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*"...that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love..."*  
Colossians 2.2 (NIV)

*"We walk by faith, not by sight."  
1 Corinthians 5:7 NRSV*

Dear friends,

Kermit the Frog once sang...

*It's not easy being green  
It seems you blend in with so many other ordinary things  
And people tend to pass you over 'Cause you're not standing out  
Like flashy sparkles in the water or stars in the sky*

One of the biggest complaints I hear from rostered ministers and lay leaders alike is about this season of green – this Ordinary season that seems to drag on all summer. It's not easy when it seems so ordinary.

One of the joys of serving a rural congregation is watching green things grow. Outside of my office window is a field. As I work, I am aware of the farmer at work. Tilling the soil as the dust cloud moves across the road. Planting in between the spring rains. Tending the fields as the crop begins to grow. Then waiting. And waiting. That ordinary time seems to last forever as questions filter through the farmer's thoughts:

Did I plant too early? Or, did I plant too late?  
Did I get the right seed?  
Are we going to get sufficient rain?  
Is it going to rain too much?  
Will the rain bring hail that destroys the crops?  
Maybe I should have bought hail insurance?  
Will we get an early freeze?

If we get a lot of rain in the fall, will the corn and beans dry?"

Yet, Paul reminds us: *"We walk by faith, not by sight."* (1 Corinthians 5:7)

This past 18 months has been the most difficult season of Confirmation in all of my ministry. Since I started this call in October, 2019, we waited until January to begin Confirmation Class. In March, we moved to Zoom. Then we moved back to in-person, but in the gym where we could spread out and keep the 6 feet distancing. It was frustrating at best. Ineffective at worst. At least that is what I thought.

A few weeks ago, my class of 5 seventh and eighth graders applied for a Microgrant. The purpose: connect and reconnect the generations through play. We asked for \$1700 to purchase games! And, we were approved. (See the May newsletter for more details).

Part of the process was an interview/conversation with someone from the Synod team. My kids got it! I was so very excited to hear their responses. They talked about mission and relationships and sharing Jesus' love with the residents of the nursing home and the daycare. They are starting a monthly pancake breakfast for the High School students who pass by the church each day to get to school. They have made a list of teens they will invite as we began praying for them by name.

The seeds were planted in baptism. They were watered and fertilized in Sunday School, worship, VBS, home, and yes, even Confirmation during Covid. And the seeds are sprouting and growing.

This Ordinary season of Pentecost might seem never ending, monotonous and dull. It might be a "down time" as you are preparing for VBS and Rally Day. But take a closer look. Invite your youth into conversation and look for the growth.

In Mark, chapter 4, Jesus reminds us:

*"The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, <sup>27</sup>and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.*

We don't know how, but we trust the Holy Spirit to work in ways we may never understand. So hang in there. Take a walk or a drive and notice the growth all around you. Your passion, long hours and dedication do make a difference even if you don't see it now.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Juli Lejman-Guy, President

