

JUNE NEWSLETTER

TO: All the good and gentle folk of the Community Presbyterian Church of Lac du Flambeau: members, affiliates and friends--Greetings!

From the top let me just say the normality for our return to worship, that is: when our "snowbirds" return, is radically different this year. Under more traditional circumstances, the community of faith here has been invigorated by their return and the church's life grows considerably. The number of those who have returned this year is commensurately less than usual due to the Covid-19 virus crisis. While this has had impact upon us and we will not most likely be able to do all the physical things we are accustomed to doing, it will not curtail our faith nor the commitments we have made in sharing that faith with all we can reach. It will just be different. For example, for many weeks now we have been holding "virtual" worship services via the internet. This has been tough going---we do not have an extraordinary sound system ---there was no need for such sophistication in our setting---and so we struggle a bit. Over the weeks we have made progress and each time it gets just a bit better, but far from perfect and nothing like being able to be here together in the flesh. We do what we can nonetheless. It has, at times, even been a bit of fun to stay on line after the service and chat---afterall, human beings are very much social beings, and we need to "see" each other---it just makes us feel better---well, at least it does me. During this time a well-known phrase from the past comes to my mind. It is from the "Civil Rights" movement so prominent in the last decades of the 20th Century and which is, unfortunately, still with us today. There has been progress in these areas, but the job is, in reality, not yet finished. I am reminded of a great quote from Helen Keller, a woman who faced substantial adversity herself and overcame it. The quote is:

The struggle of life is one of our greatest blessings. It makes

us patient, sensitive, and Godlike. It teaches us that although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.

This powerful statement, made manifest in the life of the woman who stated it, comports well with the Christian faith and the lives of those who share this faith in their daily activities. The Christian faith was once described, pejoratively, in these words: "They go to church on Sunday, they'll be alright on Monday, it's just a little game they play." It is a true statement in one sense, namely, this is the image many of us communicate, but it is "not the message" we have been given to share. That message is as simple as it is difficult---Love God and love your fellow humans. It is difficult because there are those who just do not seem to deserve love. But the gospel is clear: love them anyway and God will do the rest. We may not see it right away, but like the father in Jesus parable of the prodigal, Our Father is there waiting with open arms as well. So might it be with all of us.

These strange and difficult times will test us in many ways, but remember Jesus' statement: "I am with you always." Remember also, we have just celebrated Pentecost, the teaching of which is also simple, God is in us and we are in God. At Bethlehem God was with us (the Incarnation of God's Love), on the cross God was for us and on Pentecost God was in us---nearer than our next thought or breath. There is much for us to do in this world---too much hatred, too much discrimination and so much more, and we have this magnificent gift to share which has the power to change all things for the good and we are its ambassadors.

To those of you who have returned and/or are planning to come, we welcome your presence, as always. To those of you who are unable to do so, know that you are with us in spirit and we with you. And to all, our prayers and thoughts go out to you. May we work together to seek and speak truth and may we be willing to share the gifts we have received in so doing.

God bless you all, and as always,

Pax et Caritas,

Bill Anderson

