

“A Long View”
Rev. Terry L. Hanna

“We must stop setting our sights by the light of each passing ship; instead we must set our course by the stars.” -George Marshall

“I live in daily hope of getting my life under control.” Those were the words of Philip Yancey in his book on prayer.* I relate to what he is saying. In my office I have empty boxes waiting for me to go through my files and sort out what to keep and what to throw away. My desk is covered with post-it notes and to-do lists. My to-do lists are categorized into A, B, and C lists reminding me of what needs to be done now and what can wait. At home it is time to clean out my closets and sort through laundry. Even exercise becomes a chore, when an intense workout seems better than a lazy walk in the woods. Maybe if I take a day off to catch up, but then the phone always rings or something comes up that needs immediate attention.

“Be still and know that I am God!” (Psalm 46: 10 NRSV) Being still is hard. Ten years ago I would sit down and write a personal note to everyone who visited the church, was sick, or had a birthday. Five years ago I would take the time to respond to people through every email. Today people complain that my response time is too slow and berate me for not checking my emails regularly through the day, or not using text more often, or not communicating through Face Book. I am overwhelmed with all the information that can't seem to wait.

Paying attention is a form of prayer. But paying attention to mystery, to the beauty of the world around us, to *being* rather than *doing* does not come easy. We can get lost in a world spinning out of control. We can forget to carve out time to lie down in green pastures, be lead by still waters, and allow God to restore our souls. I think its time to take a long view. Even in a crisis, Jesus had a long view. Even in the middle of a demanding ministry schedule, Jesus would always find a time and a quiet place to pray, and he encouraged his disciples to do the same.

“Be still and know that I am God!” is a command. The Latin imperative for “be still” is *vacate*. God commands us to take a vacation, but it is not like the vacations most of us took on Spring Break. It is taking a vacation from the way we live. It is taking a break from our regular routines, where we not only rest awhile, but we spend time with God, know God, and give God back control of our lives.

So, this summer when we have some vacation time, I hope we will take a different sort of vacation. Lets take a break. Lets stop doing all those important things that we think we have to do in order to be in control, and lets let God be in control for awhile. Lets trust God with our lives. Lets take a longer view. *“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.’”* (Isaiah 30: 15 NRSV)

Pastor Terry

* [Prayer, Does It Make a Difference?](#), by Philip D. Yancey, Zondervan Publishing, 2006, p. 18-26
Scriptures referenced: Psalm 46: 10; Psalm 23: 1-2; Mark 6: 31-32; Isaiah 30: 15