

From House to Home

I recently buried my dear father Paul. I miss him. God blessed me with an extraordinary father. He was a great teacher, provider, mentor, encourager and role model. From 1968 to early 1990's he and my mother built a successful local business, Paul Construction Ltd.. Dad designed and supervised the construction of hundreds of homes and several commercial projects in and around Kelowna. His greatest joy was to watch as a plan, lines he had drawn on paper, took shape and become a house. First the foundation and basement were dug, formed and poured. Then carpenters built the frame, the skeletal structure, of the house. The house's plumbing, heating and electrical systems were roughed in. The exterior and interior surfaces were covered with shingles, gutters, siding, brick, stucco, doors, windows, drywall and flooring. Cabinets, appliances, plumbing, heating and cooling and fixtures were installed. The home was eventually inspected, approved and deemed ready for occupancy, most often by a family. With a family under its roof, this house became a home. A place of shelter and a place of growth. Thousands of meals would be prepared and shared under that roof. Children would be grow into adulthood and leave that home to start their own. My father loved to watch this process unfold. It was a privilege for him to play a role in this process; to design and build a house that became a home.

As a man of faith, my father, the maker of plans, was a part of a plan. The words of Holy Scripture reveal that God has a great plan for His children, the church, the body of Christ. The Apostle Peter revealed this plan in his first letter to the church, *"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* (1 Peter 2:5) The church is described as a spiritual building, made up of living stones, real people, arranged by God's hand into a real community. Expressions of God's spiritual household can be seen almost everywhere in our world. The living stones are active within God's living spiritual house, as they are also priests. They worship God through prayer, praise and thanksgiving. They proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity and in God's name administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. They work together with other congregations to reach out with the Gospel in the community around them and the world. They work with other congregations to serve those in need through humanitarian outreach. They invite people into their spiritual household. Many come to God's spiritual household for shelter and solace. By God's Word proclaimed and the Sacraments administered many of these guests are transformed into a living stones, incorporated into the spiritual building and made priests. By God's grace and mercy His house becomes their home. My father was one who entered the spiritual building as a cherished guest and by God's providence and the means of Grace was made a living stone in God's spiritual household. Dad worshiped, learned and served in God's spiritual household. God directed dad's skills and gifts to design and supervise the construction of a church building and work with others Christian brothers and sisters in the development of seniors' housing.

While God has been at work in this world building a spiritual households for the last 2,000 years, His building plans go beyond this life and this world. Jesus revealed another

building program, a kingdom in the making. *“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.” (John 18:36)* Jesus described his coming kingdom as a household. *“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:2)* Jesus also has a plan for bringing his subjects into his kingdom. *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” (John 14:3).* Jesus spoke these words on the night before he suffered on the cross and died for our sins. He promised that the cords of death would not hold him prisoner. He promised that he would break the cords of death and become the resurrection and the life. He promised that he would return to his Father in heaven and wanted all who believed in him to be where he is. Jesus also revealed the pathway and the gateway to his kingdom. *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6).*

Jesus revealed these plans and made these promises while he was on his way to the cross. By his innocent suffering and death on the cross and his glorious resurrection Jesus changed suffering and death from a bitter ending into a new beginning. All Jesus asks is that you believe in him in order to share in this new beginning. *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.” (John 14:1).*

The “living stones” and “priests” of God’s spiritual household at 1162 Hudson Road in West Kelowna, meet on Sunday mornings at 9:00AM-Contemporary and 10:30AM-Traditional, for prayer, praise and thanksgiving, and are fed and transformed by God’s Word and the Sacraments. Please come in and join us. Perhaps this house could become your home.

In Christ,

Pastor Ed Skutshek