

## FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART...

There once was a very cautious man,  
Who never laughed or cried,  
He never cared, he never dared,  
He never dreamed or tried.  
And when one day he passed away,  
His insurance was denied.  
For since he never really lived,  
They claimed he never died.

Tom Mathews, Aim For The Heart

It was a tough week last. I led two funerals. It is not easy to officiate the funeral of a child. I've only had to do it a few times. Thankfully, I get to do it in the context of a faithful congregation and supportive community. How much better to celebrate the life of a faithful 90 year old servant of God. They say that death takes no holiday. Neither does it take sides in the selection of its participants. As it says in Job, "It is appointed unto mortals once to die." We will all keep that appointment whether we are nine or ninety. Is this to be feared? Not at all! Paul got it right when he mused about his death. "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

We are an aging congregation. We can expect to conduct many funerals and memorial services over the next few years. I am amazed at the vitality of our octo- and nono-genarians, but few of us will live to be 100. I like Norman Coulter's chances, though. What a joy to sing Happy Birthday to this 99 year-old last Sunday in church! It will be important to both grieve and celebrate well as we bid farewell to our brothers and sisters. And, of course, this assumes we will all live a full life into our old age and we know this is not to be expected. I like the line from a prayer I often use at funerals. "Help us to live as those prepared to die." As the above poem whimsically points out, it is important to make sure we really live, however long or short life's journey may be.

Let me be practical for a moment. Do you have a will? Is it up to date? Have you remembered your church and special ministries in your will? This will be the last act of love and generosity we will be able to express. It will be our last act of service to and with the Church on Earth.

I look forward to the Interfaith Hospitality Network hosting we will do April 25-May 1. Thank you for signing up to help in some way. I notice only a few empty slots to fill on the sign up board. Stretch yourself. It will feel good.

See you in Church, APUMC.  
Pastor Carl