

Have Faith Like A Child: Life Is Wild, God Is Good

As we prepare to move into the month of August, our congregation and other congregations in the area will be blessed with the gift of teaching young people about our faith. From Sunday, August 11th through Thursday, August 15th at 6:30-8:00 PM each night we will be hosting Vacation Bible School for the community of Denver along with St. John's UCC and Trinity UMC.

In the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is asked by his disciples: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus responds not by describing great and powerful leaders or friends who have led *nearly* blameless lives (those we might think of when we imagine who God favors most), but rather calls a child over to sit with him. Jesus turns to his disciples and says, "Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

Now, many of us have heard the saying that we should "have faith like a child," but I wonder how often we stop to think about what this kind of faith entails. This kind of faith is not a reductionist faith, or one that is okay with easy answers (anyone who has spent time with a toddler knows that there are, in fact, no such things as easy answers). Instead, to have faith like a child is to reclaim for ourselves a sense of deep wonder at the mystery, love, and abiding presence of our God—to reroot ourselves in fierce hope and trust in God's goodness. Jesus gives us this nudging reminder because he knows us—he knows that as we grow older we grow more jaded, more frustrated, more disappointed, and we can lose our sense of wonder. All of these are like stumbling blocks to our experience of God in this world, and Jesus invites us to a more humble and open-hearted life in the presence of the divine.

At Vacation Bible School this year we will, along with the children, be reminded of the power of God's goodness in a world where so much brokenness surrounds us. In fact, as we prepare the curriculum I have been struck by how much adults need the reminders that the children will be hearing:

When Life Is Unfair, God Is Good.

Even in the midst of things not going the way we plan or imagine, God is still the one who has promised to be with us forever. This promise was true for the Israelites in Egypt, and is true for us today.

When Life Is Scary, God Is Good.

When death happens, when diagnoses and unexpected challenges and hardships come our way, God is still with us, crying with us, abiding with us, loving us.

When Life Changes, God Is Good.

Even when we face newness and a different reality, God is steadfast. We can rely on the unchanging nature of God in the midst of a constantly shifting world.

When Life Is Sad, God Is Good.

Through the resurrection we remember God's promise that the worst thing is never the last thing. God's power to usher new life and hope into existence is at work in our life and in our world. We trust that God is with us in the midst of hard things, and loves us through them.

When Life Is Good, God Is Good.

Finally, we are reminded to pay attention for all of the good things that happen in the midst of our daily lives. God is around us all of the time.

I pray that this August we remember Jesus' call to us to have faith like children, taking time to revel in the wonder of God's goodness and love for us—even when life is wild. Thanks be to God.

*Peace,
Pastor Marissa*