

**Dear Ministry Partners,**

The Wizard of Oz is one of my favorite movies. I faithfully watch it each fall as the leaves begin to turn color and fall from the trees. There is a scene I particularly like when Toto, the little mangy dog, takes the courage to bite into the green draped curtain and pulls it open to expose the true Wizard of Oz, a worn out circus magician cranking levers and pushing buttons.

That little mangy dog had the courage to do what no one else dared to do. *"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain,"* the wizard commands them. But the hocus-pocus is over, the illusion is gone, and it's time for a frightened girl from Kansas and even the Great Wizard himself to see way beyond the rainbow.

It reminds me of the recent courage we have had to summon during this global pandemic. Like the little mangy dog we have had to pull back the curtains of our lives and hearts to reveal our vulnerability and honestly say how frightened we have been. We have had to deal with the world the way it is, not the way we wish it was. Dr. Seuss once poetically waxed,

*"You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes,  
you can steer yourself in any direction you choose."*

And isn't that where we are at right now, taking responsibility for where we go from here. Either positive or negative, you get to decide what life looks like from here on out. But here's the cool thing ... though we might not understand what's going on or what we are supposed to do, thankfully Jesus does. For it's not what we see, or what we feel, or what we did, or what we say...but it is the truth of who we know ourselves to be in Christ. Doesn't He remind us that we are a "pearl of great price" and we are the magnificent "treasure hidden in the field."

Jesus is the compassionate truth bearer and does not shout or speak to us through a green floating head. He is the God of Elijah, who gently speaks. He is in the still, small voice. The man behind the curtain doesn't need to fool us anymore. Just like the little mangy dog, we need to grab hold of the curtain and give it a good yank. Then we can begin to step into our royal inheritance and walk away from trying to figure it all out. And so maybe we need to step outside, get some fresh air, and remind ourselves we can, with the strength of the One who conquers death, move forward and begin to give thanks for where we're going ...somewhere way beyond the rainbow.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support as we continue to work to feed the most vulnerable in our community.

**Faithfully,**

**Pastor Amanda+**