



Monday Musing: August
10th, 2026
Coming Home...

It is hard to fathom that just two weeks ago I was up in the Scottish Highlands with my family. We were way up there in the mist, in the clouds. That's Josh you can

see in this picture. To his left is a giant pile of stones. It is a cairn, a human-made pile of stones placed at the highest point of a mountain. It is a trail marker. For me, it was a trail marker into the heart of my soul.

High above the paths, and the herd of deer, we stood by the stream flowing down to the highway below. High above, we wandered sometimes standing together. Mostly wandering apart. Contemplating. Admiring. Wondering in our wandering. It was surreal.

I was so thrilled I had made it all the way up even across a narrow metal slanted bridge with no railings. That was scary. I had felt my heart pounding and my breaths increasing as we climbed. Yet it was climbing into the sacred and the holy. It was a place of God's presence. Long ago, when backpacking in the Rockies in Alberta, I had said, "This is where God vacations." I think in the Scottish Highlands is where God waits for us. And so, after our encounters with the heights, and with the presence, we placed a stone on the cairn. I wonder how high that cairn will be one day.

As I wandered around, stepping over rocks and small crevices, going near edges, looking out into a mural of time, I felt my heart slow down, my breathing calm, and my spirit embrace peace. If only the whole world might know this peace and leave a stone on the cairn.

Whether in the Rockies or here in the Highlands, there was this feeling of not wanting to come down – ever. Like just freeze time please. Let me stay here. It made me think about the story of Jesus transfigured on the mountain with his closest disciples who wanted to build a monument, a cairn, to mark the moment, and turn the surreal to real. Just as we did. We each at some point placed our chosen stone onto the others that had been placed there by so many travelers who came before us.

There sure is something about the real-life mountain top experience just as there really is something to have a mountain top experience, a spiritual encounter, with God. In both cases, you just don't want to come down. Yet, we can't stay there forever. In both cases, we must come down. We must go back to the valleys of every day living, holding

the awe-inspiring view, and the sacred encounter with the holy, in our hearts, minds and souls. And so, we come down. We come home.

Coming home is sacred in its own way. Home is the place of memories that mark the where we've been through the years. Albums. Frames. Treasures and tokens. The familiar. Family. Love. Welcome. Home. Coming home is like coming down the mountain or the Highlands to the already made cairn of our lives. My kids say it is really special coming home to where they grew up. I feel it when they're here too. I feel it when I go home to where I grew up where Mom and Dad still live.

Church is home too. The building. The treasures, tokens, memories. Family. Love. Welcome. Home. I don't have a life long church home or family as many of you do. I have moved through churches. But I understand, in my own way, what it is to cherish home, family, church home, faith family. And this I do treasure. For this I am so very grateful here in my church home at St. Andrew's United in Markham. My mountain top home.

Prayer

God of the journey, God of arrival, of mountains and valleys, memories and home, may we know the sacredness of your presence when up high. May we mark our time in the clouds of your peace. May we know the holiness of your presence when we come home to the valleys, to the holy ground of families, love. Welcome. Home. Amen.

Scripture this Week

Genesis 45:1-15	Joseph reveals his identity in welcome and peace.
Psalms 133	A song of ascent up to Mount Zion.
Romans 11:1-32	Paul talks about rejecting God and the remnant.
Matt 15:10-28	Rejected by his people, accepted by others.

TR Question (theological reflection)

Where is home to you? How do you know your home in God?

May you come to know the mountain top presence and peace,
Rev. Dr. Deb Foster, Minister of St. Andrew's United in Markham
905-294-0351 minister@standrewsmarkham.com