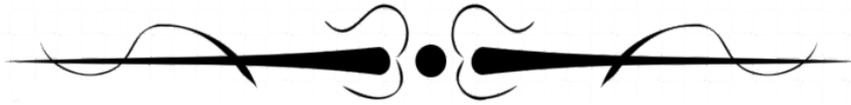


Marjorie Ann Severeid



August 31, 1953 - September 18, 2021

Michael and Mari, Maureen and David, to all of you who knew and loved Marge: grace and peace to you from the one who lived, died, and rose again that we might have life, Jesus Christ. Amen.



In Michael's thoughtful remarks he shared a simple, meaningful phrase: Welcome home, Marge. Welcome home. That's a longing we all have, isn't it? To be home. To have a place where people know us, and maybe even love us anyway. After all, as the poet Robert Frost wrote, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." That might be a little irreverent, but it certainly gets at the reality of relationships today. As much as people talk about home in glowing idealistic terms, it's so much more complicated than that. People are people! Messy, caring, independent, worried. Love and laughter comingle with arguments and misunderstandings. Still, at its heart, home is the place we belong. It's true for us. It was true for Marge. And it's been true for God's people since the beginning. We are at home when we are with God.

Isn't that the message we just heard from the gospel of John? Jesus was gathered with his friends in the Upper Room. It was his last night with them. None of them knew exactly what was to come but they know it's not going to be good. Jesus' words and actions are meant to reassure them. But still, they are anxious, troubled, afraid. What will happen? To him, to them? Will they be able to go on when their home, their place with him, has changed?

To the disciples - and to us - Jesus says: Yes. Your home is with me, is always with me. In my Father's house there are many many ways that you can find your place. Believe me when I say this is true. Even on the days when you feel the most lost, you can trust that I am with you.

We make our homes in this world in all sorts of ways. By the places we live, by the work we choose, by the family and friends who fill our circles. It isn't always an address. Sometimes it's a state of mind.

For Marjorie Ann Severeid, home was people. She laughed loud and often, drawing folks to her with her impetuous spirit and wry sense of humor. If she took to you, you knew it. And if she didn't, well, you knew that, too. She was determined to live on her own terms, and she did. As the youngest of the three Severeid children, Marge got away with more than her siblings ever did, though that isn't saying much since Doris and Vinal raised practically perfect children. The Severeid household was marked by lively discussions, a love of cards and games, and a sense that there was a big world out there. Marge was always up for adventure, the more the merrier. Home isn't just an address. Sometimes it's a state of mind.

The Severeids were fixtures at Zumbro for years. Vinal and Doris shepherded their three to church every week, where Maureen and Marge would put on their white half gowns and sing with the children's choir. David said, "it was the only time during the week when they were perfect angels." Though her faith journey wandered a bit, Marge getting dressed up for church continued through adulthood, where she was a fixture at the Zumbro Christmas Bazaar. The past decade she was here greeting in what I think was Doris' elegant bunad, looking as proud and properly Norwegian as ever. Home isn't just an address. Sometimes it's a state of mind.

And of course, Marge's home was with Bob, her best friend and soul mate. Though Marge's life was already full with her best girlfriends and her expanding career at Mayo, in Bob she found a partner in crime, someone who could make her laugh and take her teasing and share her days. From their travels to their volunteer work, she and Bob were a team - and as that team they faced their challenges together.

A few months ago, Marge was in a reflective mood. It was clear she wasn't going to recover from the latest surgery; that her time on this earth was drawing to a close. As we sat in her room at St Marys Hospital, she told me, "Pastor Shelley, I know I haven't done everything right. But there are a whole lot of things I have. And it's nice to know that list is longer." Like what kind of things, I asked her? She smiled. A wry smile, soft and spunky. I have had great friends. The best. I've made things interesting for my brother and sister. I had a blast with Bob. And I've had an awful lot of fun."

Those things sound like home, don't they? Not an address, but a state of mind. And at its core, that state of mind can be summed up in one word: Love. If what Jesus told Thomas was true - and, I so believe it is - then we know that home, true home, is wherever the love of God exists. Whether it's surrounded by good friends at a party, or in the front seat of a Corvette with your partner riding shotgun, or caring for that partner as they struggle with health issues, or accept the care of others as you deal with your own health concerns.

My friends, Marge is home. Or perhaps, we should say, her home has changed. It's not easy to say goodbye. But isn't it a comfort to know that as we make our way in this world, we have family and friends who make space for and love us. And as we depart this world and enter the next, we are welcomed by the One in whom we always have a place to belong. Welcome home, Marge. Be at peace. Amen.

Pastor Shelley Cunningham
October 29, 2021