

# The Fish Net

Pentecost 2014

Dear Friends,

Two months ago Susan and I were blessed by the arrival of our first grandchild, Anna Jane, though I must admit that when people humorously refer to me as “grandpa” my first reaction is to look around to see who they are talking to! In the months leading up to the baby’s birth we wondered how the other baby of the family, our dog Abby, would react to the new arrival. Whatever else we expected we did not anticipate her actual response; outright fear. Instead of joyfully running to the door to greet Rebecca and Matt the way she used to, upon realizing that the baby has arrived Abby now either slinks off to a bedroom or downstairs with her tail between her legs. Even better she gets out of the house altogether escaping to the backyard. Once they have left she reappears, her usual happy self.

I really don’t know why the baby, unable to do much of anything yet besides thrash her arms and legs around, scares the dog so much. Perhaps it is the sound of Anna’s crying? Whatever the reason though, it is both amusing and frustrating; the dog being so afraid of a helpless baby. Abby has nothing to fear since there is nothing Anna could possibly do to hurt her, but the dog doesn’t seem to realize that and I wonder. How often are we like Abby?

Recently I read that fear is the great characteristic of our age; in fact one author says that we live in “the age of anxiety”. Whether it be about the great issues of the day or our personal concerns, to worry is probably unavoidable for most of us. Sometimes our fears are groundless, like our dog’s, while at other times we have every reason to worry. Even so, as Jesus said in his most famous sermon of all: “I tell you, do not be anxious about life and do not be anxious about tomorrow for tomorrow will be anxious about itself. Let the day’s own troubles be sufficient for the day.” Practical and realistic advice; all the worry in the world won’t change anything so put your trust in God, taking it one day at a time. This is good advice and yet, it can be so hard to follow. In the end though we can take Jesus’ advice simply because the one who tells us not to worry or be afraid is also the one who is walking alongside of us, sharing both the journey and the load. As Jesus promised at the end of Matthew’s gospel, “Lo, I am with you always to the end of the age.” To paraphrase the words of a song, this means that we “never walk alone.”

Wishing you a most blessed summer, Shawn