



The Good Shepherd: An Installation Service for Districts

February 18, 2011

Preparation: Have cups of water on a table near where the officers will stand, one for each officer. Also have prepared before the meeting Shepherds crooks to be given to each officer. Ask someone to sing the song at the end of the service, it may be sung a cappella. Be sure to get the name of each officer and the office to which they have been elected.

(Call those to be installed to the front by name and office.)

Leader: Let us wonder about the shepherd images we find in the Bible. What does it mean to follow a shepherd? *(Say each first name individually, ie: Nancy, Linda, etc)* You have come as individual today, perhaps you have heard the voice of the shepherd just a few times or many times but this particular time, you felt you heard the voice of God, the Shepherd, through the committee on nominations of the (name of district) United Women in Faith. And, you said "Yes" to that voice.

You will become more and more familiar with the voice of God as you are led in your path toward spiritual maturity. As you live out the role to which you have been called, you will depend on God, the Shepherd to guide you, but you, too, will have the role of a shepherdess through which God will lead others - not just those on the district mission team, but also those throughout the district.

In this leading there is both joy and generosity...sharing that does not begrudge what is given...receiving that is not humiliating but empowering...joy in each other's accomplishments... interdependence as you work together.

As a district team you need wonderment - approach each day with a little awe and wonderment.

As a district team, you need to be listening. Listen to the voice of the shepherd, God, but also listen for the unspoken words among you. Words of faith seem to have an unspoken quality.

As a district team, you need to speak. The gift of the spirit is one of knowing what to say and how to say it...Peter encouraged everyone: Keep speaking, keep telling the stories of Jesus.

As a district team, you must, like Jesus, connect with people rather than cut them off -- connect with others in the inclusive attitude of a 'good mind', wholeness in all created life and in the human family.

As a district team, remember that God is the source of all spiritual gifts, services and activities. They are for everyone. God's gifts are neither secret, exclusive, nor conditional. An attitude of wholeness is an expression of human spirituality.

With a good mind, one refuses to call another 'enemy';

With a good mind, one seeks out sisters and brothers;

With a good mind, one sees and hears the voice of God in all of God's world.

Jesus invited people to come to the water. He knew people needed 'living water'. Jesus offers the 'water of life' for everyone. Symbolic of the 'living water' offered by Jesus, I now invite you to covenant together by giving a cup of water to another member of your team. (The first person in the line passes a cup to the next, on down the line). As each of you hold the cup of water, meditate on how the 'living water' has come to you and how you will impart this to others in your role as shepherdess

Let us recognize that we have responded to the call of God to be in mission, offering 'living water' to all of God's creation. We have come to drink from the 'living water' so that we might share this source of life with the world's thirsty.

May you covenant to be in prayer with and for each other..to enable and encourage one another..committing yourselves into action as a shepherdess. May your spirit be refreshed as you take this drink. *(All drink at the same time.)*

(Give out the shepherds crooks, one to each officer, and ask them to face those gathered.)

You are the ones who have answered "yes" to the call to serve as district officers. If you would covenant together as a mission team to accomplish God's mission through the administrative and program tasks of s the (name of district) United Women in Faith, please respond by saying "With God's help, I will."

As officers return to their seats, a soloist may sing " You Hear the Lambs a-Cryin' " Songs of Zion # 128.

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