

Parson to Person by Pastor Dave

(I am reprising some of my writing from a dozen years ago because of its relevance to us this fall. Names may have been changed to protect the innocent.)

Ah, the coming autumn beckons us, a slight cooling, lovely temperate mornings, and the promise of renewed vigor as the school year resumes and the church follows suit. When I was a kid, I used to dread the traditional essay assignment, “How I Spent My Summer Vacation”, but I have been looking forward to writing that essay for you for a few months now. Turns out my summer vacation was spectacular and growthful and spiritually enriching, too. Here goes...

I spent my summer vacation going to grown-up music camp. Way up north in Oregon, almost to Washington, in a little town called Joseph, with glacial lakes and snow-capped mountains and perfect weather. I was camping for the week, and studying one of my favorite instruments, the mountain dulcimer. This little wonder,

whose name literally means ‘sweet love song’, is the first stringed instrument I ever played. And so my journey began, on a Sunday afternoon, as I set out on the road, about fourteen hours away from my destination, with half a dozen instruments and the basics.

I arrived after a few little adventures by Monday afternoon and got settled in. The event was held at one of our United Methodist camps, and all of our meetings and lessons were spread out around the spacious dining hall. The food was excellent, but not as nourishing as the people... most of them older than me, but not all, some of them more advanced than me, but not all, and all of them, *all of them*, devoted to the music that could be made on the little three-stringed strumbox cradled in their lap.

It was a lot like church, and what church *could* be... a community of people all in love with the same thing. The most impressive aspect of the week was how accommodating and encouraging every-

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Our Purpose
To ENGAGE people in joyful relationships with God and with each other, so we will GROW in Christ-like compassion, and SHARE the blessings of the Holy Spirit.



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body was, of any age, any skill level, any musical background... they just wanted to help each other enjoy the music better. Spontaneous little teachings and song sessions were everywhere, and ego was virtually non-existent. Doesn't that sound refreshing?

It was such a release to be in charge of nothing but making sweet music... meals were provided, the schedule was solid but not restrictive, there was ample free time. I totally recharged my batteries, relaxed and refreshed myself, and gained perspective on how the body of Christ might benefit from a simpler approach to its songmaking in the world. We were all of one mind there, no partisan strangeness at all, all that really mattered was interacting with the dulcimer and its music. And I understood afresh how churches that really prevail always do so because of the singular devotion of all the folks there to the same thing.

And y'know, the process is the same whatever the focus of our devotion happens to be. Churches where everybody loves Jesus, and understands his message in basically the same way, they do great. But so do churches where the devotion is to service, or community, or being a sanctuary for the people of the community. It is the *undiluted focus* that propels, and where we lose energy is when we are trying to love a hundred different causes and actions at the same time.

Speaking of which, other instruments were welcome in jam sessions, but not in the lessons. I played bass for a jam and enjoyed holding the tempo together for all those shimmering strings. I wowed them with accordion music at an open mic night. But as much as folks enjoyed the diversion of other sounds and styles, it al-

ways came back to the dulcimer... they kept the main thing the main thing, and it really worked.

So... as we enter this fall, and all the busyness of our communal strivings, we may wish to articulate our devotion from time to time. I am persuaded that finding the genius of our church, and doing that, *just that*, is the way into a successful and rewarding future. We need to decide, what are we of one mind and heart about? I think it is still about engagement, growth, and sharing for us, but that's possibly just me. One of my favorite hymns (and we just sang it August 24th, 2025) sings out, 'it is the cry of my heart to follow you, it is the cry of my heart to be close to you, it is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life.' I could use my camp experience as the basis, and ask what our dulcimer is, but that seems kind of obscure, even for me. Better, maybe, this question: what is the cry of our heart? What involvement and set of actions will make us vibrate like a finely tuned dulcimer, and help us sing our sweet love song to the world?

I am so grateful that our leaders saw this continuing education opportunity as worthwhile, and sent me off to camp. I thought I was going to a dulcimer week, and I was... but more than that, I was learning again how a focused and devoted community can work together and create great goodness. And *that* is how I spent my summer vacation!

CHAT Founders Legacy

The CHAT Founders, Leslie Johnson, Bob Trausch and Sheldon Praiser, will be retiring at the end of September. In response, CHAT has launched the Founders Legacy fund raising effort. You may contribute a monetary gift in honor of the founders up to September 28. The Trinity Church Council has approved a resolution to match whatever amount has been donated by that time. Please enter "Founders Legacy" in the memo area of your check to insure accurate accounting.

Submitted by Rich Wolff

Rally Day

The Rally Day celebration and potluck is fast approaching. It will be on September 7 following the 10:30 worship service. This event is always a good time and it is easy to participate. Please bring a dish to share. We will also have the ever-popular cake/ plant walk. Please bring an edible item or plant as a prize for the cake/plant walk. There will be a water slide on the front lawn for the kids. Plan to attend. You will be glad you did.

Submitted by Rich Wolff

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ENGAGE

GROW

SHARE



WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 7 RALLY DAY, HOLY COMMUNION

Today is Rally Day, our annual celebration of returning and gearing up for another fine church year together. The guiding scripture today is from the wee book known as Philemon, vs. 4-21. It will help us explore all manner of compelling themes related to our relationships to one another as followers of Jesus. The sermon title “Manipulation or Mercy?” alludes to the complicated web we often weave together. We will enjoy Holy Communion today, and the fantastic after-church experience that only Rally Day can provide. Please join us!

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 14

We rejoin our seasonal gospel with a reading from Luke 15:1-10. Familiar stories with unfamiliar outcomes, just like Jesus always seems to provide us! The message will be called “Of Sheeps and Sheckels.”

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 21

“Simplified Service” is the sermon title today, but the reality is that while the service recommended by Our Lord is simple, it surely isn’t easy! Luke 16:1-13 guides us through a maze of earthly and heavenly behaviors and choices, bringing us at last to an inescapable conclusion that the human race is still working to embrace.

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 28

1 Timothy 6:6-19 contains truly useful words from a brilliant pastor, including advice for nearly every human way of being in this world. The sermon will be entitled “Wealth Management According to Jesus”, and today will surely be inspirational and thought-provoking.