

First and Center

Pastor's Blog

October 24, 2019

"I believe in the Church of Baseball. I've tried all the major religions, and most of the minor ones. I've worshipped Buddha, Allah, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, trees, mushrooms, and Isadora Duncan. I know things. For instance, there are 108 beads in a Catholic rosary and there are 108 stitches in a baseball. When I heard that, I gave Jesus a chance. But it just didn't work out between us. The Lord laid too much guilt on me. I prefer metaphysics to theology.... It's a long season and you gotta trust. I've tried 'em all, I really have, and the only church that truly feeds the soul, day in, day out, is the Church of Baseball." ~ Annie Savoy in Bull Durham



While I wouldn't go quite that far, I do love baseball, and we are in the final week of the game until pitchers and catchers report to Spring Training February 15, and shortly after spring training games begin. That's when hope springs eternal for fans of every single team in the Major and Minor leagues. I can walk to the Hartford Yard Goats park from my office, and I have, because I love the minor leagues. You can go at the last minute and often get a ticket for a reasonable price. You sit close to the field so you can see young players who have a hunger to make it to the Majors, so they try hard, unlike some who are in the Majors!

When you go to a game you know you are there for about three hours or so. Sometimes not a lot happens, especially if it's a pitchers' duel, but there is a peacefulness to just being in the park with other fans, eating and drinking together, resting our minds (unless you are on your cell phone, and I believe cell phones should be forced to be put away when you take your seat!) and resting our bodies. Whether your team wins or loses, it's been a good day (unless it rains!).

If you think about it, Annie is right; a baseball game is kind of like a worship service, but much longer! You are focused on an activity in front of you, you eat and drink with other people. There are people there you may know and there are strangers, but you have a common purpose. There are elements of hope and joy and despair and loss every time, shared with the other people around you. And we hope that when you leave worship, something good has come into your life.

I'm going to miss baseball for the next three-plus months. I'm not going to be without church, however. Because I "gave Jesus a chance," and it **did** work out between us. Come to church with me, then, and worship.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister