

The Pastors Connection

Dec. 2010

An Active Stillness

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Pausing may be our generation’s most needed spiritual discipline. We live with constant noise, the expectation of instant availability and a dizzying array of entertainment options. In the face of action and reaction God invites us into periodic stillness; not for the purpose of “emptying;” rather to know anew the abundance of God’s generosity.

Sunday Nov. 28 begins the 2010 season of Advent. Advent is a time to wait fulfillment of God’s promises. It is opportunity to anticipate Christ’s coming. It is invitation to sharpen focus on foundations so as to not miss God at work in His world.

Our Worship Planning Team has discerned to follow the themes developed and published by the Mennonite Church Leader Magazine. The material is introduced this way “When we stop long enough to notice what’s going on, God’s generosity and creativity surprise us, and, catching the vision, we can’t help but respond. As we gather for worship, we suggest beginning each service with silence, and leaving one or two quiet times within the service. A few snippets of stillness can offer us a sense of spaciousness and suggest a bounty of time, as well as give us opportunity to receive deeply what has been said, to reflect on what we have heard”.

In that spirit we will weekly introduce the lighting of the Advent candle by the ringing of a bell calling us into active silence. Returning again to the worship resource words: “we encourage you to use the time to pray; to remember why we are people of faith to begin with; to remember the ways of the One who made us; to receive the Love who was born into poverty” so He might become our Lord and Savior through a faithful life, death, resurrection and reign as Lamb of God.

Update on mission discernment: In last month’s Connection I noted that generous commitment of the Elsie Zook Mission Fund (EZMF) was rapidly distributing funds, requiring review of our policies. We also revisited the donors wish that the monies strengthen the mission involvement of Conestoga Mennonite Church (CMC). As a result we have discerned to retain the uncommitted balance for one of three priorities: CMC members involved in long or short term mission, a partner mission church relationship, or persons going on a short term mission team sponsored by CMC. We have sent letters to current EZMF recipients alerting them of these changes. Pause in this holiday season to pray that others would step up to meet their funding needs when our current commitments are fulfilled. In your moments of stillness praise God for the significant kingdom impact our stewardship of these funds has to His glory!

Special times to invite guests: There are several opportunities this month to give a special invitation to friends and neighbors to worship with us. Sunday evening (6 PM)

Dec. 5 we are hosting a “Community Christmas Hymn Sing.” Sunday morning Dec. 12 we will host the Conestoga Christian School Vocal Ensemble during our worship hour. Sunday Dec. 26 we will meet in the fellowship hall for a “Christmas Fellowship Brunch” during the 9:30 – 10:20 SS time followed by our morning worship in the sanctuary. Invite family, friends and neighbors to these special events as together we set time aside to be still and know that God is God, and God is good!

Joyfully living His story with you, Pastor Bob