

The Mustard Seed

Congratulations

March Birthdays

Ruby Miller (Owen), March 6th
Janet Showalter, March 14th
Leo Schrock, March 22nd

March Anniversaries

Ed & Carol Miller, March 19th
Fred & Judy Yoder, March 29th

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by Dawn Wyse

I knew it was really strange that God made it so clear to me over a week ago that He was going to have me write this article about His presence.

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What's Happening?

by You?

Do you love to stay on top of what is happening at Kalona Mennonite Church and our surrounding community? And do you have a knack for writing? If you answered yes to both of those questions, you're in luck! We're still looking for someone to write the What's Happening section of the Mustard Seed. If you have any interest, please contact Janice.



Pastoral Search Update

by Stacey Ropp (On behalf of the Search Committee)

Greetings from the Search Committee. We want to give you updates on what's happening with our committee, but we also recognize that this month's update doesn't vary much from last month. We are in the process of reviewing MLI's (Ministerial Leadership Information forms) and determining if there are candidates we would like to talk to after reading through their MLI. We realize this process may take a while and will try and keep you informed as we are able.

As a reminder the Search Committee is made up of Lynn Hostetler, Kent Lehman, Stacy Ropp Miller, Mim Nisly, Justin Slaubaugh, and Bailey Troyer. As a committee we have been working very well together, being honest and thoughtful in our discussions. We recognize the joys and difficulties that come with this process. We want the best for our congregation and recognize that seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance is the best practice for achieving this goal. As for logistics of our meetings, some have been in-person and some via Zoom and that has seemed to work well for us given the weather and COVID situations that exist. We continue to ask for your prayers and once again remind you to feel free to talk with us if you have questions or concerns or just want to offer your support!

The Presence of God

by Dawn Wyse

It is beyond me to describe the variety of emotions that have rollercoasted their way through me from Sunday, when I first heard that my 84 year old father had fallen down a flight of steps, to this Friday morning that I sit here in my lazy boy chair with my computer on my lap trying to hear God whispering into my ear the words He desires for me to share with all of you. It has been a difficult time filled with a range of emotions that I often didn't know how to deal with . . . but God.

I knew it was really strange that God made it so clear to me over a week ago that He was going to have me write this article about His presence. Usually when I assume what He wants me to write on that far in advance and I look up scripture and scribble notes He blocks my ability to write. Then He'll change the subject for me at the last moment. It is often frustrating but I must admit that it has helped me work on the spiritual discipline of listening for His voice. However, this time I can see how knowing the topic has helped me walk through this week.

Curt and I have been studying Haggai together. In Haggai, God is telling the people that they need to get back to rebuilding His temple. The people were ignoring what God was telling them to do and just going about doing their own thing. However because they were disobedient to God, He made sure they wouldn't be fruitful in the things they were trying to do. So the prophet Haggai, speaking for God, tells them to get back to work on the temple. Interestingly, God had already supplied them with what they needed to rebuild the temple. King Cyrus of Persia said in Ezra 1:4 **“Let every survivor, wherever he resides, be assisted by the men of that region with silver, gold, goods, and livestock, along with a freewill offering for the house of God in Jerusalem.”** If you read on in that chapter you will see more ways that God provided for the rebuilding of the temple.

Something clicked in my mind when I realized that God had provided the materials to rebuild the temple. The people didn't need to work to find them and this seems to be the case every time God had them build a temple or tabernacle. Look at the tabernacle built by Moses and the Israelites in Exodus 35-36. The freewill offerings were more than enough to build the tabernacle and the people had to be told to stop bringing in their offerings. However, if you look at Exodus 12:35-36 you will see how many of these items had been plundered from the Egyptians as the Israelites left Egypt. God had provided for the Israelites what they needed for the tabernacle. to be provided.

Then if you look at the temple that Solomon built. Desiring in his heart that a temple for God be built David accumulated the supplies for the temple to be built. I Kings 5 and I Chronicles 29 gives us some of the details about this, but the point is that once God told Solomon to build the temple everything that was needed to get the job done was there. They only needed to use the supplies and get the work done.

The Presence of God (continued)

So why were the temples and the tabernacle so important that God just laid out the supplies to get the job done practically at their feet? Because that is where the people could meet with the presence of God. We have the benefit of reading the account of the glory of God filling the tabernacle in Exodus 40:34-35 "The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." And also in 2 Chronicles 7:1-3 "When Solomon finished praying, fire descended from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests were not able to enter the Lord's temple because the glory of the Lord filled the temple of the Lord. All the Israelites were watching when the fire descended and the glory of the Lord came on the temple. They bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground. They worshiped and praised the Lord: For he is good, for his faithful love endures forever." It was the temples where the people could meet the presence of God and it's in the presence of God we are transformed into who God created us to be. So why don't we need the temple today in order to be in God's presence? Because when Christ died the veil in the temple was torn (Matthew 27:51)

Christ's sacrifice on the cross made it so the Holy Spirit could come and live in us. We are now the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). And God supplied everything we need to be His temple. God (the Son) sacrificed His perfect life so that God (the Holy Spirit) could come and live in us making us God's temple by convicting us about sin, righteousness and judgment. And He will guide us into all Truth. (John 16) So we no longer need to physically go to a temple, but we do need to allow the Holy Spirit to 'rebuild us' into the temple. He has all the supplies needed. We just need to listen and cooperate with the work to rebuild us. God's presence is here.

What a blessing this insight has been in my week. God allowed me to see His presence on Mom as she told me how she knows God will be able to take care of whatever we will need to walk through. She knows that God will take care of Dad. And not only was she saying it, but I could see her faith and God's peace resting upon her. Then I saw Dad in the hospital unwavering in his belief in God and His ability. I am so blessed to have parents who love God in all situations. Sure they have their doubts at times, but I have witnessed them living lives that continually reorient their focus to God and His faithfulness. It gives me hope.

As I have laid awake at night or struggled at certain points in my day this week I have found myself calling out to God saying, "Holy, holy, holy is my God!" over and over again. And the presence of God surrounds me bringing me peace, bringing me love and most importantly bringing me an awareness of the Almighty God being there. I am so grateful He is here. I encourage you to allow the Holy Spirit to rebuild you into the temple you are meant to be. It is one remodel job you will never regret. He'll bring all the supplies. As always, in pursuit.