

Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

After listening to roughly 7 lectures and attending 8 worship services with an average 40 minute sermons, my heart and brain and soul are pretty full. The Festival of Homiletics brings together some of the best preachers and preaching professors (mainline) that our church has to offer. We had two from the UCC, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, from Trinity UCC in Chicago, and Bishop Yvette Flunder, who is out in California. (Yes, we the UCC have Bishops. One group in the Calvin Synod which is Hungary Reform, and the other is the African church tradition). We even had a Jewish scholar, Dr. Amy Jill Levine, who talked to us about how to lessen our antisemitic rhetoric. Basic take-away: we don't need to make the Jews of that time or this time look bad, to make Jesus and Christianity look good.

I also got to catch up with some clergy friends, one of whom I haven't seen in 15 plus years, as well as meet some of my 'Facebook' friends. I enjoyed being in a place and gathering with many who have experienced our world and struggles within and without the church was healing and affirming. We also talked about our colleagues who left and who are struggling. Ministry is hard even in the best of times.

The theme of the Festival was HOPE. Many challenged us to look to the margins, and those left behind, to listen to what their hopes and work to understand, rather than share our hopes from a more privileged point of view. Hope, according to Rev. Dr. Timothy Ackins-Jones, is permission to find rest and not constantly be struggling. Rev. Raquel Lettsome reminded us that God is the object of our hope and we must respect the God who shares our human condition through Christ. Rev. Dr. Edgando Colon-Emeric said the church is like the moon whose light waxes and wanes and our light is borrowed from God. Rev. Dr. Luke Powey reminds us in Psalm 150, the last Psalm, that we must always praise and shout alleluia. Rev. Melva Sampson reminded us that hope is a responsibility and a decision. It has a cost and is a choice. I do have access to these and others, maybe at sometime we will do a series to watch some of these for discussion.

Thank you for the opportunity and responsibility for being your preacher. It is something that I hold as a sacred and holy calling.

Peace
Pastor Enno