

Time Together

While We are Apart

Wednesday, May 6, 2020



Good day, dear church communities,

Our animal picture today comes from Barbara Wheeler (SMWC). Teddy, the chihuahua, just came to live with Barbara last week! Her daughter in North Carolina found Teddy, who is 12 years old, as a senior dog in need of adoption. Her daughter brought Teddy to Barbara and they are very happy together! Many thanks for sharing this new joy with us, Barbara!

Many of you know I am a regular reader of the cartoons in the Richmond newspaper. Jane Fortin (SMWC) and I often enjoy the same ones (often with dogs in them!), and compare notes on Sunday mornings! Several months ago, I mentioned in a sermon an old Far Side cartoon that I loved. The Far Side, as you may remember, was a single block cartoon, with lots of animals involved, often talking...the jokes were often a bit odd, but also very funny. The last strip was published in 1995. I loved the animal cartoons in The Far Side, but I also must admit I loved the cartoons about death. As a priest and counselor who has specialized in grief work, I'm afraid that part of my not being afraid to talk about death and dying also means I really appreciate a good joke about death too.

The Far Side cartoon I mentioned in that sermon showed a woman clearly in the



garments of mourning, black dress, black veil, standing by an open window. Out the window, a number of large household items are floating upwards towards the heavens.... a couch, a grandfather clock, a bureau. The woman is shouting, "Harold was right! He can take it with him!" Like I said, grief counselors like death humor.

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I bring up this cartoon, as I have read several reports during this time of pandemic that people are taking efforts to do a better job making preparations for when they die. For some, this is deciding between being cremated and having a casket funeral, for others this means making or updating their will, and for others it is writing down some of their preferences for their funeral. I am grateful that Betty Thornton left some directions for her son Jeff about her funeral. When we can fully gather and celebrate Betty's ministry and life, we will have some assurance that the service will be to Betty's liking. Betty left a copy of the bulletin from her husband Les's funeral, with notes about things she would want a bit different in her own service. She had told her son she wanted to be cremated. She left a list of hymns she loved.

All of these steps help a grieving family to know the comfort that comes in some assurance that they are planning a funeral service in the manner their loved one wished. What a gift we can all give our loved ones! So, during this time of needing to stay at home, I invite you, if you have not already done so, to simply begin a handwritten or typed list entitled "My Funeral Wishes." I need to do this too, so I'll start by enumerating the first things to go on my list: I want to be cremated; I want hymns #664 (My shepherd will supply my need) and 482 (Lord of all hopefulness) included in my service. If you try this exercise and then want to share your list with me, I'd be honored to see it. Many folks have given me copies of such lists to keep in my file cabinet for safekeeping.

Well, back to my favorite Far Side cartoon; I could not find a copy of it, so I had to settle for another one, again dealing with death, and heaven. I'd say tuck a magazine in my casket, if I had not already decided to be cremated!

Now, onward to a little more "Time Together." Megan

Prayer Notes:

We will include our prayer lists in each Sunday Newsletter. Please continue to let us know of folks you would like to have on our prayer lists. Notes for this week:

- Ian Larmore is grandson to part-time Trinity members, Bob and Nancy Larmore. Ian is an active teenager living in Norfolk who has battled cancer in the past. For the past few months, Ian has had a concerning cough. A recent CAT scan showed no cancer, thankfully, but they did find in other tests, a blood infection. Ian was admitted to the hospital in Norfolk this past weekend and hopefully treatment for the infection can be fast and effective. Please pray for Ian, his parents, and all his family who love him much.
- Chuck McGrath is slowly improving. His birthday is coming up on May 17th, and I believe he is turning 95! If you would like to send him a birthday card, the address is:
P.O. Box 370
Irvington VA 22480

Please continue your prayers for Chuck and his family.

- Our healthcare workers are on all our hearts. Please keep them, and their families, in your prayers.
- SMWC and so many in the larger community mourn the death of longtime member Betty Thornton on Saturday, May 2nd. The family has decided to wait and have a funeral service when the COVID restrictions have lessened, and we can gather easily to celebrate Betty's life and ministry. Please keep Betty's family in your prayers.
- Theresa Kanuck (SMWC) told me this week of the death of her cousin, Mary Lou Hovanec, from COVID on Monday, May 4th in Pennsylvania. Theresa said Mary Lou was the cousin who could always make everyone laugh, no matter the occasion. Please pray for Mary Lou's family.

Please join me now in this prayer for those who have died recently:

O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered: Accept our prayers on behalf of your servants Betty and Mary Lou, and grant them an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of your saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

May and June Birthdays and Anniversaries

St. Mary's Whitechapel Birthdays: Karen Woodruff, May 4; Jean DeFilippo, May 12; Ernie Greene, May 13; Chuck McGrath, May 17; Randy Romaine, May 25; Rita Theisen, June 3; Ursula O'Bryhim, June 16; Ed Ramsey, June 16; Jane Henley, June 17; Jane Fortin, June 22; Warren Hottle, June 29



Anniversaries: Lucy & Warren Hottle, May 10; Ed and Sue Ramsey, June 15

Trinity Birthdays: Finn Pollard, May 2nd; Allen Cornwell, May 3rd; Karen Woodruff, May 4th; Jonathan Chilton, May 11th; Hope Hayden, May 11th; Milton Kingsbury, May 13th; Owen Christopher, May 22nd; Spencer Cammarata, May 24th; Jenny Dunaway, May 24th; Jamie Hayden, June 12th; Jodie Hayden, June 12th; Alexis Hayden, June 15th; Cole Hayden, June 15th; Dinny Jackson, June 23rd; Julian Cornwell, June 24th; Curtis Walker, June 30th

Anniversaries: Carter & Cheryl Christopher, May 19th; Janet & Jay Davenport, May 20th; Gwen & Stan James, June 16th; Diane & Dukie Smith, June 18th

Announcements

Many thanks to Danielle, Josie and Charlie Spencer for volunteering to be the new Garden Committee at Trinity! They bring great energy to the beautiful gardens of Trinity!



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Announcements

The May/June/July edition of “Forward Day by Day” is now available. This devotional produced by the Episcopal Church is usually available on our Announcement tables. If you would like a copy and you have a key to the parish hall, you can drop by and pick one up. If you do not have a key and would like a copy, call me (804-477-5515) and we will arrange to get it to you.

“Zooming Coffee Hour” is held every Sunday at 3pm; all are welcome! Text, call or email me if you want to join us, and I’ll put you on the list to receive the Zoom invitation each week. Once you sign up you are on the list and can come any Sunday that suits you. (My cell number is 804-477-5515.) And if you would like to join us, but are not signed up for Zoom, Ellen Tracey from Trinity and Sharon and Richard Gill from SMWC are willing to help anyone get on Zoom. Ellen can be contacted at: 804-436-2371 and The Gills can be reached at: 804-462-9939.

For the season of Easter, I will be posting a video each Sunday, focused on the Gospel for the week. The videos will be available on the Trinity website and on our Facebook pages.

Washington National Cathedral continues to offer beautiful and moving worship daily. They can be found at cathedral.org.

Please let me know if you are in need of help with getting groceries or other necessities. Call, text, or email and I’ll connect you with a volunteer.

Many thanks for continuing to pay your pledges as you are able in these difficult financial times. And many thanks to those who have been able to donate to the Rector’s Discretionary Funds. You can continue to mail pledges and donations to Rector’s Discretionary Fund to each church:

Trinity Church
PO Box 208
Lancaster, VA 22503

SMWC
5940 Whitechapel Rd
Lancaster, VA 22503



Thoughts from the Organ Bench

The Little Brown Church" is a historic church located at 2730 Cheyenne Avenue in Nashua, Iowa that was made famous by a song, "The Church in the Wildwood." The structure was completed in 1864.

The music about the church was written by Dr. William S. Pitts in 1857 following a coach ride that stopped in Bradford, Iowa. The church is in a valley near the town, though the church was not actually built until several years later. In the years since, the church has become known simply as "the Little Brown Church." When Pitts returned to the area with his wife in 1862 he discovered a church being erected where he imagined it. The congregation had been meeting in various temporary spaces until Rev. J. K. Nutting led the drive to create a permanent home for the congregation. During this period, Pitts had been teaching singing at nearby Bradford Academy and taught his class to sing his song for the first time at the dedication of the church in 1864.

Pitts later sold the rights to the song for a nominal sum. After the church closed in 1888 due to economic downturn in the town, the Society for the Preservation of the Little Brown Church was founded. By 1914, services were again held in the building. Shortly afterward, the small congregation experienced a revival that attracted new attention to it and to its song. Among those who found and loved the song at this time was the Weatherwax Quartet. This group of traveling singers traveled



throughout Canada and the United States in the 1920s and '30s and used as their trademark song "The Church in the Wildwood." They would quite easily talk about the little church during their travels. As the song grew in popularity, coupled with the development of the U.S. Highway system in the mid-1920s, many visitors came to the newly reopened little church. Since then the

church has become a popular tourist spot, and remains so today. It attracts thousands of visitors every year to see or be married in the "little brown church in the vale." The church is currently a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

There are several variations of the original lyrics, but here is the most well known version:

There's a church in the valley by the wildwood
No lovelier spot in the dale
No place is so dear to my childhood
As the little brown church in the vale.

Refrain:

(Oh, come, come, come, come)
Come to the church by the wildwood
Oh, come to the church in the vale
No spot is so dear to my childhood
As the little brown church in the vale.

How sweet on a clear Sabbath morning
To listen to the clear ringing bells
Its tones so sweetly are calling
Oh come to the church in the vale.

Refrain

There, close by the church in the valley
Lies one that I loved so well
She sleeps, sweetly sleeps, 'neath the willow
Disturb not her rest in the vale.

Refrain

There, close by the side of that loved one
'Neath the tree where the wild flowers bloom
When farewell hymns shall be chanted
I shall rest by her side in the tomb.

Refrain

For more information about the church, visit the web site: <https://littlebrownchurch.org/>
Enjoy these interpretations of the song "The Church in the Wildwood" by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and The Gaither Choir: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRkftf4jS8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io6vlgHg4Ps&list=PL8HaYdnQAJvUs3Bj1JizSgoT1w3BjYvV1>

Sources:

[Wikipedia.com](https://www.wikipedia.com), <https://littlebrownchurch.org/>

Reflection

I subscribe to a daily devotional offered by the United Church of Christ (UCC) called Still Speaking, referring to God still speaking in our lives today. The authors are a wide variety of clergy and laity in the UCC. Our reflection today comes from Rev. Dr. Marilyn Pagan-Banks, who serves as Senior Pastor at San Lucas UCC in Chicago, and as Executive Director of A Just Harvest, a feeding ministry in Chicago. Her reflection is entitled, “A Time to De-Clutter,” and reflects on a wonderful verse from 1 Peter, in The Message translation.

*So clean house! Make a clean sweep of malice and pretense, envy and hurtful talk.
You've had a taste of God. Now, like infants at the breast, drink deep of God's
pure kindness. Then you'll grow up mature and whole in God. - 1 Peter 2:1-3 (MSG)*

My spouse and I are considered “essential workers,” so we are still going to work every day while making sure to wash our hands and wipe down doorknobs and light switches, and changing clothes as soon as we come home. We’ve made our own hand sanitizer since we can’t find any in the stores. We are taking extra care to protect ourselves and making sure we do not cause harm to others.

To be honest, this part has been relatively easy – except for the part where I don’t get to see our family (especially the grandbabies!).

But keeping the weariness out of my voice and pushing aside impatience – this is hard.

Serving those who live on the street and cannot “shelter in place” while keeping anxiety at bay – this is hard.

Checking in with those who feel the most isolated and willing my words to conjure up for them a vision of hope and true feelings of connection – this is hard.

Perhaps this crisis is reminding me that I have to work just as hard to protect myself, from the inside out, so as not to cause harm. I may not be able to use this time to clean house, but I certainly can take time to tend to those places within me that are cluttered with trauma, bitterness, and shame so that joy and love might spring forth unencumbered.

Perhaps I am not the only one.

Prayer

*God, I thank you that your Holy Spirit not only moves, but removes with
power and grace so that nothing, not even COVID-19, can keep your light
from shining and your love from spreading. Amen.*