

## Pastor's Ponderings May 2025

*We do not even know how we ought to pray,  
but through our inarticulate groans the Spirit is pleading for us,  
and God who searches our inmost being knows what the Spirit means...  
In all things God works for the good of those who love him...  
- Romans 8:26-28*

I intended to write this contribution to our May newsletter from a retreat center in rural Georgia. Instead, I had to write from home while convalescing from Covid. "Life is what happens while we're busy making other plans," my mother used to say. Life often doesn't work out the way we had in mind. There are minor disappointments, there are major disasters, and even death blows. Being sick through Holy Week (thank you to Tim Plewik, Pat Minnick, and Lynn Morgan for leading Holy week events and services in my absence!) and then spending a week recovering at home rather than being in a place of rest and spiritual renewal in a warm climate, counts as a minor disappointment, even though it felt major when it happened. It can be tempting to think that things would be better if we directed our own lives so that everything would work out according to our desires and intentions. But directing or determining our own lives would involve directing and determining the world around us, which unavoidably shapes our lives. We might think it would be nice if we could orchestrate warm sunny days when we want them and a nice soaking rain when our lawn or garden needs it. And surely, it would be nice if we could ensure perfect health and good fortune for ourselves and those we love, right? I don't think so. We have no idea what extended negative consequences might be caused if we were able to magically orchestrate the world around us according to what we think would be good or nice or pleasing. In truth, we have very limited ability to even know what is good for ourselves or what is the overall life-time impact of events and experiences in our lives and in the world around us. No, I do not want to be in charge. Thank God none of us is in charge of the world. Another wise saying I learned from mother in my youth is "let go and let God."

True happiness is to be found in accepting and embracing life as it is, as it unfolds for us each day. This does not mean we must passively accept or approve of or support everything and everyone around us. It just means we need to recognize that we are not in control, and we do not necessarily know what is best for ourselves or others. As the Apostle Paul put it in his letter to the Romans, we do not even know what to pray for. But the Spirit prays through us, and the God of all creation works for good through us and in the world all around us.

Despite not feeling great and not being where I had intended to be the week following Easter, I found gifts and benefits and blessings in my time at home. I took the time to write letters to a couple of people I'd been meaning to write to for many months. I was able to spend some good time (after I was no longer testing positive for Covid) with Leslie's daughter Olivia, which would not have been possible had I been in Georgia. Leslie and I watched some movies we really enjoyed. We even got out for a beautiful drive to see cherry blossoms in Niagara County. I'm counting it as a good week, the gift of another week of life.

May each day and each week be a blessing for you as well, despite the disappointments and inconveniences and seeming mishaps in your life.

May it be so.

Ted