

The "What If's" of Life

Rev. Gotham said something in his sermon this morning that made me think about the "what If's" of my life. What if that Sunday morning I decided to go to church I had listened to my mother and not gone and instead waited for her to go with me. What if when I arrived at that church no one had spoken to me and ignored my presence? What if I had waited the two weeks that my mother requested would I have ever gone, or would it have been just another empty promise in my life? What if the woman who told me to come and sit by her had ignored me? Would I have returned? What if I had never returned how different would my life have been without God in it. Would I have been just an empty shell? What would I have been like as a teenager without that woman who talked with me about my life or without the Pastor that encouraged me with hard truths? How would that faith which began in that small church have served me when I was a teenager and young adult becoming a nurse? How did becoming a nurse impact other lives? How did my faith impact my life? How did that in turn impact my children's lives? I saw how that small church changed the lives of my mother and father and my brother and his family when they followed me to that small church. I saw the impact when years later my brother would call me and tell me that he had been forgiven for his sins. It may have taken years and may have happened in a Lutheran church up north, but it began in that small Methodist church in Madison Heights where they followed me. I have belonged to three churches in my life, and all have impacted me in some way. Although my growth began in that small church in Madison Heights it continued to grow in Washington where I first realized that God loved even me unworthy as I am. It continued to grow here at Utica United Methodist Church where I have remained for 42 years and grown even more in my faith with the love and fellowship of others and the wonderful Pastors I have encountered, especially Rev. Gotham who made sure I went to Emmaus and inspires me all the time. What would my life be like now without my faith. Would I have just been bitter about the cancer I had years ago and think that God had caused it? Or would I with my faith see how God had used it to make me better and more grateful for the life given. We all have what if's in our lives, I am grateful that mine were there, and God was in the decisions. Thanks be to God! How has God touched your life?

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me by still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Dear Lord, we thank you for this day. Be with us Lord in all things. Be with those who are sick, and those who grieve, those who are homebound, those who are lonely. We thank you for the blessings we have received. We ask that you be with us in all things, in our days and in our nights. Bless and protect our Pastor. We thank you for bringing him safely back to us from his mission trip. Be with the others who left home and family to go to Africa to help the people there. Be with our church, may we be the hands and feet of Christ in this place. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. Be with those who are far from us, keep them safe and well and return them to us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson