



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

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Vision: Hamilton First: A growing extended family sharing Christ's love
in the heart of the city.

Mission: To Know Christ and Make Him Known in the World

December 14, 2011

Dear Friends:

Are you ready for Christmas? I am not talking about have you purchased all the presents – that is not important (OK, for some of you it is important). I am talking about being ready for the birth of the Christ child.

One author that I read suggested that Advent is about dealing with the eternal. What does it mean to have God in our lives? Do we really trust that God will do what has been promised?

I am sure that your first answer is of course I trust God. I have learned to trust God since I was a small child. Singing “Jesus Loves Me” taught me to trust God’s love. Then I heard about Jesus life, death and resurrection and I trusted God with my salvation. Now I trust God with?

We trust that God loves us and with our salvation, but I am asking you to go a little deeper. Do we trust that God will be in the midst of life’s painful experiences? Do we trust that Christ will be born into dark places? Can we, as Mary did, say yes to being a single unwed mother because God has asked us? Do we really believe that God is in our pain?

When people have pain, physical or emotional, it is normal for us to blame someone else. That is a clear step in the grief process. Dealing with any major pain throws us into grief and the same processes as when someone has died. Thus, when something goes terribly wrong, it is easy to blame God. Which is OK. At least it is OK as long as we do not stay there. Even the psalmist would get angry at God. However, the end of the psalm came back to trust. They “remembered” who God is, was and will be. Often it would say something such as “but you are the same God who...”

Do we really trust God with our grief? Do we trust that in the midst of that terrible place where the future does not seem to offer us the hope that we once had, that God will act? Do we believe, not only on Good Friday, but every day that Christ died and rose for us, so we have no fear of death? Do we trust that the babe of Bethlehem will be born anew in our hearts this Christmas.

I hope we trust, for it makes all the difference in how we live. Each time we take communion we proclaim our faith when we say "...as we proclaim the mystery of faith, Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." It allows us to face all of life, even death or any type of grief, with an assurance and trust. God will act in our lives. Christ will be born again. May it be so for you this week. May you walk each step of your week trusting that no matter what comes, God is there beside you.

Grace, love and peace,

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

Rev. Peggy