

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

October 2, 2011

WORLD COMMUNION

October Theme: A SEASON OF SAINTS

Today's Saints:

Dr. M.L. King, Mr. & Maude Adams



Press on!

by

Larry Moffet, Senior Pastor

We need a little light-hearted cheesiness this morning. Ermal Collister gave me permission to

tell you this story. After Tommy Thompson's service yesterday, around table fellowship downstairs, she asked, "Did you see me come in late? I hope I didn't disturb you." I assured her, "Didn't bother me a bit." She continued, "Well what happened was I was ironing, and looked at the clock. I saw I had another 20 minutes before I had to leave to make it to church, and so I thought I would iron one more piece of clothing. I looked at the clock, and I thought 'Where did the time go? I am going to be late' but I came on anyway." I told her her story gave me a great way to start the sermon. "It's titled 'Press On.'" Not missing a beat, Ermal said, "You know they only let you drive 60 on the highway."

That's one kind of "press on." We're talking today about ways to be faithful. Paul, as you will remember, was in jail and wrote this letter to people he loved in Philippi, the first place in Europe that he started a church. His letter is full of statements like "Rejoice in the Lord always."

The people in Philippi knew what Paul had been through. Some of them followed him on the rest of his trip to make sure he was doing all right. He wanted them to know he was faithful, in spite of being in jail and wrote:

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death...

¹²Not that I have already...reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own,

When I need a little encouragement, I like to look at the lives of ordinary people who did amazing things. That's why this month our worship focus is "*A Season of Saints.*"

Maude Adams walked the mud streets of Uni Place over 100 years ago. I haven't found out much about her. She was simply called a "Deaconess."

I cannot begin to imagine what it was like for her to go from house to house, organizing people into small groups – and helping them see that even though this church did not at that time have a building, it was one congregation.

People met on front porches, in dining rooms, in classrooms in Old Main, and somehow became a cohesive "Peoples' Church." Pastors came and went. Maude Adams stayed and kept on working. She lived out Paul's words:

but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Jesus Christ.

What is the Maude Adams in you helping you do to "Press on?"

We will talk about saints from the 2000 years of Christian history later. A person who lived within the lifetime of some of us, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has saint status in my book.

He didn't start out life that way. He actually lived a life of relative comfort and some privilege growing up in Atlanta. There was a community of African American folks who had achieved middle class status.

His dad was pastor of a Baptist church that had some resources. When he went to college, it was a fine liberal arts college. He went to a seminary in New York State, and then had the privilege of doing doctoral work at a United Methodist university in Boston.

Just done with years of education, still in his 20's, Dr. King was called by a relatively small congregation in Montgomery: Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. It was a "silk stocking" African American congregation, known for NOT getting involved in the needs of the community. Then one day Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus.

In all the chaos of the meetings that ensued, the Black Community of Montgomery decided to start a boycott of the bus system. They chose this young inexperienced pastor as the leader.

Some, and this is documented, said it would never work. Dexter Avenue Baptist Church was too disconnected from the needs of the rest of the Black Community. This "King" didn't know the Montgomery's white power structure. He was from Atlanta and Boston. Even *he* didn't think that he was the one to be the leader. Does this sound a little like Jesus words about a "stone being rejected becoming a cornerstone?"

**'The stone the builder rejected has become the chief cornerstone;
it was our God's doing and we find it marvelous to behold**

Jesus Christ himself was scoffed at by most of the religious leaders of his time, Jesus was a stone that was rejected by many. When he quotes a Psalm, people around him start to get it. God uses stone that others look past or reject.

We know Jesus's path of servant leadership led to resurrection *after* a cross. Around this World Communion table we celebrate that amazing love.

Today our Peacemaking Workshop will give us a good look at what it means to be a Servant Leader. This afternoon you are invited to finish this sermon by being a part of talks and thinking about your purpose.

You may have read in the paper yesterday, they quoted me right. I believe most of us do not think of ourselves as leaders. We simply want to do something that matters. That is what our purpose is – to make a difference.

God, however, uses very ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

it was our God's doing and we find it marvelous to behold

The one thing we know Maude Adams and M.L. King, Jr. had was people who encouraged them. People who helped them "Press on." Do you want good leaders? Encourage them. Help them be effective. Nebraskans used to have a wonderful way of bragging on each other. That was an effective way to encourage the Maudes and Martins to become leaders.

Press On

When the valley is deep,
When the mountain is steep
When the body is weary,
When we stumble and fall
When the choices are hard,
When we're battered and scarred
When we've spent our resources,
When we've given our all

Chorus:

In Jesus' name, we press on
In Jesus' name, we press on
Dear Lord, with the prize
Clear before our eyes
We find the strength to press on
To press on

EPISTLE SCRIPTURE PHILIPPIANS 3:10-14

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection
and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,
¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this
or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own,
because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own;
but this one thing I do:

forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,
¹⁴**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call
of God in Jesus Christ.**

***GOSPEL SCRIPTURE MATTHEW 21:42-46**

Jesus said to them, “Did you ever read in the scriptures,
‘The stone the builder rejected has become the chief cornerstone;
it was our God’s doing and we find it marvelous to behold?’

⁴³”That’s why I tell you that the Kin-dom of God
will be taken from you
and be given to people who will bear its fruit.”

⁴⁴”Those who fall on this stone will be dashed to pieces,
and those on whom it falls will be smashed.”

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables,
they realized that Jesus was speaking about them.

⁴⁶Although they sought to arrest him, they feared the crowds,
who regarded Jesus as a prophet.

**WORSHIP SERVICES: SUNDAYS 8:30 & 10:45 AM
WITH ADULT AND CHILDREN’S BIBLE CLASSES AT 9:30 AM
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