

PAUPER'S FUNERAL

By Bill Pugh

I was asked by a local undertaker to take a pauper's funeral.

Pauper, what a sad name.

We were in a separate room for the service, my friend the undertaker and the man lying in peace in the open coffin.

Who was he? Nothing was known about him. No trace of friends or relatives to support and be with him.

Why had he fallen on hard times?

No one to care. I felt for him. All I could do was to look at him at peace and imagine his life, good times and not so good.

Yet he is a child of God.

I had the strength of the gospel message to proclaim and the helpful liturgy of the funeral service to read.

Three of us were there at the service, yet I felt we were not alone.

I am with you always, said our Lord, and he is.

As I finished and said goodbye to my unknown friend, I imagined the next step.

A flight of angels swooping down to take his soul to the heavenly home, where our lord dwells and many friends are there, waiting to greet him and make him welcome.

No paupers. All are rich beyond measure. Such is our faith.

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