

## Pastoral Reflection

Sabbath Renewal Reflection 2

Mount Rainier, Washington

June 25-30

*In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, - Genesis 1:1*



One of my goals for renewal leave was to spend some one-on-one time with each of my two sons, Eli (15) and Atticus (12). After my week at the Grunewald Guild in Leavenworth, WA (See Reflection 1 in 10-21-17 Navigator), Eli met me in Seattle. We spent a day site-seeing in the city, a day whale watching (saw a pod of Orcas, a right whale and a humpback!), and two days hiking in Mount Rainier National Park.

I don't think I had ever spent more than a day with Eli just the two of us – certainly not since

he became a teenager. So, I didn't know what to expect for our five days together on the northwest point of the country. It was better than I could have imagined!

Hiking Crystal Mountain was an all-day event. The weather was perfect. I marveled at my first-born son as he effortlessly led the way, frequently pausing to encourage me to keep up, "You can do it dad! Come on!" How could it be that just yesterday (actually 15 years ago) I held this boy in my arms and rocked him to sleep? What a gift!

At the top of Crystal Mountain at almost 6:00 pm, we were given a rare blessing – a clear view of Mount Rainier without heavy clouds or fog. It was 72 degrees where we stood, yet snow was visible all around. It is humbling standing before such a majestic scene. How small am I in comparison! Then, I thought about God's steadfast love as firm and as beautiful as Mount Rainier. I thought about all that snow and what we heard all day as we hiked up – the sound of running streams coming down the mountain. I tried to imagine how much life is supported by the flowing snowmelt. To think that God has known me since before I was a child, even since the beginning of time; to imagine that even in the vastness of creation and time, God remembers and cares for me! Could it be...

"DAD! It's time to go!" Eli snapped me out of thought and back to place and time. Just in time, too! The gondola was closing at 6:00 and if we hurried we could ride down. I was so spent from the hike up, I don't think I could have made it back down. So, we ran to the Gondola and caught the last ride down.

What a blessing to be a child of God. What a blessing to be a dad.

On a journey into faith together,

Pastor Steve