



Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

As an icebreaker or a small group activity, I would lift up advertising slogans and tweak them for the church, like “The church is like Olive Garden, when you’re here, you are family” or McDonalds, “(da da da da da) I’m loving God!” In most mainline churches, and in the churches I have served, we are asked to describe their church or lift up what is good, “It always comes up, we are a family church.” And this is good, that we are supposed to be brothers, sisters, siblings of Jesus. However, what rarely comes up is that we worship a God who is good, merciful, and/or full of love. We too often point to the things we, as a church, do: Food Shelf, Sunday School, music, or mission trips. We often forget we do this in Jesus’ name or because we believe in a God of love, compassion, and justice.

We have a lot of ideas about who God is, and where God is or isn’t, in our church and throughout the United Church of Christ. However, we are still the church, the body of Christ, and working on that relationship. We are still proclaiming that we are not alone in our struggles for faith, justice, and community in our world, and that this is a good thing.

I love this church for many reasons and see areas where we can grow (especially with young families and youth). But I am unequivocally here because I believe I am called by God to be a pastor and serve the church, the community of Grand Marais, and the world. Have my beliefs and values changed over the years? Yes! Do I sometimes doubt and become utterly flabbergasted? Of Course! Do I think my leadership, or the church is supposed to be perfect? Nope, but we are called to be faithful and grow. We are called to develop our gifts, talents, and skills to grow the fruit of the Spirit which Paul defines as goodness, kindness, patience, faithfulness, self-control, love, joy, peace, and gentleness. Jesus came to fulfill the mission to bring good news to the poor, release of the captives, and announce the forgiveness of debt (not just sins).

May we continue to do so.

Peace

