

FCCS Sept 8, 2019
Rev. Curran Reichert

“Our Children, Our Treasure”

I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsists, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love.

- Wendell Berry –

Plant, water, wait, that was Lois Patterson’s motto. Lois was Garen Patterson’s mom, she died in January this year just weeks shy of her hundredth birthday. Lois was a mother of four children, with nearly a dozen grand and great grandchildren and her best advice; plant, water, wait.

Today we celebrate our young ones, we fill their backpacks with notes to let them know that we are on their team. There are fourteen children who call this their church home and participate in our Godly Play program. There are yet several others who are not old enough yet they will surely know that they are loved and welcomed here. There is power in speaking their names so I want to do that now;

Kaila, Oliver, Julia, Denise, Ellis Jane, Darby, Dylan, Marshall, Grant, Lorilee, and William, Shannon, Ryley, Ashlyn, little ones Charlotte, Jack, Grace, and of course our visitors who we may only see once or twice, but who are non the less important.

There is something magical about knowing and being known to a child. Denise knows Lori Anderson, she has met her cats and helped out with her at church events. The other day Denise was proud to report to me that she had run in to Lori the church lady at the Tuesday night market.

Now, more than ever, our young people need safe adults. They need people they could turn to if they we afraid or in danger. Children these days go to school amid the headlines of the latest mass shootings, and school lock down drills. They know classmates whose parents are at risk of being snatched up in ICE raids. And as we enter the fire season, those old enough to remember will be aware of go bags and evacuation routes.

Yes, it is more important now than ever that our young people know and are known to us and that we represent for them islands of sanity in a tumultuous world.

This summer I had the great joy of officiating Tyler Dickey and Steven Orloff's wedding. Tyler is in her early thirties now and teaches kindergarten in the city. She credits her relationship with Reverend Nancy and all of you for laying the foundation of her strong moral compass. She says that the communication skills she employs in her personal and work life everyday are those that she learned here as a young person. Her love of God, and nature, and Camp Cazadero speaks volumes about the way she was raised in this place.

Also, this summer I got to go camping with Emily Webber and spend some time with she and her boyfriend, both of whom have big plans to transform this world. Emily has rocked her education at Davis and has managed to maintain a strong connection with a faith group she found there on campus- she has no trouble connecting who she is in this world to what this church means to her life.

Then there is Renee Serotta, who's currently away from her studies at Cal to study abroad in Italy. Many of you heard Renee speak last year about her passion for environmental justice. It is not hard to see how the ideals she encountered here continue to guide her into young adulthood.

Of course, there are plenty of other young adults who came through these doors and whom you hold dear in your hearts, the point is that early exposure to spiritual development and encouragement creates an enduring root system that sustains and supports us as we go through life.

Plant, water, wait.

I mentioned in August that I received a call, rather last minute, to preside over a memorial for Hailey Barker who died suddenly at age of 27. Hailey was a part of Sunday School here with her sisters Taylor and Kamryn, their mom Annette often led the class. Though none of them consider themselves church goers now, in their moment of crisis they looked to us.

Most of us fell away from church at some point in our young adulthood, that is not at all uncommon, but when young couples get married, or have children of their own they are likely to turn to the churches of their

childhood. If those churches have meaningful programming for their young ones, they stay- if not, they go.

I realize that investing time in our Godly Play program as a teacher or Shepard may not be everyone's natural inclination, but is there no more important place for people to serve. We want to be a congregation that knows and is known to our young people at every stage of their development and the best way to do that is to meet them where they are- on a Sunday morning in the Godly Play room. We need people to commit to helping out two to four times a year that is not a lot, but to the program its everything.

You know and I know that most seeds don't plant themselves, weeds do, but beautiful things, they need a little help. Plant, water, wait.

This summer, in the wake of the shooting in El Paso, I found myself in a circle of very wise women wondering what we might do to prevent the next mass shooting. Here's a thought.

Tajinder Singh, is a farmer in the North Indian state of Punjab. Tajinder felt the need to be able to defend himself against thieves and wild animals, so he applied for a gun license. Once the appropriate background checks were completed, Tajinder was told by the local authorities that he needed to fulfil one more condition before he could get his gun

"He had to submit two photos: One showing him planting 10 saplings on his property, and then another with the thriving trees one month later.

To mark World Environment Day in June, Chander Gaiind had an idea. He's the deputy commissioner of the district of Ferozepur — roughly the equivalent of an American mayor. "I thought about how much Punjabi people love guns, we receive hundreds of applications for gun licenses from this district every year. Maybe I could get them to love caring for the environment too."

And so, it was decided that anyone who applied for a gun license from this district, home to 2 million people, would need to sprout a green thumb first. And that's how the ten-tree rule was born.(Source the Daily Good, "Green Gun Control.)

Plant, water, wait.

Children are not so different from trees, they need to be grounded and supported if they are to thrive. Planting trees is one answer to ending gun violence while making the world a better place, loving children is another.

I wonder what would happen if in our country, in our world, every child was listened to, if every child had just one adult outside of the home- sometimes in spite of the home- that they felt they could trust and turn to if times got rough. I have a hunch that might go a long way to ending all kinds of violence in our culture.

Plant, water, wait.

Let's start here, let's start with our children, let's start today.

Amen