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Grace Notes

From Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” This quote is attributed to Margaret Mead, a cultural anthropologist. I have a postcard on my refrigerator with this statement on it which reminds me of the power we have to make a difference in the world.

Do you want to make a difference in the world? So do!! I have always wanted to offer counsel and support to those who need it. It is clear to me that God has planted this passion for service and care in my heart. I remember getting in trouble in first grade for being out of my seat during class. What the teacher didn’t notice was that I was standing up for a friend who was cornered by the class bully.

What’s your passion or personal conviction that you have had on your heart your entire life? Is there a quote or saying that speaks to that conviction? This is the core of living and where Jesus meets you. Prayer is essential but if you want to know what God hopes you will do with your life, look to your convictions. If your convictions lead you to care for a neighbor in some way, that is probably what God means for you to do with your days. God’s seeds planted in our heart always lead to life, compassion, growth and restoration.

The United Methodist Church is changing and will continue to change. This is not a new thing! This church that I call home and we call family has only been named the ‘United Methodist’ church since 1968 when the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined with the Methodist Church. Before that we were a church that split between north and south over the issue of slavery. This change stuff and the arguments about theological and biblical understanding is nothing new!

In the midst of change and the arguments we are having about sexuality, there is still God’s work to be done. I challenge you to have spirited discussions about these things, but do not be consumed by the argument. Jesus direction remains that we love God and love our neighbor as ourself. A small group of individuals can and are able to enact God’s love in the world. You and I can still make a difference if we covenant to do so! We are able to impact our community and be Kingdom people even as there are those who we try to tear us apart.

On September 1 we will be appointed a new Bishop, Rev. Grant Hagiya. Bishop Hagiya returns to our California-Pacific Annual Conference after serving eight years in the Pacific Northwest. I’m very excited by this change and look forward to powerful pastoral leadership. We will say ‘thank you’ and ‘God bless your ministry’ to Bishop Minerva Carcaño who will be moving to the Northern California Annual Conference.

Let us continue in prayer as we strive to be Kingdom people in a season of change.

Shalom!
Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw