

# A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

## "All Are Welcome" 8/23/23

*Thus says the LORD, ... My house shall be called  
a house of prayer for **all** peoples. (Isaiah 56:7)*

A Canaanite woman who worked her way through a Jewish crowd to ask Jesus to heal her daughter. A Roman Centurion who made his way through a crowd to ask Jesus to heal His child. The Samaritan. The leper. The woman with a hemorrhage begging to be cleansed. The crowd which hungered. The old, the young, the rich, the poor, the educated, the uneducated, and the over-educated. The clean, the unclean. The neighbor, the foreigner. All were welcomed, all were loved. And they still are. God's love is for everyone.

Who are we to accept and who are we to turn away? Oh, yes, we can come up with reasons, excuses, laws, customs to justify the act, but how does the act of rejection or separation reflect the love of God? God said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isa 56:7) His creation included those on this side and those on that side. However, or whenever God created the world, each day He declared it good and loved it.

Every grain of sand, every mighty mountain, all of the deep valleys, each deep sea, all of the flora and fauna, each of the creatures, and all of the people who would walk upon it. It is all God's creation, and it is all good. It is all the work of His hands. Red and yellow, black, brown, white they are precious in His sight. Why, then, are we allowed to separate out those we consider unacceptable? How do we decide who is worthy and who is not? And when were we given the power or permission to make that call? Just saying.

"Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered." (Isa 56:8) God, who set apart a people unto Himself, extends His love, His invitation into a relationship, His blessing to those outside, those on the other side, those not even named. All of us "others" are welcomed, accepted, and loved.

"May God give us blessing and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe." (Ps 67:7) All stand before God equal and equally in awe. In awe of God's creation, of His acceptance, and of His love. Just saying.

## **Please Pray with me.**

God of creation, thank You for Your love, for You call to all people, for welcoming each of us. For all of our faults and differences, Your love and acceptance remains the same. We stand in awe of You, of Your creation, and of Your forgiveness, and for the fact all are welcome.

**Amen.**