



WORTH OF ALL PERSONS

by Lyn Palmer-Lander

Through our experiences in life, we learn to connect in our relationships, to form attachments with others and develop an understanding of ourselves. As we journey, we try to make sense of the messiness of human life.

Sometimes in our personal pain we can lose our way. In trying to belong, to fit the mould of others' expectations we can lose confidence in ourselves and the perceptions of who we perceive ourselves to be. In my experience sometimes others that are maybe living by the 'code of the norm' don't understand, listen, or have the patience for our differences.

I was expected to conform to their ideals and behave in different ways against my authentic self..... I tried.

I felt like I was sitting on the sidelines of my life. Rejected by others and my then Church community, I felt isolated, hurt, and unworthy.

God made me the way I am. God never rejected me and doesn't make mistakes!

Over time I have learnt to let go of my inner battles and disagreeable perceptions that were limiting my self-acceptance and ability to freely love. I felt God's call back from the sidelines and into active relationship with Him and others.

I tried going to a local congregation of my first religion – nothing different there. I did not feel any embrace of change or acceptance of any range of diversity.

Seeking intentional engagement in relationship with our Creator I instead found God outside of Church. God was in my living natural environment, the wonders about us every day and I could see God in the gift of my beautiful children. I still felt God's calling in my heart and I was responding. I was seeking to cultivate new experiences in life that He placed in my path. Experiences that would teach me, impact me, prepare me and match with my inner being.

Eventually with His guidance and my openness and willingness to be guided, I found 'my tribe' in Community of Christ. God has led me to a new spiritual home.

You have all welcomed me with such love and I am very thankful to you and to God.

Sometimes we don't know what we value or what we have until we can see the gift and gratitude from someone else's experience. A few years ago, just a month after my baptism a member asked me "Why would you join this Church?" Wow, I thought how can you not see the beautiful community that is? How can you not connect with our enduring principles, our mission initiatives?

As we proclaim Jesus Christ in our daily lives and promote joy, love, hope and peace, I am now living intentionally.

This new beginning for me is in a way a new pioneering frontier. I belong. I am part of a community that is on the move choosing to live vulnerably and upholding the worth of all persons. We have the means to inspire others as we demonstrate contagious courage in our actions.

As our doctrine continues to breathe new life into our future, I pray we hear our Creator God. For being in a relationship with Him, our unconditional, loving Creator, is at the core of Community of Christ. God is talking and He really wants to talk to us.

There is power in the acceptance of ourselves, and in our brothers and sisters who have a relationship with our Creator or those who don't know God. As we seek God in our daily lives, let us be the measure of hope, the inspiration, and the active love. Let us continue to build on our momentum we have and share our unique story that is Community of Christ, with others.

As the marriage legislation changed in Australia, Sue and I were able to be married. But it was the blessing of the church that mattered so much more to me than the civil rights.

God called me; God saved me. But all of you who are Community of Christ actively give me your love and acceptance and I am grateful.

Praise God!