

Judy's Journey Moving into Retirement

July 2010

"The Summons"

As I reflect on my years of serving as a Rural Worker, Town and Country Worker, and most recently Church and Community Worker, I often think of a hymn that has been meaningful to me. The names have changed over the years since I began in 1964, just like the name of the ministry. One that fits that place currently is "The Summons"

*Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?*

When I began working for the then "Board of Missions", I had no idea about where life would lead me. Through the years I have had service appointments in Arkansas with 11 small membership congregations....a rural setting. After a break for seminary, I served in Missouri both in a leisure ministry setting, and then in a rural-urban setting. This was followed by a rural cooperative parish in Southeast Kansas. The next was the most urban setting in Kansas City, KS, which was followed by a time directing a ministry in Ogden, KS. My final appointment was as Mission Interpreter in Residence for the South Central Jurisdiction. Obviously this one had the largest geographical territory!

*Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?*

I have spent time working with God's people of all ages over the years. Hosting work groups in rural settings for urban youth or urban settings for rural youth has been one way of educating how they can be in mission and ministry to a different population of God's family than their own. Usually their response was we gained more than we gave.

*Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?*

Networking with others has been one of the ways of doing ministry. The networking with groups within and without the UMC is a way of involving those in the church with those who are not yet there. This has provided for me wonderful relationships which I continue to cherish from all my ministry settings. Christian Education and Outreach Ministries have been the basis for much of the activities in which I have been involved always with a mission emphasis.

*Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?*

My prayer, as I retire and continue on a different journey, that somewhere along the way, you have been challenged to be the "you" you can be to further make disciples for Jesus Christ and the transformation of the world. As a part of this challenge, I would hope that you, your church or group would be in covenant with one of our United Methodist Missionaries. Not only will you learn about how the church is in ministry someplace besides your congregation, you will be supporting the transformation of the world. I would be glad to share the process with any who are interested.

*Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.*

My journey is going to take me back to California. I will be living along the central coast area. I haven't lived in California since 1964 when I began working. I am looking forward to living closer to my father and my sister. So towards the end of August, I will be making that transition. In the meantime, I will be busy with the sorting and packing process. I will be taking with me many memories from over the years. I would invite any who are traveling in that area to make contact and plan to visit. Phoebe would also be glad to see her friends.

Our new address: (after approximately August 25th)
Judy Atwood
765 Mesa View Drive, Sp 38
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
805-481-8788
atwoodjka@gmail.com (for the time being right after the move)