
THE LIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH OF CLIFTON AND PASSAIC

"A Church UNITED in faith, hope, & love!"

ISSUE NO. 92 March - April 2012

LET YOUR HEART BE BROKEN

Is it just me, or in the past few weeks have we been exposed to an inordinate amount of heart-wrenching news? There has been the "usual" bad news from Afghanistan and Iraq, while violence has escalated in Syria. The pundits say the economy is improving, but millions of Americans are still unemployed. For a while, we hoped that 15-month-old Angel Babcock, the child found in a field after a tornado killed the rest of her family, would survive, but after a few days, she died. Add to that our own personal struggles, worries and grief for those in our congregation and it's hard not to experience compassion overload.



***"The human heart is incapable
of containing the world's suffering
without breaking.
Yet only by breaking does it make room
for the world's suffering."***

Faced with such suffering we have two choices—we can harden our hearts or we can let them be broken.

Greg Levoy, in his book *Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life*, says, "The human heart is incapable of containing the world's suffering without breaking. Yet only by breaking does it make room for the world's suffering." This is precisely what Jesus

did for us on the cross. He didn't remain aloof from our sin and suffering, but he embraced it making it his own, letting his heart be broken. As the book of Hebrews says, "[Jesus] became like his brothers and sisters in every respect ... Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

What was true of Jesus will also be true of his disciples. We are called to have broken hearts that make room for the world's suffering. A contemporary praise song puts it this way: "Soften my heart, Lord, soften my heart. / From all indifference set me apart. / To feel your compassion, to weep with your tears; / Come soften my heart, O Lord, soften my heart." To be a Christian means to have a soft heart that beats in rhythm with God's heart—the things that bring joy to God will bring joy to you, and the things that break God's heart will break yours.

Someone has said that the cure for callused hearts is callused knees. If your heart has become callused on account of all the bad news we keep hearing, let me invite you to get down on your knees in prayer and service. Begin with prayer. Open a news magazine and pray for the poverty-stricken and war-torn parts of our world. Think about the people in our own community who are outcast, lonely or broken. Pray for the broken and wounded. Weep with God over the sin, suffering and injustice of the world.

But don't let it end there. Let God's compassion move you to stay on your knees, taking the role of a servant. Send a contribution to the Red Cross to help the people whose homes were destroyed by tornadoes. Send a card to one of our shut-ins, call them on a regular basis and stop by occasionally to visit. Volunteer at the Community meal or take some food to St. Peter's Pantry. Follow the example of Jesus who was so broken-hearted by our suffering that he laid down his life for us.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Mike