

This week I bought a new book for our grandchildren called, Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andrae and Guy Parker-Rees. I find it speaks to our enduring principles All Are Called, and the Blessings of Community.

The book tells about an awkward young giraffe named Gerald who tries to dance fancy waltzes and cha-chas like the other animals but gives up when he's too clumsy. Gerald then meets a cricket who teaches the giraffe how to hear and follow the music within himself, and in all of nature. Turns out, Gerald CAN dance – in his own unique way! The other animals are amazed at his fantastic moves and ask Gerald how he got so good, and how they can learn to dance like him. Gerald tells them, “We all can dance...when we find music that we love.”

I hope our grandchildren learn to listen and dance to their own unique music. More importantly, that they love what they hear within themselves. I want them to have teacher-crickets in their lives, present when needed. More importantly, I hope they develop the compassion and wisdom to become someone else's “cricket,” encouraging others to find and love their own giftedness.

These lessons can also be metaphors for us as disciples of Christ and members of loving congregational communities. In the book, everyone is transformed by Gerald's journey, because all the animals were connected. At times on our journey together, we might resemble Gerald; or the animals being critical and unwelcoming; hopefully we are often the loving cricket; and the animals being accepting and eager to learn new ways of “dancing” to music we love. How do we continue to change from being critical of each other, to celebrating and wanting to learn “Gerald's” new way of dancing, or loving, or worshipping? Like the story, we all become better when our gifts are aligned and used for our common purposes. It's the “music,” or the Good News of Christ and how we receive and share this gospel that matters most.

“To proclaim Jesus Christ, and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.”

Makes me want to dance!! How about you?!

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