

Lani Hubbard Memorial Service

June 8, 2024

Isaiah 61:1-3

Canticle of the Creatures

1 John 3:1-2

A homily preached by The Rev. Dianne Andrews at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Port Townsend, WA.

Today, we gather together as loved ones and family, companions and friends... to celebrate the life of Lani Hubbard who lived a life of grace and service having committed her whole self to serving the God of love she knew in Christ Jesus. Though we each knew Lani in our own special ways, these words of St. Clare, the 12th century saint who St. Francis cherished as a friend and inspiration, seem to encapsulate the beautiful simplicity that we have known in Lani:

"We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become."

Lani loved God, and she loved God's people. Clare also wrote:

"Love God, serve God; everything is in that."

Through the years, Lani's journey of faith grew and flowered. A vocation of nursing offered opportunities for her to grow in deep compassion... as she cared for wounded veterans and premature babies alike. The formidable Army nurse in Lani was ever present... and was a wonderful pairing with her vocation as a deacon in Christ's church. A prayer for the ordination of a deacon describes Lani well:

"In thy great goodness, O Lord, make these thy servants to be Deacons in thy Church; give them grace to be modest, humble, and constant in their ministry; give them a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; and with the testimony of a good conscience always before them, may they continue stable and strong."

When Lani first tasted the goodness of God's love... when Lani responded to God's invitation to live an abundant life of caring and giving... she responded with a committed and constant: "Here I am." "Here I am" was the foundation of Lani's ever-deepening willingness to live a simple, unfettered life of devotion that was seasoned with a delightful southern twang and a sweet sense of humor.

"Love God, serve God; everything is in that."

What else is there to say? ...and yet there is more...

As a professed Franciscan, Lani's family grew even larger. With a willing heart, Lani took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience... vows of simplicity, fidelity and humility... living into a rule of life... a daily rhythm of prayer, learning and service... that gave even more meaning to her already rich life of faith and service. The Community of Francis and Clare... to which Lani most recently made her whole-hearted commitment... describes the vows like this:

The vow of "poverty," also known as the vow of "simplicity," reminds us that God's love is uncomplicated and unconditional. ... Poverty assists us in our approach to others: with the invitation to be open to others and believe that all is a gift from God... a gift to be cherished... Nothing that stands between us, God, and our neighbor.

The vow of "chastity," also known as the vow of "fidelity," reminds us that God is faithful in love. Centered on God's love, the aim is to respond to this love by being faithful to the loves that God has placed in our lives... Love that is marked by gentleness, mutuality, respect, and

dignity.... treating and honoring another person in a way that honors them and the Christ within them. The vow may include celibacy for those who are called to a chaste life.

The vow of “obedience,” also known as the vow of “humility,” reminds us that God is within and without us. Obedience is a call to listen for God in the beauty of creation... in the hearts of our companions... and in those we serve... Obedience means giving with open hearts and humility.

If you are interested in learning more about the Franciscan life, you can visit the website of the Community of Francis and Clare¹ where you will find Lani listed as a member of the Eternal Community of Franciscans.

Lani exuded quiet strength. She was slow to anger, “hard to piss off” as her beloved wife Sue puts it. Lani was patient and thoughtful and always up for an adventure... be it learning new skills like boatbuilding or taking road trips to see new places and meet new people. Lani cherished her work in the church and the people she has served with and among. Her missionary trip to Tanzania was a treasure of experiences and memories that she drew from for the rest of her life. Lani loved pancakes... and she loved being a member of Sue’s family who were thrilled that she was part of them.

As a deacon, Lani was devoted to the work of serving at Christ’s table, of helping to feed God’s people with the Eucharistic food of life... and then, very importantly, she was devoted to the task of taking the deacon’s position the back door of the church... and dismissing the congregation after worship... sending them out, not merely to leave church and resume life as usual, but to go forth and do the work they have been given to do. The imperative work of a deacon is to send a people.... who have been nourished with Word, prayer and sacrament... out into the world... to serve as Christ’s hands, heart, and voice in the world... to serve as agents of transformation that help nurture peace, well-being, and wholeness. Lani was forever a faithful deacon... seeking to break down the barriers between the church and the world. Today, Lani is here in spirit. If she were here in body, Lani would be the one to dismiss us at that the door, sending us out to live into the abundance of God’s love.... and to witness to... in word and deed... God’s deep desire for the well-being of a world hungry and thirsty for peace, justice, and dignity. The deacon’s work is to remind us that we are worthy... and that we are called.

As we celebrate Lani’s life, I want to acknowledge the great privilege I have known in serving alongside a faithful servant. I would also like to acknowledge the tenderness of this moment of saying farewell to a dear friend. As we, together, prepare to commend Lani to God, I pray that we may relish the love and friendship we have known in Lani...

...and in the days to come, I pray that we may savor the gifts and memories of a simple servant who lived the words:

“Love God, serve God; everything is in that.”

Amen...

¹ Community of Francis and Clare: <https://cfcfranciscans.org/>