

September 2018

*“Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust, assured that the great and marvelous work is for this time and for all time.” Doctrine and Covenants 161:1*

Our grandson, Paul, turned three years old this spring. A couple months later his baby brother, Logan, was born. Paul loves Logan! He helps change his diaper, pushes his rocker, and holds him for brief moments of stillness. But Logan doesn't fully interact with Paul yet – they don't play dinosaurs together, or say their A-B-C's, or jump and laugh on the trampoline. Logan can't run around the yard, or play hide-and-seek inside like Paul can. Sometimes Paul ignores or avoids Logan. Is Logan the gift Paul expected when told he was going to get a baby brother? Sometimes I wonder if Paul might want to exchange Logan for a play mate that didn't need mom and dad's attention all the time. Or, maybe he'd rather get another firetruck, or a Tyrannosaurus Rex that roared *and* walked. As gifts go, Logan might seem overly needy to Paul and not as fun as he thought.

Of course, Logan will grow and the two will not only be brothers but become best friends, too. They will play together, argue, laugh, fight, love and stand up for each other. Neither knows that now, though. Not today. Their relationship is something that will grow and develop as they grow and develop. For now, Paul says he wants apple juice then cries, “No! I don't want apple juice” when it's given to him, only to cry for apple juice again when it's taken away – over and over until he sits quietly and a timer is lovingly set. With his parents' guidance and patient help, Paul is finding his way. Everyone but him knows he will not only outgrow this, he is likely to not even remember the struggle to make space for someone new to love.

In some ways the same might be said about us. We receive the gift of God's mission as our mission, and God's future as our future without fully knowing what it will look like, or all that will become different as it arrives. This mission and future need our attention and unconditional love to thrive, so we juggle schedules and shift priorities. Like parents, we look at our buildings, sanctuaries, worship services, even campgrounds and ask if we are on track to meet family needs. This “newborn-ness” is sometimes not what we expected to receive. Like children, we too might wish instead for robot dinosaurs, or experience apple-juice-meltdowns. Yet we have been here at some point in our personal lives, and we have hindsight to know what our “best selves” would choose. Making space and sharing is never easy, yet the Gospel was given to be received, and received to be shared.

We are blessed to be part of a faith community that believes at its core that each person and all creation is a gift given and loved by God. Developing loving and healing space for others to experience God's grace is worth every tear, every joy, every timeout, and every growing pain. There is a big picture God can see even if we can't. It will take shape over time, becoming as familiar and beloved as this moment now. Though each person and congregation is unique, each has what is needed to take the next step. The place beyond the horizon beckons. Let's continue to journey together as family and friends, as Community of Christ.

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