



Poland Presbyterian Church

At the Green since 1802

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Poland, Ohio 44514
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July 6, 2014 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

The Rev. Robbin Del Nagro

“A Time to Rest”

Our burdens are many and it is no different today than in Jesus' Day. They watched as John the Baptist preached a message of repentance and had nothing but criticism for him - “he doesn't eat or drink”, they said. Then Jesus came and he ate and drank – he ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners yet the people also had a complaint against him – “He is a glutton and a drunkard,” they said. It seems when you are in a position of leadership you can never quite get it right. A complaining spirit is a burden to carry around. But there are other burdens we carry.

Perhaps we are burdened by the suffering in the world around us – the poverty and homelessness and hunger we see in our own country and around the world. Maybe it is war or global warming or the rapidity with which the world around us is changing. Or perhaps we are dismayed by the headlines in the newspaper – about crime and corruption and we wonder if there is anyone we can truly trust. Or perhaps our burdens are closer to home. We may be concerned about our relationships with family members or the illness of someone we love dearly. Changes can create burdens, particularly when they involve our jobs or economic situations. We try to find something that we can control and often that something is the way the church is run; from the way the furniture is arranged to the way money is spent. And if you really want to be burdened by something, there is nothing more burdensome than feeling that you must be in control of things. None of us is ever in control – we may think we are, but just wait awhile and God will surprise you. No, we are no different than the people in Jesus' day.

Our lives are so busy. It seems so necessary that we celebrate holidays and birthdays and special occasions. It seems so necessary that we go to visit our relatives or pack into our lives every festival or activity that we can possibly attend; until it seems that enough is enough. Our lives have become too busy and too full and we have not left nearly enough space in which to simply be. No wonder there are so many books on the shelves today about ways to simplify our lives. If only we could do that. People who

have been retired a few years tell me that they don't know how they ever had time to work, their lives are so busy.

Busyness cuts us off from our emotions. We played the flute for you but you didn't dance – you didn't want joy, so we wailed but you didn't mourn – you didn't want that either, Jesus tells them. Psychologists will tell you that when we are too busy we don't know what emotions to feel and so we carry around the burden of a heart unable to feel joy or sorrow.

Jesus says to let it go. Jesus says to come and to lay our burdens down. He promises that his yoke is light and his burden is easy. If only we could believe that. If only we could simply rest in Him. Sometimes that is all we really long for, just quiet rest. We have had lots going on here at our church for the past several months. We have had ordinations, confirmations, baptisms, weddings, funerals, celebrations, dinners, festivals, and sometimes I am sure we are all thinking, “I've had enough. Wouldn't it be nice to just rest.”

I remember long summer days when I was a child – endless days with nothing in particular to fill the time; lazy days. Do we know what lazy days are anymore? Days when we could lay in the grass and watch the clouds drift by or sit on the porch in the evening and watch the fireflies. It is time to rest in Jesus. Our Wednesday evening meditation group is learning how to do this. It doesn't seem like it would be difficult but somehow it is difficult to take just fifteen minutes to let go of our burdens and sit in silence together. But I am asking you now to do just that. As we join together this morning in communion with God and one another, let's take a moment to close our eyes and find that quiet place where we can be still and know that God is God. Let's take a moment to lay all of our heavy burdens down at Jesus' feet. Let's try to let go of our desire to control and to have things our ways. Instead take Jesus' yoke upon you for it is light. Whenever we seek to do God's will rather than our own, we find our burden eased because God's will is not difficult. Put your burden down and take Jesus' burden for it is easy. Amen.