

Sunday June 25th, 2017

Remember, Rejoice, Reunite

Peggy Jensen's last reflection

Prayer: God surround us with your calm presence as we listen for your words of encouragement now. Help us to remember that the words in scripture are always here to lift our hearts and calm our souls. May the thoughts and words that we share be your word for us today. Amen

Retirement, this will be a new adventure. You have taught me a great deal about retirement. You have a choice about what you do with your time but the time disappears quickly, especially with church and community activities. You all give your time generously.

At BC Conference at the end of May, there is a time to recognize the retiring ministers. When I arrived at Conference I was invited to record a video offering my advice to new ministers.

1. Interim Ministry: means change and transition, Congregations say they are willing to change as long as everything remains the same and nothing changes! You have actually made a lot of successful changes here and I hope you feel good about what has been accomplished.
2. Choosing hymns no matter what you choose someone will be thrilled and someone will be unhappy! Thank you for trying new hymns, sometimes I found some favourites for you! Thanks to Marilyn for her gift of music and being so adaptable.
3. My favourite passage is **Philippians 4:4-9**
Rejoice in God, always rejoice
There is Spirit at work and you can see it when you serve a congregation.
Watch for the Spirit and share the good news of God's presence in people's lives.

The readings today were non-lectionary –Peggy's choice. I changed the rule! The Philippians passage is my favourite that you heard today and I want us to reflect on this briefly, then I hope you will mark your Bible at home and return to this important scripture, **Philippians 4:4-9**.

Rejoice in God, always rejoice

We have so much in our lives to be grateful for! Try rejoicing and giving thanks-- instead of complaining,

Let your gentleness be known to everyone....

Now this is a challenge but I can be gentle. This has helped my ministry and how I deal with people. I do endeavour to be the calm presence in a stormy meeting! Of course not always gentle, but I try.

Do not worry about anything very hard to do (as I was preparing to write this I was directed to Matthew 6:25) "*therefore I tell you do not worry about your life, what you eat or what you drink or the Shared Ministry agreement or the congregation after you leave, is not life more than food and clothing. Work for the kingdom of God and trust God.*"

Pray about everything, with thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.

Prayer is already an established practice here. I am so grateful that you do the prayers of the people and hopefully more of you will offer to lead the congregation in prayer. You have a powerful prayer chain, I have seen and experienced the results of this community at prayer. Continue to pray, individually and together. God hears the prayers and works through others to answer your prayers. Trust God to answer your prayers.

Keep on doing the things that you have learned, and received and heard and seen.

You have wonderful opportunities ahead as **Christ Church Gabriola !!!**

Don't forget what we have accomplished in this time together. You have learned to work together, to share responsibilities and to have fun and fellowship. Many more pot-lucks and parties will help.

Creating the Shared Ministry Agreement was an amazing process. When I think back to the house meetings, they really helped bring you together. It is not the words on paper but your emotional commitment to this community of faith. I think the May 7th vote was very significant, so it took the lawyers a while but now it is finished. Getting the legal document signed is like the marriage ceremony. When a couple exchange their vows and sign the paper it is an affirmation of a commitment they had already made to each other. So signing the papers today is an affirmation of the commitment you have made to each other over the past year and years as you have grown together. Now you can look forward to a future. All of us have interesting adventures ahead of us. Remember that God is with each of one of us and we are never alone.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

May it be so . Amen