Stewardship Corner

Growing up in Doylestown, I lived two doors down from the Methodist Church, and between church functions, Scout meetings, and my mom being in charge of acolytes, I spent a lot of time roaming its halls. I knew every square inch of the building, from playing in the dirt cellar to hiding out under the Fellowship Hall stage.

I attended Sunday School in every classroom in the building -- both the original and its annexation -- helped paint the sanctuary more than once, and spent many a shift in the kitchen washing dishes.

Despite all that, and also the fact that I grew up next to the church parsonage, I can't say that I ever remember a minister's sermon, a specific Sunday School lesson, or anything from confirmation class. I'm sure down deep that something stirs in my soul, but seriously, nothing comes to mind.

What I do remember, though, is a sermon by a college student studying to be a minister. I was probably 12 at the time, and I guess he dumbed it down enough for even me to comprehend. Years later, I have come to understand his sermon was based on 1 Peter 3:3-4, but at the time, it was a simple analogy that has stuck with me all these years: "Is it the picture, or the frame?"

It's a simple question, and one that can be asked in many ways. In fact, most are more familiar with: "It's not what's on the outside, but what's on the inside that matters." I prefer: "It's not what you look like, it's what you think like!"

I guess because the speaker stuck his head inside a picture frame, I have this visualization engrained in my head all these years of a sermon that breaks down in its simplest form how we should live our lives. We can pretend to be anything, or anyone we want, but inside, that's where the true person is.

Now I don't pretend to be a book-smart Christian, let alone an evangelist for Christ. I'm not comfortable in those roles. I'd much rather be the picture inside the frame, someone with a good soul, someone who leads by example, contributes where he can, and lives a Godly life.

And, High Church is a place that allows me to do just that, be it helping out at fundraisers, being a confirmand mentor, a friend, a liturgist, an elder, a consistory member or even guest preacher, a little bit of what's inside me comes out. You get a PICTURE of me.

Jean and I have been High Church members since 1979, where we enjoy the country setting, the family-like congregation, and its many pastors over the past 41 years. I didn't realize how important Emanuel was to me, though, until we started having online church services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I miss razzing Ralph on his bench, shaking hands with church members, talking sports with some, fishing with others, and mechanics with still others. I miss greeting the ladies, singing hymns and listening to the children's sermon.

Sitting on the hill, High Church is a pretty picture frame, but where the real work is done is on the inside.

Stay well my church friends. Until we meet again.

Art Holden

1 Peter 3:3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.