

Christine's Corner-February

We understand virtue as the pursuit of wisdom. In Andre Comte-Sponville's book A Short Treatise on the Great Virtues, translated from French into English by Catherine Temerson, he lists eighteen virtues. He begins with politeness and includes fidelity, prudence, temperance, courage, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, gratitude, humility, simplicity, tolerance, purity, gentleness, good faith, humor and love.

What a wonderful, compelling and serious list that is! It need not surprise us for we are endowed by our Creator with these gifts that can come in very handy when our backs are against the wall and we are looking for new directions and the re-making this church. We would be wise to think about these qualities that informs the good life, says Peter Gomes, author, pastor and professor.

If ever there was a time in my life's span for employing a virtuous life, it is now. Our response to difficult time tests our wisdom and of course our faith whether as the Body of Christ or as citizens of this nation. Just last night I was asking Carolyn Lane, "What defines success? What defines contentment? This is within the context of preparing as leaders for the Church Council meeting. This is after I had done some deep reflection about my role as intentional interim during a time of change and challenge.

Now I ask you what role you will play as we move forward into this interim period as if our life as a church depended on you and the entire congregation.

It is now time to introduce some new questions for reflection and decision making. We need to be wise as trustees and stewards of this 218 year old congregation.

What form will our future ministry take? Will it remain with a full time pastor or not? Will we have the same committee structure? How effective have we been in growing the church and spreading the gospel? What will happen when the endowment is depleted? It will certainly be exhausted within 10 years unless there are drastic changes. What are our options? No need to panic. We need to focus and seek solutions.

In the next year we will begin to use the eighteen virtues listed above with more intention. They are tools for our journey as Christians seeking the good life for others and for ourselves. Our ideas and attitudes about our faith and discipleship really matter. Our church has, can and will make a difference in the lives of the congregation, the community and the Vermont Conference.

May God add a daily blessing to each of us as followers of Jesus.

Wilderness times lead us to new paths of service.

Hear the hymn word written by Jane Parker Huber in 1981.

Called as partners in Christ's service,
called to ministries of grace.
We respond with deep commitment,
fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing,
side by side and friend with friend.
Equal partners in our caring,
to fulfill God's chosen end.

May the peace of Christ be yours,
Pastor Christine