



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Become a part of God's family at First UMC

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Vision: Hamilton First United Methodist: a growing extended family sharing Christ's love in our community and the world

Mission: To Know Christ and Make Him Known Through Worship and Mission with Our Congregation and Neighbors

January 11, 2012

Dear Friends:

Do you want to complain? I keep thinking that since my first of the year HomeTouch, it might sound as if no one is ever to complain. I want to make sure that you know I believe in complaining. It is more a question of the right time and place to complain. Let me explain.

I think it is important for our souls to complain so that we empty them of bitterness and can see God again. I think it is important to complain so that those who need to know, know where it hurts and why. (I think of my hip. It was only because I complained to the MD about a pain in muscles that I thought was related to my knees that she found my hip. Thank goodness.) It is important to complain when individuals are not listening to you. It is important to complain when you are being mistreated. Complaining can be very helpful.

Complaining can also be off putting. You all know the story about the boy who cried wolf. If we make complaining a routine, then the people around us tune it out. If we complain to everyone who walks by, then people ignore what we say. If we complain about things that cannot be changed, then people around us do not know when we complain about something that can be changed. If we never complain to God, then it appears that we are willing to live with the evil in this world.

Complain to God? You betch ya! When was the last time you read the psalms? Many of them are joyous, it is true. But some of them are downright angry. They basically say, "How dare you God?" Isn't God offended? I think it is like us with our children. We would rather find out

what they are angry about than have them stomp off in silence, unengaged. God knows our feelings, so voicing them does not introduce something new to God. Rather voicing them cleanses our heart so that we can be healed and open a place for God's love and healing.

I think it was Martin Luther who suggested that we ought to read the psalms through each month? That would be three psalms a day. Why this suggestion? Because the psalms contain all the feelings that we have about life and tie them to God. Isn't that the point of a Christian life, to be tied to God?

So I say complain, first and foremost to God. Then complain judiciously to those around you. Make sure you give the right complaint to the right person. It would not have helped me to complain to the Bishop about my hip hurting. He did not know about the possible need for a hip replacement. My knee MD did know. Right person to hear the complaint, even if she was not the one who could do the surgery. I think you get my point.

Complaining is not an end unto itself. It is a practice to let go of things that stand between other people and us or God and us. So I say complain, get it out. Then go for a walk with God and have a conversation about what is next. You know, even in your bed you can walk with God.

Grace, love and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy".

Rev. Peggy