

## “Small Is Beautiful”

Singer Ray Stevens, amid the troubled period of the 1960s and 1970s, wrote, composed, and performed a well-known popular song titled “Everything Is Beautiful.” Like many songs of the period, it opposed the numerous social divisions and prejudices underlying the conflicts that erupted in anger, disdain, stereotyping, and choosing to identify oneself and others by differences, often single characteristics, while resenting those who differed from oneself or one’s own group in some way.

The song affirmed the standard of our loving the whole human race, with all of our differences, as God’s creation, loved by God and of great value and importance. It’s a standard so vital that Jesus gave up his life to demonstrate what it means to be loved by God and to love one another. God welcomes all of us like Jesus welcomed little children, those whom some of the adults looked down on, literally and figuratively, as not important enough to be allowed to bother Jesus by seeking his blessing, which their parents wanted for them. Jesus, however, had a different take on the situation than did the adults who prevented the children from coming to him. With God’s love for all people, both large and small in this case, different in size and in their levels of importance in society, Jesus told the adults blocking them to let the children come to him, counseling the adults to become like the children if they wanted to enter God’s Kingdom.

“Everyone is beautiful to God in his or her own way” was the lesson Jesus was teaching. We could say the same thing about the churches in our presbytery. Each is beautiful and important in God’s eyes, large ones and small ones alike, in our own ways, each with its calling from God to its ministry. On April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Fayetteville Presbyterian Church, we’ll celebrate the importance of our small churches as we engage in “Mustard Seed Ministry,” where God’s Kingdom takes root and grows, even in the smallest of our congregations. Come and share the story of the special beauty of ministry God loves in **your** church. – Ron Buckalew