



July 1, 2020

RECHARGE

When the battery life of your chosen electronic device gets low and the warning pops up, you know that you've got to recharge. What does the warning look like for you? How do you know when your body and spirit need to recharge?

Joyce Hollyday, a minister in the United Church of Christ, reminds us of the need to recharge, because the work of ministering to grief and injustice in the world is a journey. In a little book, *Then Shall Your Light Rise: Spiritual Formation and Social Witness*, published in 1997, Hollyday tells the story of a woman among the Honduran refugees of the late 20th century. This woman asked one of the volunteers at the camp, a church woman from the United States, why she seemed so sad and worn out all the time.

The volunteer spoke of the “grief she felt at all that she was witnessing, and her commitment to give all of herself to the refugees’ struggle.”

But the woman gently confronted her, “Only people who expect to go back to the United States in a year work the way you do. You cannot be serious about our struggles unless you play and celebrate and do those things that make it possible to give a lifetime to it.”

When the refugees had to move and set up a new camp, they always made three committees: construction, education, and joy. They knew that celebration was as important as digging latrines and teaching children to read.

Hollyday reminds us that, “Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.” To be serious about the church’s ministry – caring for the sick, comforting those who mourn, resisting evil – does not mean turning away from joy. Celebration and laughter belong to the ministry of God. In the words of the hymn that we sing at Christmas, “Repeat the sounding joy.”

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister