Rosie’s Reflection

I see a strong theme running through this Newsletter. What do you see, feel, and hear as you read and reflect? The pictures alone are worth a thousand words!

Tabor’s family, and the many families and friends associated with Tabor, have had a lot to celebrate lately! Baby dedications, baptisms, graduations, transitions from school to summer schedules (camps, activities, vacations, new jobs, Bible school, and Pastor Phil’s sabbatical) all point toward change and new beginnings. All these celebrations, transitions and milestones are important markers on this journey we call life. Some are familiar summer routines while others lead us into uncharted territories. We look at these events with anticipation continuing to celebrate each step of the way. On the other hand, we may hold back, or become discouraged when things aren’t going the way we planned.

So here’s a reminder (for all of us): As we dedicated babies and baptized new members, the Tabor congregation promised to pray, lend support and walk alongside you. In the midst of all the recent graduations and other celebrations, families, teachers, mentors, and friends also cheered you on with words of inspiration and wisdom. Take us seriously. We meant every word, and we’re committed to keeping our promises. Hold us to them. And your part, as Pastor Katherine urged in her “Candor” article this month, “look and listen for God.” And whatever you do, “Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way” (Colossians 3:17, the MSG).

-Pastor Rosie
At the time of this writing, I am again dwelling in the parables. Following Sheri Schmidt's meaningful children's story and our WDC Conference Minister's insightful sermon this past Sunday, May 22, I am especially drawn to the Parable of the Sower as found in Mark 4:1-20. I am once again struck by Jesus' admonition, “Let anyone with ears to hear, listen!” (v. 9).

We have a cacophony of voices and noises that are competing for our ears, our attention, our allegiance, our hearts. What are the “rocks and thorns” that prevent us from hearing and acting upon God's Word? What are the times and places where we fail to take root and recognize the voice of our Lord? There are many seductive and destructive powers in this world, and many may indeed listen and yet not understand; many may indeed hear and yet fall away.

In a world filled with so much noise and so many voices shouting to be heard, it is vital to train our ears, our eyes, and our hearts to be attentive to the places where God's Kingdom is taking root in the world. In the days, weeks, and months to come, I challenge all of us to look and listen for the places where we see God at work or hear God's voice. Become a “detective of divinity,” actively searching for God in every part our daily lives. For the more we look and listen for God, the more we see and hear God. The more we see and hear God, the more we feel called to join in what God is doing in the world.

Look and listen for God in conversations with loved ones, in the face of a stranger, in washing the dishes, in the midst of stress and busyness, in the rising of a loaf of bread, in the laughter of children, in a sunrise, in a shared meal, in solitude, in the mundane yet miraculous sprouting of a tiny seed into a stalk of wheat, a glorious flower, or a strong, magnificent tree.

Let anyone with ears to hear and eyes to see, listen and look! And more and more we will begin to see and experience the ways that God is generously sowing the good news of the Kingdom in all the places, terrains, and “soils” of this world. More and more we will begin to hear, recognize and desire to join in God's marvelous abundance thirty, sixty, or even one hundredfold.

~Pastor Katherine

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**Grace's Goodies**

*French Spring Soup*

Sherry Unruh had numerous requests for this soup which was served at the Fellowship Progressive Dinner on April 24.

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 # leeks, chopped (can substitute green onions for part)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 quarts water (or broth)
- 3 large potatoes, chopped
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 1 bunch fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1/3 cup uncooked long-grain white rice
- 4 teaspoons salt (adjust if using salted broth)
- 1/2 pound fresh spinach
- 1 cup heavy cream

- Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the leeks and onion, and cook until tender.
- Pour water into the pot. Mix in potatoes, carrots, asparagus, and rice. Season with salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes, until vegetables and rice are tender.
- Stir spinach and heavy cream into the soup mixture, and continue cooking about 5 minutes before serving.
Questions

Questions...questions...questions. Anyone that has spent any time with children in that 2-5 age range knows that there's always lots of questions! I have been reminded of this by being a grandpa. “Why is there a grain bin out there in the field by itself?” and “Why is that rock at the corner?” Now you need to know how to answer enough, but not too much, because next week the question will be “How do they get the wheat in the grain bin?” and “What is an auger?” These questions helped me to realize how much things have changed in my lifetime. Questions are how we learn about things, and how we learn about ourselves.

Questions that were asked at the baptisms are questions that we should each ask ourselves from time-to-time as a reminder or re-commitment.

As a fellow Christian I would ask you to think about the first three questions. As the church chair I would ask you to spend some time thinking about the last four questions.

Baptismal Questions:

1) Do you renounce the evil powers of this world and turn to Jesus Christ as your Savior? Do you trust in the grace and the love of Jesus and promise to obey him as your Lord?

2) Do you believe in God the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord; and in the Holy Spirit, the giver of life?

3) Do you accept the Scriptures as guide and authority for your life?

4) Are you willing to unite with this congregation and worship, serve, and share in its ministry?

5) Will you support this congregation by your earnest prayers, regular attendance, loyal service, and faithful stewardship as God gives you strength?

6) Will you live in Christian fellowship with this congregation, giving and receiving love, sharing burdens, and seeking the good of all?

7) Are you ready to participate in God's reconciling mission in the world?

Since we are half way through the fiscal year, and are behind targeted giving for the budget; and since the gift discernment process will begin soon, this is a good time to reflect on these questions.

-Jim Schmidt, congregational chairperson

VBS at Tabor: June 6 - 10

“Surprise! Stories of Discovering Jesus”

Celebration Service June 12, 10 a.m. followed by a picnic in the park.
“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Romans Chapter 12 is filled with wisdom and action. Have I sacrificed myself to God today? How can I be a living sacrifice in my daily living?

Romans 12:2 is a powerful verse. Our bodies belong to God and we are to offer ourselves unconditionally. Let God control our thinking, and our thinking will be changed to reflect what God's perfect and pleasing plan has in store for us. I try to pray each day "what will God do through me today? How will I reflect God's love?"

We all have unique gifts given to us by God. I have special passions for outreach and serving. One of the ways to serve is mentioned in Tabor's mission statement "HOSPITALITY, healing and hope." Share with God's people who are in need. Welcome others into your home. Practice hospitality (Romans 2:13). We learn from Paul's account with Lydia that she was a persistent hostess when she invited Paul and Silas into her home (Acts 16:15); she didn't give them a chance to say no. You might say she was rewarded for her hospitality by having the opportunity to listen to Jesus and learn about prayer.

Here at Tabor one of the ways we show our hospitality is by serving Wednesday night meals followed by a variety of Wednesday evening activities including children learning about Jesus, scripture and prayer and having fun doing it. Wednesday evening outreach began with inviting an excited kindergarten neighbor to church. A few years ago, with a different carload of children, I parked at the back of the church. As we got out, one child stood speechless looking at the church. When I asked what was wrong, he said "This is beautiful, can I really go in?" (And remember, we were at the back of the church!)

Now, over ten years later, 25 children, age 3 years old to high school youth, join our Tabor-grown children. I have been rewarded so many times by learning to know the children and hearing them say "Tabor is my church." Tabor is gifted with lots of "Lydias" showing their hospitality.

How do we find the gifts that God has delighted us with? Spending time reading God's Word and digesting it helps us find God's answer to us. If we do that, it will be a delight to do God's will. God's wisdom will spill over to us.

God gives us general principals to apply in many different situations and through God's Spirit, we will have God's wisdom flowing through us. Wow, that's pretty amazing! Wisdom for what? I would like the wisdom to know how to pass peace on to others. A children's song says "I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart." Can we really understand that? Can I really do my part in living peaceably with everyone, as much as possible? (Romans 12:18) I like to think God meant for us to focus on the first part of the verse. Does it give us an "out" to add the last part "as much as possible." I will have times that I will be offended or that I will offend others and times that my attitude will be tested. I need to remember that I am only responsible for my attitude and it will require all my effort to make peace with "everyone." If Paul, in his writing, would have said "most everyone," it would have been easier, but with God's will, if I do my part with all my effort, God will grant reconciliation "as much as possible." The song "peace is flowing like a river, flowing out to you and me, flowing out into the desert, to set the captives free" speaks to God's grace which has been given freely to each of us.

What part does your body play in God's kingdom? Is your gift to be joyful, to serve, to lead, to show mercy, to strive for peace? Whatever God has called you to do, do it in faith and love.

Prayer:  

God, it is with love for you that I sacrifice my time and body to your service. Help me to know how I can unconditionally serve you peaceably each day.