



From Our Conference Minister

Small Acts of Love! (Matthew 10:40-42)

When I sat with couples to do pre-marital counseling, one of the questions I often asked was “what makes you feel loved?” Nine times out of ten, the response was that they liked random and unexpected acts of love, kindness and thoughtfulness. Hearing their partner say, “I love you” was important but it was the small acts of love that ranked highest.

I was reminded of these small acts of love after reading this last verse from Matthew’s gospel: “...and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” (Matthew 10:42)

We often imagine discipleship as requiring heroic sacrifices or great feats of the adherents. However, discipleship can be as simple as offering a hug to someone who is grieving, or a listening ear to someone who is hurting and confused. Discipleship is volunteering at the local food-bank, pet rescue shelter and planting a tree for eco-justice.

The story of *The Star Thrower* is about a guy who traveled to the beach routinely to toss starfish into the sea. When asked why, he replied that if the starfish did not get back in the water soon they would dry out and die. The beach was strewn with thousands of starfish. When challenged that he cannot possibly hope to make any difference -- he responded, “to the ones I throw back, it makes all the difference in the world.”

Small acts of love can make a big difference to the people receiving the help.

When we feel overwhelmed by the problems and pain in our world, remember this story and start where you live. Begin with one person, and offer small acts of love.

Dr. Greg Carey (New Testament Professor, Lancaster Theological Seminary) asserts:

“Jesus has promised to come in time to redeem all in love, to fix all damage, heal all hurts, and wipe the tears from every eye, but until then we can devote ourselves to acts of mercy and deeds of compassion small and large, not trying to save the world -- Jesus has promised to do that --but simply trying to care for the little corner of the world in which we have been placed. It does not matter who receives care, what matters is the care that is offered.”

Thank you for all you do, and will do, to care for the world that God still loves! Amen.

In Christ,

Monica

Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith, Conference Minister and President

P.S. [3 Great Loves](http://www.ucc.org/3greatloves) will be launched at General Synod 31 in just a few days from now. It will provide a great opportunity for us to share our small (and big) acts of love! [3 Great Loves](http://www.ucc.org/3greatloves) – <http://www.ucc.org/3greatloves>