

From the Pastor's Desk

Late summer 2025

While on vacation in July, Bev and I stopped at Mt. Airy, NC, the hometown of Andy Griffith and the inspiration for the fictional town of Mayberry. You could eat at Aunt Bea's restaurant, visit Floyd's Barber shop, pop into the courthouse and even stand in one of the cells. Bev and I opted to take a ride in an old squad car and have a local citizen tell us the tales of his hometown and its most famous resident. (Country music fans may also note that Mt. Airy is hometown of Donna Fargo as well).

We also toured the Andy Griffith Museum; it's right next door to the Siamese Twin Museum (you can't make this stuff up). While at the museum we got to see old costumes, scripts, movie clips and posters. Right away I saw the poster for my favorite Andy Griffith movie, "An Angel in My Pocket." It's the story of a young pastor moving to a new parish with his family. It starts with a street brawl between two feuding factions in the community, that are also prominent members of his new congregation. The new pastor must navigate the complex personalities, bring two lovers together and find a solution to his broken pump organ. All the while, his brother-in-law and janitor are building a still in the church basement. The movie is touching and hilarious at the same time. (I know, it sounds like a movie night at the church).

In reality, our relationships with others can be just as rocky, and often without the humor and happy endings that we find in the movies. Our hearts are often broken because we care for one another, and sometimes we don't meet their expectations, or they ours. So, we drift apart, relationships stall, and our lives drift apart. What is left is often an emptiness that never is filled. Life goes on, but with something missing.

With Christ, we sometimes feel ourselves drifting away from his teachings, his church and his love. We may have been hurt or lost someone and seek to blame God for the emptiness we have. Recently, I was at Bud Murphy's for karaoke night, and I was singing that old Barry Manilow song "Trying to Get That Feeling Again". And often that's what we get, a longing for the excitement and joy of finding a relationship with God that has seemed to grow quiet as of late. Yet, scripture tells us that "there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord". (Romans 8: 39) God's love for us never moves. So, what does? If I were to venture the guess, I would say it's us. We become so engrossed in our own circumstances and emotions that we lose sight of the lifeline that God has provided for us. His outreaching arms that desperately long to embrace us and hold us close when our lives and relationships begin to spin out of our control.

When you find yourself in the emptiness and wandering that lead you to struggle with the "dark night of the soul." Open his word. Pour your heart to him in prayer. Seek the counsel of a trusted believer and friend. And know that you are loved. Always. Just look to the cross as evidence of it. Jesus said: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."(Matthew 28:20) I believe him. Do you?

May God bless you and keep you

See yinz Sunday,

Pastor Steve