

ARTICLE FOR GAZETTE
July 19, 2006
By Rev. Carol Mariano
Orting United Methodist Church

On an ordinary day a cup of cold water may not seem like much. It's only water! We reach for the soda, latte, sports drink, iced tea, or something more potent. Yet there are times when a glass of pure water is the most beautiful thing you can receive and not all that easy to get.

Don't forget to drink plenty of water...when you are outside on a hot day, when you are exercising, working hard, singing. I'm getting thirsty right now just thinking about it. I tried pop. It left my throat sticky and my tongue feeling thick. When I was on a mission in Kenya we collected the rain and filtered out the snail parasites, then boiled or purified the water chemically before drinking it. The lodge in Tanzania had its own water filtration system, but the water still tasted like crocodiles to me. In Mexico (Baja), where they had been without rain for two years, the ground was hard and cracked. We drank bottled water.

We expect to have problems with the water when we travel, but even here water purification devices are becoming a necessary attachment to the kitchen faucet. The water table is dropping. When I lived in the eastern Washington town of Pasco we had to drill our well 396 feet deep. Bottled water is sold next to the soda pop—tap water just doesn't cut it anymore. Those clear mountain streams we used to drink from now carry the threat of giardia. What is ahead for our children and future generations?

Jesus said that whoever offers a cup of cold water to the little ones in the spirit of Christ will not lose their reward (Matthew 10:42). Water is necessary for life. Sharing what gives us life is the beginning of Christian faith. Sharing with each other is as essential as cool, pure water. One day Jesus was thirsty and he

asked for water from a woman drawing up water from a well. Then he offered her another kind of water that he said would overflow into eternal life. It was the water that quenches the deep thirst of the soul. Give me that water, she said, and she became one of his followers.

We all can come to the water Christ offers. So far it is plentiful in our community and it is offered to you freely. We all can be baptized into his way of living and praying, worshiping and fellowshiping in the body of believers, and ministering to others. We can feel our souls responding to his love, our spirits lifting like the leaves of a withering plant that, receiving water, draws itself up in supple strength toward the light of life.