



Summer Grows Sweeter as the Days Go By

I attended church on the beach last Sunday and it was awesome as always. I just love being able to roll out of bed at 7:45, brush my teeth, throw on some shorts and come as I am! I wonder how many others would attend church more often if it was always this simple. When I am at the beach in the winter I enjoy laying in bed watching church on TV. Rolling over and hitting the remote, snuggling under the covers with my hubby and my dog is almost as cozy as the summer service on the beach. I considered resorting to the remote this time but something moved me to action ...it reminded me of the old expression 'when the spirit moves me'

I knew I had made the right choice even before I got there. Riding up the island seeing all the early risers engaged in various beach activities. I was welcomed with a smile, as usual, and the crowd was more than double the one at the service I attended in May. The congregation swells as tourist season sets into full swing.

Little did I know the treat in store as the new intern delivered her inaugural sermon. Oh yes, it would have been easier and perhaps more relaxing to reach for the remote, but there is something about participating in a community of faith that goes beyond regular worship. It is the joy I see and hear in the musicians, the movement of the man bouncing a baby to the beat, and the physical beauty of the beach as the backdrop that reminds me of the power and the purpose of sharing this experience with fellow believers, even on vacation!

When the service was over, I walked over to the pier, realizing that in all the years I have been visiting Topsail Island, I have never been to the Surf City Pier! Having walked two piers for free on my recent visit to Oak Island, I curiously inquired about the \$1 admission for observers. 'Yes maam, we charge \$1 because as soon as you walk through that door you have \$1,000,000 of insurance through Lloyd's of London, and that ain't cheap!' I chuckled as I walked away, remembering the collection basket where I had voluntarily deposited my \$1 earlier. I had been offered eternal insurance, which is not cheap either, but it is not earned through earthly endeavors.

The prospective pastor warned in her sermon of setting our sights on worldly treasures...fruits of the flesh as described by Peter. She challenged us to examine our days and our debts, obvious indicators of the Gods that we worship. She talked about her college friends who come to her for counsel, quick to rationalize and give excuses for not attending church. They are much too busy having fun, reserving the ritual of religion for responsible adulthood. But our relationship with Christ, like all relationships, is an investment that evolves over time and 'grows sweeter as the days go by' as we heard in the closing hymn. I encourage you to experience the ambiance of a short, sweet summer service on the beach. Join Faith Harbor United Methodist Church any Sunday this summer at 8 am at the Roland Avenue access...come over the swing bridge and go straight to the water. You'll be glad you did!



Gail is a part time resident of Topsail Island and is committed to inspiring people to live their best life! Visit her at GailO.com or contact her at gail@accessthebeach.com.