

**105th Annual Reunion Service, Central Mine Methodist Church – July 31, 2011**

**Minister:** Rev. Dr. Daniel Rosemergy

**\*Introit**                      The Central Introit (Glenna Slatterley Irwin)

**Greetings & Announcements:** Laura Wake Wiesner

**A Moment of Remembrance and Thanksgiving:** Arthur Stanley Martin, 1919-2011

**Hymn:**                      Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

**Invocation and Lord's Prayer**

**A Time with Children/Youth** [Cornish Toys, Saffron Bread, Copper Ore]

**\*Anthem:**                      I Lift Up Mine Eyes (Allen Pote)  
Izzabella Irwin, Oboe – Jim Irwin, Recorder

**Responsive Reading:** 33rd Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – “God Our Refuge”

**Hymn:**                      All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (Diadem)

**Scripture Readings:** Ruth 1:6-19; Matthew 4:12-13, 17-23

**Special Music:**              Joys Are Flowing Like a River (Manie Ferguson)  
Carolyn Meyer, Deanna Martin, Pete Manderfield, Dan Rosemergy

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Offering and \*Offertory Anthem:** God of the Ages (J. Sibelius, arr. by Hal Hopson)

**Doxology**

**Sermon:**                      **Facing the Unknown—Creating a Future** (Abridged)

Last summer, following the Reunion Service, I began to think about the courage of the early Cornish miners in leaving their homes on the closing of the copper and tin mines in Cornwall and traveling to distant and unknown places to practice their mining trade and to create a new life for themselves and their families.

*Facing the Unknown--Central.* Put yourself in the place of a miner facing the closing of the mine he has worked in for years, facing the uncertainty of an unknown future, with separation from families; long, arduous trips; and finding work. The realities of this migration are captured in historical accounts, e.g., Alfred Nichols' *More Copper Country Tales*, and novels, e.g., Newton Thomas' *The Long Winter Ends*.

Thomas' novel tells the story of Cornish miner Jim Holman. As he leaves the mine in Cornwall for the final time, he says to the mine's Captain Bennett, "'Goin' to Ameriky. We 'ave our bookin's made. To Michigan. Us leave nex' week." Bennett replies, "'I'm glad you'm goin' there. Ev'rything will be new to e. The work bayn't no 'arder there than 'ere. You'll like it w'en you get used to it. We sh'll miss e 'ere—all of us. Hi shan't forget the hymn'" (p. 12). The hymn is the Diadem, that "brave tune," the miners had sung each night as they were lifted from the mine's depths.

In *More Copper Country Tales*, Nichols writes of “Little Billy” Teuby who was faced with the necessity of finding work: “His family had grown numerically annually and consequently had become an unceasing burden financially so much that new fields and greater opportunities became a necessity.”

The stories are moving but hopeful. In similar ways, our biblical stories tell of peoples venturing into the unknown out of their faith in God and in themselves. The circumstances of these stories may be different but they all share common themes: change occurring in their lives resulting in uncertain futures, and the challenges of creating new lives and futures.

*Facing the Unknown—Biblical Stories.* In thinking about facing the unknown, two stories immediately come to mind—the story of Ruth and Naomi, and Jesus’ calling of the first disciples. In both, we’re at the beginning of a journey into the unknown.

*Ruth and Naomi.* After a famine in Bethlehem/Judah, Elimelech and his wife Naomi and their two sons journey to the country of Moab, establish a life there, and their sons marry Moabite women. Then, Naomi’s husband and sons die, leaving her and her daughter-in-laws, Orpah and Ruth, alone. Hearing of better conditions in Judah, Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem and her own people, and she tries to persuade Orpah and Ruth to return to their people. Orpah returns, but Ruth implores Naomi, “Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. . . .” Ruth has chosen separation from her homeland and family and risked her life and future.

*Matthew: Call of Disciples.* Jesus begins his ministry, teaching “‘Repent, for the realm of heaven is at hand.’ Then, walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men and women.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.” No explanation is offered why they chose to follow him, what following would mean, or where this would lead.

*Creating a Future—The Past.* Russell Magnaghi writes in *Cornish in Michigan* that Central Mine, which opened in 1854, was one of the important Cornish towns. The journal of school teacher Henry Hobart (1863-64) provides a keen view of life in a community dominated by Cornish people. The immigrants boarded, rented, or owned homes and used their extra money to support their churches and schools, playing a major part in the community. They assimilated but also maintained their Cornish heritage. Billy Teuby [*More Copper Country Tales*] weathered the ocean voyage and found work in Central, and he became known for his good voice and was the bass drummer in the Central Mine Silver Cornet Band. In the face of the unknown, they created a future in a new homeland—work, chapel, family, friends, community. It was not easy or without fear and loneliness—but they overcame.

*Biblical Stories: Ruth and Naomi.* In her new homeland, Ruth decides to help glean the barley in the fields to feed herself and Naomi and store grain for the winter. In the field she meets Boaz, a rich relative of Naomi, who helps her. Later they marry and have a son Obed, grandfather of King David. The future unfolds.

*Biblical Stories: The Disciples.* The disciples follow Jesus in his ministry, teaching, preaching, and healing. Simon Peter—“Upon this rock, I will build my church.” Andrew, who was closest to Jesus in public life, was present at the Last Supper. He beheld the risen Lord and witnessed the Ascension. We have the shared graces and gifts of Pentecost. James was present at the miracle of the raising of Jairus’ daughter, the transfiguration, and with Jesus in Gethsemane. John was the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” Each disciple was privileged in living fully in their relationship with Jesus and one another, but in the end were

martyred for their faith. Ted Loder, Methodist minister, writes in his poem “I Praise You for What Is Yet to Be”:

Wondrous Worker of Wonders,  
I praise you  
not alone for what has been,  
or for what is  
but for what is yet to be,  
for you are gracious beyond all telling of it.

*Today.* Facing the unknown is universal. It is a part of the human condition. We are all unsure what the future holds, and there is so much change going on around us—globalization, technology, mass communication, environmental concerns, conflicts around the world. The question is: How do you ground yourself in the middle of it all? What sustains you when you are faced with loss, change, or illness? We can accept that change happens and learn not to fear an unknown future by becoming as knowledgeable as possible about what is happening in the world and learning ways that we can be part of the creating the future.

John Richardson, Jr. wrote, “When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people: those who let it happen, those who make it happen, and those who wonder what happened.” I think there is more, something central to ways we move from fearing the unknown to creating a future. Abraham Lincoln said, “The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.” Charles Schultz’ *Peanuts* character Peppermint Patty tells Lucy, catcher on their baseball team, “Life should be planned inning by inning.” All too often the future overwhelms us. We need to take it a day at a time and let it unfold, with the confidence that we can do things to create the future. It is an attitude: I’m going on, whatever happens, and God gives me the strength to do it. I look back at the stories of Ruth and Naomi; the disciples Peter, Andrew, James, and John; Central’s Cornish immigrants. They all shared three things: choice, covenant faith, and community.

*Choice.* Ruth and Naomi chose to go to Bethlehem, Naomi back to her people and Ruth to share Naomi’s life. The disciples chose to follow Jesus, when they could have remained in their homes as fishermen. The Central immigrants chose to journey to a new land where opportunity existed.

*Covenant Faith.* Naomi returned to her land and people and to the worship of her God; Ruth accepted and lived that faith. The disciples had faith in Jesus’ promise of a New Age, a better life in covenant with God. The Central immigrants brought their Methodist faith to “Ameriky” from Cornwall Chapel to Central Church.

*Community.* Naomi returned to her community and, with Ruth, found there acceptance, love, and support. The disciples became a part of the followers of Christ. The Central immigrants maintained their heritage in their new land and created community.

All of us have or could have all three. *Choice:* We can decide what we want and need to do. *Covenant Faith:* We can deepen our faith in ourselves and in our religious/spiritual life to sustain us, even and particularly in hard times. *Community:* We can nurture or join supportive communities, networks of caring, loving folks to walk with us on our journey.

In “I Tremble on the Edge of a Maybe,” Ted Loder writes:

In silence, Lord,

I share now my eagerness  
and my uneasiness  
about this something different  
I would be or do;  
and I listen for your leading  
to help me separate the light  
from the darkness  
in the change I seek to shape  
and which is shaping me.

We are assured that God will guide our future, giving us confidence and hope. Let that promise go deep in your soul and be with you in the days and years ahead.

**Hymn:** Be Still My Soul

**Benediction**

**Response:** God Be With You Til We Meet Again

**Organist:** Susan Rokicki

**Choir Director:** Glenna Slatterley Irwin

**\*Choir Members:** *Sopranos:* Carol Bard, Joanne Bollinger, Tacy Flint, Carolyn Meyer

*Altos:* Connie Martin, Deanna Martin, Marcia Mason, Lani Poynter

*Tenors:* Peter Manderfield, Ramsey Meyer, Larry Molloy, Gerald Rowe

*Basses:* James Irwin, Jay Martin, Graham Meyer, Jack Porritt

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