

Faith UMC Newsletter

October 2017

Listening to the Voice



*“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; ...
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; ...
The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; ...
The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare.”*

Psalm 29:3a, 4, 5a, 7, 8a, 9a

I moved to Grand Rapids from a small town in the southwestern corner of the state. We previously lived in New Buffalo and I worked in Three Oaks. Both are towns of only about 2,000 people – at least year-round. New Buffalo does swell in the summer with many seasonal visitors, but still it has a total of just three stoplights and when we first moved there in the 1990’s there was only one stoplight. ☺

Living in a city is a new experience for me. Getting used to the traffic has been an adjustment. Also, since I do not have a very good sense of direction, I get lost fairly frequently. Fortunately, I have a steady companion helping me with directions. Whenever I am going to a new place, I plug the address into my smartphone and a friendly voice tells me what to do: “Turn right here. Turn left there. Take exit such and such off the Interstate.”

This voice is tremendously helpful to me. Without it I would spend a lot more of my time wandering around in circles. However, whenever I am supposed to go in a straight line for a while, the voice will go silent. After some time passes, I wonder: “Is she still with me?” Invariably, the voice will speak once again just before I need to change direction.

When this happened to me the other day, I thought about how this is like the direction God gives to us. Sometimes we go through long stretches when it seems that God’s voice has gone silent. We may wonder, “Is God still with me?” If we are patient and trusting and listening carefully, God’s voice will sound out once again at just the right time when we need some direction. Or, sometimes if we miss that last direction we have been given, we may end up traveling on the wrong path, but then the voice will come and give us the correction we need. “Recalculating” is what the GPS voice is likely to say. “Repent and turn around” is what the voice of God is likely to say.

Sometimes God’s voice is mighty and loud and clear, as is described in the passage above from Psalm 29. At other times, God comes to us with a “still, small voice” as God spoke to Elijah in I Kings 19:12. That is the language found in the King James Version. Other recent translations of this Scripture passage speak of God’s voice as a “gentle whisper.” I like that. God whispers to our hearts in various

ways. Usually the sound is not audible, but a nudging or a prompting that we feel within telling us to do something.

May you listen carefully for that voice in the month ahead. I intend to do so, also. I am praying for God's direction at this particular moment in time as I will soon be turning another year older. ☺ Further, I am praying that God will provide guidance to me and the leaders of our church as together we determine how best to live out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Listening with you,
Pastor Sherri



Welcome to Our New Administrative Assistant

We are pleased to welcome our new secretary, Jamie Dunn to Faith UMC. She comes to us from Negaunee, MI in the Upper Peninsula. A 2014 graduate of Alma College with a degree in music, she enjoys playing violin, viola and piano in various ensembles as well as scrapbooking, woodworking, traveling, and attending theater/musical performances.

Stitch-n-Time ministry was given a very generous donation of yarn. Many colorful skeins of yarn are now available to be knitted or crocheted into mittens, hats, scarves and afghan squares. Please contact Sally Johnson (453-8537) if you are willing to help with this wonderful ministry.



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