

TEACHERFACE
January 26, 2014 –Congregational Meeting –Philippians 1: 3-11
The Church of the Covenant

The essence of this sermon is reduced to this –What’s written upon our heart is also written upon our face. Our wonderful Director of Christian Education, Janet Nevin, who retired at the end of 2013 has what I call a “Teacherface”. Janet is one of the most transparent people I ever met (and I mean this in a good way). You can look at her face and have a pretty good idea what she’s thinking.

I remember a couple of years ago during the Childrens’ Message when a young disciple was being a little squirrel-ly and running around the chancel area to everyone’s delight. Except of course for “Teacherface”. The more the little one ran the more her face became hardened. Don’t mess with Texas as the saying goes and don’t mess with Miss Janet either. It became this lovely, amusing and charming moment that we all wait for with eager anticipation on Sunday mornings; everyone had a smile on their faces...with the exception of the one trying to lead the Childrens’ Message. I was enjoying it a little bit too much, relishing the moment and Janet’s discomfort when she looked at me, pointed at the child, and without needing so much as to utter a word, pointed at me. Without communicating verbally, she looked at me and communicated, “Get him –Get him, NOW!”. So I get up out of my chair in the chancel and as the kid is running by I am about to reach out and encourage him to have a seat when Janet, finally in frustration, says to the little child, “SIT DOWN”. It was sort of that voice of God kind of thing like in the Book of Revelation when God is crying out, “DOOM, DOOM, DOOM!” All authority, dominion and power in the universe was captured in that voice and on that face in that moment. So I sort of did a wide-eyed double take and sat down. Then Janet looked at me and without saying a word I heard a voice in my head saying –“Not you, stupid, the child is supposed to sit down; you’re supposed to get up and help!”

I think there must be a class in teacher’s education that includes non-verbal communication. As in, how to melt steel and, Medusa-like, turn people into stone with just one look!

My principle hobby in life is the study of people. I like to try to figure out what makes them tick; why we do what we do; how God relates to people’s lives and how this impacts who someone is and what they do. You all are utterly fascinating. So in order to study the human character one must also be able to study the human face. In fairness to Janet, I must also say that her face constantly reflects her deep love for children and her even deeper love for God. I have watched over the last couple of months as she knew this was her last Christian Ed meeting, or last staff meeting, or this was the last time she would be recruiting Baby Jesus for the Live Nativity Scene or this was her second to last Childrens’ Message, or this was her last Punkin Patch, or this was her last Vacation Bible School. What I saw written there was this amazingly deep, profoundly loving, care and nurturing heart for people and especially for children and especially where God is concerned. We don’t wear our heart on our sleeve; we wear our heart on our face. And then sometimes Janet would cry; she is prone to tears and at the drop of a hat. So she has often wept for us and our children. She has poured out her heart and demonstrated to us how much she loves us and cares for us.

Moses went in to speak to God face to face and when he emerged he had to place a veil over his face because he had been in the presence of God. His face shone brightly. The shekina glory of God had transferred from God’s face to the face of Moses. You could tell Moses had been in God’s presence because of what was shining forth from his face. We are to be “*aglow in the Spirit*”, meaning that that which is in our heart, the Spirit of the Living God, shines forth from our face. The joy of the Lord is our

salvation. Joy and glory are given through the Lord Jesus Christ into the heart of the believer and that which God gives to our heart we are to beam outwardly, out into the world, through our faces. We know if there is glory in our heart then there is glory on our face. We know there is joy in our heart when we see joy written upon our face. We know there is JESUS alive within our heart when there is also glory and joy in our heart. *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1: 27)* The Bible says, we can see *“the glory of God in the face of Christ”*, who Jesus was and is always shines forth from HIS face. And may I say, we may see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ shining forth from our face when we see glory and joy written there. When the Savior lives in our heart then the Savior shines from our face. Janet, we see the presence of God alive in your heart because we see that same love and joy and glory written upon your face.

Some of Janet’s favorite Bible verses are those we just read from Philippians (Philippians 1: 3-11). Janet, *“(WE) thank (our) God in all (our) remembrance of you, always in every prayer for you, grateful for your partnership in the gospel and in children’s ministry over the past 5 years.* Dr. Mac, Dr. McConnell, when he was here as head of staff spoke to you and planted the seed in your heart about turning your vocation as teacher into your second calling as Director of Christian Education –the seed came to fruition and *“He (the Lord God Almighty) who began a good work in you has now brought the work to completion”*. And as Philippians continues we know *“It is (your) prayer for us that (our) love for children and young people, our love, as it says, “may abound more and more”* and that this prayer and this love that you have taught us and demonstrated to us we know will come through Jesus Christ, *“to the glory and praise of God.”* Janet, what you have taught us we will remember. Janet, what you have shown us with your life and faith we will live. Janet, what we have beheld written upon your face, we will be. We thank God in all our remembrance of you...

And one more promise. Later we will hear in our congregational meeting that because giving has fallen off whether we do or do not have a Christian Educator position in 2015 is now in jeopardy. Our church mission statement that we are *“TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN TO THE NEXT GENERATION”* is now on the line. The transmission of the gospel from our heart to the next generation is in question. Janet, take a good look at my face, take a good look at the heart and commitment we bring and through this congregation bring to the Christian Education of children, take a good look at the steely resolve in the faces of the elders of the church, take a good look at our TEACHERFACE and see if there is any doubt in your mind that the good work you have begun will continue. What is written upon our heart where children are concerned is also written upon our face. We make that promise to you, Janet. That what the Lord has begun in Christian Ed through you HE will continue to completion. Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*