



First United Methodist

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 (A United Methodist Congregation)*

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

August 11, 2010

Dear Friends:

We get to think again about Chapter 11 of Hebrews, where we are still listening to the litany of "By faith." I actually love this section of scripture because it reminds us of all the people of faith who have come before us.

What a great witness to the way that people for thousands of years have followed God, not because they could see and touch God, but because they believed. You can almost see the mothers and fathers lined up marching from one decade, one century to the next, one millennia to the next following where God has lead them. A vast ocean of disciples.

Then the 12th chapter begins with the statement of "we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses" and I begin to look around to see who is there. Who do I recognize from the people who loved and encouraged me? Then I smile. What a gift, being surrounded by people of faith who love you.

I begin to think of various individuals in the crowd and give thanks for them. But at this point, I don't want to distract you with my individuals. What I really want you to do is think and talk with someone about your crowd. Who is in your crowd? Who are the people that loved you into the faith? Who are members of our Christian faith that you would love to see surrounding you? Who from history is there urging you on? Is it Peter? Maybe it is John Wesley or his mother Susanna! Maybe it is St. Augustine or Francis of Assisi. I would not be surprised if your crowd included Abraham and Sarah or Moses. Who makes up your crowd?

What these passages are designed to do is to keep us faithfully on the journey, when faith can be so elusive. As we know, life can be hard. When you cannot touch God, at moments it can be hard to believe. We need those around us (the church) who encourage us on the way. This is true not only of the current church, but of the church universal (a common name for those in heaven).

The passage in Hebrews reminds us that not only is it hard for us to believe, it was hard for those first Christians, first followers of God. Yet, because they kept to the course, we have our faith today. I pray that we might keep our faith alive that we might be called of as having "by faith" followed God so we will be in the next generation's cloud of witnesses.

Have a good walk with God this week. Remember those in your cloud of witnesses and give thanks!

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Peggy