LOD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER, NC

No Experience Required

In the name…

Let us pray…

Biographical words from the prophet Jeremiah. Three divine affirmations. I knew you even before you were an embryo. In the womb I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations. Say What Jeremiah replied. I do not even know how to speak. I am only a boy.

No Experience Necessary.

We don’t have to be only young to have no experience. Of Course, all the players in the Super Bowl have experience as players but several probably have not been in a game like this. But they are not saying to their coach I don’t know how to tackle in a game like this or run, or receive or kick. Even with little experience or none, they will do whatever it takes to win the game for some that means deflating the balls.

Yesterday I ran a Groundhog’s Day run 2.2 miles, 2 the month of February and 2 the day of the Groundhog in Ablemarle. After which I went to Town Creek Indian Mound nearby and then to Morrow Mountain State park. When I got there, I asked staff if I could get up the mountain and back in around 2 hours. They thought so saying only the last quarter mile was difficult. They thought I could so I quickly went to the trailhead to start and without thinking anymore, I set out. As I got to that last quarter mile I thought I heard cars, and as I got close to the top, numerous cars. You can drive up and not hike 6 miles round trip. I did not know, I had never been to the park and so I was inexperienced. Any way it was much more satisfying to hike up.

In experienced means doing something for the first time. We should have more than one tasks we take on during our lives when we have no experience. I mentioned just a few during young lives. We experience confirmations, graduations, starting college, finishing college, maybe grad school new jobs, marriage, life without someone we love. We all have these, and like Jeremiah the Holy Spirit goes with us during all our inexperienced phases of our lives. Jeannie now has a new phase of her life without Don, and that is difficult. However, Don showed us the way in some of the challenges he faced without experience. He left his home state of Ohio to serve his country in the military. He did the same when he moved to Rochester to work for Eastman Kodak. When he married, when he moved down to North Carolina.

What he modeled for us most was his congeniality with those he met. And as he was doing this he was epitomizing the words of St. Paul in Coritnhians, in all that he did, he had love a love that was patient, kind, not envious or boastful, not insisting in his own way, , not irritable, or resentful. When Don spoke or acted, it was not about him, but it was about showing that love to and for others. For him the greatest trait he could exhibit was love. When we have visitors worship with us, we are all meeting them for the first time so we are inexperienced in those meetings. He would be one of the first to introduce himself to others and make them feel welcome. He called men inviting them to the men’s group meeting; thereby getting an account of how many will be there for the cooks.

Each time you introduce yourself to someone it is like it is for the first time. Each time you call someone it is like you are doing it for the first time, but he knew and we know the Holy Spirit is with us as She was with Jeremiah.

In the newsletter you received today, there is an article by Peter Marty, the senior pastor in Davenport, Iowa where our church son, Josh Kestner is serving. Entitled “People Don’t Pass Away” and I think some of his thoughts are appropriate as we think of Don. He would have liked when Pastor Marty described what people might say when he dies, Peter checked out, kicked the bucket, juggling haloes, taking up harp, started a worm farm. I have often used the phrase “cashed it in”. Andrew Marlin of Mandolin Orange as closing time at a bar. Don would have liked these.

I mentioned yesterday I went to the Town Creek Indian Mound. When death occurred in their ancient culture , the shaman guided the person to the next world. We have guided Don up till his time of going from this life to life eternal, the Holy Spirit takes it from here.

Pastor Marty says those who know him and know his confidence in God, know that only 4 words are needed when he experiences his death. “He died in faith”

And we say of Don also “He died in faith”.

In the name…