

Sharing the past-present-future

By Pastor Linda Battello

United Methodist Church, Madrid, Elsie

Hebrews 11 recounts all the ways people in the past lived out their faith in God.

I wonder what we would put in our history to recount how we lived out our faith in God.

Elsie and Madrid United Methodist Churches both celebrate their 125th anniversary this year. Both churches have been considering the people who planted the churches and how they got started. The faith of those who came before began with Sunday School and then moved into worship and church building.

Both celebrate that the first thing done was to teach people about God and God's Son, Jesus Christ. Their faith was made real by sharing: "I believe so I will tell you about what God is doing in my life and my experience of Jesus and His love."

These communities of faith are still here because they saw past where they were and kept telling and showing the story of Christ's love in the world. Even though they didn't know what the future would look like they kept their faith and told the story even until today.

Elsie has decided that to celebrate the past and present faithfulness, they will open their fellowship and share their stories on Sept. 14 -15 with Bishop Jones preaching on Sunday. This is to celebrate that they are surrounded by a great cloud of faithful witnesses and intend to continue the tradition of love and mercy through the present and into the future.

Whether you celebrate with them or in your own community, let's remember that our job is to "lay aside every weight and the sins that cling so closely and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

In all these attempts to live our lives to reflect God's love we know that the Holy Spirit will continue to help us so that even if we don't know the future, we trust that God will continue to work with faithful people to bring the kingdom into being. Keep the faith, tell your story, build the future.