



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 5, 2010

Dear Friends:

Have you had any good tomatoes yet? I wait every summer, for there is nothing I love better than a fresh garden tomato. I remember them from years past, their juiciness, the way the taste with bread and butter. It is so delicious. I live in hope each summer until I get that first wonderful bread, butter and tomato sandwich. I don't even need any bacon with it, but add bacon and I feel like I am in heaven.

You might not like tomatoes as much as I do, but I guess there is a food that has that same quality for you. Something you long for until you get it on a special occasion. You know how the memory of it sustains you until the time when it is presented to you and you can enjoy it, savor its taste and feel blessed.

This week's scripture is that kind of remembrance. It is not about food but about faith. I am talking about Hebrews 11, that great chapter about faith begins.

¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

The writer of Hebrews (it is debated as to who wrote this book) tells about the history of faith in what I think of as the "by faith" lessons. For the author, in this 11th chapter names various members of God's community who took a risk and walked by faith. This week the examples are Abram and Sari who we know as Abraham and Sarah. Their names were changed because they lived by faith.

Faith is a really hard thing to live by because by its very definition "things hoped for, conviction not seen" faith is always elusive. We can almost see what it means, but then it is out there ahead of us and we have to have trust that our faith is in something real. When the world tells us what we believe in is not real, it is even harder.

Those early disciples needed reassurance that their faith was indeed worthwhile. They needed assurance of God's love and grace. I am sure there are days when each of us need that same assurance.

That need for assurance is why this chapter of Hebrews is such a gem. In a few short pages the author tells of the people of God trusting in God and God fulfilling the covenant made. God's love is so great, that even when we do not live up to our end of the covenant, God is consistent through Christ.

OK. I have offered the assurance, but that may be backwards, for where do you need assurance about your faith? Is it God's presence in the everydayness of life? Is it because you have a grief that you do not know how to bear? Maybe you have problems with thinking about your own death. Maybe it is concern over the congregation at First. Maybe it has to do with why you need faith on a daily basis. There are all kinds of reasons that we might question faith.

When I doubt, I let the faith of my ancestors carry me until I am able to see God's presence and say, "Yes, I believe; yes, I trust God."

I pray that this passage from Hebrews will be a great witness to you, for chapter 12 is yet to come. Have a good walk with God this week.

Grace and Peace,

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

Rev. Peggy