

From This Corner
Pulpit Supply
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Normally in United Methodist nomenclature, “pulpit supply” means a person filling in for the resident pastor, or placing a lay preacher in a situation where there is no licensed or ordained pastor. I have discovered yet another kind of “pulpit supply.”

This newly discovered “pulpit supply” is what I find in the pulpits of our churches. Very frequently, I am positioned behind the pulpit with the pastor so I am able to see what is not usually seen. On some occasions, there are no pulpits at all. More on that later. For those of you who spend most of your time on the pew side of things, pulpits have storage space in them for things like hymnals, songbooks, or even a glass of water for a dry preacher. At least this is what you might expect. But no, our pulpits are filled with an array of things that boggle the mind. .

As I observe the pulpit contents from the revealed side, I sometimes find my mind wandering. What does this mean? Here are some examples:

a wrapped gift with church dust – Did the honoree not show, or is that for some future guest? Christ will come again, so I guess they are ready.

an exit sign – I can expect a call from the PPR.

antacids – Irrefutable evidence that United Methodist hearts are still being “strangely warmed.”

old bulletin from 1997 – Was that service so good that the folder is being saved for the Conference Committee on Archives and History? On the other hand, is it evidence of the last time this church did anything liturgical?

1 wooden match – This pastor is a person of faith.

used communion cup with dried juice – Matthew 23:26 “Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, and then the outside also will be clean.”

1 unused disposable baby diaper – Was this a Christmas Eve children’s sermon illustration, and if so what was the point?

crown of thorns – I heard this was a tough church.

dead flies – I hope this is not a commentary on the preaching done in this place!

used kleenex – No comment.

At the last church visited, I noticed that the storage space beneath the pulpit had cabinet doors covering it. My mind went wild. I did not look to see.

Anyway, I think I have figured out why some of our churches have removed the pulpit. Mystery solved.