

From Jenn Warnock, Lay Minister

“ So if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed” Jesus, John 8:36

“May we think of freedom not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right.” Those words were presented within a prayer in front of the United States Senate by their chaplain, Reverend Dr. Peter Marshall in 1947. Dr. Marshall, a Presbyterian minister, grew up in Scotland, the son of a poor coal miner. He was expected to become a coal miner like his father, but one night as he described it, “the Chief tapped “ him on the shoulder and called him to ministry. Peter was very interested in foreign missions, to Africa or Asia, and resisted the idea of church ministry. He immediately began college studies, working hard in the coal mines by day and studying by night. Peter also served faithfully in his church, praying fervently for God to show him the way he wanted him to go. One day, an answer came from a surprising place, Atlanta, Georgia. Peter had relatives there, who had heard about his call from the Lord. His relatives invited him to come and live with them and attend Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta. Yes, the Lord hears us and answers prayers !! Peter followed the Lord’s will to Atlanta, Georgia, finished his studies, and then pastored churches in Atlanta and New York. He became well known for his eloquent sermons and strong faith in God, and eventually , this Scottish immigrant was called to be the Chaplain to the United States Senate. His sermons, often written in poetic forms have been printed in a book called *Mr. Jones , Meet the Master* and his prayers in a book,

The Prayers of Peter Marshall. The deep faith and love for Jesus that Dr. Marshall demonstrated influenced everyone who met him.

As he stated in his freedom prayer, freedom in Christ brings responsibility to the Christian, to the Church. St. Paul reminds us of our freedom in Christ in his epistle to the Galatians (5:13-18 NIV) “ you my brothers and sisters were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh, rather serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “love your neighbor as yourself”. The freedom we have in Christ compels us to love others, to help others, to share with others. The freedom we have in Christ inspires us to want and to provide freedom for others. I write this on Juneteenth, a day which celebrates the end of slavery in America, a situation that was evil and not of God. As we celebrate the freedom of this country during the month of July, let us remember that as followers of Christ, we are responsible to Christ to do what is right and pleasing to God in all of our decisions.

“In Christ Alone,

Jenn