



Dear Faith Family,

Letter #52

Sunday's readings: Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22: 23-31; Romans 4: 13-25; Mark 8: 31-38.

I have written a year's worth of letters! I had no idea when I began writing to you, that I had begun a project that would go on, and on and...ON! This is the second Easter season we will remember the passion of Jesus and celebrate the resurrection in separate locations. God comes to us WHERE WE ARE, gathers us together with Word and Sacrament, and loves us with the sacrifice of God's Son. We receive the gift of Easter: eternal life.

My morning devotions are becoming more meaningful. Is that true for you? Who knew it would take me so long—so many years to acknowledge the true TREASURES of life: a congregation gathered for worship; family; friendship; hugs. I have sorted out my needs from my wants, too. The older I get, my NEEDS become simplified. I am grateful for the basics: food, shelter, and clothing. I finally realize they are blessings!

Speaking of blessings, we have been blessed for over 10 years by Mary Schramm's editorship of our Faith newsletter. Mary's retirement is well-deserved; I hope she will stay in touch by submitting an article now and then. Mary Steeber has graciously agreed to continue to format the articles submitted to her for publication. This month's deadline is February 24th. Thank you, Mary Steeber, for keeping us informed and connected!

When Peepers and I went for a walk Friday morning, the sunshine reminded me that God is light, and that the darkness does not overcome the light. That is good news to hang on to in a world that is always in flux. I read something that day that hit home. The gospel is not just for the poor and down-trodden—those I feel sorry for—but also for the corrupt, the crooks and the greedy. In this time of religious and political division and downright animosity, no one is outside the love of Jesus.

I was looking through some Lenten devotionals and rediscovered some reflections of Walter Bruggeman's that seem so significant for us. The small book is called *A Way Other Than Our Own* and points from a path of self-indulgence, to a path of compassion and grace. This path is our journey with Jesus to a new neighborhood of justice, peace, and generosity—a place where all creatures and creation are valued.

If you are still considering some things to give up for Lent, here are some ideas:

Give up: Hurting words for kind words

- Sadness for gratitude
- Anger for patience
- Pessimism for hope
- Selfishness for generosity
- Anxiety for trust in God

Worry won't add a second to our lives; it will be helpful to turn our focus from personal concerns to our community.

Lift up prayers for the family and friends of Liz Caemmerer and pray for comfort for Bill Moody at the loss of his sister. Join me in praying for Texans who are undergoing hardships beyond their imagining. They need all the prayers and support we can offer.

God bless you all.

Love,
Pastor Nancy