

January 6, 2015

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

It's a snow day.

And, let's be honest, people have different feelings about snow days.

Some people love them. No school. No work. The pristine white clinging to the grass and the bushes and the trees, turning everything into a winter wonderland. It's just beautiful.

Other people detest snow days. All the scraping and shoveling. Slippery roads. Crazy driving. The white snow turning into brown slush. Yuck!

I never cared much for snow days. Particularly when our boys were very young, snow days upset the whole routine. Either Susan or I had to stay home from work, and having three energetic boys cooped up in the house was no picnic. Oh, we would try to get them outside. We'd spend 30 minutes getting them bundled up in their snow clothes, but after 2 minutes outside, someone would get snow down their neck or inside their mitten, and the cries of "I want to go in" began to sound. It was absolutely no fun.

These days, though, I enjoy snow days a lot more. At church, we follow the DC Public Schools, so we do not get snow days very often, but they do happen. Last year, we had a few, and I found them a welcome respite from the usual routine. I would stay home all alone, snuggled under the covers, reading a book or working on my next sermon. There was something about the solitude, the silence. It was utterly... tranquil.

Back in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Desert Fathers and Mothers, men and women who left society to live alone in the Egyptian desert, found solitude and silence to be a pathway to God. The solitude enabled them to get away from the busy compulsions of life and be with God and God alone. The silence helped them concentrate on God's active presence in their lives. It was a spiritually powerful combination.

I think I experienced a tiny bit of that power during our snow days last year. Snow days became God days. They were a time to close the door on the outside world. A time to be still. To be quiet and listen. Snow days were a time to be with God, and God alone. And, couldn't we all use a little more God time in our lives?

Enjoy the snow and I will see you in church,  
*Andrew*