

Tower Chimes Article for July, 2010

"And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther 4:14b

Going to Annual Conference is always an adventure. This year we met at a beautiful site in LaCrosse right on the Mississippi River. Since leaving the UW Stevens Point campus 10 years ago, we have been meeting in more upscale locations, involving major hotels in three different communities. Yet, while Annual Conference is conducted in what I would call "more luxurious settings," we continue to remember who we are: *"People dedicated to making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."* We are here to make a difference in the world, to meet the needs of those around us, spiritually and materially.

Our United Methodist denomination has set 4 focuses for this quadrennium (2009 to 2012) which are these: 1.) developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world, 2.) creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations, 3.) engaging in ministry with the poor, 4.) and stamping out killer diseases caused by poverty by improving health globally. These focuses have to do with Christian leadership and Christian hospitality, and meeting the needs of people who don't have what they need.

I want to encourage each and every one of you who is reading this article to know that you are utterly loved by God and that there is reason for your presence in the world at this time in the history of the world. Our Lord's plan for us during our life on earth is that we come to know him and love him and follow him. And in following him, our Lord calls us into ministry through the tug of the Holy Spirit on our individual hearts, through the call that we have to serve through our own congregation, and through the wider call of our denomination which aims to keep before us the bigger picture of the needs of the world.

In these challenging times, know that you have a calling to make a difference in the kingdom of God on earth. And our Lord promises to give us the power, and strength and resources to respond to his call, whatever form it may take.

So then let these words be your guide every day: *"Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the Lord, your God, am with you wherever you go."* *Joshua 1:9*

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Ruth