



Serene setting for worship

Sunday, January 3, 2016 at 7:46 pm (Updated: January 3, 8:01 pm)

People gathered to worship, as every Sunday morning; however, today there was no church building due to unforeseen circumstances.

The setting was serene and peaceful, trees were a canopy and only God's creations surrounded those who came to worship. There were no fancy pews, no stained-glass windows, and no elaborate altar. No ushers, no pipe organ, no sound-system, and no fancy-dressers. Nevertheless, God's presence was certain.

As the young trumpeter played "The Lord's Prayer," I was chilled by the absolute beauty and simplicity of his sincere talent in each heartfelt note. I looked to the pale blue sky, mostly hidden by the many oaks, and felt the soft breeze upon my face.

The sun seemed to twinkle as it tried to penetrate the hanging moss while buzzard-hawks soared like graceful kites, in search of a morning meal. Cardinals called to one another and the crimson-red males flitted among the branches, perhaps guarding their nest while seemingly attracted by the sounds from the trumpet.

Dedicated volunteers carried metal folding chairs to the cement slab and arranged them in rows. The altar was a simple table covered with a white cloth; the perfect place for the advent candles, the crucifix, and communion trays. The keyboardist accompanied singing of hymns as this service beautifully welcomed another new week.

This new church is warm and friendly. Tree of Life, Missouri Synod Lutheran Church, is not yet 1 year old. Services are held at Whispering Pines Park, recreation center, each Sunday at 10 a.m.

As I listened to the Epistle and the Gospel, I was humbly blessed to be in such a "perfect church"; one with no costly accessories, no locked doors, and no sad feelings. "Joy to the World" closed the service as park visitors stood far away, awed by the worship music as it wafted along with the soft wind.

I believe Jesus would approve for He preached in the desert, on the hills, and at the riverbanks. Clothed in a robe, with sandals on his feet, He healed many as he taught us to be generous, kind, loving, and forgiving.

May he continue to bless all of our holiday celebrations, our families, and our troubled country so we may look forward to a brighter, safer, healthier new year.

Christ can never be taken out of the true meaning of Christmas; it is we who make that choice.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays!

Joanie Welch

Inverness