

Sermon: January 29, 2023

**"Rainbows and the Son"**

We need more sunshine.

We need more messages of hope ... more stories about the goodness of the human spirit.  
We need more spaces and places where people gather ----- not just to protest and complain about what's wrong (and, yes, there is much to complain and protest about) ..... but gathering to celebrate the enduring power of love and kindness.

It's hard to watch the news. It's seems as though the "wrong side" of life gets the most press.  
People who cross the line of decency and justice.

I certainly don't want to speak for you ... but ----- this all makes me even more determined to focus on what is right ... and good ... where the "real power" is.

We need this.

Our kids need this.

Our world needs it!!

We all have "stuff" going on in our lives. Each of our journeys is unique and different.

As I get older ... I find it harder and harder to say "good-bye."

We say "good-bye" to lots of things. Maybe it's our job ... or saying "good-bye" to something you used to be able to do, but can't anymore. We often say "good-bye" to a chapter in our lives.

Think of all the people whom we have lost and have had to say "good-bye."

Last week my thoughts were about the "serenity prayer."

This week ----- I've been thinking about rainbows. In the story of Noah and the ark ... the rainbow is a sign of God's never-ending covenant with his people.

Rainbows are a sign of hope. They appear in the midst of the clouds.

They appear after the rain.

Rainbows turn our thoughts

to heaven and eternal life.

"Heaven" is not just about the after-life. Heaven is a word meaning "wholeness." Being with God, feeling God's presence. When you know and feel that God is with you ... when you see healing and goodness around you ----- this is a little hunk of heaven here on earth.

Rainbows appear in the sky. But rainbows also live deep within our heart and soul.

Who are you thinking about this morning?

Do you have people who tug at your soul ... who get inside your guts??

I'm thinking about Michael and Danny. Both are mentally disabled adults.

Michael's earthly journey ended this week ... at the age of 81.

He was unique. He was different. For his entire life ----- his sister Mary Kay was his advocate and warrior. She brought dignity and meaning to his life.

Michael loved simple things ---- like going to church and getting the newsletter he couldn't read in the mail.

When he could no longer walk and get into the church ... he insisted on going.

So, Mary Kay drove Michael into our parking lot. I would meet them outside and share prayer and conversation together.

Until his very last day ... I would see him in bed:

“I LOVE YOU, MICHAEL.”

“I LOVE YOU, REVEREND DON.”

Yes, Michael was humble, simple, and basic. This is the way our church needs to be.

And there is Danny ----- soon to turn 65.

Sits here every Sunday with his sister and warrior and advocate --- Karen.

Danny doesn't speak like most of us. He speaks with his heart and his eyes.

He is in the hospital and re-hab now.

I walk into his room. He puts his hands together ----- his way of saying “church.”

“I love you, Danny.”

With a flip of his hand on his chin ... he says “I love you” back.

His simplicity and humility are magic ..... and this is the kinds of “magic” that needs to be at the very foundation of our humble temple.

I will probably watch the news tonight.

I will see stories about people who have done wrong. Yes, I will worry and pray and get anxious.

But then I will think of Michael and Danny.

I'll see Michael coming onto our parking lot.

I will see Danny's hands.

I will be reminded where the real power is.

Just before the early service ... the phone rings.

Tom Kasper died. He died at the VA Hospital ... in a section called “Serenity Place.”

When I saw him last ... he didn't say a word.

Yet ... in his silence, he spoke of God's goodness and grace.

We need to carry this with us everyday.

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