

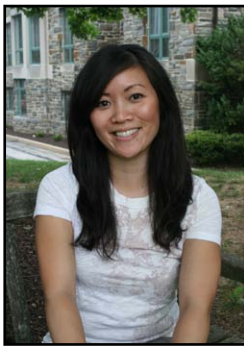
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

Pastor's Blog: December 1, 2011



By the Rev. Joanne Fong

“The wilderness is our solitary place, our lonesome wasteland, our desolate, empty space, wherever our course of action is uncharted and our way is unclear...This crying out from the wilderness and darkness is not a quiet conversation. It is a confrontation. It is also a prophetic pronouncement and declaration, the origin of which does not lie within you or me as individuals, but with God. Our crying out is God speaking through us. Our voices echo His Voice within us.” (Barbara J. Yoder)



This quote in reflection of John the Baptist in Mark 1: 1-8 reminded me of a conversation I had many years ago. When I confided in a friend about a decision I had trouble making, he offered me an anecdote a friend shared with him that gave him much comfort. His friend had told him that life is like a traffic street. When we arrive at the intersection of an unfamiliar road, we are never sure whether to make a left, a right, or to proceed straight ahead once the traffic light turns green. When life suddenly breaks to a halting stop, when the normal familiar path of our journey is suddenly interrupted by an unfamiliar street sign named “change”, change that unexpectedly comes uninvited in the form of financial instability, unemployment, debt, divorce, illness, and bereavement, change that alters life to the extent where the future suddenly appears uncertain – we are held arrested. We are captured by this life altering red light, fearing at the same time that it will turn green, urging us to move forward, when all we want is to stay parked, to linger, to breathe, and to wait and remember all that were before this red light. Yet it is during this life-altering red light, this desire to wait during this unwanted change that prods us to look into our selves. We discover in our waiting, the things we cannot change and the things we can change, because it is precisely at this red light that we find an angel at the corner preparing the way for us. She will take us to the road that will eventually lead us in the right direction.

His friend then turns to him and asks, “Do you believe in angels?” And my friend pauses looking at him thoughtfully and said, “Yes. I believe I am standing in front of one right now.” In response, I smiled. I thought: I must be in the presence of one also.

The comforting voice of my friend was in some way very much like the role of John the Baptist. In moments of unclarity, of confusion, of waiting, I find it is through friends and strangers alike that God turns us toward the face of our loving Christ and makes a way that is clearer for us.

Prayer

God of hope,
you call us from the exile of our sin
with the good news of restoration;
you build a highway through the wilderness;
you come to us and bring us home.
Comfort us with the expectation of your saving power,
made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.