

Practicing faith: Of steeples and pointing others to God

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July 29, 2017 03:20AM

By Rev. Cal Lord

I have a confession to make before I begin this week's column. I'm sold out for Jesus. My lens for looking at the world is colored by my faith. Every image I capture in my brain has Jesus standing somewhere along the periphery. That is, if he isn't there on center stage.

I'm reminded of a preacher who always began his story time with the children with a question. One week he asked, "What's gray, has a furry tail and eats nuts?" One little boy replied, "It sounds like a squirrel but I know you are going to say Jesus. You



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With that in mind you might be able to understand why I was so excited to witness the raising of the new steeple at St. Michael's Church in Pawcatuck. You could feel the joy in the air. People held their breath as the steeple was raised and set in place. Then we clapped.

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Tradition holds that church steeples have had different functions. In years past, the church often sat in the center of town. The steeple would rise above other buildings. With its clear lines, visible from all around, it would point to heaven and direct our eyes upward to God.

Steeple often housed bells and clocks. The height ensured that clanging bells would send out a clear call for people to pause and worship the Lord. That has been true for me for the last six years. I always enjoy the sound of the bells ringing from Christ Church here in town.

Whether we feel lost in the crowds of New York City or Los Angeles or we're living in a small town in southern New England, I've often felt that the sight of a church steeple is a reminder that God is always near. It stands out as a symbol that God is with us.

An even better reminder of God's love, grace and the hope of the Gospel is people like you and me living out our faith. You know that old saying? "Here's the church. Here's the steeple. Open the doors and here's the people." So stand tall in your faith.

The best way to point people to God today is to be the church. They will know that God is near when they see us turn our lives around, start living victoriously, and begin serving the lost, the weak, the forgotten. So let's get out there and ring the bell for God in all we do.

God bless! See you in church.

The Rev. Cal Lord is pastor of Central Baptist Church of Westerly.

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