



May 26, 2020

Among Us as One Who Serves

By the Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr.

For many of us at Immanuel, Memorial Day weekend at Shrine Mont is spirited and easy fun – a time to relax and hang out. I mean *really* hang out. Not Google Hangouts or Zoom. Just like our Pumpkin Patch shows our local neighbors about our commitment to service, Shrine Mont shows all of us how fun it is just being together having fun.

And, yes, I was disappointed not to be at Shrine Mont this year. Fortunately, we still have our special memories and traditions to share, even if we weren't together there this Memorial Day weekend.

Those memories are alive and well for me and, I bet, for so many of us – the dining hall with the lima bean challenge, the EYC talent show, the scavenger hunt, the bonfire with S'mores, Sunday worship in the "cathedral" with the Shrinemonters leading us. It is worth thinking about those special times, knowing they will come again – maybe this November -- and then soon it will be Memorial Day weekend 2021. We accept the uncertainty of this and so much else.

Memorial Day is much more, though, than easy fun and hanging out. It's our duty and opportunity to honor and recognize those who serve — our heroic men and women in uniform who gave the last full measure of devotion, their lives, for our country. This year, we might also remember those on our front lines in the COVID-19 battle; the nurse who holds the computer screen for the daughter to say a final "I love you;" the first responders who rush headlong into danger; the teachers who keep our kids learning, all those in grocery stores and pharmacies, and those delivering our mail and packages who risk their life and health to keep our country going during these worrisome times.

All of them are servants. We owe them so much -- our way of life, our health, and our safety.

Jesus was a servant and taught us through these words in Luke 22, verse 27:

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

And St. Paul prods us about our role to be servants in Philippians 2:3-5:

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

It is important for us to remember the message to follow Christ Jesus and be a servant as he was. Taking the risk, caring for others, and putting their needs ahead of ours. It means focusing on others, instead of ourselves.

As we reflect and recognize the Memorial Day holiday, let's take every opportunity we can to give thanks and remember those many heroic individuals who serve us, both in military uniforms and in other vital servant roles in this new world we are in.

And now and always, we give thanks for all those who serve.