

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, HAYFIELD MN.

Crossing #17

March 22nd 2015

It is the time of Lent, the time of preparation for the upcoming holiest day in the Christian calendar. The service at this Presbyterian Church in Hayfield begins with a prayer that the Gospel will lead the lives of the faithful during Easter and beyond.

Stepping into this building is like taking a step back in time. Originally constructed in the late 19th century, this church suffered a fire and was later rebuilt in the 1920s. Even though several years of its history was lost, it now stands close to 100 years old and boasts the pride of its founders whose descendants fill the pews to this day

The sanctuary takes you back in time, to a simpler time, for a simple yet vital part of our existence, the worship of God. An intricately carved wooden partition separates the entrance into the back of the sanctuary from the inner sanctuary itself. The smaller and simple stained glass windows, very typical for churches built during this time, filter the outside light, casting a hue of reverence within.

The reverend reads from Eugene Peterson's *The Message* of John 12:20-25:

20 There were some Greeks in town who had come up to worship at the Feast.

21 They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee: "Sir, we want to see Jesus. Can you help us?"

22 Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip together told Jesus.

23 Jesus answered, "Time's up. The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

24 "Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over.

25 In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.

These words of Jesus urge his followers to let go of this life in order to fully serve God, a message also embedded in the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The reverend links this Biblical message to our current ailing human conditions of overconsumption, being bombarded with ads and commercials, and the continuing psychosis of the “us vs. them” syndrome.

As her sermon continues, the reverend states that violence draws us into this world, exactly what Jesus is warning his followers NOT to do in John 16.

Reflecting on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., the congregation is called to live side-by-side with the world.

In this true Christian, Presbyterian tradition, the observer graciously accepts and stands alongside you.