

## **Run River Rouge, Run**

8/25/2016 "A Message for You" Printed in *The Rockford Squire*

A woman stood on the walkway above the Rockford Dam watching the Rouge River flowing down fast. It had been another crazy and hectic day at work. But she had hurried through her bookkeeping and had successfully finished early so that she could squeeze in time to run to her favorite downtown shop to pick out a special birthday card for her mother and a funny card for her friend who had just gotten engaged. With the plastic bag of her purchases encircling her wrist, she had given herself permission to take a rare break from her overscheduled life to simply go down and watch the river for a few minutes. A leaf tumbled out of the spillway and slipped down the cascade to disappear under the frothing river. Sadly, it never came back up. She felt like that leaf. She was overwhelmed, there were so many projects to do before school started for their three children. She hadn't even started sorting through the school clothes to find out what still fit, but she remembered that Nate was going to need a new winter jacket. The big project of cleaning out and repainting the garage had never happened this summer, and the idea of having a yard sale to make some extra cash from her girls outgrown baby toys was a dream that had been dashed on actual reality.

As she stood there thinking through her mental to do list, she found herself praying. "God, when am I going to get everything done? How am I supposed to do it all? I try, but I am just not good enough." A tear tried to form in her eye, making her blink hard. She wondered if she had a tissue in her purse. But just then the air moved her hair as a breeze brushed her cheek. She felt, more than heard, an answer to her anguished prayer. "Turn around." She turned around and looked out on the placid expanse of the river spread out before her. --The river that was designed by God to go on its own winding chosen path. It went around the hardest rocky places, sometimes running deep and fast or other times flowing slow and steady and smooth. As she stood on the dam, she realized that it was human design and human constructions that had forced the river here to charge over the edge into a crazy frothing soup. In the same way, much of her own

anxiety was caused by her own super high self imposed expectations. She demanded too much of herself. She wanted to do it all and be it all. But there was no way she could ever do it all if she always kept adding more unrealistic expectations to her "to do" list.

As she stood there on the dam and turned her life back over to God, she felt a sense of peace come over her. --She didn't need to have it all or do it all. She just needed to get her priorities straight: Love God, and love others while loving herself. The rest was all just extras. With God's help, she WAS enough. --Enough to do the actually important stuff anyway. With her plastic bag of cards swinging, she turned and walked off the dam to head back to her car and to her wonderful and glorious life. She felt like making her grandma's meatloaf recipe for supper. The kids had been asking for it. As she stepped down the sidewalk she didn't see the leaf finally pop up to the surface from where it had been pinned on the river bottom. The leaf nodded in the sun, happy in its freedom and then floated away out of sight, fully engaged in its own journey. It was all going to be downstream from here.

*Rev. Karen Fitz La Barge is the new pastor at North Kent Presbyterian Church. She loves roses, chocolate, a good book with a cup of tea and obscure board games. She is eager to meet people and to learn more about Rockford as well as to capture more Pokémon for team Mystic. Learn more about her at: [NorthKentPresbyterianchurch.com](http://NorthKentPresbyterianchurch.com)*



Rev. Karen Fitz La Barge. Copyrighted Material. All Rights Reserved