



Getting Out and About

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Lisa Heckman

***♪ Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light-years away,
but here in this place the new light is shining, now is the Kingdom, now is the day. ♪***

Gather Us In, Mary Haugen, © 1979

Visiting with the Crossroads session this week, it was resident Rev. Anna Langholtz's last meeting with them. She shared many observations from her 2 years of shared ministry and left them with the challenge to get out of their building and out into the community. That's a great challenge for all of us!

It made me think of the time of the exiles in Babylon. They were mourning all they had lost: home land, identity, and most of all their religion with the destroyed Temple so many leagues away. They believed God to be enthroned within the Holy of Holies at the heart of the Temple; with it gone, was God as well? Absolutely not! That was the word that came to them thru the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekial. God was not confined to a building, not even the sacred Temple. God was always out and about and continued to be with them wherever they now found themselves.

We Christians have gotten a bit too attached to our buildings over the years. It is the central place for the congregation to gather for worship, yet no longer remains the place we find ourselves the rest of the week. So why do we expect that new people will want to be there either? Our faith is gathered around the Word, not the sanctuary. Our challenge is to let go of the safe and familiar places and partner with what God is already doing outside the boundaries of congregation and building.

"Building on ..." is our theme for 2024. Extending yesterday's Gathering theme, I'd love to see us do more to "Build on Relationships" between congregations. We shared ways we are living out the Marks of Vitality at the table discussions. Did any ideas you heard from others spark a possibility in you for your congregation? Why not connect with someone from another congregation you met at the table to continue sharing ideas? How can we partner across distances and differences?

God cannot be contained in a building or even a single community. We shouldn't be either. May we get out of our silos and build relationships to share the love of God through Jesus Christ wherever we might be.

Grace and Peace.

Lisa

lisa@pbymilwaukee.org

work: 414.292.2743

cell: 607.321.4581