

I AM WISDOM ELIMINATES FEAR AND DOUBT

Through prayer, even in the busiest times, we give time back to God, we find the peace that comes from appreciating the important things, and we encounter the joy of God's unexpected gifts.

Pope Francis

God's Unexpected Gifts

Peace comes from appreciating the important things God places before us in unexpected ways. Wisdom expands by knowing the Universe continues to provide a splendid blending of body and soul and beautiful things in creation.

Gifts from God provided in unusual and unexpected settings and times are sacred. Who among us has not stood in absolute awe while seeing double rainbows, waterfalls, or hummingbirds as they dart, dip, and swoop among blossoms of many colors. The same joy found in nature happened among happy eyes on the parking lot at Martin United Methodist Church on Easter Sunday. After the long year of isolation, being there with friends was truly a long awaited and desired gift.

Early spring brings us a gift of beauty each year. One week into April and we have already received splendor in our lives. Driving home after the Easter service, I was oblivious to most things until suddenly... there they were...Bluebonnets in bloom. I was seeing them for the first time this year. The color was an unexpected gift after worshiping with and offering communion to people I know and love.

Joy in the presence of God's creation at a familiar Church home was uplifting indeed. I was awed by the line of familiar eyes above masks as you walked toward Pastor Lara, Pastor Faiana, and me as we offered the tiny cups representing the body and blood of our Lord and Savior. It was so different than when we served the elements in pre-pandemic services. However, the distanced closeness added joy and shared blessings over the symbols of Christ's love for each and every one who attended.

Bluebonnets arrived in early April 2020 just as they did this year. The difference, we didn't drive south to the Hill Country to enjoy the azure covered fields and hills. We collectively agreed to isolate in our homes for an unknown period of time, only to wake up one year later with the joy of seeing one another again. Church friends and family now cherish a planned yet unexpected gift safely coming soon.

Receiving a gift in worship is like witnessing the displays of beauty in God's creation. Outdoor gifts were blessings when Sandy and I arrive at the perfect Bluebonnet photo spot. Over the years, we went looking for just the right light and floral expanse to

photograph our sons. As infants we inserted them among the flowers in their Easter outfits including baskets and egg hunt bounty. Later photos show them standing knee high in Bluebonnet splendor dressed in a little league baseball uniform with bat in hand. Along came six grandchildren, and the ritual repeated itself for many wonderfully astonishing photo opportunities.

God's unexpected gifts continue to happen in our family as it has for more years than I want to admit. For example, today I was on my normal morning walk with our Standard Poodle, Shaggy. Walking along Katie's Woods road, I noticed some blue in the ditch between the road and the woods. I instantly recognized Bluebonnets. It was another unexpected joy where I could stop and touch, and, yes, I did snap a selfie with my dog. Enjoying surprises continues to make me smile.

Marvelous gifts from God will continue to happen in small steps for Sanctuary worship and Sunday class time. I know you have read we are returning to the Sanctuary for worship. There are protective phases we must follow in light of the ongoing Covid dangers. I believe the time will come when handshakes and hugs will return to our midst. Until then, I have determined to remain socially distanced and masked to protect the human floral arrangement at in-person worship beginning April 18. Your support in helping maintain a safe gathering place will be appreciated.

Worship registrations are necessary to maintain the 150 persons limit. Please take the time to review the processes noted in our newsletter and register for your service choice.

See you in the sanctuary in the presence of God among friends and family.

Peace Always

Ted