

Greetings to all the Saints at Manatee Life,

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 66:4 (MSG) – Larger reading: Psalm 66:1-12

“The whole earth falls to its knees - it worships you, sings to you, can't stop enjoying your name and fame.”

STORY:

A visitor to New York wanted to visit Ralph W. Sockman's church which was called Christ Church. He got into a cab and asked the driver to drive him to Christ's Church. The driver took him to St. Patrick's Cathedral. “What's wrong?” asked the cab driver. “I wanted to go to Christ's Church.” “Well, sir,” responded the cab driver, “I don't know about you, but when He is in town this is where He goes.”

OBSERVATION:

The “church” use to gather at it various locations around the world. Now some are starting to reopen for in-person worship. Even then it is a little dicey.

But think about how it use to be prior to being hit by this Pandemic ... Doors were opened, greeters greeted, ushers passed out bulletins, choirs sang as the organ/piano played, people gathered in the pews and the preacher did his/her thing. The question ... the real question ... is: Did Christ show up? Did the Holy Spirit move among the people? Did we just go through the motion, get our ticket punched for heaven and go home to live the same old, boring existence?

Do we ever really expect anything to really happen when the church gathers at the designated hour? Allow this work in the depth of your spirit. Permit your mind to play with the concept, the idea ... and then contemplate what really will happen when we once again gather for in-person worship. Will God show up?

And now, the real question, are we in the process of preparing for the church to once again? And, will we change our level of expectation and anticipation as we join others for the church's regular worship service ... or will it be irregular, an unanticipated event where something unusually exciting happens? Will we be looking for it, praying for it, longing for it? Or, will we just be glad to be back in “our” pew, seeing familiar faces, listening to the sermon as we actually see the preacher up close and personal? What will be our expectations?

QUOTE:

“The whole person, with all his senses, with both mind and body, needs to be involved in genuine worship.” - Jerry Kerns

PRAYER:

Help us, Eternal God, not to take lightly the gathering of your church nor the need to prepare for the gathering. There is a lesson gracious God for us to learn because of this Covid crisis. Forgive us because we have taken you and our freedom to worship too much for granted.

Prompt us not to leave it all up to the preacher and soloist and others. Come Holy Spirit fill us, lead us, mold us, shape us after your divine will! Amen.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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Plans are being made for in-person worship on Sunday, October 25th