

Least of These

Those words, “least of these” come from scripture. Matthew 25. We are a “Matthew 25” congregation in our denomination, the PC(U.S.A.). One trait of a “**Matthew 25**” church is vitality.

But what does that mean and what does vitality look like on these hot summer days -- when the sun is blasting down with its most intense heat? When the humidity is thick and the air heavy? All seems dead and silent with no life.

I think of the fountain at our church. The huge clay pot – earthen vessel – planted in the rock circle in the middle of the sidewalk leading up to our church. You know it. It’s a font – but also a symbol of who we are with the water gurgling up. On most weekdays, though, if you’ve ever been by the church, you will know that the water is turned off when no one is there. Quiet. No sound. Seemingly dry. But -- the water lives in the pipes below. I know it. You know it. Ready. Ready to spring up and gurgle with water – like with life, with sound. Wet. Vitality.

For me, as a member of our church, our body of believers who worship at Chapel in the Pines – I sometimes feel like my vitality – my “water of life”, my spirit -- is nonexistent or just at a trickle – on these hot, humid days. If you know me, you know that I’m not a fan of hot weather. I’d rather stay home in a cool house. Tune out, turn off, keep cool.

One day this week, though, I had to mail something. I stopped by the Eagles gas station on 15-501 to visit the little post office. I got out of my car and tried to dash in and dash out without getting too hot. I couldn’t help but notice, though, the man leaning on the wall just outside the automatic doorway. I thought to myself, “I know him. He’s the fellow who usually stands in the median near McDonald’s asking for help from the cars passing by.” He looked weary from the heat. I knew the temperature that day was to be in the “feels like” range of 105-109 degrees. I was glad he was near the doorway. Perhaps he could duck into the store for a moment of coolness if he really needed it.

I went back to my car and got a small bag with a couple of wash cloths, a bar of soap, and a toothbrush. Those items were the leftovers from our church’s time in June when we put the hygiene kits together. We had just a few bags that weren’t complete. I handed him the bag and said, “This is from our church.”

It was a way to help – like giving a sip of water. Water of life.

We have opportunities. Even small ones. Even to just notice people as human beings. Notice each one as made in the image of God. We can choose to notice. Perhaps smile. Choose to not look away.

If you remember the Matthew 25 scripture, it’s about giving, helping, inviting in, visiting. It’s about those who are hungry and thirsty and strangers and sick and in prison.

Even on these hot days we have water down in our pipes.

It’s ready. “Spring up, O’ well.”