

Tuesday, December 4th, 2012

The Rev. Dr. W. Terry Schoener '63, Distinguished Alum '11

Scripture:

Psalm 33: 20-22

20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and shield.

21 Our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

22 Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

Devotional:

I saw the green flash!

No, silly, not a superhero. It is a rare natural occurrence when the light of the setting sun is bent through the atmosphere in such a way that for an instant only the green of the spectrum reaches your eye. Google it. Jules Verne mentions it saying that “if one were to peer into the light of the green flash they would gain the power to read the very souls of other people they meet.”

A life-long sailor, I have met mariners who tell me of seeing the green flash. I have waited a lifetime to see it -- have sat at anchor half a thousand sunsets watching for it --- to no avail. Then last February, while in Barbados with sailing friends, we gathered to view the Caribbean sunset. Someone said, “Maybe we will see the green flash,” and by God we did! Eyes wide, mouths grinning, we received what couldn't be demanded.

As a pastor for 50 years I have experienced the waiting, “my soul waiting for the Lord,” waiting for infrequent flashes of God-sightings. Faith is mostly Advent and just enough epiphanies to hold it together. Congregants gather regularly hoping for Epiphany-dazzle, but each day the sun sets and no flash, only Advent-wait. Yet, while making nice at the church door, it's not unusual for someone to say, “Pastor, I had the most amazing thing happen!” Never pooh-pooh these stories. I find they awaken thoughts of my own infrequent holy flashes of God sighting, and my eyes widen and my heart grins afresh. In the afterglow of the God-flash everything is seen with renewed lucidness. It was worth the wait. The waiting gave the flash value. See, “My soul waits” is a gift too, reminding that the flash is something that can't be demanded, but is gifted.

“Our soul waits for the Lord, He is our help and shield”

Prayer:

Holy One, I wait --- now with less impatience than before. With hands in my lap, open with palms turned upward, as if expecting to receive. Advent yourself to me in your own good time. I trust your timing; I trust your being; I trust your purposes; I trust your gifts of waiting and watching. So, I wait for you to cause your bright morning star to rise over us once more. Amen and amen