



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

Family Matters

There are a couple of ways to read that title: plain family matters meaning the things that a family does and is, and family matters, meaning family is important and it matters in our lives.

I like the second one, probably because it's harder. The first is only what the family does, the second is who the family is – and why that's important.

We have a few families, really. We have the biological family into which we were born and which seems huge with cousins by the dozens and nieces and nephews and all of them graduating at the same time! There is also our family of friends – people who have gathered around us throughout life and have become part of who we are. Some still live close by and others are at some distance, but they are still friends.

Then there is our family of God. Each of the families matters to me, but this is the family which I think matters the most. As I have moved through the world, I seem to have been a part of a number of these families but that's not so. The family of God is world wide and no matter where I am, I am part of that family. This week it might be my Presbyterian branch, next week my Methodist branch or Episcopalian, and the next my Lutheran branch. All through the week I “bump” into members of those particular branches. And most of us acknowledge that we are members, together, of a world wide family. And that matters.

It matters that we all have been baptized into this family. It matters that this family is important to us. It matters that we know each other as brothers and sisters.

It matters that God is our father and Jesus our brother. Now that may seem somewhat strange, but it is true.

I read in the paper about the Samaritan Inn which opened in Leesburg a week or so ago. Yes, it was purchased by the First Baptist Church of Leesburg – our Baptist branch – and wasn't it wonderful that they were able to do that. But the whole renovation wasn't done by them. There were people from all over the county who cleaned, repaired, painted and decorated that Inn. So what's it all about.

This is something “the family” did so that there would be a space available for homeless families. There often seems to be places for men or women, but children are part of that homeless population as well, and this is an attempt to help them, as families, to get back on their feet.

As a secondary effect, people from many different backgrounds and religious groups met and shared the stories they have about their lives. A fellowship across “branch” lines became a reality. I'm certain this is a pleasure for God to see.



What about us? Well, we don't have the funds to buy a motel, but as a family we are very aware that now that the children are out of school there is a need for more healthy food to be made available to them for the summer. We have been good givers to the Neighborhood center. That is part of this branches' ministry. It matters that we are a family of God It matters that children need nutrition. Let's work at this ministry in particular this summer. Thanks.

TMK

-- *Week of June 27, 2010*