children's Horizons, Inc. She is a Master Gardener and helped organize a community garden in New London. DS Kate is the founder and vice president of the Board of Directors of the Mission of Hope House, a homeless shelter in New London, WI.

DS Kate graduated from Garrett-Evangelical Seminary with Masters degrees in both Divinity and Pastoral Care and Counseling. She also has a Certificate in Religion and Self Psychology from the Center for Religion and Psychotherapy of Chicago and received her doctorate from the Institute for Clinical Social Work of Chicago where she completed a dissertation on Holy Communion. If you would like more information about the conference staff go to www.wisconsinumc.org. Kathy OBS.

Reflection – Hope of the World

By Rev. Dr. Kate Croskery Jones

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

(Col: 1:25-29 NRSV)

I have an Advent wreath, I strive to attend to the ordinances of God every day, yet Christmas spirit hasn't come easy this year. Here it is just a few days until Christmas and I am far behind on many of my traditions. Nothing is under the tree. Little is planned. Driving through my hometown of Kenosha the other evening, I saw the Christmas tree atop of "the Spot," a local

drive-in hamburger place, open year-round (only in Wisconsin, right? Kenoshans do love their cars and will eat in them even when it is 30-below outside. Kenosha is home to the Rambler, the Javelin, the Gremlin and of course, the Pacer).

Hope filled my heart when I saw the tree atop the Spot. The Spot has been there since July 4, 1945. It was not an easy time to start a restaurant. It is a hard time to be in the restaurant business. Ever since I can remember, the Spot had a Christmas tree on top of their building. In most years, I thought it a bit of an oddity. This year, the sight of the tree made me sing the words penned by Methodist theologian and first female seminary professor, Georgia Harkness, in 1954:

Hope of the world, thou Christ of great compassion:
speak to our fearful hearts by conflict rent.
Save us, your people, from consuming passion,
who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.

Hope of the world, God's gift from highest heaven,
bringing to hungry souls the bread of life:
still let your Spirit unto us be given
to heal earth's wounds and end our bitter strife.

Hope of the world, afoot on dusty highways,
showing to wandering souls the path of light:
walk now beside us lest the tempting byways
lure us away from you to endless night.

Hope of the world, who by your cross did save us
from death and dark despair, from sin and guilt:
we render back the love your mercy gave us;
take now our lives and use them as you will.

Hope of the world, O Christ, o'er death victorious,
who by this sign did conquer grief and pain:
we would be faithful to your gospel glorious;
you are our Lord, and you forever reign!

May Christ Jesus fill us all with a hope to sustain us through the dark days, that we might rise with Him every day to bear his light to the world and shine love and hope on all whom we meet. AMEN.