

Church Home

We had just moved down from our home in Lebec, the upper portion, and were looking for a church home. Our former church was Shepherd of the Mountain Lutheran Church. It was small -- 40 people on a real good day -- and sometimes, a guitar and a keyboard for sound. There were a few Sundays when the guitarist was absent and the keyboard player had dropped out of attendance, so hymns were sung a cappella -- which really wasn't too bad. Two ladies also accompanied the singing from up on the stage. The church was small -- possibly 200, filled. The Pastor, Rich Shields, was a very accomplished man that knew more of the different languages associated with the Bible. Bible study under him was a blast. We studied Revelation for more than a year, only getting to chapter 7. During the summer, we met in a pizza place in Frazier Park. It was a separate room, not used at that time. We would order our pizza and wine before the session began.

We moved off of the mountain because of our age and infirmities and were satisfied with our decision, except for no church home. We visited St. John's and found it too big for our wants and then Jim had a problem with Grace Lutheran because of their closed communion. Early on, we thought Emmanuel would be too far from our new home, but decided we should at least take a look.

Walking in that first morning was quite an eye opener. There was a great guy playing a great looking piano and it was beautiful. We sat through the service and were astonished to see the same gentleman playing an organ that was tucked back where we hadn't noticed. Again, it was a great sound. How could a church afford such great sound? Then, eight people, the choir, sitting along the side of the piano, started singing and another beautiful sound. Wow, what is this Church? The pastor was this nice, elderly lady that had this way of greeting a person that made you feel you knew her for years already. We knew we had found a church home.

Time slipped by and we understood the church was going through this selection process to find a new, permanent Pastor. We were there when Pastor Dawn held her first service. We had heard she was of the gay community. Of course, having a gay, woman pastor was all new to both of us, but with Jim having a gay grandson and Doris having a gay son, this was not a problem. It was different, though. When Pastor Dawn shook hands as she walked down the aisle after that first service, her hand was damp and we knew, even though she had delivered the service with conviction, she was one, nervous lady. We immediately liked her. She visited us a number of times during the summer and we shared Communion with her on several occasions. She will always be in our hearts and thoughts.

It wasn't long after that Jim came down with an infection in his heel and ankle. He spent the month of June, first in a hospital and later in a skilled nursing facility away from home. In the following months, Jim was treated at home by nurses that came twice a week to dress and check an open wound that did not respond well to treatment.

Shortly after Jim came home from the skilled nursing facility, Doris fell when Jim's phone rang in the next room and her foot tangled in an extension cord when she went to answer it. Jim, unable to help her, called 911 and, soon the ambulance came to take her to the hospital. It was thought she had dislocated her shoulder, which was true, but they failed to find a small bone that had broken loose. Surgery a week later repaired the bone, but Doris has been in therapy since then with more to come. During that time, Pastor Dawn visited several times, as well as several other members of this congregation. It was a dark time for both Jim and Doris and those visits meant a lot to both of them. As of this writing, Jim is improved but still suffers from this infection, as well as several other ailments that keep he and Doris from attending the Church services they would like and the future does not hold much hope for them to be able to travel across town to that wonderful Church that has the best music, the best choir, the nicest people and a wonderful Pastor. Jim and Doris found their new Church home.

Jim and Doris wish to thank all the people of Emmanuel Lutheran Church. We will still come to the services when our health allows to say to the people that this Church is a jewel that you all can be proud of.

Jim and Doris Parsons