



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

**Digging in the Dirt....
Kneeling on Holy Ground**

This is one day (Palm Sunday) in the church year that is really confusing – we begin our worship with a parade and remember Jesus entering Jerusalem surrounded by people who are delirious with joy! And we end by beginning our week of mourning as we remember how the crowd turned and called for his crucifixion.

The day may be confusing in the sense of worship, but it sure isn't all that much different than our lives. At the beginning of the New Year most of us make resolutions that we hope will not just change our lives, but will help us become healthier, happier and more productive. By this time of the year, all that has probably faded off into the distance except for a few hearty souls (of whom we are very jealous!).

Then comes lent – and we do the same thing. This year we have the added incentive of giving to our challenge fund as we give up a favorite habit or luxury we have had in our lives. Some of us will also kick in what we have spent on luxuries during the month. OK. That's me. I had a nice little vacation trip, so I'll put in what it cost me, as it wasn't a "necessary" function – and it was fun!

I heard, the other day, of a church which gave up their time of worship on one Sunday a month and "did" church – sent the congregation out in groups to do good works in the community. That sounds good and sacrificial, but it rings hollowly to me because I feel the need for my community worship time each week. I feel that we need to "do" our ministry IN ADDITION and as an extension of our worship rather than as a replacement of it.

Ministry without worship, to me, is rather hollow. I don't discount the good that is done on that giving Sunday, but I question the wisdom of no

worship. It seems to be the easy way for people NOT to have to give time outside of their regular worship time.

So, what is happening? Are we “digging in the dirt”, that is, working to make the world a better place and neglecting “kneeling on holy ground”? I suspect we do that on occasion.

Some of us hate Lent. It’s too sad. We re-live the saddest part of Jesus’ life every year. I knew a pastor once who became depressed every Lent because of the sadness the lessons brought into his life. But even the church has some sense here liturgically- not always, but in this situation, yes. Every Sunday is a “little Easter”. We take time, even in the saddest of seasons, to rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord. We stop “digging in the dirt” for a day, and use this best hour of the week to “kneel on holy ground” - the holy ground of the empty tomb.

Thank you, good Christians, for all the nitty gritty work you do in the name of Christ all week. Thank you for remembering how many people suffer each day and that going “one day at a time” is almost impossible for them without your assistance. Listen, be concerned, and help out when you are able. And in all cases, pray for those who come into your life. Kneeling on their holy ground is the best you can do for them.

TMK

-- Week of April 5, 2009