



February 21, 2018

Billy Graham, 1918-2018

A few simple words to give glory and gratitude to God for the life, ministry and witness of our beloved neighbor and friend to many in our congregation and community, Billy Graham.

The impact that Billy Graham has had on the world is incalculable. The list of his accomplishments in the name of Christ is widely available and worthy of grateful reflection, if not dumbstruck awe. In a century of global astonishments, from appallingly brutal warfare and human misery to breathtaking advancements in science, medicine, mobility, communication technology, international assistance, environmental care and long overdue (and ongoing) reconsiderations of what it means to share our common humanity, Dr. Graham has, for most of those decades, brought a witness to the gospel message to an incomparably vast audience and the highest echelons of power. The scope of his achievements is rightly being acknowledged and celebrated across the globe today.

Within our community, his name is spoken more intimately. Family members as well as dear, lifelong friends of Ruth and Billy are among our close friends here in Montreat and throughout the wider and more disparate community of "Montreat Nation." We remember their loss not only with appreciative solemnity, but with hugs of personal compassion. They knew and loved a real human being, not a public voice or an airbrushed image or a mythic icon.

Whether we knew him or not, it has been an honor and a peculiar joy just to have known that he was here among us in our tiny town, somewhere up the road in a place the locals would faithfully feign ignorance about to any who came around hoping for a peek. For all of us who profess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior--a phrase that means sometimes wildly different things to good, faithful, intelligent, loving people--his dedication to the proclamation of

the Good News will be an inspiration for as long as we have breath to proclaim it ourselves.

Thank you, God, for your servant.

Faithfully and with gratitude,
Keith Grogg, pastor
Montreat Presbyterian Church

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