

Harvest Home
The Rev. Donna M. Wright
St. Matthew's Kellers Church
October 20, 2017

Grace, mercy, and peace to you, from our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.
Amen

Before Marica turned two, we went to Disneyland. It was a Tuesday in November. Perfect weather in Anaheim. Not so many people in the park. As I bought the tickets, Don pushed Marica's stroller up to where the band was playing, in their white uniforms and shiny instruments. When I had the tickets, I joined them and we waited for their piece to be over. Then we headed toward the gate. But Marica objected. "NO!" We stopped and asked her what was wrong. She said, "I WANT MORE!" I said, "You will have more. In here." When we got to Main Street Square, another band (in bright red uniforms) was sitting and starting to play. Then we walked over to where some Disney characters were greeting children. Marica gave them hugs. Then we headed toward the train. And Marica said, "I WANT MORE!" I said to her, "Honey, this whole day will be MORE." And that was the last time that day that she asked for more. Because she kept getting more. And MORE.

Marica trusted us, her parents. We had always given her everything she needed, and a good deal of what she wanted. Obviously, we had not given her everything she ever wanted. That is how she knew the word "more."

We have a heavenly Parent who has provided for us. And for the world. In the Psalm we prayed, "May God's face shine upon us, that Your way may be known upon earth, and your saving power among all nations." The psalmist knew that when God's face shined, blessings abounded. And not only to the people of Israel. Look at the end of the second line: "your saving power among all nations," and later, "you guide the nations upon earth." That would be outside the scope of what the nation Israel usually expected. They expected God to take care of them. But there is a strong strand in scripture that the Lord's love and care extends to every bit of creation. And God's love and care is always MORE.

Even though Jesus calls his disciples, "ones of little faith," I am sure they trusted God. They also had some cause for worry, though. This is early in Jesus' ministry. The disciples have left their jobs, their money-making endeavors, their means of support, to follow Jesus around. They could not take care of themselves like they had in the past. What could they depend on, for food and clothing and shelter? Itinerant work, maybe. The kindness of

people who were impressed by Jesus. At this point, they weren't thinking about more, they were thinking about enough. As any poor person thinks, "Will there be enough?"

I have heard reports from Puerto Rico about people in the interior of the island banding together to help each other. Diverting water from a high lake or stream, so it is easier to access. Four and five families living together in one house, because it is the only one intact. Sharing a generator. Keeping a diabetic neighbor alive by rigging up a makeshift refrigerator for the insulin. There is clearly not enough in most of Puerto Rico. But the ones who have little are still sharing, out of love. Out of compassion.

Out of love for Jesus, we give these items of food. Hopefully, at least 1300 pounds. That is our goal for this year's Harvest Home. We will give it to Penridge FISH, Fellowship In Serving Humanity, as we give the food we contribute weekly. FISH gives food and other needed items to the people in our area who need food and clothing. This amount of food will leave the FISH shelves in days. So even though it is a lot of food, it is not enough.

St. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to give not sparingly, but abundantly, so there will be plenty to go around. St. Paul urged them to give, "not reluctantly or under compulsion," but cheerfully. And to give generously, as God has supplied them with enough (and more than enough) for their needs. Hopefully we also give generously, abundantly, and cheerfully. But let me say this quite clearly: we do not give because God needs us to. We do not do good works because God commands us to. God does not need our good works. God is not impressed by our good works. Our good works are to God like 2 year old Marica's coloring pages were to me: delightful, and worthy of being put on the refrigerator. But not why I love her. As Martin Luther said, "God does not need our good works. But our neighbor does."

We give out of love for God, who loves both us and our neighbors. And when we have MORE we can show the abundance of God's love by giving our MORE away. More food. More dignity. More understanding. That is how we make the kingdom of God and God's righteousness known. And you don't need a ticket for that kind of MORE. Amen