

July 2018

### We Are All One Body in Christ

Last month, I enjoyed my teacher's schedule of having the summer off and traveled to Virginia to visit our daughters, sons-in law, and grandchildren. I started my journey in Leesburg to spend time with our oldest daughter, Stephanie, and her family, which includes our oldest grandson, just over a year old. I spent hours with Jasper doing his favorite activity, digging in the yard with a little yellow shovel. From there, I flew to NYC and met Kim and our youngest daughter, Miranda, and her family, which includes our youngest grandson, who had just turned 3 months. Kim returned to Orlando and the working world, while I traveled to Richmond by train to spend the rest of June with the baby.

While in Northern VA, Stephanie's family and I took the metro to Washington, D.C., for the day. As we strolled along the National Mall, gazing at the Washington Monument at one end and the Lincoln Memorial at the other, people of all nationalities joined us in admiring the beauty of the day and the inspiration of the place. Through the trees, I could glimpse the White House. I kept thinking how proud I am to be an American. It's hard to come to this city with our grand heritage displayed in strong, white marble and not take pride in the people for whom it stands.

In New York City, we walked to Battery Park to give our son-in-law a view of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Nick had never been to the city, and we wanted to ensure he got to see the statue even though we did not have time to take the ferry that day. As we entered the park, we strolled into a joyful summertime atmosphere of children running through water spouts in their bathing suits, business people having lunch on the benches, and tourists snapping pictures of the bronze artwork commemorating the hope of the immigrants who began their lives in America at that historic place.

Both cities, DC and NYC, thrive with people from every corner of the Earth. Somehow in their incredible diversity, these beings weave together into the great fabric of Our Father's world, creating the color, the variety in texture, and the strength of the twisting bonds of a beautiful thread of life. They are Americans. They are us. That's what we are all about.

No matter what your politics, together we are United Methodist Christians, and we have a duty to follow Jesus in his gracious compassion for all. We cannot stand by and let the current events continue without intervention. As I hold my dear 13-month-old Jasper and my precious 3-month-old Wesley, I can't even fathom the fear and anger that would fill my soul should someone try to separate them from their families. America is so much better than that. America, celebrating its 242<sup>nd</sup> birthday this year, stands for liberty and justice for all. I'm so proud to be part of that heritage, and I'm extremely hopeful for its future. As a Methodist, I will stand up to defend the immigrants (who are us all) because the laity, the people, do make a difference. I urge you to read to this article at UMC.org and find out how you can help our immigrant families. <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/how-united-methodists-can-help-immigrant-families>.

Loving the Laity,

Melanie and Kim Lee

