



Kathy Tollett, 1953 - 2010 The Rev. Eun-sang Lee, Pastor

Kathy Tollett died on the morning of February 13. Her passing was sudden and rather quick, and Kathy faced it with amazing strength, acceptance, hopefulness, and grace. In a profoundly

Kathy-like manner she "made it easy" for the family and friends by her honest, graceful and caring spirit. The most memorable – at least to me – was when she suddenly said, "I want no purple or pink!" She meant the color of her own casket.

Kathy's family wish to thank all those who came to the hospital to say goodbye to her. The visits by children were particularly joyful to Kathy. They wish to extend a special thanks to Linda Johnson. Linda came to the hospital to see Kathy in the evening of her passing, could see as an RN that the time was nearing, and offered the family that she'd stay with them in the hospital room. Quietly and confidently Linda assessed, helped and consoled. A total stranger to the family, Linda was "an angel sent from heaven" that night, Kathy's sister Heidi said.

To her family Kathy was a sister who was "always there" and who provided the "stability in our busy lives," an aunt who opened her space in times of need, and a daughter who called her mother 2-3 times a day. The church has lost the one who quietly took care of crucial but unnoticeable things – taking the council meeting minutes, setting up the communion, training and shepherding acolytes, etc. – behind the scenes, offered genuine hospitality and friendship to newcomers, and volunteered for mission projects as much as she could.

Kathy was looking forward to Lent and our Lenten study this year – Three Simple Rules. In fact, she was the first one who asked for the book. I'll miss Kathy. I'll miss my one-time classmate's friendship and our theological/intellectual discussions. I'll miss her humor. I'll miss her outlook on life, and now, on death. We have to first "live" in order to die. And death is not the end of the story. That is our food for thought in the season of Lent. Goodbye, Kathy.

From Rev. Steve Goodier, our District Superintendent ...

They say that opportunity only knocks once. But temptation seems to pound on my door forever. Even opening up and letting it in doesn't seem to make it go away. More temptations come along and the beating goes on.

Those temptations that cause me the most problems are those that pull me away from being my best self. So I can relate to the Swiss woman who was served dinner on a domestic American flight. She opened up her dessert – a delicious looking piece of chocolate cake – and immediately sprinkled a generous layer of salt and pepper over it. A shocked flight attendant exclaimed, "Oh! It's not necessary to do that!" "But it is," the woman replied, smiling. "It keeps me from eating it."

She found a way to drive temptation away from her doorstep, at least for awhile.

The most persistent temptations in my life are distractions that keep me from doing what is in my best interest. I forgo some much-needed exercise because I "just don't feel like it" today. Have you ever felt like that? You may want to quit that reading group, that difficult class or those music lessons. It's easy to become distracted and get discouraged. Or maybe we say we just "can't find the time" to spend with those closest to us, such as family. We may want to do these things; it's just that sometimes we need a nudge.

Something baseball great Hank Aaron once said can help out here. "My motto was to keep swinging," he said. "Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly or having trouble off the field, the only thing to do was to keep swinging." Sometimes we just need to keep swinging. And if we tell ourselves that all we need to do today is to take one more swing, that may be enough. We can always take one more swing. And who know ... today we might hit a home run.

I think that's true in the church, too. As I travel the district I too-often sense that people are discouraged. Money is tight. Some churches feel as if they just can't make one more cut in programs or staff. Others worry about the next dip in attendance. Jesus must have felt discouragement when he fasted in the wilderness for forty days. He was sorely tried and tested. But the answer for churches, too, is to keep on swinging. It takes as much effort to be the best church we can be as to be the best people we can be. Keep on swinging. That is the only way to hit a home run.

This Lenten season I hope you will keep your eyes on the hope of Easter as you strive to be your best self, and as you strive to make your church the very best it can be. Be faithful and keep on swinging. And don't forget that God can make something wonderful happen.

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