

September 24, 2015

Beloved in Christ!

Grace and peace to each of you. I pray you are well as you read not only this greeting but as you continue to live out your daily lives in Christ Jesus.

I can hardly believe that September is already almost gone! The chill in the air is an abrupt reminder that summer is indeed drawing to a close. Can you believe it we have now celebrated living together for seven years! I am delighted to say that I continue to love you more with each new day. It has been a time of growth for all of us.

Before I began writing this message to you, I was meeting with Chris van Alstyne and Jim Russell of Life Touch about our new upcoming Photographic Directory. Thinking of this new endeavor makes me think of how we are all wonderfully different – different all having different stories blending together to make the body of Christ.

I also think about how we are each individually wounded. I continue to be surprised to hear of many injuries to relationships, some injuries happening years ago. Some of the injuries were caused by people no longer at Bethany; and yet the pain persists. The stories are told with such vividness it is as if they happened yesterday. The pains are still raw and loaded with grief. Secretly carrying wounds is not a new phenomenon. I continue to pray for the day when we no longer need to be defined by them. I pray for the day when we can all truly celebrate and trust one another.

We cannot deny our wounds; they are real. The question is: are we going to continue allowing our wounds to control and define who we are and who is worthy to be in relationship with us? Or, are we going to learn to forgive others? We cannot change other people; what we can change is ourselves and how we respond to those who have wounded us. We all make mistakes, myself included, and sometimes we really hurt each other.

I love watching children play in the park. At one moment they are thrashing each other, venting all of their pent up emotions against one another; and then at some point, they yield and become “best friends” again. We could all do well to watch and learn from our children.

Every one of you is wonderfully made and amazing in your life journeys. As we begin this new educational year, I pray that this will be the year that our wounds are processed into diamonds. We are the body of Christ; let us strive to be a sweet fragrance to our Lord.

Grace and Peace to each of you,

*Pastor Peggy*