

# Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

## Pastor's Blog: October 27, 2011

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By the Rev. Jacqui Van Vliet

I know someone who is a huge fan, even now, of the Charlie Brown comic strips. She often uses them as illustrations in her sermons. In fact, I'm certain she has a plethora of old, cut-out cartoons of the cast of those Charles Schultz creations, which ran for years in the Sunday papers, filling up more than one desk drawer. Here are some from her treasured collection as I remember them.

One focuses on Lucy who muses aloud "I was praying for greater patience and understanding, but I quit...I was afraid I might get it."



And then there's the conversation between Lucy and her brother Linus as she enters his room while he was getting ready for bed. He kneels at the side of his bed, obviously praying, "I think I've made a theological discovery." Lucy says, "What is it?" Linus replies "If you hold your hands upside down you get the opposite of what you pray for."

Or the one that may be my friend's favorite. Peppermint Patty is standing outside in her backyard at night blanketed by a sky full of stars as she says "Star light, star bright, First star I see tonight. I wish I may, I wish I might, I wish, I wish, I wish tonight...I wish I had a beautiful pony."

Her mouth breaks into a wide smile as she looks all around her backyard and waits. And waits. And waits. Finally, Peppermint Patty looks up at the star-lit sky and yells "YOU DUMB STAR!"

I think I know what my friend finds so endearing about these characters. They mirror much of our own human foibles and fears though we may not wish on stars anymore, worry if we've got the right form (hands folded, eyes closed, down on our knees) or pray for ponies any longer.

Those characters help us to understand our vulnerability at revealing ourselves in search of a connection, of relationship. But as in most things, practice helps. The practice of prayer, talking and listening to God, is about learning to mature in faith as one deepens the intimate, relationship of love with the One to whom we belong and who knows our name.