



March 7, 2019

Dear Ones in Christ,

My spouse has an app on his phone called “WeCroak” (wecroak.com). It’s not about bullfrogs. It’s about mortality and death. It’s based on a Bhutanese folk saying that to be a happy person, you need to contemplate death five times a day. And so, five times a day and at random intervals my husband’s phone buzzes and on his screen is a quote from a variety of philosophers, writers, notable folk... about death.

Once a year, the church’s liturgical app ‘dings’ us with a reminder about death. We walk around on Ash Wednesday and see folks with ashen crosses on their foreheads, and we remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. For many of us it’s a reminder that time is fleeting, for others it is a reminder that we are creatures bound to the Grace of our Creator. It’s a call to remember who we are – a call to repent from what we’ve done. We croak. It’s the nature of dusty folk.

I’m not sure Ash Wednesday makes us happier. I do know that it can make us a bit more centered in what (Who?) is important.

It makes me wonder what would happen if we did the same with our church structures? Don’t misunderstand me.... I know that Matthew records Jesus as saying that the gates of Hades will not prevail against the Church (Chapter 16), but I’m not convinced he’s talking about bricks and mortar, despite his play on the word “rock”. I’m also not trying to be morbid here... but I do wonder from time to time if we (our churches, our Presbytery, the PCUSA) would be missed should we close our doors.

Again, I’m not sure this sort of reflection could make us happier... or if that is even the point. I do think it might help us to be centered more in what (Who!) is important.

May our Lenten journey bring us to the Cross and the Empty Tomb,

Karen