



Reverend Elaine's "Reflections"

February, 2011

Dear Friends,

These last few weeks have been a whirlwind of activity as we have begun the process of "getting to know" each other and prepared for our service of Covenanting, a wonderful service of celebration held last Sunday. Now, I feel as if our journey together is really beginning.

One particular question from the January chapter of Joyce Rupp's book, "*May I have this dance*" struck me. She invites us to read the book of Exodus and ask if there are any similarities between this story and my own, our own. As I ponder this, I believe there are many similarities between our lives and this wonderful book telling Israel's foundational story of God freeing the captives from Egypt and the people's journey to the "Promised Land".

This journey was filled with challenges and the Israelites looked over their shoulder and wished they were still in Egypt. They complained A LOT!! The water was no good and there was not enough to eat. They said to Moses "At least in Egypt we could eat all we wanted". And so God said I am going to make food rain from the sky, meat in the evening and bread in the morning. (Exodus 16:1-35).

When Moses went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments the people rebelled and made a golden bull to worship. Life didn't seem to be going to well in the wilderness. Everything seemed better with Pharaoh, even slavery.

All through all the people's arguing and complaining, God was consistent and patient. I remember how I used to feel when I set of on a long journey with the children in the car. We would have just left the house and be just

around the corner when the plaintive cry would come, "Are we there yet?" So would begin a journey of boredom frustration and sometimes even arguing as my sons battled for their rightful share of the backseat. I had loaded books, crayons, toys and small trucks to entertain them. That was in the days before DVD players were standard equipment in cars. We played games as well, "I spy with my little eye" and counting the fields of cows, even counting Christmas trees in house windows, anything to keep them occupied. The boys were excited about where we were going, the zoo, park or visiting friends. They looked forward to the destination. It was the journey that was the challenge.

I think it's true of the Exodus story as well, the Israelites really, really wanted to get to that "Promised Land", the place flowing with milk and honey.... who wouldn't?? It was the journey that was the problem. I think that can be true in our everyday lives as well, we want to get there, wherever there may be without appreciating the journey. Sometimes we really need the journey, that time between to adjust to a new reality. I remember when I immigrated to Canada, the flights were about 15 hours, not very long to adjust to a new life in a new country, unlike people emigrating by ship. There was time to bid farewell to what had been and time to prepare for what was to come, to mourn for the past and begin to get excited about the future.

In these past few weeks as I have travelled up and down route 31 between home and church I have enjoyed the journey. It has been a time of peace and even meditative quiet. A time to sing along to my radio or CD, sometimes it has been a time of irritation when someone has been driving "to slow" and I have felt myself get impatient and I have practiced patience. I have enjoyed the beautiful countryside and even tried out some different routes. My journeying is a time of preparation and planning to lead worship, to visit and to carry out my duties as your minister. My journey towards home is my time to meditate on the day's events and the encounters before stepping across the threshold. Each journey is a learning experience to be embraced.

Every day is a journey to be embraced and valued. Our journey in ministry together is now just beginning. There will be many emotions as we journey together through dessert and wilderness to the Promised Land.

Just a wee after thought for those of you who are thinking "We just got our new minister surely we are in the promised land" I hate to be the bearer of "bad" news, every time we arrive in the promised land, we head right back out into the wilderness, to get better acquainted with one another, but more importantly with God, after all that was the real reason for the Israelites spending all that time in the wilderness, they had to learn to be God's people and so do we.

Are we there yet?? Nope!! Just heading out - let's get going - wilderness here we come.

Yipeeeeeee!!!