



First United Methodist

Become a part of God's family at First UMC

225 Ludlow St. Hamilton, OH 45011

513-896-5683

firstumc@firstumc-ham.org

firstumc-ham.org

Rev. Peggy L.T. Garrison, Ph.D., Minister pastor@firstumc-ham.org

*Vision: Hamilton First: a growing extended family sharing Christ's love
in the heart of the city (A United Methodist Congregation)*

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

July 21, 2010

Dear Friends,

I hope that the middle of July is finding you comfortable and not too warm. It has been a muggy summer. Thank God for air-conditioning. For many, many years I bet you got by without it. What kept you going?

This week, we are looking at what keeps us all going when life gives us lemons. Yes, I know we are to make lemonade. How do we walk with God from one day to another? Sometimes it is hard to see God on the good days. How do we see God on the "lemon" days? What is it we need?

Jesus' disciples came to him to be taught to pray. I wonder if what they wanted was the way to keep on their faith journey. They needed something to help them know they were on the right track. A prayer was given to them known as the Lord's Prayer. Do you remember the words? The passage in Luke reminds us:

¹He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."

This is where the Luke passage stops. It then reminds us that we pray because we believe that in asking, God answers prayer. But not unless we say them.

Jesus had to teach his disciples how to pray. Do you remember teaching someone else how to pray? What would you do to help someone pray? What would you say?

With children we start simply with a grace, "God is great, God is good, Let us thank God for our food." It is something they can repeat over and over. This is a good start. Then we teach them a bedtime prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Again simple and easy to repeat.

"But," I can hear people saying, "it mentions dying. We don't want to scare children about dying." We do not want to scare children, but telling them that God watches over them

even in death is to affirm our faith. To teach children that death is real, unlikely for them for a very long time, but real is to help them deal with their own life.

I like to couch the teaching of "Now I Lay Me." In the context of the song, "All Day, All Night." Then the words become this:

All Day, all night, Angels watching over me my Lord,
All Day, all night, Angels watching over me

Now I lay me down to sleep. Angels watching over me my Lord
Pray the Lord my soul to keep. Angels watching over me.

Chorus

If I die before I wake. Angels watching over me my Lord.
Pray the Lord my soul to take. Angels watching over me.

Chorus

We have many great prayers in our Christian heritage. Each one adds to our understanding and the richness with which we see God. Everyone can remind us that God is in charge, and will walk with us through anything. Some remind us how to live (The Lord's Prayer.) And some prayers remind us it is okay to die (Now I Lay Me.)

What prayers do you remember? Who taught them to you? How did your prayers teach you how to take lemons and ...? What do you want to say to God in prayer right now?

Prayer is there to help us have immediate access to God with all our feelings. I invite you to pray this week. Say a prayer of thanksgiving. Pray for yourself. Pray for the church. Pray for our world. Pray for your family. Pray for.... Then you will have a good walk with God this week.

Grace and Peace,

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

Peggy L. T. Garrison