

## Moving in the Right Direction

Published in The Bethel Banner, January 2015

© by Myrna CG Mibus

Over a year ago I was asked if I would be a mentor in Bethel's mentoring program. I was pretty excited to say yes because I really like the young woman who asked me to be her mentor and I felt that I have a lot of life experiences to draw from to share with young people. On top of that, I think I'm reasonably approachable, interesting and fun and am comfortable talking to people about life and what I've learned from it. So I felt pretty well qualified to be a mentor...except for one thing...part of the point of mentoring in Bethel's mentoring program is to help guide the mentee in their faith journey.

Faith journey? Uh oh. Well, that stopped me in my tracks. When it comes to faith and helping other with their faith I don't feel adequate at all. *I could use a faith journey mentor of my own*, I thought as I wondered if I should say "yes" to being a mentor or quietly decline with an "I'm sorry, no. I'm really not qualified."

Not qualified? Yeah. It's true. I'm an inadequate Christian. Sure, I go to church. I participate in the service, listen to the sermons and help out when needed. But in my day to day life I'm just not that great of a Christian. It's not just that I forget to ask myself "what would Jesus do?" before I decide how to act in a sticky situation, I have huge doubts about my faith and about God. I really don't have much of a prayer life and don't study my Bible with much regularity (okay, I admit, I hardly read my Bible at all, let alone study it). With all of the hatred in the world, much of it stemming from religion, at times I've been ashamed to say I'm a Christian lest I be lumped together with religious fanatics. Back when I was a teenager, I thought I had a pretty good handle on what it meant to be a Christian and I thought I was a pretty good one myself. But as an adult, I really didn't know what to think anymore. I keep searching for answers, but I sure don't feel like I have my own walk with God figured out enough to help anyone else along their way, especially a young person getting ready to be confirmed.

But here's the thing...despite my doubts about my faith, I still have a belief at my core that says that there is a God and a Holy Spirit that calls us to do things - even things that make us scared. And, even with all of my fears that I would say the wrong things or lead Bethel's future confirmands astray with my lack of faith, the Spirit encouraged me to say "yes." So I did. I agreed to be a mentor.

So how did this mentoring thing work out? Well, I felt pretty inadequate but I took it as a good sign that my mentee didn't ask for a new mentor before the year was up! Seriously, though, Bethel's Mentor program provides each mentor with a folder full of information with suggestions of things to do and a bunch of questions to discuss with our mentees. Barb also arranged a few mentor/mentee events for us to do together. All of the built-in program elements helped me out a lot with the how to part of being a mentor.

As for me and my worries about sharing my oh so uncertain faith, I learned to trust that the Spirit that helped me say "yes" would also help me find the right things to say when I was talking to my mentee and the other confirmation kids. Being a mentor got me thinking more about my own faith, too. And though I don't have things everything figured out, or probably ever will, I feel like I'm moving in the right direction.