

Transformed Again and Again – Memory Missionary Missive – December 2016

“Friends, life is short, and there’s precious little time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So make haste to kind, and be quick to love, because in every act of love and kindness the God who first formed us, transforms us and reforms us, again and again. And certainly for those blessings, all the people of God say: Amen.”

Worship frequently ended with this benediction - or something similar - for many wonderful years at Mt. Washington Presbyterian. Our pastor shared these precious words of reminder; we have the power to love and share happiness! Embedded in there as well is the confidence that we will be ever-changing, like it or not.

At some point in life, one usually discovers that life is short. For me, that realization came with my dad’s death in 2002, and life has not been the same since. Yet, as I told my dad during his cancer battle - “I’m sorry you have to go through this but it’s teaching me some wonderful lessons.”

Four special men in my life completed their time on earth in 2016 (including the pastor who said that benediction mentioned above.) None of these guys were DNA family, but each shared precious time, love and wisdom with me that I’d like to share with you...

- Life is For Loving It! Be grateful, expressing a bold gratitude for each person in your life, including those passing through just long enough to take your breakfast order, run your groceries through the scanner or drive their vehicle beside you
- Stay grounded in your faith, keep studying and listening to others without the need to ever say a thing. Be yourself even when it would be MUCH easier to remain silent and go along with the crowd
- Allow people to provide help. Show your appreciation and quiet joy (including love of the Cincinnati Reds!) along the way. It’s okay to decide that “enough is enough” and allow your body to slowly deteriorate without availing oneself to more medical treatment
- Choose joy and persevere. Brighten the corner where you live, even when the dark clouds form and you may have to manufacture virtually all of the light yourself

So with thanksgiving for these and so many other lessons learned, let us all go valiantly into the upcoming year. May we be confident in the talents we have to share, content that we needn’t share them all right away and focusing on joyfully and lovingly visiting with family, friends and strangers.

I can’t wait to see what’s ahead, for you and for me. After all ...“Life is short. Learn your lessons well and then do something with those lessons learned while making a suitable number of mistakes along the way!”

Enjoy the day...and the memories!

Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, is an “aspiring memory missionary.” He and wife Kim are having fun with Long Memories efforts (www.LongMemories.info), focusing on helping others in “Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!”