

Sermon: January 9, 2022

"Tray table turned altar"

We've all had those days ----- you are just "out of whack" ...

Movin' around like a nut ... not sure what you are doing ...

The other day I need to get here extra early ----- to let the service guy in. Don't want to be late.

On my way ----- I see the sunrise ... so I stop to take a picture.

Get to church ... the phone is ringing. Two people stop by to chat. I offer the service guy a cup of coffee.

Then I hear Len's voice ----- "Don ... time to start "thought for the day."

Oh, my gosh ----- haven't even thought what to say.

I put on my "mike" ... start walking in ----- no idea what I will talk about.....which must have been painfully obvious to those of you who watched. On my way up to the altar ... I say to myself:

"Be still ... and know that I am God."

So true. Slow down. The opposite of this would be:

"Hurry up ... and continue to pretend you are God!"

Yes ----- too often I try to be like that: controlling, being in charge ... and then we get frustrated when things don't go our way.

This morning I slide into the parking lot with my pick-up truck.

It's early really early!! and the phone rings. It's Hank.

"Don, how is the parking lot??"

"About two degrees south of hell!!"

"I'll be right over."

After salting the lot ... Hank comes inside for a cup of my fine coffee.

He walks around. "The church really looks nice inside."

"Well, Hank ... you ought to come in and see it once-in-a-while!!"

I look at Hank. "I don't mean to be sentimental ... but this morning ---- the church looks like YOU.

We needed you ... and you came. Thanks to you, we are safe. You have a gift -----
and you shared it with us. THANK YOU."

This week our theme has been "coming home."

This is what Jesus is all about. He wants his followers to come home.

... come home to a religion that is true to it's roots.

... come home to a religion free of guilt and judgment.

... to a religion of openness and unconditional love.

... a religion that takes shape and comes alive in ordinary people like you and me.

I went to Menards early yesterday morning.

I'm not really allowed in Menards. The only thing I can locate is salt for our water softener.

On my way to the salt ... I see this bin full of helicopters.

My eyes light up. I buy 30!!

I unload my cart for the only cashier working this early.

"Oh, wow ----- why all these?"

"It's for my kids' story in church."

"What church?"

"All Saints Lutheran in Orland Park."

“Nice ---- I’m Lutheran. Missouri Synod Lutheran.”
“Wow ----- you are the real deal. These helicopters will be Missouri Synod by noon tomorrow.”
(I think she laughed.)

Speaking of helicopters and coming home.
I went to see Judy Edberg yesterday. She recently “came home” from the hospital.
She wants to share Communion.

Her good friend Sandy is there.
Also a young nurse’s aide who is helping once-in-a-while.
It’s time for Communion. Sandy gets up to leave. Judy says: “Don’t you want to stay for Communion?”
“But I’m Presbyterian.” Judy smiles ---- “doesn’t matter here!!”
The nurse’s aide is ready to leave. Judy says ----- “Please join us!!” ----- and she does.

The four of us gather around Judy’s tray table ... which is now our altar.
Simple.
Refreshing.
Kind-of like “coming home”!!!!

Judy asks me to tell them the story of the first time I brought someone Communion.
Way back ... two weeks after I got here in 1974. He’s a 90-year-old retired minister ... who still wears his
black suit everyday. I didn’t have an “official” home Communion set. So, I took a slice of bread ...
put it into a cookie tin ... and grabbed a styrofoam cup and a half bottle of wine.

I get to his small apartment.

We shared.

He smiled.

Not long after that ... his was the firsts funeral I had at All Saints.

It’s sure good to be here today, with all of you.

It’s always good “to come home.”

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