

Hinton Rural Life Center
Celebrating 60: Embracing Our Roots & Sharing the Fruits

Reflections . . .

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This is why I kneel before the Father. Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by him. I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, I ask that you'll have the power to grasp love's width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God. Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen."

-- Ephesians 3: 14-21

Hi Friends,

What a joy and a blessing it is to celebrate Hinton Rural Life Center's 60 years of ministry! While I have only been directly connected to Hinton Center for about five years now, the roots of Hinton actually go much deeper in my own life and even my call to ministry.

You see, before being appointed here as the director of program ministries, I served at a small United Methodist mission center in the rolling hills of southeastern Ohio. I started there as an administrative assistant after I graduated from college, and our summer ministry home repair program was modeled after – you guessed it – this place called Hinton Rural Life Center. It was at this mission setting in rural Ohio where I learned about the ministry of the deacon, and where my own call was unleashed and solidified. I basically grew up in ministry there.

You see, the roots of Hinton Center go deep and wide, as does the love of God evidenced through those roots and the fruit produced.

Hear these words from Ephesians 3:

I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, I ask that you'll have the power to grasp love's width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God. Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us.

These roots of 60 years of ministry do go deep and the love that is shared is wide and long. This ministry continues to do far beyond all that we can ask or imagine because of the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us.

Not only does Hinton Center impact this local community through our safe and healthy housing, firewood, and other community efforts, but Hinton Center impacts communities all over, like the one in southeastern Ohio I came from. It's because of this passion and heart that people take a little piece of Hinton home with them. Whether that's a shift in perspective, a better understanding of what it might be like to walk in someone else's shoes, learned skills, a deeper appreciation for service, a renewed sense of purpose... whatever it is... Hinton Center continues to transform individuals, churches, and communities through our deep roots and our fruits.

Many people have heard me share that one of the biggest and most surprising joys of being at Hinton is working with our summer staffers. I say most surprising because it was the one aspect of the work that I dreaded the most. Yet, soon after starting my first summer here, I realized just how wonderful working with our summer staffers really is. These young adults who spend a summer or a few summers here have continued to shape and reshape my own sense of call. They rejuvenate my purpose, and they remind me how deep and how wide the love of God really is. They continue to form roots and share fruits through their Hinton Center missions experience. They continue to discern calls into ministry, ways to serve in mission, and take with them meaningful life skills. They continue bearing fruit.

So, yes, let's celebrate these amazing 60 years of ministry, but let's also look ahead to many more years of being rooted in love and sharing fruits, as we continue loving God and loving neighbor, trusting that God will do more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Friends, I leave you with this blessing:

May God bless you with discontent with easy answers, half-truths, superficial relationships, so that you will live from deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, abuse, and exploitation of people, so that you will work for justice, equality, and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you will reach out your hand to comfort them and to change their pain to joy.

May God bless you with the foolishness to think you can make a difference in this world, so that you will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

Amen and amen. Let us continue making a difference in this world through Hinton Center's roots and fruits.



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