

good news of Jesus' hope, love, and forgiveness is strength renewing and life giving.

It is gratifying and invigorating to see former students become doctors, nurses, teachers, church workers, business people, and lots of other service oriented occupations. Some have received advanced degrees; others have done well with their high school education. Each Monday I receive an injection for my ms from a former student. My chiropractor and physical therapist are both former students. I have taught with and watched the ordination of former students. Thanks be to God for all those joys!

Still others have encountered difficult situations or made wrong choices that have left them in tough circumstances. In the past month, I spearheaded a fundraising drive for the family of a former student who lost their home due to medical expenses and the fraud of a contractor. This past weekend, I visited a former student in prison. I met his sister at a retreat where I was speaking and learned of his imprisonment. She also told me no one had visited him during his eight year incarceration. While I was rather intimidated by the setting, I totally enjoyed reconnecting with this brother in Christ. He greeted me with a hug.

He told me he recently read a newspaper article about people in our community who had received the Most Honored Citizen Award. He surveyed the list three times since he was certain my name would be listed. While I never received the award, I was most honored to know this young man loved and respected me enough to have asked how someone could be nominated for the honor.

One of the toughest things I have ever done is to

... concerns about retirement ... what would I do for entertainment, since being with children brings me more joy ... such as the third grader who told me, "There are two kinds of sin, original and extra crispy!"

leave full time classroom teaching to become a principal. I absolutely love substitute teaching whenever possible and someday, when I do retire, I hope to teach as much as possible. While I enjoy teaching children and adults, I also love learning from those I teach. Jesus was called a Teacher and I know He is the one who also called me to be a teacher. I know I cannot teach for Him unless I continue to sit at His feet and learn about Him from His Word. I would not be able to do that without those who taught me about Jesus when I was a child in a Christian

school. And so, God's love and teachings are passed from one child of God to another. I John 3:1 tells us, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are." These words become real to me every day when an autistic student daily repeats to me the words I once shared with him. Upon entering the school he always greets me with, "Hi, my sister in

Christ," and I turn to him and say, "Hi, my brother in Christ."

How blessed I am to have the opportunity to be a part of God's family and to joyfully teach not the Good News, but the Best News!

Elaine Bickel has served the church for over 37 years and is currently the principal at St. Paul, Millington. She has written curriculum for Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Lutheran day schools and authored Bible studies, devotions, and various articles. Elaine is also a sought after humorous and inspirational banquet and retreat speaker. She and her husband, Jim, have two grown children and four grandchildren. More information about Elaine and her ministry can be found on her website, Holey Knee Ministry (www.holeyknee.com).