

Denice Leslie
September 2, 2007
14th Sunday after Pentecost
Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-16

“Showing and Telling Jesus’ Love Everywhere!”

Thursday night I was sitting in choir practice listening to the men learn their part to Pei Jesu which the choir will sing next week during our 9/11 Remembrance Observance in worship.

As the men’s voices swelled across the empty sanctuary I sat there watching Kathy Cannon, intently playing at the organ and Scott Hatfield as he was giving instruction and directing, sweat beading up on his forehead.

An inner feeling of joy filled me. I felt this overwhelming sense of the goodness of life, the goodness of all of you, and the goodness of God. I reflected on the Fresno Metro Ministry newsletter article on the myriad ways this church is in service and marveled.

Today its time to remember and celebrate how God works through all of us here at Memorial:

Just looking at the people in the choir I realized: As professionals, both Kathy and Scott have demanding careers. In addition to the ministry of music Kathy and Max serve as our Worship Plan Team chairs and Kathy is a clinical psychologist in private practice.

Scott is a high school science teacher. Scott also has a call to the ministry of helping others understand one can be a faithful Christian and affirm the information science gives us about creation.

Ron Zastovnik, tenor, and mandolin player in the Praise Team does tech work all day long at CSU Fresno, and then comes in here at 6p.m. on Thursdays to work on the projection for Sunday, and the mics and sound.

Cecil Leonardo, tenor, who continues to consult and do work for the city of Clovis as a civil engineer brings his personnel experience to the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

Connie Alfaro, alto, has a job with the city of Fresno in licensing and permits that requires the consummate skills of an international diplomat also serves as our Youth Director and

has taken on family life ministry and Sunday School within Youth Board.

Howard Cook, tenor, is a retired airport administrator is out there using his managerial and public forum skills working with the city of Clovis to see if we can’t become one of the cities first Solar energy sites.

Sue DeFranco, second soprano who is the Librarian at Gettysburg Elementary, plays the guitar, provides Sunday morning hospitality, and has been the mission educator of this church for at least a generation—finds time to promote and distribute various collections throughout the year for the Rescue Mission, the Salvation Army, and most recently, school supplies for our Katrina Covenant Churches.

And this is just a few of the folks in the choir. And how about all of you? I want to lift up a few folks you may be unaware of:

Dr. Karen Hansen-Smith not only is in private practice, and teaches the Young Adult Sunday School class with Andy, but also has a clinic in Fresno for poor women without health insurance.

La Donna Snow, who graduated with a degree in criminology, served as an officer with the Clovis Police Department, today runs her own leotard business in which she employs abused women in conjunction with the Marjorie Masson Center, Hmong Seamstresses in conjunction with the Manchester Employment Center and just recently gave a job to a woman who embezzled money from a Clovis school so she can begin to make restitution.

Pam Galindo has a room in her home dedicated to the storage and organization and distribution of back packs through the Clovis PD from items you provide through for the Homeless Ministry.

Jim Acton has turned the curse of his lymphoma into action on behalf of other lymphoma sufferers through raising unbelievable amounts of money for the Lymphoma Society.

Ozzie Hernandez who is serving on the board of the Fresno Metro Ministry brings his faith and his experience as a Missouri School Board president, Forensic Social worker and Clovis Police Officer.

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Then there are a myriad of ministry teams in this church:

The Boutique group whose efforts go to not only helping fund our connectional giving but specifically to the support of our missionary in Macedonia, Carol Partridge.

Those of you who serve in the ministry of our Mission Thrift Shop benefit local folks as well raise fund for our world service missions and pension obligation for retired pastors.

There are those of you who lead classes and groups for children, youth and adults which help us to grow and mature in our faith.

And those who serve in our Administrative ministries as stewards of our infrastructure: funding and finances, maintenance and facilities, and implementing order through our policies of operation.

Don’t even get me started on all of you who provide care giving ministry to all of us within this community through the caring fellowship of the Wow Potluck, the Special Friends and Parish Chaplains, the Prayer Chain or the Care Clusters, and Love Net, Dinners for Eight, PTO...

Then there is the Hmong Ministry Community Garden and Hmong Ministry Liaison Team, the Food Pantry, the Sierra Villa Rest home Ministry..... And I could continue.

What I know is what I see in you: GOD IS GOOD! What a life-giving privilege it is for us to be in ministry together for the sake of the transforming ministry of Jesus Christ!

Whatever your ministry involvement, you apply the values of this congregation of believers as listed on the front of our bulletin this morning.

Were you aware of that? I ask because I want you to consciously make the connection between the faith profess in Jesus Christ and the ministry we practice in his name. I want you to be conscious of the intentional way in which we chose to live out our lives.

As Pastor Kham Dy calls it: The Jesus Way. We chose to live the Jesus Way.

Please look at the front of your bulletin. We have a very simple purpose/mission: It is to “Show and Tell Jesus Love Everywhere.”

Underneath that statement are the core ways or values which we all agree that we as United Methodist Christians are to live.

As we begin a new learning and serving year together, it’s time to remember who we are.

In a moment I want you to join with me in reading our Mission/Purpose statement. As we do it, recall the people ministries I enumerated this morning and those not named and reflect on how they express our Mission/Purpose statement.

Let’s read together:

We Show and Tell Jesus’ Love Everywhere.

We show and tell about God’s love and acceptance by:

- *Being a nurturing, supportive community.*
- *Proclaiming the Good News of God’s Love*
- *Serving the needy*
- *Receiving God’s grace and forgiveness*

We remember Christ’s teaching by:

- *Honoring God’s gifts of reason and experience*
- *Respecting scripture and traditions of the Church*
- *Seeking God’s guidance by discovering and using our gifts for ministry*
- *Loving and respecting all people as each is made in God’s image.*

I have two more questions for you this morning:

- 1) How can you and your ministry teams consciously lift up this Mission/Purpose statement in your ministry? What could you do?
- 2) And in conjunction with this question is another: How can you get the word out to

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others that THIS IS WHO WE ARE HERE AT MEMORIAL?

Anyone have any ideas? (pause for time to think)
What can you do? How can you get the word out? (Wait) (use if needed: Need an example?)

Okay, Lets use the Mission Thrift Shop Ministry as an example. The Mission Thrift Shop is a ministry that attracts people from outside the church. People volunteer in this ministry who do not participate in worship. Many people from the neighborhood come in to shop.

What if those of you on the Thrift Shop Team took a few moments each work day and each of your two sale days to gather the volunteers in a circle for a few moments to welcome every one and before prayer you?

- Read this Mission/Purpose statement together and
- You made copies of this bulletin cover and stuck a copy in every sack of things sold at the shop?

OR Boutique Group, what if you all set a time after the arrival of the majority of the group, to do two things:

- Read this Mission/Purpose statement together and
- Had one person offer a word of prayer to bless the work of your hands for the glory of the mission of Jesus Christ? Barbara Nielsen would be very good at that.

Why? Why do this?

Because we aren’t just friends or members of a service club. We are Christians called to be gathered in Christ’s name and to honor him every time we meet in an intentional manner.

Because two of the core values that we have are

- to Proclaim the Good News of God’s Love and

- another is Seeking God’s Guidance by discovering and using our gifts for ministry.

And because in this way you show and you tell Jesus’ Love. You reach out and model for the un churchd what it means to be a disciple of Jesus while you are strengthening your own faith.

You are showing: This is what Christians do—they show and they tell Jesus’ love.

After all, we are a church. I mean the Lion’s Club and the Elk’s do wonderful work. And they too, are very close knit fellowships. Aren’t they Bob Brown?

What makes us different is that we serve Jesus. And we live the Jesus Way.

Those of you who do mission work outside of the church have situations in which you can’t proselytize.

But you can post this some place in your work station or office, or you can keep a copy of the Sunday bulletin handy and begin your day by reading it over.

OR if someone should express thanks to you, you can always say, “I follow Christ.” Or “I chose to live the Jesus Way.” Or “Don’t thank me, thank God—you see I’m a Christian.”

OR I’ve been where you are—but I found a new way of living. If you are interested in knowing more I’m here.

You see a lot of what we have is a well kept secret. We assume people know when they come to the Thrift store that it’s a Christian ministry.

But people don’t know what we stand for. Or really anything about what that looks like.

People are looking for a way to live that provides direction and purpose for living.

They are looking for a way that makes sense, that is sane, lasting, larger than the surrounding culture, and whole making.

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Jesus is the way. The way of justice. The way of love. The way of discerning what is truly life giving and what is false and death dealing in this world.

They also don’t know there are Christians in out there who encourage the use of reason and experience in applying scripture.

They don’t know any of these things unless we find a way to help them know who we are and what we are about.

As we come to the table of the Lord, let us come with thanksgiving for all that we have received, for all that Jesus lived and died and rose for and let us commit to showing and telling his love everywhere!