

You Are Our Dwelling Place

Psalm 90 by Patty Friesen Nov 16 2014

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Psalm 90 orients us in God's dwelling within our hearts, within our homes, and within our neighbourhoods.

Slide 1 – This is the house where Patrick and I dwell at 1515 Coy Ave, Saskatoon. We bought it 7 years ago when the housing market was exploding. We consider it a miracle because it hadn't come up on the MLS listings and we only found it through a newspaper ad when we stopped at the JS Wood Library for a break from house hunting. Slide 2 - When we looked at it, the owner was digging carrots in the large garden and told us to taste one. We said, Sold! It has a rental suite that we hadn't planned on but that pays half our mortgage and is continually in use by students.

Slide 3 – This is our neighbour Hugh to the north. Hugh is a great neighbour. He doesn't read very well but he knows everyone and everything that's going on along the street and is the best watchdog we could have. He helps us, watching the house when we're gone and we help him with various tasks around his yard and house. Slide 4 - This fall, Hugh has gone into assisted living.

We miss him and would like to buy his property for expanded garden space and possibly an in-fill rental house on the lot.

Slide 5 – This is our Buena Vista neighbourhood. It is conveniently located close to downtown and the farmer’s market and to Gabriel Dumont Park along the river. Slide 6 - We have a great Buena Vista school that is an anchor in the neighbourhood and celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. Slide 7 – Further down Lorne Avenue is our local café Tastebuds that serves over 25 flavours of soft ice cream. Slide 8 - _____ autobody shop where know us by first name and slide 9 – Pelican Market is our local convenience store run by a lovely Chinese family. Slide 10 - Our local Anglican church hosts Pilates exercise and square dancing lessons. It’s probably used more for exercise than worship but that’s the growing trend of churches. Slide 11 - We have many small war-time houses that are being bought up and torn down for in-fill projects. Slide 12 - These projects provide housing in our neighbourhood and generally improve the looks of things but may be pricing out former residents.

Slide 13– We have Killburn Park for baseball and football games where the Hilltop Warriors play. Slide 14 - this block highlights the discrepancy between wealth and opportunity in our neighbourhood. Slide 15 - Killburn Youth

Detention Centre sits on the same block and these youth who are hauled in the back of Saskatoon City Police cars have not had the same opportunities for sport and development. Formerly the Saskatoon Home for Abused and Neglected Children, it has long been the heartbreak of the neighbourhood.

Slide 16 – We love our home. It has its' challenges. The basement has flooded in the past and it is kind of small for having people over but we like the comfort and beauty of our trees, bushes and garden. We are still learning what it means to be the owners and caretakers of 1515 Coy Avenue. Slide 17 - We have some crazy neighbours, people who dump their trash around our bin instead of in it. Slide 18 - Others feel free to pick our apples along the alley but we are learning to engage our neighbours in positive ways and the more we look for opportunities to be neighbourly, the more that seem to come our way. Slide 19 - We love our Buena Vista neighbourhood. It's got character. It is somewhat diverse and has all the amenities, including Homestead Ice Cream within walking distance. We love our city. We love walking the Meewasin Trail along the river on days off and walking to the Farmer's Market and downtown. Slide 20 - As a growing city, we have our challenges but it feels like we are on the cutting edge of the local food movement, of alternative transportation and creative in-fill housing. Slide 21 - As a city we are hopefully learning what it means to be sustainable and protect our

gorgeous river valley. Hopefully Patrick and I are learning to be good citizens of our city and to contribute to its well-being. End of slideshow...lights...

I've commissioned the youth Sunday School class to take slides of Osler and surrounding farms so we can have a sermon in the new year about how God is present in this context. We already know that the Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve is God's country. Dick and Kathy Braun took me on a rural tour the other Sunday. It was a gorgeous fall day, the fields harvested and sloughs still full of grebes, coots and mallards. We stopped at farms and villages but only scratched the surface of the history and family connections in this area. I'm looking forward to other farm tours if anyone wants to have me over for supper Wednesday or Thursday nights this week before church meetings or Sunday lunch.

Scott Russell Sanders says in Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World, it is by understanding where we live, that we can understand how to live. We dwell in our homes with the companions of our families, our neighbours, the people of our RM, town or city and with the creatures that run and root and soar around the place. There is no home or rootedness apart from this companionship. We are only adequate to the earth if we are adequate to our neighbourhoods. It all starts at home in recognizing our connectedness.

Psalm 90:16 Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to our children. Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands – O prosper the work of our hands. We have a tremendous gift in our homes, properties and farms. The work of belonging to a place and seeing God in the midst of it is never finished. The more fully we belong to our place, the more we will revere it and become better caretakers of it

Let us pray...