

## Pastor's Blog

### Rev. Laura Baumgartner

I visited Lazy F for the first time ever last weekend. I know that must seem crazy to some of you, but I had never been before. I got to see the cross way up on the hill, marvel at the new dining hall, meet Sam and Mazy, the dogs, and give thanks for the beauty of the place. I now understand a little more about what so many of you have told me about what a unique and hopeful place Lazy F is and the many ways that you all have intertwined history with that place. However I wasn't there just to investigate.

I went as part of the advisory board for Earth Ministry. Earth Ministry is an ecumenical organization working at the intersection of faith and environment. During seminary, I did a year-long internship with Earth Ministry and learned about the many ways that caring for God's Creation takes shape in our time. So when my former colleagues asked me to join the advisory board, I knew I wanted to say yes. A year ago, when they asked the first time, I had to say no given that I was just starting here at Aldersgate as your Associate Pastor. This year when they came back and asked again, knowing that we had restructured my time with you to fit into fewer hours, I said yes with a joyful heart. The first board meeting I attended was last weekend at Lazy F.

It was just days after the election when we gathered in Skyline. Earth Ministry had been instrumental in representing faith communities across the state in writing and revising and negotiating Initiative 1631 that failed to pass in the election. The joy I felt at being on the board and being able to work again with former colleagues was tempered by election grief. Whether you agree or disagree with Earth Ministry about the wisdom of I-1631, probably you didn't get exactly what you wanted in the election, either. Election grief is something that we probably can all relate to. As we gathered, there were pastors and laity, some who don't attend church and some who have found church in new ways, all ready to come back to the table and together find ways to hope beyond whatever despair might threaten us.

Whether it's environmental issues that are your passion or some other cause for which you work and in which you find meaning, ours is a time when it's easy to identify our disagreements. It's easy to see where disagreements might lead to despair. It's easy to focus on the ways we feel we have failed. But our faith teaches us that there's more to the story. Brad preached about disagreement on Sunday and some of the times in our church's history that Methodists have disagreed. He reminded us that the disagreement wasn't the end of the story. Sometimes the disagreement led to a widening of the Wesleyan movement. Sometimes the disagreement led eventually to a reunion. What I learned about disagreement from being with the Earth Ministry board last weekend is that sometimes there is a way to move beyond disagreement and find ways instead to focus on where hope has entered in. Sometimes there is a way to move beyond our grief or our despair and instead count on the fact that the Holy Spirit is still leading us and still calling us. During times of disagreement, we can't always see the end result that might take years to become clear. What we can count on though is that there is more to the story. Thanks be to God!