

From the Pastor

Greetings all,

It was quite a surprise leaving IL in 90+ degree temperatures to arrive to a cooler Florida. It was an even greater surprise to find our family in the near-paradise that Disney creates (it's not called the Magic Kingdom without reason!) in the midst of a tropical storm. The plus side, lines were shorter for rides because of the almost constant rain; and the rain and seeking shelter, or riding roller coasters regardless, added to the sense of adventure. My family had a great time. We had the opportunity to spend more time with my parents and the boys got to act as Jedis and pirates and wildlife conservationists.

Probably because of walking miles every day with wet, heavy sandals, the straps cut into my feet, even with moleskin. After a few days, I noticed that while my right foot had a nice, straight line for a sore spot, my left foot had ... a Mickey Mouse head! Really. I laughed but when I looked at it again a few minutes later, it really did look like the mouse ears. I smiled for a couple of reasons. First, I thought it so Disney that their branding would appear everywhere. Second, I knew that in another place only a week before, I wouldn't have seen the mouse ears. But because I was in a place with "hidden Mickeys" throughout the Parks, I saw three circles as the famous Mickey face.

That thought sticks with me. How often do we see what we expect to see or hope to see? Is my sighting of Mickey on my left foot closer to seeing the face of Jesus on a tortilla or closer to seeing someone you just met all over town or seeing/hearing a word that's just learned frequently when you know you had never encountered it before. (That happened to me a couple of years ago reading Barbara Kingsolver's *The Lacuna*. I had never heard "lacuna" before. And it is pretty unusual. But since reading that book I have heard it on various news shows and read it in various places). We tend to see/hear what we know of or what we look for.

On a more practical level, I think of the parenting advice that also comes from teachers. Catch your children being good. Start looking for what they do well and remark on that. Pretty soon, before any real change in children's behaviors or attitudes take place, the change comes on those of us observing. We start to see how much good is there. Noticing the good, we notice more good. Pretty soon the lens we use to see starts to see the positive not just in the one(s)

we are first watching but in many places. Hopefully, even in ourselves.

There is so much in our lives that are signs of God's love and grace. Friends who care. Music that moves us. Ideas that inspire us. Animals that befriend us. Food to eat. A comfortable place to sleep. Air conditioning that cools us (especially true for those of us who have lived part of this summer without it).

Our faith community is a true blessing as well. We are a diverse group of totally human people who care deeply about bearing witness to God's desire for peace, for love, for wholeness, for justice for all people. We are welcoming and friendly. We are concerned and caring. God continues to speak and we continue to listen. God continues to show us love and beauty and God's goodness. May we use God's vision as our lens to see those we live with and those we encounter.

Peace,

Pastor Lynn