

## Summer 2013 Message

# Dear Friends and Family in Christ Jesus:

The theme of this year's Baltimore Washington Annual conference was "Sow the seed. Be the Light." The teachers and preachers used this theme throughout the three days we were together in holy conferencing....they spoke of the sower carrying a bag of seed on his chest—flinging his seeds as he swings his arm as far as he can swing. The seeds fly away in an arc that scatters the seed all over the ground. The sower knows that some of the seed will hit dry hard packed earth on the path—some will land in the sticker bushes at the edge of the field—some will land on rocky clay packed ground too. But almost recklessly he continues to scatter and fling his seeds. Because some of that seed—some of it will grow and produce a wonderful crop. The sower is God. The seeds are God's—there is nothing wrong with the seeds God sows—all of the seeds are the same. The differences are in the soil—us.

Read these words from scripture:

## Mark 4.1-8

*Again he began to teach beside the lake. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the lake on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.'*

The fertile good soil will produce right away. But it has to be cared for to remain fertile soil. But for all the other soils, it can take a while to produce an abundant crop because those dry hard packed areas have to be softened and loosened. Those places that are thorny have to be cleared and worked. The rocky soil needs to be nurtured and cleaned up. Eventually even the worst soil, if nurtured will become fertile ground and produce a crop 30-60-100 fold.

As I reflected on my God given call to ordained ministry this theme seemed to resonate deeply. I am now 59 years old and the seeds that were sown in me many years ago

have taken root and grown over time. Some seeds did well in fertile soil and grew well—other seeds have lain dormant inside while God worked on those hard, dry, thorny, rocky, patches in me that needed nurturing. And God always sent good people into my life to work on me—a few were clergy—but most of them were laity—individuals who were the light, shining the love of God through their lives. These people saw something in me and encouraged me on this journey. Some did not live long enough to see the crop bearing fruit—but the seeds they sowed are now bearing fruit.

Congregations were and still are a part of this journey too: Ayres chapel, Araby, Rohersville, Arnolia, and Brookfield-Immanuel—each have taught me, and provided the seasoning needed along this journey. All of this all along the way has been an unearned, unmerited gift that I treasure and will spend the rest of my life sharing this warm embracing light I have received to pass it on to others.

I want to especially thank the members of SPRC for their love, support, and encouragement these past two years—for allowing me time for writing and study. I want to thank the CPE group for taking time to do the many extras needed for me to move forward toward the examination last fall. I want to thank each of every one of you who have offered a hug, a word, a card, a gift, showing your warm hospitality and great excitement—thank you for wanting to be an active part of the ordination process, I look forward to an opportunity to thank you personally. I knew I was coming to a wonderful place when at our first meeting when I explained all that had to be done—someone said, “Do you mean we get to be a part of you being ordained?” Mr. Ken White, a long time BOOM lay representative said the leadership group he met with was the most fun and amiable group he has ever met! And special thanks for the beautiful stole you gave me for Ordination as a sign of your love and support and for all the effort made to attend my ordination.

So—here is the point of all my rambling today: God calls each of us to sow seeds in God’s field (all of this earth)—to sow seeds with reckless joyful abandon and to be the light that shines God’s love even into the darkest places—producing a crop on good soil and nurturing soil that is dry parched and choked so that it will become fertile for our abundantly amazing God.

Sow the seed; be the light. May it be so.

PBJ, Peace blessings and joy,

Pastor Marianne

P. S. Have a great summer—Make worship a part of your summer Sabbath time.