

A Prayer of Vision for Community

Rev. Tim Estes

Merciful God,
Working in concert we have
accomplished many things,
Walking in step with one another,
we have come many thousands
of miles,
yet sometimes the enormity of what we have left to do,
and the distance we have yet to go,
seem overwhelming.

We have set out on this journey of faith because,
like Abraham,
we have in view a distant city,
one that is unlike the one we now inhabit,
one whose builder and maker
is none other than You, our God.

We have a vision of that city
because we have in our own hearts
an awareness of something better,
that dreams and hopes do matter,
that goals and purposes really do
count for something.

We acknowledge before You that we are
filled with both irrepressible hope and nameless fear,
with both undying faith and devastating doubt,
with both selfless love and self-seeking hatred,
and we ask that You would save us from our own contradictions,
that You would cause us to believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts.

(over...)

And most of all that you would
give us the strength and the conviction
to continue on our journey...
that whatever else may come our way we might continue
to fight daily for justice,
for full inclusion,
for simple human dignity...
for life itself with all its contradictions
and wonders,
and sorrows,
and beauties...
and hopes...
and dreams...
and challenges...
This is our prayer.
In Jesus' Name.
Amen.

The Rev. Tim Estes spoke passionately about his vision for community: a community where people with disabilities are working along-side non-disabled people, living in neighborhoods with non-disabled people, and worshipping with non-disabled people. Tim's love was revealed most powerfully through his personal relationship with people who have disabilities and their family members.

On August 18, 2005, Tim, passed away — suddenly, unexpectedly, and way too soon for those of us left here. He was only 51.

Some knew Tim through his leadership in human services. He'd served as the Coordinator of the Macon Georgia Citizen Advocacy Program where he recruited people to become advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities. Later, Tim was the Executive Director of The Arc of Kentucky where he directed a project related to supported employment for people with disabilities. Others knew him in his clergy role. He was serving as the Pastor of the Warsaw Baptist Church in Warsaw, Kentucky at the time of his death.

Brother Tim, as many affectionately knew him, wrote this prayer for the 1997 Kentucky Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens) Conference.