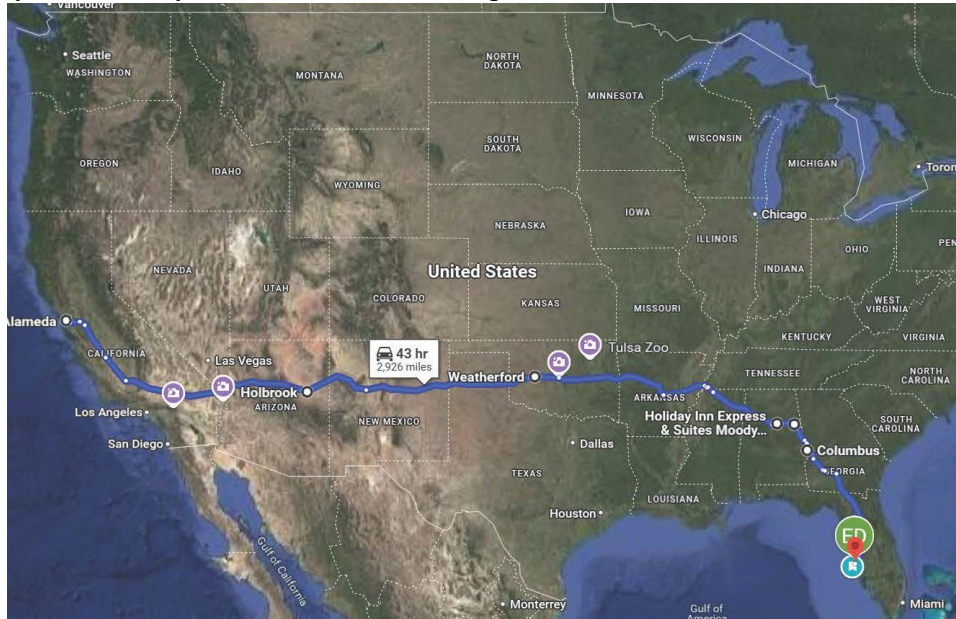
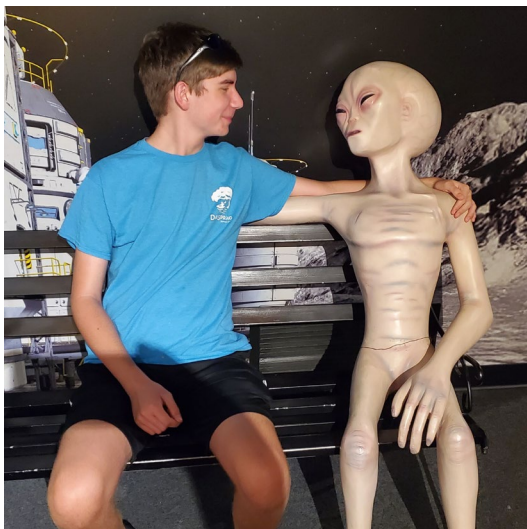


Sermon Mary and Martha and a Road Trip  
The Very Rev. David J. Marshall, All Angels 7.20.25

On Friday of last week, Christi, Elijah (our 15 year old) and I flew to San Francisco to celebrate my mother-in-law's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. On Monday, Elijah and I took her car (which she gave to us) and drove back to Florida. It is a 2,479 mile drive that took three nights on the road – about five hours of that Elijah was behind the wheel. We took I-5 south to Bakersfield, turned left and drove into the high desert of Arizona on I-40. We stopped for the night outside of Flagstaff, then Oklahoma City, and Moody Alabama. Here is a map.



To avoid a dust storm in Arizona, we pulled off the freeway, drove five miles south, and saw the best-preserved crater created by a meteor. It's impressive – a mile wide crater, three miles in circumference, and is deeper than the statue of liberty. And, Elijah took a photo with an alien.



We paralleled Route 66. Here's a photo documenting it.



But the best picture of the trip was this one – as we entered our home state of Florida.



You might ask what the deal is the plastic goat. It's a gift Elijah received a number of years ago. When you press on it, the goat makes a sound that resembles a scream. And yes, there is a type of goat that sounds like that. It became our travel mascot and appeared in just about every photo we took. Plus, it would "bleat" or scream, at various times along the journey including at each cattle car we passed. But that's a part of the road trip experience.

You might find it strange that I brought this up but there is a connection to the Gospel lesson. In the shortest Gospel reading of the year, Jesus is invited to Martha's house. Mary, her sister, is sitting at Jesus's feet while Martha is doing all the work. She interrupts Jesus and asked him to tell Mary to help her. Jesus said, "Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and certainly in the Marshall household, clergy are worried and distracted by many things. Jesus reminds me of what is important in life. Likewise, for 15 year olds today, they too are worried and distracted by many things; yet, there is need of only one thing. This story reminds me of our road trip. We could have had the car shipped to Florida for \$1,200. We could have flown home and then went on with our worried and distracted lives. Instead, we chose the better part. Elijah and I chose to spend time together, to accomplish something together, and to make memories that will not be taken from us.

I sailed with my dad from the San Juan Islands in Washington State all the way to our home port in Tacoma. It took three nights. There was a storm; a lot of sitting around, and very good conversation. I am reminded from time to time of our trip together. It's the better part of my teenaged life. It will not be taken from me.

We have the opportunity to "sit at Jesus's feet" as Mary did. We can sit quietly, in prayer, or reading Scripture, and imagine what it would be like to sit at the feet of our Lord. To have no other cares or distractions; but only the One Thing, Jesus our Lord. We can imagine sitting at Jesus's feet while waiting for a doctor's appointment. If you are waiting for a flight, you can take the time to imagine having Jesus sit next to you. Or, as one person told me, while waiting for the cable/internet guy to show up. We also can take the time to remember a road trip that seemed almost inconsequential at the time; but now means the world to us.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.