

Being there matters most

MACK SIGMON

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I've never spent a great deal of time thinking about loss in my life, although I've spent the last 39 years in ministry helping others with their losses. But this summer I have lost both my father and my mother to non-COVID related illness, my father-in-law, and several good friends, some who died because of the pandemic. I am finally catching up on the memorial services that I was unable to lead over the past year due to our restrictions on gatherings, while now attending services to grieve with and for my family.

Yet, I am still so blessed by God



Meet the Pastor

The Rev. Mack Sigmon is the pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in downtown Tucson. Originally from North Carolina, Mack has been the pastor at Trinity for five years.

with all the wonderful and simple things that we have in this life — the beauty of the mountains, the blessing of rain in the desert, the cat that sits purring on my lap, the gift of music that I play to feed my soul, and my loving soulmate who just will not let me sink into despair.

In the midst of my losses, I remember Jesus's beautiful admonition in Matthew 5, "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your

span of life?"

My spouse placed several bird feeders in our backyard. Sometimes I feel like we are feeding half the bird population in Pima County, but that is what Jesus means in saying that our heavenly Father feeds them. When we care for the life that surrounds us, flora or fauna, we are joining with God in the task of loving the world.

Then there comes those moments when God loves us in the midst of our struggles, not with miracles, but through a hug, a smile, a sympathetic word, a gift, a tweet that says, "I am thinking of you." In all those faces, I see God's love; in all those words, I

hear God saying, "See? I am here." Come to think of it, those are miracles.

When I was in seminary, we were talking in one of my classes about ministering to those who have suffered the most unimaginable of losses. The question that kept coming up was, "What do you say to people who are grieving so much?" Our very wise professor replied, "There is nothing you can say in the depths of their pain, and it doesn't matter. They will not remember what you say; but they will remember that you were there. And when you are there, God is there."

Now I get it.