

SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 2021, MORNING MESSAGE
REVEREND EDWARD DUNN

“The church is not a spa for saints but a hospital for sinners” was one of the things Mr. Bonner liked to share with me. He knew, long before I did, that ministry was going to be my calling. I’ve long since realized that some of his homespun wisdom was among the first lessons of my theological training. He and others spoke theology in simple, easy to learn language. He sought to ground me in the honest work of my calling, for church is not meant to be a resort but a recovery room.

This week’s Scripture lesson features the call of one of Jesus’ disciples and a meal that includes an unlikely guest list – at least according to the religious leaders of the day.

A number of years ago I was a consultant to a congregation that was proud of its ministry to feed homeless people. As I listened to them talk about what their church did, I soon realized that most of these people had never participated in the feeding ministry. They had hired those who did the work. They were more concerned that homeless people were sitting in the same chairs they used for congregational events and for after worship fellowship each week. Several of them commented about a fund they had begun to raise money to purchase new chairs – for themselves!

I am convinced that they were good-intentioned people who dearly loved the Lord but their vision had become clouded. The purpose of the church had become to serve their self-interests over the needs of the world around them.

In our reading from Mark 2, Jesus reminds us that we are called to work in a hospital, not a spa. Thanks, Mr. Bonner, for being such a wise teacher!

Blessings,
Edward