



View from My Window Devotions for Advent

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Our Palladian Window

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My first impression of Lakeside was our window. Vel Johnson had called me in Warrenton to ask if I would be interested in considering the pastorate of Lakeside. At that point, I knew nothing of the church. It happened that a few days later one of my members was in Nash General Hospital and I drove over to visit her. At that time, Sunset Avenue between Buck Leonard Boulevard and the river was rather ordinary. Then I saw City Lake and ahead, the church. As I made the curve, the Palladian window greeted me and I got a glimpse of the sanctuary. When I arrived home, I told Deborah that I did not know much about Lakeside, but the church building was stunning and the setting absolutely beautiful.

Now, every Sunday, as well as numerous times during the week, I get to look out of the window of our sanctuary onto our neighborhood. Occasionally I see someone in one of the houses across the street sweeping their porch, checking their mail, or sitting and relaxing. When I get closer to the window so that I can see a broader view of Sunset Avenue, I see cars coming and going, people walking around the lake, trucks ferrying products and supplies to homes and businesses, buses carrying people home, to work, to life. I sometimes wonder where those people are coming from and where they are going. Thousands of vehicles pass by our church on a given day. That is a lot of people, a lot of life, passing by our window.

Often when I meet someone new in the community and tell them that I am the pastor of Lakeside, they ask where the church is. I tell them that as they travel down Sunset by City Lake and make the curve, we are the church right in front of them. I often quip that if they don't make the curve, they will end up in our sanctuary. One young man practically did that a few years ago!

Our church is known for its window, especially during this season of the year when our Christmas tree carries images of Jesus' life into the night on streams of light. Many people have told me how much the window and the tree mean to them. Within weeks of my moving here, Linda Davis asked me if we could light the cross at night so that it could be seen year round. In many ways, our Palladian window is the face of Lakeside to our community.

These days, our window looks out onto a community that is frightened, uncertain, and anxious. I hope that the lights and Christmas trees will break through some of the darkness that is wrapped around folks who pass by our church. I pray that the light Christ brings into the world will banish the darkness that threatens our spirit of hope. I know that the love of Christ can energize our lives and make them full and complete, as God intends. I also know that what we do day by day, how we live, and the witness we bear through our love for one another conveys the light of Christ that does dispel darkness.

Looking through our window, we see a little bit of the world God created and loves enough to come and live among us. Hopefully, as people passing by look in, they will catch a glimpse of God as well.

