

WALKING THROUGH THE CEMETERY

My parents were born and raised in Huntingburg, Indian, a small town in the southern part of the state, and about every four or five years, whenever there's a wedding or funeral or a reunion, we all head back down there.

We visit with distant relatives whom we haven't seen in a long time and we eat at a great German restaurant in the county seat and, inevitably, we take what my kids refer to as "the roots tour."

There's where grandpa and grandma went to high school, and there's where grandpa was born. Your great grandfather owned a gas station on this corner and, during the war, when there wasn't any gas to pump, he built all those houses along that street. There's Aunt Linnie's house, and that's Uncle Herb's and Aunt Edith's place.

The original farm that our ancestors bought is still in the family and we can go see it. They built the barn before they built the house and the women, children and livestock lived in it and the men lived in a tent until the house was built. Barn and house are still standing.

Eventually, we make our way to the cemetery. Nothing morbid. The little kids run and play and the older kids and adults visit the graves of our ancestors, pay our respects, marvel at their strength and fortitude and courage. Say a prayer of thanks for all they did on our behalf.

My kids seek out the tombstones of their namesakes. Ben and Sarah Feldmeyer, two ancestors after whom they were named and who live on in them. They are not here. They are risen.

There are a lot of opinions and ideas about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Even the gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) didn't agree on the details.

We aren't sure exactly how or even when it happened. We aren't sure who the first people were who discovered the empty tomb and we're not sure exactly how everyone reacted to the news when they first heard it. But we Christians are sure of this:

The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we call "The Christ" is not just an historic event; it is a current event as well. He is resurrected and he continues to be resurrected in every one of us who bear his name – Christian.

Every time one of us reaches out to feed a hungry child, Christ is resurrected.

Every time one of us shares our faith with someone who is hopeless, Christ is resurrected.

Every time one of us helps a brother or sister who has fallen, Christ is resurrected.

On Good Friday, we walk through the cemetery. On Saturday, we will happen upon a grave upon which is printed the name, Christ. On Sunday we take that name upon our selves – Christian – and prove once again that that grave is empty.

He is risen, in me. He is risen, indeed.

END

Dean Feldmeyer (Wilmington United Methodist Church)