

From your Pastor . . .

On Sunday the grass at church was quite long. I suspected that our lawn cutter had gotten behind during this rainy spring, which has been great for growing grass and weeds. It made us look a bit raggedy. As I thought about it, it almost seemed appropriate that we look raggedy on the outside. Why? Because I think Gloria Dei is a bit raggedy on the inside.

One definition of health for me is when the outside and inside of a church or person are the same. Jesus encountered some people who looked good on the outside, but were raggedy on the inside. To be fair he didn't use the word raggedy he said "*you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth.*" Matthew 23:27.

I don't think the raggedness I am perceiving is because of stuff like that. I think it is because we are in grief. Gloria Dei has lost many wonderful people since I have been your pastor, but none of their deaths seemed to affect the congregation like the death of George Kronbach. Everyone I have been talking to in the last period of time talks about George. Newer members, old time members, shut ins, all want to talk about George. One of our newer members shared that one of the reasons they joined Gloria Dei was because George called them by name when they came the second time.

Perhaps it was because of the suddenness of his death. . . perhaps it was because George was always at church and you would see his little truck parked there and know that the coffee was on . . . perhaps it was because he was so persnickety about some things . . . George is missed. I wonder if he would be surprised that his death has left his church a bit raggedy, even if the grass has now been cut?

Well if I am right what can we do? My first answer is that there is nothing we can do. With the grass, we could call out lawn mower and see if he has forgotten us. But with grief, there is no one you can call. Grief is the cost you pay when someone who has been significant to you dies. Grief lasts as long as it lasts, and to attempt to shorten it is not helpful or healthy.

So we will be a bit raggedy for a while. We need to treat each other even more gently than normal. We need to gather together even though the coffee isn't going to taste the same for a while.

Perhaps in this instance there is more we can do. Wouldn't it be wonderful if some of us would begin to do the things that we appreciated George doing. The position of coffee maker is open. More importantly, the position of getting to church early and greeting people when they come in is open. Could you be someone who learns a visitor's name and welcomes them by name the second time they come? I bet

there are even some other things we could do in honor and memory of George. I think he would be pleased.

See you in Church where our Easter Celebration continues,