

COMMON TIME

According to the church / the liturgical calendar, we are in "Common Time."
Common time is the period from Pentecost to Advent; it is the longest period in the church year.

There is also "Common Time" for music, represented by the 4 over 4 signature, meaning: there are 4 beats to a bar and each quarter note gets a beat. I requested that our hymns, this morning, be in common time. Common time presents a pleasant, familiar and comfortable rhythm: 1, 2, 3, 4,.... 1, 2, 3, 4,.. 1, 2, 3, 4.

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Most of our lives are lived in "common time." Common time is the day to day routine, which includes our regular habits. Common time in life is the calm balance that we subconsciously seek, periodically escape from, yet usually return to.

It is sometimes called homeostasis: the norm; the predictable; the balanced patterns; the cadence that fills most of our time,.....and that reflects who we are.

Homeostasis is very evident in the church domain, too.

Woe to the pastor who changes the feel of the church or asks people to sit in a different place during worship service. We like where we usually sit. Our "Pew" provides a comfortable and familiar view, and ...that's okay.

It is important to NOT disrupt things too much or too quickly.

We live in "Common Time", even though we tend to spotlight/ **photograph** the exceptions / the extravagant / the high points / the ceremonies and the transitions.

We often mark our time by focussing on the deviations from common time with the special events, such as: Christmas, births, deaths, achievements, holiday trips or beginnings and endings.

It is good to mark and commemorate change and transition: ceremony is engaging the "clutch" that allows us to let go and change gears.

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Today, marks an ending,.....and in a way, a beginning.

My time as pastor of this church has come to an end,even so, "I" have not come to an end,.....and I hope I won't disappear. :)

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Those of you who were here ten years ago, do you recall my first sermon? Probably not. It was titled "Rooms".

I talked about how we set up our own space / our own room and I tied that to love and how we do relationships. The message was anchored to John 14:1 and 2, which is about Jesus preparing a place / a room for us.

Just as God can create rooms for each person, in God's heart, we can provide endless rooms for others, too. Love is NOT limited.

Parents provide a space / "room" in their hearts for each child born, and we do that with all meaningful relationships, too.

These "rooms" are where we allow another person in / to be a part of our lives / to live and connect with us,.....and to **change** us.

And, even if that person goes away or dies, I don't believe the room disappears. It remains,.....one way or another.

Some are visited frequently; others are barely remembered.

Moreover, when someone else enters our life, we can choose or...Not choose to create a New room for that person.

We are faced with that decision, again and again, throughout our lives.

And, it is good and healthy to open up as many rooms as life invites.

Loving relationships are what make us rich, and.... the rooms for others in our hearts are the safety deposit boxes of our wealth.

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Interestingly, it is the "common things" from living in "common time" that makes a room cozy and comfortable.

The extravagant and unusual pale in comparison to the small, personal "common things".

For example, we will place in our new home the same common things that made our house here feel like home.

It is the little, the familiar common things that we hold dear.

This is true for all of us.

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Leslie and Katherine have left, and soon I will leave, too.

We have keenly sensed and warmly embraced the rooms that you have provided for us--in your hearts.

We are grateful and humbled by your love. And, we have rooms in our hearts for you, and a room for our time here.

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There are trophies in those rooms...marking the highlights and accomplishments,.....and there were many such events and experiences.

The very first ministry I helped to start was Open Floor hockey. It was a statement of invitation and how having fun is important.

I'm proud of that,.....and likewise with DO ART, providing hot chocolate on Halloween night and the "For Peace Band" that marched in a couple parades.

I'm proud that our MC Canada Peace resolution launched the "liveforpeace" campaign.

I'm delighted that we have a seniors banquet, game and movie events, and that we have chosen to be a ground breaking church in MC Sask.

I greatly appreciate how this church welcomed us when we arrived here. You orchestrated many kind and thoughtful gestures.

There have been numerous exciting occasions here, such as our Christmas eve program, the various Easter and Holy Week services, the concerts and special events,.....and the baptisms and child dedications.

All those examples are "high moments",.....yet the trophies do Not make rooms in our hearts warm and comfortable.

The truly important mementoes are the common things...from common time.
Some of the common things are:

conversations in the foyer about the last game or the upcoming game;

the moaning about the weather,...the rain,...the snow,...the cold,...

we chat about the crops,.....and even whisper about politics and current events.

There is the smell of the sanctuary and feel of pews;

the weekly walk of children heading to the front for the children's story,.....and the one who just could not conform with the rest;

the fellowship meals are mostly done in common time with extraordinary enjoyment.

Jake's observations on the length of sunlit hours, as if no one else was aware of the season.

The regular committee meetings.

The weekly bulletin, which is always too long.

Sarah strolling through the church, checking things out.

Adeline's emails and reminders.

The array of announcements on the bulletin board.

The nursery,.....and the church library.

The youth events.....

Our times of praying together, sharing together, of serving together, of laughing together and crying together.

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There are countless, common things I will keep in my Osler room, including going to the post office and the muddy or dusty and bumpy roads.

And, the dearest.....are the common times I spent with each of you.

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We may lift up and boast about the unusual, and celebrate the highlights, BUT... it is the Common things / the common time that sustains us.

The everyday cadence is what keeps us going.

We thrive and build on the common things from common time.

They are like the mustard seed of Jesus' parable: seemly small and insignificant, yet are truly the depth and breadth of who we are and what we are "really" accomplishing.

And,...when we invest ourselves, in love, with those around us, the seed will become mighty, indeed.

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The little, daily things / the common time is what is essential.

It is what sustains us; it is what changes the world, and it is where we learn to understand Psalm 23:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

It is a common passage, in common verse, about common things for a common time.

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We emphasize and celebrate the Big events, such as Christmas, Easter and special ceremonies. But, we can't live in those events.

A marriage is not a wedding ceremony.

True and lasting faith resides in the basic, common things, such as:

God is love; God is good; Jesus is the Messiah; God is gracious and God is always with us, each and every day.

Faith in God...or any other kind of relationship that is based on the dramatic, on entertainment, on excitement or on miracles will Fail.

Jesus walking on water, healing the sick and raising the dead will Not save us.

A loving God reaching out to us as God did through Jesus, feeds our soul and redeems us.

It is love and grace, in common time, that sustains and enriches us.

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We are tempted to think that God only lives and is only discovered on the mountain tops, but that is Not the case.

True, God is at the apex of our lives, and at the nadir, .... Yet, most importantly, God is where we live, ...where we are NOW.

We do not need emotionally charged worship services or special events. We do not need them, but still, they are fun to enjoy.

We simply need to be reminded of the love that is close by, about the room we have in God's heart,.....and ...the rooms in our own hearts.

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Our heart beat,.....our live's cadence is in Common Time.

In common time, our relationship with God grows, and common time is where peace is found, such as in nature,

in a hymn, in a smile, in a touch, in a tear, and... in **daily living, daily living justice and Grace.**

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The rhythm of our daily lives--Common Time is where God is waiting to walk with you and me.

Our hope and salvation is found in common time.

This is the essence of the Gospel Message, which is:

The Uncommon and almighty God,.....communing with humanity in common time. The uncommon made common.

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And finally, you may have not noticed, but I never used my "common" benediction during Lent or Advent.

The benediction is a blessing for common time, and I will pray it in a few moments, at the end of the service.....as is commonly done.