

December 17, 2018

Dear Community Partners,

What is it about the holiday spirit that makes the world seem to be a better place? The Christmas Season calls us away from the mundane affairs of our ordinary lives. The world bustles with a different atmosphere. Year after year we have the opportunity to be amazed. We watch light pierce darkness. It always does. We hear words of peace, hope and joy, and they encourage us. We observe servanthood revealing greatness. We encounter the joy of giving exceeding the joy of getting. Kindness seems more available. People more readily open doors for one another, and smiles seem not so foreign. We sing joyful carols whether we can sing or not, and we feel better because of it.

After the holiday season we often return to the commonplace things, but do we have to? As we put away the trees and ornaments and decorations for another year, do we have to also put away the willingness to help, to be kind, to be gracious and merciful and to notice others who have serious needs? Sometimes simple things help the most.

The other day I read something on social media that has “stuck with me.” Let me tell you about it. It involved Winnie-the-Pooh. The original version of Winnie-the-Pooh was a fictional anthropomorphic teddy bear created by English author A.A. Milne. His first collection of stories about the character was published in 1926. The Disney Media folks picked the character up and made Pooh a title character in 1966. This is the excerpt I read. We can learn from it.

It occurred to Pooh and Piglet that they hadn't heard from Eeyore for several days, so they put on their hats and coats and trotted across the Hundred Acre Wood to Eeyore's stick house. Inside the house was Eeyore.

“Hello Eeyore,” said Pooh.

“Hello Pooh. Hello Piglet,” said Eeyore in a glum sounding voice.

“We just thought we'd check on you,” said Piglet, “because we hadn't heard from you, and so we wanted to know if you were okay.”

Eeyore was silent for a moment. “Am I okay?” he asked eventually. “Well I don't know to be honest. Are any of us really okay? That's what I ask myself. All I can tell you, Pooh and Piglet, is that right now I feel really rather sad, and alone, and not much fun to be around at all. Which is why I haven't bothered you. Because you wouldn't want to waste your time hanging out with someone who is sad, and alone, and not much fun to be around at all, would you now?”

Pooh looked at Piglet and Piglet looked at Pooh, and they both just sat down, one on either side of Eeyore in his stick house.

Eeyore looked at them in surprise. “What are you doing?”

“We're sitting here with you,” said Pooh, “because we are your friends. And true friends don't care if someone is feeling sad, or alone, or not much fun to be around at all. True friends are there for you anyway. And so here we are.”

“Oh,” said Eeyore. “Oh.” And the three of them sat there in silence, and while Pooh and Piglet said nothing at all, somehow, almost imperceptibly, Eeyore started to feel a very tiny little bit better because Pooh and Piglet were there. No more; no less.

When Christmas is over the real service of Christmas begins. We learn from Pooh, Piglet and Eeyore that often times presence is better than presents. The gifts of love, joy, comfort, peace, security, value, respect, humility, grace, mercy and helpfulness are not gifts to be opened only on holiday occasions. They are given every day to make life better. The supply is unending. The more we give, the more we receive, and we give again and receive again, and the gifts go on and on. Let us go on helping those who are broken in spirit, feeding the hungry, breaking chains of bondage, being merciful, giving second chances, holding accountable, bringing peace and holding out helping hands every day. Then we can be a part of rebuilding nations.

We are continuing to work to get all Bremen cell phones enrolled in the Bremen Alerts system. If you have had difficulty enrolling your cell phone, or if you thought you had enrolled it but have not received a test call, here is what you can do. Send an email with your name and cell phone number to bremenit@bremenga.gov and we will enroll it for you. This is a fantastic service for all of us, and we want you to be a part of it.

May God richly bless you now and throughout the New Year! May you know the gifts of God's love, joy, hope and peace at Christmas and always.

Blessings indeed,
Sharon Sewell