

First United Methodist Church

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One of the qualities about Downtown Mitchell First UMC that pleases me and makes me glad to be serving this church is that when I look out on a Sunday morning at all the faces that are present in our congregation, I see diversity. I see men and women, I see young and old, I see children and youth, I see Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. I see people young in their faith, I see people mature in their faith, I see people struggling, doubting, or wondering in their faith. I see special needs people. I see married and single people, I see people who are in long-term relationships. I see people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. I see people with different theological perspectives. I see people.....

Why this sight pleases me is because this is also the reality of our world. I'll admit that as a child my world didn't exist much beyond Mitchell to the east, Chamberlain to the west, Armour to the south and Huron to the north. Oh, it did expand as I grew; Sioux Fall, Aberdeen, Rapid City. When I was in Jr. High, our family vacationed in Florida. Now that was a trip!!

I'm reminded of an experience I had when my children were much younger. We were living in Devils Lake, ND at the time. We decided to go to Winnipeg on vacation. When we crossed the border, and were driving in Canada, one of our kids with eyes wide in amazement commented, "So this is what a foreign country looks like!" Yes indeed...that is what a foreign country looked like...much like the Dakotas!

I'll admit that I am quite fortunate in that I have traveled a number of times overseas. I've been to the Holy Land twice and I've been to Europe twice. I've been in Canada and Mexico (both rather briefly). I have been able to see different parts of the world. Everywhere I've gone it has been beautiful and wonderful. And also, everywhere I've gone there have been wonderful people, interesting people, loving people, faith-filled people. We may have different features and skin color (or not), and we may speak different languages (or not). But we're all just people making our way through this journey of life. Plus, with technology as it is, our world is truly shrinking and we can now work, trade, talk, do business with, collaborate with, worship with, etc. people from all around the world. It's good for us to connect now, because diversity is what we'll find at the banquet table of God's Kingdom.

This Sunday is World Communion Sunday. We celebrate the diversity of our world as we also celebrate the diversity of our Christian faith. I will look out across our congregation again this Sunday, and I'll be grateful for our diversity and the diversity found within our Christian Faith. John 3:16 reminds us that God doesn't just love a few people or just one nation, "For God so loved the world....."

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

This Sunday is World Communion Sunday. We'll receive a special offering that will help ethnic and racial minority students to receive scholarships to help with higher education costs. Communion will be served at both services, as well as on Wednesday evening at our 6 pm Midweek service. Also Pastor Keith will conclude the C⁵ Sermon Series. We'll look at our final word – Celebrate! Come join us!!