

July 24, 2017

Dear Mennonite Church Saskatchewan,

I am acting as guest-writer this week as Ryan Siemens takes his summer holiday. I recall fondly my weekend with you in April and continue to hold you in my prayers.

As I write this, I am sitting in my favourite chair observing a ball fly through the sky in the yard outside my window. Because the ball that is flying is a tetherball, it never flies far. The ball is making a valiant effort to “escape,” but alas – the rope to which it is tied and the post to which the rope is tied never allow the ball to go far.

I find the tetherball to be an excellent analogy for the spiritual life. Like the ball, we are tethered to a grounding post – God, who in infinite wisdom has designed the world in such a way that we can never escape the tether of God’s love. God persists in tethering us, regardless of the places to which we may seek to escape, whether intentionally or unintentionally. We are beloved of God. Of this we can be assured.

While many of us know God’s love at a personal level, the same holds true for us as a community of believers. At times, given the shifting culture in which we are living, it can feel as though the church has been torn from the tether that holds it in God’s gracious embrace. At other times, when we look critically at our communities of worship, it can feel as though the church, by will or by inattention, has torn itself from God’s tether. Whatever the cause behind the strain on our tether, the surprising truth is that we – as a community of God’s people – can never be torn from God’s love. Collectively, we are also beloved of God. Of this we can be assured.

This is good news – although because this message is so simple and we have heard it so often, we can forget how good this good news is. It remains important for MC Sask to be faithful in its desire to reflect God’s love. It also remains important to listen carefully to how the church is being called at this time and in this place. Nonetheless, our desire to listen and to be faithful always remains secondary to that which is primary: individually and collectively we are always and already beloved of God. We cannot tear the tether that binds us to God’s infinite love. Of this we can be assured.

May your time of prayer in the coming weeks rest in this assurance.

- Betty