

Love is a Sponge

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.” ^{3 John 1:2}

The thought of simplifying outreach via Teddy Talks was on my mind as I recently stood at our kitchen sink removing clean dishes from the washer. I removed a glass inserted top side up and spilled its contents on the kitchen cabinet and down onto the floor. Immediately, I picked up the sponge that is always laying on the edge of our kitchen sink. As I started to wipe up the water with the sponge, I was just moving it around on the cabinet. It wasn't until the dry sponge began to slowly absorb the water that it became much easier to dry the spill. Success comes when the sponge is full before the work begins.

In the same way a sponge requires water to help it soak up more water, we Christians require more faith words, sermons, and intentional faith developing music to prepare our minds to share the love of God. Sharing spiritual knowledge helped listeners soak up joy as they expressed the story of God's message of love on Easter's past. We can all know that happiness comes when we are part of the great outreach and care the Martin United Methodist Church family extends in and beyond the doors of our Sanctuary. I believe we soak up love in our heart, soul, mind, and spirit in preparation to share through our missions.

Methodists from long before the 1968 decision to merge with Evangelical United Brethren have been credited with greeting family, friends, and strangers with the question, “How is it with your soul?” The conversational response was stated with little hesitation, “It is well with my soul”. Truthfully, I miss that greeting and response we United Methodists said to engage others by using those words.

Long term Methodist/United Methodists will tell you the words are from the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. Some may venture a little more information about the question and suggest that it was John Wesley's brother Charles who penned the words and music “It is well with my soul.” Horatio G. Spafford wrote the words and Philip P. Bliss composed the music. It is not unusual to believe Charles wrote the song and led the people in singing to the tune of some bawdy tavern music. Charles gave the uneducated nonreaders the message and attached it to music they likely sang secular words to in their pubs. It was his way to indelibly etch faith in their hearts, souls, and minds like a sponge.

Charles Wesley did write over 6500 hymns during his lifetime including “Christ the Lord is Risen Today.” Try to imagine how many voices will sing “*Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia! Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!*” Sunday, March 31, 2024...Easter Sunday, United Methodists from around the world will sing the words, *Christ the Lord is risen today! ALLELUIA!* Charles made every attempt to make it as simple as possible for people to know the Word through his music and like a damp sponge, we absorb more faith.

Peace always,

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