

Rev. Jennifer Peters McCurry
Emanuel's Ev. Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh (Bellevue), PA
June 29, 2010 • Funeral for David Archer

Daniel 12:1-4a
Psalm 121
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 11:21-27

We live in a time when many people long for a clear vocation, a special calling in life. Young people look for how they can contribute to the world in meaningful ways. Folks in their middle age reconsider their choices from the past, and whether change would bring them a life that seems fuller. People who are retiring ponder how to spend their days, in what may become a new vocation for the later years of the lives.

At 82 years of age, David Archer seemed incredibly clear about his call and his place in God's world. He poured his dedication and focus, his passion and joy, his intelligence and talents into the things that mattered most to him. Even his last couple weeks revealed his sense of vocation, the pattern of his life.

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On the Saturday that ended with David in the hospital, he came here, to Emanuel's, in the morning. I'm sure that he practiced diligently, as he usually did on Saturday mornings. I suspect that he continued to imagine how music might

better enrich the faithful worship of our congregation. He tended to both the big picture and the details. His joy and commitment to excellence were clear throughout his music ministry. He leaves a legacy of musical blessings to the Lutheran churches and the musicians in our area. Emanuel's was only the most recent, lucky recipient of them.

Later, on that same day two and a half weeks ago, David went to Carnegie Mellon for two other passions of his. In his professional life, David offered his background as a chemical engineer, his skills, and his wisdom in work on energy conservation. He did so in his intentional relationships with graduate students.

I'm sure that many people in this room can speak more personally than I to how David shared himself in those roles. I do know that while he was in the hospital, David received excellent news. For the last year, he worked to get funding for the Intelligent Workplace Program at CMU. Thanks, at least in part, to David, they were awarded a grant for over \$680,000 from the U.S. Dept of Energy. Yes, that included six decimal places! The money will be used in CMU's work developing controls for buildings which more effectively conserve energy. In a very tangible way, David leaves a legacy that will enable his graduate students to continue their studies and work in the field and the goals that they shared.

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David's life was one that offered his gifts in service to God and God's creation, through all of his professional callings. In them, and in his family life, it was clear that he also brought care and love and joy to the people he knew – family members, friends, students, musician friends, church members. David could see and hear and understand such wonderful possibilities for us and for God's world. He wanted for individuals and communities to flourish. He hoped that they would be blessed while also being a blessing to others. He wanted them to share the many gifts that he valued in them. He thoughtfully considered how he could best help support the people about whom he cared, and the good for all.



David's beautiful clarity of vocation is an example of the first part of our life in Christ. Our reading from 1 Peter mentions our "a new birth into a living hope." (*1 Peter 1:3*) That living hope begins here, in this world, with the life that we live now. It begins with the forgiveness and love and the vision of a whole life, which we receive from God. We receive them in the waters of baptism. And then we are sent out to share that love through the special gifts that God gives us – for the rest of our days on earth. David was a witness to us all about how that may be done with faithfulness.

Yet our living hope comes with an “inheritance” (1:4). In our life with God, we receive another gift – life that does not end with the grave. In God, David is promised resurrection and so are we. Some day, we will all gather with David once again, as we have around dinner tables, pianos and organs, and work tables. This time we will be gathered around God’s throne, with all the people of God who have lived throughout all the ages. If the Bible is right, our time will be consumed with worship singing praises to God. If David is right, we will sing every single verse of every hymn – like we are doing today – even when there are twelve of them. If we’re singing praise to God, that’s the way it should be.

Our worship today is one of thanks and praise – for God’s gift of unending life to us all – and for God’s gift to us in David Archer. Amen.