

## **A note from Pastor's Desk**

Psalm 51:10-12

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit.*

On the last weekend of April, several members and I attended the “Create in Me” retreat at Lutheridge Camp and Conference Center in Arden, NC. The purpose of the retreat is to allow artisans and learners to come together and create new works of art which celebrate God’s creation.

Our speaker was Jacqueline Bussie, world renowned teacher and Christian book writer. In her presentations she invited us to explore what it means to lament or grieve, the diverse types of grief. On such type is grief shaming; like “big boys don’t cry,” “you should just get over it and move on,” “put your big girl panties on” and so many more I am certain we all may call to our minds.

We all were able to find times in our own lives where we have experienced grief. Once we identified our grief, we were asked to express our grief by creating art and sharing with each other the meaning behind our art and stories. One of the most interesting results was that people began to be vulnerable with one another. Most of us knew one or two people attending but the rest were strangers. As we shared, little pieces of ourselves, unity began to grow among all of us. We were more alike than unlike. It didn’t matter what the grief experience had been or was on-going there was unity.

One might say the healing steps began in these presentations but only bore out in the art later created by the attendees during workshops and drop-ins at several types of creating tables. The hum of life, healing, and love heard as the creations fashioned by our hearts and minds gave life.

How then does this experience and all of life’s experiences match today’s scripture and the theme of the retreat? We all have times when we lament with our beloveds (friends and families), asking God to make us secure in our situations, to make us new.

God has graced us with many opportunities where we may reach out in supplications, work to create something new (not always art) and celebrate God’s love in action. It doesn’t always have to be a retreat but certainly time away from our daily routines can have the effect of changing our perspective on life. Being vulnerable with our brothers and sisters allows us to re-imagine life and begin anew. This is the real “Create in Me” extended to us as joy. It’s the joy of God’s salvation and the invitation to come to the banquet of eternal life. This transforms/changes us. May all our days be “Create in Me” days filled with love, laughter, and life.

With much gratitude to God and my love for you, I pray you live in hope.