

Pastoral Reflection – On Acceptance
Co-Pastor Susanne Guenther Loewen, May 13, 2020

This past week, my toddler came up to me with two ripped leaves and informed me that we needed the tape – she wanted me to “fix” the cucumber seedling that she had ripped apart! If I’ve learned anything in my years of parenting, it’s that these types of mishaps are unavoidable – they simply come with the territory of living with and raising littles. There’s no use getting upset; the only response that will do any good is patience. And, I’ll admit, that’s something I’ve had to work at and learn.

I’d been trying to put my finger on why the stay-at-home guidelines of this pandemic were feeling familiar when I came across an article comparing COVID-19 isolation to maternity leave. Both involve staying at home most of the time, sleepless nights, a foggy mind, and frequent handwashing! Both involve one’s time not being one’s own. The author, Stacey May Fowles, continued, “Becoming a mother meant dramatically relearning not only how to approach life, but the pace of that approach. I had to actively cultivate patience, and become okay with staying in one place for long stretches of time, day after day. I had to learn how to embrace simplicity, stillness and quiet, and to understand the art of taking things in, rather than frantically ‘doing’ all the time. I had to reassess not only what was valuable and meaningful in life, but what gave me value and meaning as a person—not, as I previously thought, what I produced, but how I lived and loved.” Her talk of “actively cultivating patience,” and of “embracing simplicity, stillness, and quiet,” struck a chord with me. She was speaking about learning how to be patient and to accept the stage and season she was in with her young infant. She concluded, “What I

ultimately came to understand is that in so many situations, acceptance is the key to endurance. Recognizing that something is, but won't always be, is exactly what cultivates a good life."¹

As we feel the time of health guidelines dragging on these days, I invite us to think of ways to cultivate patience and acceptance in ourselves. We know this will pass, and we don't know when, so there is wisdom in taking things day by day – the same as those early, hard, months with a new baby. And there is wisdom in accepting that God is with us through all of it – on the days when patience with ourselves and others comes easily, and the days when we have to work a little harder for it. And if you need encouragement in the form of hymns about patience, you might want to look at *Hymnal, A Worship Book* #584 – “They That Wait Upon the Lord” or *Sing the Journey* #75 – “Be Still.”

May the God of patience and grace be with you this week.

¹ Stacey May Fowles, “New Motherhood Prepared Me for COVID-19 Isolation,” *Broadview Magazine*, May 7, 2020, <https://broadview.org/motherhood-covid-19-isolation/>