

Dear Friends,

I was part of training for how to facilitate restorative justice last Friday and Saturday. It gave me hope for humanity in general and our future. The basic premise is that when someone is wronged or property is damaged or stolen, the two parties can sit down and listen to each other and work their way through to restoring the relationship. It starts with the facilitators meeting individually with each group or person and helping them get ready to meet with the other. This doesn't always happen and there is the protection that the victim doesn't get forced into experiencing trauma again. But when it works, the offender and victim can come out of it with a greater sense of community than just a fine or someone going to jail.

What surprised some of us that sometimes even violent crimes such as rape and murder have gone through this process and have been healing for all those involved. Again, it takes a lot of preparation by all those involved and is not a fast process, but sometimes it can be quicker and less traumatizing than a trial.

The WTIP radio station is one of six stations across the country that is experimenting with getting people from the opposite sides of politics to sit down and share stories. From the ones I have heard, it seems to be a good thing and a way forward for our community and country.

For our stewardship drive, we are also inviting some to come forward and share their stories about their relationship with this church. We could talk about budget, expenses, and financial discipline, which I will say our leaders and treasurer are very particular about being good stewards of the church's resources. We don't give so there is money to spend, we give because we believe in the story of the church. The story that there are good people trying to do the right thing. The story that we strive to be a community where anyone and everyone is valued and welcomed. The story that our God, world, and universe are not something random or something malevolent, but good and filled with love.

Our story is that restoration, reconciliation, resurrection, and reconnection are possible and has been happening throughout history, happening today, and will continue into the future. This is the love that binds and the God whose steadfast love endures forever.

Peace

Pastor Enno