

The Peace of Christ at Pawleys Island Lutheran Church

Christ the Redeemer Church
June 14, 2009
Green Time after Pentecost

Mark 4:26-34
Rev Gary L. Smith
www.christredeemerchurch.com

See how small these mustard seeds are? As this jar of mustard seed is passed around this morning, take one and hold it throughout the service. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. It starts out very small and insignificant and then grows into a plant large enough that even the birds will make nests in its shade.

Ah, shade. Yesterday the heat index was 106 degrees here. Steve Jones, David Levan, Duane DeWald, and I played golf in the LBJ Museum Annual Golf Tournament to raise funds for the Museum. Our own Ed Mihalkanin helped to organize this teams scramble.

Steve told me on one green, "Make this putt so that you have something to preach about tomorrow." I missed the putt. It was a boring round for our team. Nothing to preach about. 1 over par. Never in trouble. No spectacular shots. No dropped long putts. All we could think about was hitting the ball near a tree so we could stand in the shade for a minute or two as our team shot a 73. It is a Green Sunday. Nothing special. Not Easter. Not Pentecost. Not Christmas. Just a Green, ordinary Sunday. Most of our days are ordinary days in life. Days of heat where we seek shade and respite. Green. Shade.

I read an article last week about Pawleys Island hammocks. Hammocks are nice swings that one enjoys in the shade of a large tree. Pawleys Island is off the coast of South Carolina. The island is home for two friends of ours – Ron and Lonna Handley. After reading the article about these hammocks from the Island, I called Lonna to see how her breast cancer treatment is going. She is doing great and sounds strong and determined.

I asked her if she and Ron had found a church yet on the island. She said a friend invited her and Ron to visit the friend's little Lutheran Church on the island. They did. Young preacher. Nice guy. He spoke about how meaningful it is in the service to greet each other with the Peace of Christ. He talked about the history of that greeting. He told them, "How would it be if you introduced yourself to someone else during this time of passing the Peace and said, 'Hi. My name is Gary and I have cancer.'?" Lonna was stunned. It was such a meaningful thought to her that she cried for the first time after beginning cancer treatments. She and Ron attend that little Lutheran church now.

I loved hearing that story about a young preacher on an island trying to help others to love and learn how to pass on the Peace of Christ to others. Trying to create some shade.

I miss Amity. I miss Daniel. We get to see them both within the next month and we are getting impatient with waiting. I wish there was no hunger in the world. I wish there was Peace in the world. I wish all of my friends and family had good health.

I wish my friend Shawn could see his Chicago Cubs win one World Series before Shawn expires in life, but that will never happen until there is shade in Hades. While waiting for family reunions and for the Cubs to win a World Series and for better days in the world to come, I will just gather in church each Sunday and greet each friend with the words, "The Peace of Christ be with you." The greeting is small...like a mustard seed.

Just a normal Green Sunday after Pentecost. Hot. No great shots during the week. Just seeking some shade from the heat of life. Just a little mustard seed of faith. That is all we need. To move mountains. To grow a plant that will provide shade for others.

We received a graduation announcement this week from Will Glover. Will was one year behind Daniel in school up in Boston. Will is deaf. Will's mother Sally and our family worshipped together. Will's father dropped dead of a heart attack at age 40 while we were in Boston. I did the funeral service for Will's father at the Air Force Academy cemetery. My heart so ached for Will and his mother. Will loved to fish with his father.

The only thing I could think to do for Will was throw a ball with him. Turned out he loved to play ball with me and Daniel. It seemed like a little thing to just play ball with him. I got the little league officials on base to bend the rules so I could have Will on my team, even though he was too young. I wanted to make sure he was treated properly.

Will fell in love with baseball. He ended up making the All-Star team that first year of organized ball on my team. Daniel and I were so proud of him. Daniel made the All-star team that year also. Will continued playing baseball all through school. He is graduating this year from a school in Washington D.C. and is pursuing automotive mechanics. I like to think that baseball helped along the way. Providing some shade in his young life.

And we send off this morning these 11 campers to Glorieta Christian Camp today to plant some seeds in their lives. Rusti, Cris, Mason, Cole, Cameron, Connor, Courtney, Alicia, Reese, Brenden, and Brock...have fun, eat well, learn a lot, enjoy the trees and the mountains and the cool weather and the shade there. .

I ask two things of you this week. One, keep your counselors Rusti and Cris up late at night.

Two, make a point every day of greeting each other at Camp with the words, "The Peace of Christ be with you." Or you can say to each other each day, "You da man" or "You da girl" or some greeting like that. But please speak to each other at least once every day.

And please read Cameron's mail to him at camp since he can not read. If he gets any mail, that is.

May we all provide some shade for each other this coming week. May the Peace of Christ be with you. It is just a little thing, this greeting and prayer, but it provides some shade for us all when it comes from a friend. Amen.

