

WORDS

Sometimes there seem just too many words in a person's life, in my life.

If you have Google, and email, and Twitter, and Zoom, and FaceTime, and Facebook...and your phone, and a hundred channels of television and as many of radio, and lots of books and magazines and papers...well, you have a lot of words in your life.

Not so long ago, there were fewer words.

I grew up in a world with one radio station and no television until I was a teenager.

My family had a small library which I read my way through as a boy and adolescent.

I spent a lot of time in silence, by myself, under a lamp, with a book on my lap.

I had then a single stream of words going into and through my young head.

And on Sundays, in church, I sat in a pew or in the children's choir, and there too I heard a single stream of words.

Those words were repeated Sunday after Sunday, and they became part of how I think about life..."when two or three are gathered together...lighten our darkness...pass our time in rest and quietness...give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give...for mine eyes have seen thy salvation...for he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden...accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of heavenly grace...and thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the highest...in his hand are all the corners of the earth...left undone those things which we ought to have done...erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep...the Scripture moveth us in sundry places...the Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and at the last a perfect end."

And so, when there are too many words, from too many sources, in my life...these are the words to which I return as I open my old Book of Common Prayer.

And on Sundays, in more contemporary language, I say similar loved words in the church of my "riper years".

That single stream of spoken words, old or new in form..... is liturgy, and it is among the profound, anchoring gifts of my beloved church.

Lorne Ellaschuk