

To an Unknown Dog – December 2015

Today I did something I've done several times and absolutely hate: I buried a dog. For the first time, it was not my dog, but it was still tough.

Long story short. Michele saw a dog on her way to the church yesterday morning. It was lying beside another dog that had been hit by a car and was dead. She tried to approach her (female dog), as did several other people, but the dog kept running away with no awareness of traffic. Michele and others tried to corral the dog for some time, but with no luck. Last night, we were coming home from church after caroling and a bonfire and we saw a police car with another car. As we slowed to pass we saw that another dog had been hit. We turned around and Michele got out and discovered it was the same dog she tried to rescue earlier. Apparently, the dog didn't want to leave the area where she'd lost her friend. Needless to say, Michele was heartbroken.

We have a history of rescuing dogs. Usually, they spend a few hours or a night with us before the owner is located. In one case, we kept the dog – our sweet Ellie.

This morning we drove back to the spot so Michele could see the dog in the daylight. It was the same dog. She seemed to be a lab mix with beautiful coloring. As we drove away Michele asked me if I would bury the dog if no one picked up her body. I didn't think it was a good idea.

After errands, chores, etc., I hadn't gotten the dog out of my mind. I changed into my grungy painting clothes and told Michele I would check on the dog. I am married to a very tender-hearted woman and I knew she felt it was somehow her fault that the dog was killed. I thought I could at least offer to bury the dog, while praying the whole time that someone from the county had picked her up. They had not.

I placed the dog in my truck bed and drove home. Michele met me and thanked me with tears in her eyes. I got to work digging a hole in the backyard and hewing a bunch of tree roots. It was well after dark when I finished the job. Before I began shoveling dirt back in the hole I paused and thought and prayed. Then it was done.

I don't know the dog's name. She didn't have a collar or tags. I don't know if someone is missing her or searching for her, but I think they would have found her body if they were. I could count her ribs so she wasn't well-fed. But I do know she was like many of us: scared, lonely, and feeling like she didn't have a friend in the world.

As we approach Christmas I know there are many people like this nameless dog. You may know someone who afraid and alone and is trying to hide their fear and loneliness, and perhaps doing a poor job of it. Reach out to them; let them know they have a friend to talk to and a shoulder to lean on.

Or it may be you who is scared and lonely. I am sorry. I know you are hurting. But I know someone who loves you. And his love is warm yet magnificent, real yet indescribable. His name is Jesus and we're about to celebrate his birthday. I'd love to introduce you to him. I'd love to be your friend, and so would many other people at Crosspointe. Give me a call at the church or come visit us some Sunday morning or Wednesday evening. You don't have to be alone. You don't have to be afraid. You can stop running.