

We Are the Church
Pentecost Devotional - May 20, 2018

For Christians, Pentecost is a holiday on which we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early followers of Jesus. The English word “Pentecost” is a transliteration of the Greek word *pentekostos*, which means “fifty.” Jews used the phrase to refer to a Jewish holiday known as the Festival of Weeks, or, more simply, Weeks (*Shavuot* in Hebrew), which was seven weeks or “fifty days” from the end of Passover to the beginning of the next holiday. It was originally a harvest festival (Exodus 23:16), but, in time, turned into a day to commemorate the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. It was while the disciples were gathered together to celebrate this festival that the Spirit of God moved through and among them, leading them to spread the Good News and, in essence, starting the church.

Pentecost, therefore, is an appropriate time to offer this devotional, as we are celebrating the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the church, as well as the gift of God’s word to us. Some of these writings offer reflections on the various ways in which the church offers meaning to us. Some reflect on specific Bible passages. All are written (or drawn) by members and friends of Mifflin Presbyterian Church, who have been called together to be the Body of Christ in this place and this time. We thank each of them for sharing with us.

We hope that as you read these devotional and reflect on God’s word to you, you will also pray for the men and women, girls and boys who have written or drawn these entries. Please pray, as well, for Mifflin Presbyterian Church, that God may continue to guide us as God has done for over 177 years.

Sunday, May 20

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly... Acts 2:1

If you ask someone what is his or her favorite day or season of the church year, most people will answer Christmas or Easter. Mine used to be Advent – I love the sights of sounds of that season, as we wait for the coming of Jesus once again into our lives. I have fond memories of my Sunday School Advent booklet that we used in my home as we lit our family Advent wreath each Sunday in December. Recently, however, I think that Pentecost has replaced Advent as my favorite time of the church year. So many images represent that day:

Wind Flame Multiple languages being spoken
Bright colors of red, yellow and orange A Dove

Pentecost is often called the “birthday of the church”, signifying the beginning of Christians who gathered for worship, study, service and sharing. It is that great tradition that continues at Mifflin, as we, too, seek to follow the One who brings good news to the poor, release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. There are SO many powerful ministries at this church, ways in which the Spirit has empowered us to love and serve one another. During this Pentecost season, may we be watchful for ways that God is calling us to love and serve in new ways. When we are gathered in one place together as a church, who knows what that Holy Spirit will unleash? “And suddenly...”

Kathi Bubb
A Child of God

Monday, May 21

Running the Race

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.” 1 Corinthians 9:24_ESV

As a lifelong runner, I am predictably fond of the Bible verses that refer to running and the metaphor of running a race. The Bible has quite a lot to say on the subject with at least nine separate passages. And it’s no wonder; call me bias, but the topic is rich with metaphors for life, figurative and spiritual.

The question I get most from non-runners: “Why?!? Why do you run?” In other words, what’s your motivation? Running seems especially puzzling to the non-runner. They can’t figure out the purpose for what seems an intentionally self-punishing enterprise. My pat answer is, “Cause it feels so good when I stop”!

Seriously though, there are plenty of good reasons for running. In my youth, it was all about competing. With maturity and education, I discovered the great health benefits of being aerobically fit, not to mention the stress reducing aspects.

Spiritually speaking, I’ve been ‘running the race’ for a long time, as well. Paul’s intent in the text is clear: “Run to win. And what is the prize for which we are encouraged to compete? I think C.S. Lewis puts it best in his famous sermon, “The Weight of Glory”, where he defines glory as a “good report with God, acceptance by God...and welcome into the heart of things”. Now that is a prize worthy of the pain!

Ed Ward
Teacher

Tuesday, May 22

On April 8, a sentence from the prayer of confession prompted an epiphany of sorts for me.

The statement read, “You call, but we do not always listen.” That sentence made me think of my cat, Sylvester. Sylvester is a 6 year old menace, pretty much like the cartoon character, except his face looks more like Batman. I’ve always said he sees his name as a challenge to do mischief. He has long outgrown kitten behavior (supposedly), but he is always into something, unlike my other two cats. He NEVER listens. I often become irritated with Sylvester and he has had his share of “time-outs” or more likely I have had *my* share of “time-outs” because he never really learns anything from it (as you might expect from a child.) When I’ve had enough of his antics, I put him in the basement for a bit so I can have some separation from the stress of his behavior.

I often wonder if God sees me as I see Sylvester, challenged by the same behavior over and over. It occurred to me that rather than shaking His head (as I do with Sylvester) and throwing me out, God has built a bridge to me by sending His Son as my redeemer. He could have chosen to send me off somewhere by myself, but instead he offers His Grace, when I don’t deserve it and shows Mercy.

May I strive to show to others (and even to Sylvester) that kind of Love.

Annette Devores
Musician and Cat-mom

Wednesday, May 23

The church is:

A family

A second home

Wonderful

Thought-out

Holy

Friendly

A community

People

An accepting community of people who love one another

Members of myGroup

Thursday, May 24

Are you listening?

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 NIV "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Does God talk to us? Can we actually perceive God communicating with us? Absolutely! God does not typically speak in an audible voice, but He most certainly is speaking with us. The voice of God whispers directly into our heart and soul, guiding us, counseling us and comforting us. But are we listening, or are we too busy talking? God will not scream at us to pay attention, so if we are too preoccupied with our own thoughts, His gentle voice will be drowned out.

Our prayer time must consist of listening as well as speaking. We need to attentively reach for that small voice and eagerly let it guide us. In quiet prayer, ask God to reveal His will and then listen patiently for His response. The more often you do this, the easier it will become. However, if you fail to do this, you will miss out on the advice and direction God is offering. Worse still, your relationship will suffer, just as a marriage suffers when one partner simply refuses to listen.

For Christians who know Jesus intimately, the deterioration of their relationship which comes as a result of not listening is a steep downward slope. For those who are just getting to know Him, it can be a serious impediment to growth in their relationship. If you consistently fail to pay attention to what God is telling you, it will become progressively harder to make out His will against the background noise of your own desires. It may become so difficult that you will no longer believe that God even speaks at all.

Let's strive to do less talking and more listening today. Let's give the Lord a chance to be heard.

Leah Burch
Life Long Learner

Friday, May 25

Running the Race – Part 2

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31 KJV

In addition to be a fitness runner, since the late 80s, I've also been a distance runner, having completed 18 full marathons, but who's counting?!?The well-meaning critics who question running in general, really don't get marathon running.

Distance running teaches you many things, not the least of which is discipline and perseverance. But there is one very important prerequisite: patience! Don't approach distance running with a 'sprinters' mentality. You have to be able to put in the time and training and wait on results that aren't readily evident when you start. From the month's long training blocks to the many long, lonely runs, there isn't a lot of immediate gratification. Even the race requires patience, lasting 3+ hours to complete.

As a Christian, I have learned to wait on the Lord in my running and I'm working on the spiritual race piece. When we truly trust that He has our times in His hands, we will build the 'faith muscles' and our strength will be renewed as we rely on Him. We shall run and NOT be weary; we shall walk and not faint.

Lord, help us to trust you always, even when the work we are putting in, doesn't seem to yield fruit in the short term.

Ed Ward
Runner

Saturday, May 26

Great Father Great Love Great Joy

As we watch the awakening of spring, it lifts our spirits. The lush greens sprinkled with pinks, yellows, blues and violets fill our hearts with joy. Then we reflect on our greatest joys, our children and grandchildren, what a blessing He has given us! We watch them grow and mature, our joy and love seems to have no bounds.

How much greater than is the joy and love of our God?

These verses reflect that Great Love and Joy of our Father in Heaven:

How Great is the Love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called the children of God. (John 3:1)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord. (Psalm 127:3)

I have no Greater Joy than this to hear of my children walking in the (way of the Lord). (3John 1:4)

May our Great Father in Heaven fill us with his Love and Joy so that we can share it with others.

J Purcell
Grandma

Sunday, May 27

**Jesus
Loves Me
This I Know**

I first learned about the love of God and Jesus
through the people of the church, my home church in Erlanger Ky.
They knew my name as a child, they provided a safe welcoming space for me as a young teen
and they encouraged me when I was a teenager to become a leader.

Even now they continue to pray for me.

**For the Bible
Tells Me So.**

I liked to learn as a questioning, academic minded, young person
and my Sunday School teachers instilled in me a love for reading and studying the Bible--
whether the challenging parables of Jesus or some of the gruesome stories of the Old
Testament.

This gift of the love of Bible study served me well as I explored my faith
and committed my life to Christian ministry.

**Little Ones
To Him Belong
They are Weak but He is Strong**

By the time I went to seminary, good Christian professors
modeled a broader faith to me that was even more inclusive than I had growing up.
They helped me to see that God's blessings, concern and care are for all people, weak and
strong.

And I learned that I did not have to always be "strong" to be loved by God;
God uses my weakness and calls me to care for other "weak ones."

**Yes,
Jesus Loves Me
Yes Jesus Love Me**

It is still through the church and my Christian family
that I know the love of God in Christ as presented in the message of the Bible.
This love comes alive as I study the Bible with other Christians whose insights inspire me.

The church, my Christian friends, embody the love of Jesus to me and others
as we study, worship, pray and serve together.

**Yes Jesus Loves Me
The Bible Tells Me So**
And so do you.

David Bubb, Beloved Disciple

Monday, May 28

Interview with Max Morrison

What do you like about coming to church?
Playing with dinosaurs and watching the puppets

How long have you been coming to church?
60 years

Who do you like to see at church?
Nana and Grampa

Who likes to see you at church?
Miss Pam (nursery worker)

What is God like?
God is good.

What do you know about Jesus?
He died and lived.

What happens when you die?
You go to heaven.

Who is in heaven?
Grandpa Fred and Phil (the dog)

Max Morrison
Age 4

Tuesday, May 29

... to whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest"; and, "This is the place of repose"- but they would not listen. Isaiah 28:12 NIV

This verse breaks my heart. How much I need a resting place but how often do I not listen to God and rest in Him. When work becomes intense and I am caught up in the insanity, instead of listening to God and resting in God. When driving with all the other crazy drivers, I again fail to rest in God. When my life is escalating with family issues and activities, I need to accept God's resting place and renew.

Please God, let me listen to you and rest.

Yvonne Cradden
Church member

Wednesday, May 30

Music speaks to me likely because music was such a major part of parent's home. My mother was the church organist, my two sisters and I took piano lessons and we all sang in choirs, except for my brother who cannot carry a tune. Music and singing in a traditional church choir fills my soul. So I will share a song that our choir sang a couple months ago that just won't leave me. This is what our Heavenly Father wants His children to know about Him.

Be still and know that I am God.

The God of strength, the God of truth;
I am your refuge in your time of fear,
And you will know that I am near.

Be still and know that I am God,
The God who gave My only Son to you;
You will find hope in His great sacrifice.

Your faith leads to eternal life.

Though waters may roar and mountains may shake,

And danger fills your heart with deep despair,

With faith, and hope, and love,

You'll find Me through your prayers,

And know that I am near.

Be still and know that I am God.

In times of pain, in times of war,

In Me find solitude and perfect peace.

Keep faith, My wonders never cease.

With love, I speak the heavenly words you hear

So you will know that I am near.

Be still and know that I am God.

By Gene Grier

Sue Ward
Choir Member

Thursday, May 31

One of Jesus' last instructions to His apostles was to not leave Jerusalem and wait for the Father's promise. This promise was for them to receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. This power was to speak in tongues, heal the sick and preach the gospel to all.

Joshua 24:15 (paraphrased) says "choose you this day whom you will serve and worship". There were lots of gods to worship in Joshua's day, just as there are many gods to follow and worship today. Joshua said "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord".

The unique insight that I receive from these Scriptures is an every-single-day choice that everyone, Christians or not, must make. From your first waking moment of every day, you must answer that question – who or what am I going to serve today?

Pray for the Holy Spirit to come and give you your own Pentecost, and give you the power to choose to serve our Lord and Savior. Amen

Rod Elgin
Grandfather

Friday, June 1

*The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.
Proverbs 29:7 [NIV]*

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

"The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:35-40 [NIV]

It would not be surprising to see these passages chosen as favorites by many at Mifflin Church since service is one of our congregation's cornerstones. We are blessed to live in a caring and sharing community and regularly witness examples of Mifflin's generosity through our experience at GRIN. There are many mission opportunities available for all ages, interests and talents. Find your passion for service!

John and Nancy Williams
Senior volunteers

Sunday, June 3

Saturday, June 2

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39, NRSV

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Romans 14: 8, NRSV

These words from the Apostle Paul have come to be incredibly comforting to me, as the years have gone by. Knowing that I have a place as a child of God; that I have a promise of eternal rest and peace with Him, means that I can live with whatever comes in life on Earth. God has it all in His plan for me.

As a child, I grew up in the Presbyterian Church. Most of my social life was centered in church activities: worship, choir, Sunday school, youth group, and more. My Sunday school teachers were dedicated, wise and helped form my spiritual growth.

As a young adult, I drifted away from attending worship. When my children were very young, we lived near a small Presbyterian church which I passed frequently doing errands. Eventually, I felt a strong pull to attend a service. This brought me back to God. He had not moved, I had. And now, I had come home again.

Pat Nelson

Mother, Grandmother, nature-lover.

Vivian Winters age 7

Monday, June 4

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. I Chronicles 16:34

Today we begin Vacation Bible School here at Mifflin. In my experience, VBS always brings out the best in a church, and Mifflin is no exception. There are almost forty volunteers who are serving this week – tribe leaders, marketplace vendors, snack coordinators, recreation and song leaders, dramatists, decorators, registration facilitators and much more. These volunteers are from age 12 to those past retirement age. All are working together to provide children – both from our church and from the community – an opportunity to explore the Biblical story of Daniel and how his situation in Babylon over 2000 years ago is one that we can learn from today. We hope that the stories and songs that the children learn will stay with them for years to come and guide their lives as followers of Jesus.

The scripture verse listed above is one of five daily verses provided in the VBS curriculum that help us to remember who God is in the midst of all that we experience. I am indeed thankful to God for this Mifflin Church family for their faithfulness to serving God in this place through this ministry of Vacation Bible School.

Kathi Bubb
Child of God

Tuesday, June 5

I order you a prophet to the nations... Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Jeremiah 1:5, 7-8 NIV

This is one of my favorite verses. It is in my heart and mind every time I have traveled to unplanned destinations. The cost is great to say "Yes" to what the Lord asks of me and leave behind what I have. Through my daily living I've learned that our Father takes us where He needs us to be. By being obedient I can help others hear His voice, His consolation, His joy. There are many people who need God's presence like the immigrants, the illiterate. Every day I am more aware that the person next to me, in the house, at the office, in the church, on the street or on the call I am taking; even the ones that are so rude, everyone is fighting their own battle and needs the presence of God. Many times a smile, a gentle word, a genuine concern, a respectful silence is enough to restore peace, hope and dignity. **Again, Our Lord is sending us where He needs us to go!**

Gitana Eva Atunga

I am from Peru –a beautiful land-, I am a woman, mother, teacher, freelance writer and life time learner. I love and respect people, every living thing and to our Mother Nature.

Wednesday, June 6

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil
against you because of me.” Matthew 5:3-11 New International Version (NIV)*

In Israel, our guide Mike had five “Be” as we traveled around Galilee. When we were at the Church of the Beatitudes Mike encouraged us to “Be Attitudes”.

Many years ago I learned “attitude of gratitude”. I learned to be thankful for all kinds of things from major (trip to Israel) to minor like a nice hot shower.

Beatitudes are defined as blessings. To “be attitudes” seems to me to be the next level after thanking God for my blessings to being a blessing to others as well as to be the meek, to be the one hungering for righteousness, to be merciful.

God, I can only grow into being the “attitudes” with Your help. Let me remember I live in Your presence.

Yvonne Cradden

Thursday, June 7

Who is the Church?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. Hebrews 12:1

We were a group of Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal and Catholic pilgrims led by a Palestinian Greek Orthodox guide. On our pilgrimage we followed in Jesus’ footsteps on the bank of the Jordan and in Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Along our way we saw many magnificent church buildings built by other followers of different faith traditions, including Orthodox, Armenian, Catholic Ethiopian, and Coptic Christians, to celebrate moments in Jesus’ life.

When we speak of the church, we are often referring to the building in which we worship or our denomination. But what is the church really? On our recent trip to the Holy Land, I spent a lot of time reflecting on this question. The church began with a small group of disciples who walked in Jesus’ footsteps as he preached the good news, cared for the poor and healed the sick in a remote corner of the Roman Empire. They had no building; they were not a part of any denomination. They were simply a group of individuals who followed the example of Jesus.

During this pilgrimage, I was reminded of the true nature of the church. It is not magnificent buildings, even though they are inspiring. It is not the different denominations, even though some of them have roots which stretch to the earliest days of Christianity. Rather it is the faithful followers like those I travelled with and those who had gone before, who strive to carry out the commandments of a first century itinerant preacher and who believe that He is God’s only Son, that He died for our salvation and that the tomb is empty.

Ned Segelken

Member of the Church of Jesus Christ

Friday, June 8

Holy Land Visit

The most powerful image I brought home from visiting the Holy Land is of the people. In Israel/Palestine the mix of people is very complex and extends into several different categories: social, ethnic, religious, political, geographical, and historical. All of these in a country the size of New Jersey.

The diversity of the region reminds me of a line from a movie: "Allah loves infinite variety." And, indeed, our God does love infinite variety! The people there live with daily tension regarding safety and a future for their families. But you will also find joy and expectation. Many times during my visit I heard requests for prayers – prayers for peaceful talks that would lead one day to peace in the land. And prayers for unity, where, currently, there is separation.

God is worshipped in different ways there, but the one constant, in a land of complexity, is people praying to the One true God. We must continue to trust that our God will one day bring peace to ALL His people. May it be so!

Hazel Riegler
Life-long Learner

Saturday, June 9

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer; Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or need clothing and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you? The King will reply "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:35-40 NIV

"Here I Am Lord"

I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.....

When I first heard this song, it touched me deeply. I thought this is exactly how I feel about stepping out to serve those in need. My desire to serve the Lord is to be a light to those who do not know Him. May they yearn for his presence as I once did before I accepted Him into my heart as Lord and Savior.

When the Holy Spirit calls you, listen, go, and serve. You will never be the same.

Blessings,
Jayne Elgin
Servant of God

Sunday, June 10

In July 2016 we moved to Reynoldsburg. We were staying with our daughter here in Gahanna until our condo was ready. Between moving and selling our home in Niles, my husband Rich was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoma. July and August were a tough few months. We visited Mifflin in August – our first visit was a Sunday the kids were talking about their week at VBS. We didn't get to hear Pastor Bubb's sermon, but everyone was so nice.

In the next few months while Rich was going through chemo, we visited around eight more churches. We were not very impressed with any one church. It was around Easter 2017 when we thought that we would try Mifflin one more time. This visit we got to hear Pastor Bubb preach. We were both impressed, and we felt like he was speaking to us. We were both looking for some peace and strength to help us through this difficult time in our lives, and we find that at Mifflin.

We are so grateful for Pastor Bubb's words and for the friendship Mifflin showed us. We felt very comfortable at Mifflin, and in September we chose to join this wonderful congregation. Rich is doing well as his cancer is in remission. Thanks again for being there at the right time. God works in wonderful ways.
With love and gratitude,

Rich and Francine Livi
New members

Monday, June 11

Israel's Only Savior

*But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine. Isaiah 34:1 ESV*

A person's name identifies me, you, others. I admit I am bad at remembering names but I kept coming back to Mifflin because Stephanie remembered my name even if I did not return for several weeks.

But God ALWAYS knows my name from birth until I die. I never cared if He knows the number of hairs on my head but that he knows my name. When others ignore me or shun me, God never leave me. I am His.

When Mary Magdalene was crying at the tomb, Jesus called her by name. John 20:15-16. Jesus is calling my name and yours.

Yvonne Cradden

Tuesday, June 12

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. ~1 Timothy 4:12

This one verse is what I have used for many years now in my work with the Mifflin Youth. Just as the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy, I find it sums up perfectly what the young people of our church are called to be and that my purpose is to support them any way I can.

Whether I’m teaching Sunday School, chaperoning a Mission Trip or just hanging out with them at an event, I try to bring up some part of this scripture to remind them (and me) of their calling. They must be getting it because they even wrote it into an 8th Day Puppets skit this year!

More importantly than memorizing the scripture, they’re living it out. Our Mifflin Youth are amazing young people of faith! They participate in and help lead worship, help with many different service projects we sponsor, step out of their comfort zone to share their faith, and set a good example in our community.

I’ve come to realize that this verse is not just for those young in age, but also for those young in faith, young in confidence, young in courage, young in knowledge, young in It means that we don’t get to use “I’m new to this” as an excuse to back away. When we get the urge to back away, remember that we are to set an example for others so that they may see Jesus through us.

Courtney Riegler
“Youth” at Heart

Wednesday, June 13

Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:24-25

You know what the greatest remedy on earth is today?... it’s not a pill. It’s not a shot. It’s a hug. Bruce Dern, actor

On a recent trip to Montaña de Luz in Honduras, our word for the day was “hug” – un abrazo. A hug is a touch of love from another person. Touch is so powerful! It is difficult to imagine people like the lepers in Jesus’ time, who were never able to experience touch because they were considered unclean. Like them, the HIV positive children at Montaña de Luz often experience discrimination. People are afraid to touch them because they fear transmission of the disease. These children and teens are hungry for love. A hug and kind words can do so much to communicate God’s love to others.

Cathy Morrison
MdL Advocate

Thursday, June 14

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Psalm 46:1-7 NIV

At the 9/11 Memorial Plaza in New York City, a special tree makes its home there. It is called the Survivor Tree. Several workers found this Callery Pear tree after a month of it being buried under smoking rubble, ash and debris. After further inspection, they found that despite many limbs being broken off and the trunk scarred and burned, there was one branch that had green leaves. The tree was carefully moved to a nursery where it was cared for. After several years it was able to be moved back to its home in the Memorial Plaza and has the honor to be named the 9/11 Survivor Tree.

This tree reminds me that despite our imperfections, scars and brokenness, God has a plan for each of us. Just like the tree, sometimes we feel like the world is crumbling down on top of us, and being able to look beyond the immediate seems impossible. It is at those times that we can remember, “The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” When we keep our faith that God has a plan for us, we can be open to hear God’s Word and respond accordingly.

Jim and Ann Pietrykowski
Parents, Teachers and Learners

Friday, June 15

A sweet welcome graces the Mifflin congregation as we pass by our beloved dogwood tree at the parking lot entrance to church while entering for worship. Legend has it that these trees, plentiful in Israel in Jesus’ time, were as tall and as strong as oaks. The cross Jesus carried and was crucified on was a dogwood. It is said that the dogwood, after learning its role in crucifying of our Lord, was so distraught the tree never grew tall or mighty again – preferring to become gnarled and twisted. The four petal blossoms that greet us during Pentecost are formed in the shape of a cross - the vertical petals long and the horizontal petals shorter to form our beloved symbol of Jesus’ sacrifice for us. Stop and look closer at the petals and you will see a blush color marking the points where the nails went into His skin. At the center of this flower, you’ll see a crown of thorns.

I am thankful to the gardener who planted this tree and to our Lord who created this living symbol of His everlasting love for us.

Tracy Magnuson
Nature Lover

Saturday, June 16

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Isaiah 52:7

Now it's your turn! How are you going to share the Good News of God's love? It's as easy as telling a story about your faith, your church, your life experience, your favorite Bible verse, your third grade Sunday School teacher or any other way that God has been a part of your life. Find someone to share that story to today or this week.

Let us see your beautiful feet!!