

The Service of Celebration
August 1, 2020
Nashville, Tennessee

Mark Heyward Solesby

May 25, 1976 – July 11, 2020

Gathering	James Leith Macbeth Bain
<i>Brother James' Aire</i>	
Greeting	Sam Davidson
Reading	Luke Solesby
<i>Like the First Time</i>	
Hymn	Natalie Sleeth
<i>Hymn of Promise</i>	
Scripture	Leland Solesby
<i>Ecclesiastes 3:1–8</i>	
A Remembrance	Sam Davidson
A Prayer for Mark	
Scripture	Luke Solesby
Habakkuk 2:3	
Music	Annie Fortescue Harrison
<i>In the Gloaming</i>	
<i>Jonatha Brooke</i>	
Poem	John Greenleaf Whittier
<i>I Know Not What the Future Hath</i>	
Prayer and Closing	Sam Davidson
<i>Easy</i>	
<i>Mark Solesby</i>	

Like the First Time

After all is said and done, we need each other
For a million reasons we can't even name
All our roads still lead to one another
And for all we've been apart, we're still the same

Like the first time, only better
We're a song that must be sung together
Like the first time, only this time
Could it be forever?

Peter Yarrow

I Know Not What the Future Hath

I know not what the future hath
of marvel or surprise,
assured alone that life and death
God's mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
to bear an untried pain,
the frailest reed God will not break,
but strengthen and sustain.

I know not where God's islands lift
their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
beyond God's love and care.

John Greenleaf Whittier

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;

a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

a time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Habakkuk 2:3

For still the vision awaits its time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.

If it seems slow, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.

Hymn of Promise

In the bulb, there is a flower
In the seed, an apple tree
In cocoons, a hidden promise
Butterflies will soon be free
In the cold and snow of winter
There's a spring that waits to be
Unrevealed until its season
Something God alone can see
There's a song in every silence
Seeking word and melody
There's a dawn in every darkness
Bringing hope to you and me
From the past will come the future
What it holds, a mystery
Unrevealed until its season
Something God alone can see
In our end is our beginning
In our time, infinity
In our doubt, there is believing
In our life, eternity
In our death, a resurrection
At the last, a victory
Unrevealed until its season
Something God alone can see

Natalie Sleeth

Sung by R.C. Hopper

In the Gloaming

In the gloaming, oh my darling
When the lights are soft and low
And the quiet shadows, falling,
Softly come and softly go
When the trees are sobbing faintly
With a gentle unknown woe
Will you think of me and love me,
As you did once, long ago
In the gloaming, oh my darling
Think not bitterly of me
Though I passed away in silence
Left you lonely, set you free
For my heart was tossed with longing
What had been could never be
It was best to leave you thus, dear,
Best for you, and best for me
In the gloaming, oh my darling
When the lights are soft and low
Will you think of me, and love me
As you did once long ago

Annie Fortescue Harrison

Sung by Jonatha Brooke

Greeting

As you light this candle, think of Mark. The light, the warmth, the insight. A candle has the power to bring light to any dark place. A candle doesn't care how busy the dark place is. How adorned its walls or immaculate its architecture. A candle has but one purpose: to shine. And oh, how Mark Solesby shined.

A candle also has the power to illuminate what might go unseen. Mark had this power as well — the ability to shine the light not on himself, but on others. To show you what you might not always see: the very best in yourself.

As you light this candle, think of Mark. Think of the light he brought and still brings. Think of the best of yourself and how Mark brought that out of you.

A Remembrance

The Mayor of Hillsboro Village. Uncle Mark. Or, just Mark.

The singer of first dance wedding songs. The person always ready with a smile and a hug. A gifted storytelling, songwriter, singer, and musician. He had no rivals or enemies and several best friends.

He always showed up.

In his bestselling book, *The Second Mountain*, David Brooks writes,

Every once in a while, I meet a person who radiates joy. These are people who seem to glow with an inner light. They are kind, tranquil, delighted by small pleasures, and grateful for the large ones. These people are not perfect. They get exhausted and stressed. They make errors in judgment. But they live for others, and not for themselves. They've made unshakable commitments to family, a cause, a community, or a faith. They know why they were put on this earth and derive a deep satisfaction from doing what they have been called to do. Life isn't easy for these people. They've taken on the burdens of others. But they have a serenity about them, a settled resolve. They are interested in you, make you feel cherished and known, and take delight in your good.

When you meet these people, you realize that joy is not just a feeling, it can be an outlook. There are temporary highs we all get after we win some victory, and then there is also this other kind of permanent joy that animates people who are not obsessed with themselves but have given themselves away.

Brooks goes on in his book to profile people who climbed the first mountain of career and material success, realized there was more and then began a second mountain of service and love that resulted in this deep joy. He goes on for some 300 pages with these processes and profiles to encourage the reader to consider his or her second mountain. I could have saved Mr.

Brooks some time and told him, “Just go talk to Mark.” He seemed to have this joy thing figured out without the need for mountains and measurement.

In planning today’s service, it was said, “If he could, Mark would want us to blow this thing out with great music and great performances.”

On Tuesday, we sat.

We listened to music and cried. We told stories and we listened. We honored Mark by our being together and our listening.

And over the last several days I’ve read. Stories of high school hijinks. Impromptu but unforgettable concerts or jam sessions. And I’ve determined that there are three ways in which we — all of us — can continually honor Mark and what he meant to us. In these ways maybe we can have just a glimpse or taste of the joy that he radiated, that he found on his mountain that made up the whole of his life.

1) Say yes.

“Mark reminded us to say ‘yes’.” Whether it was the chance to play music, meet up with someone, try your hand at something new, see an old friend, listen to or tell a story — Mark showed us how to say yes.

By saying yes to these life experiences, as ordinary and regular as they may seem, we’re saying yes to life itself. Saying yes is living.

And most of it was “regular life.” Sure, there was the occasional story of epic concerts or unforgettable memories but most of what was shared was car rides. Dog walks. Dinners or drinks or guitars on porches. Conversations or phone calls. Errands.

That’s what Mark would continually say yes to and that’s what we all would remember.

2) Remember.

Oh Mark, teach us to remember. Countless heartfelt sentiments from so many of you have poured in since the 11th.

- “He was my first friend in Nashville.”
- “In that last day, it was those eyes and that smile.”
- “What was special about Mark was that he could always find what was special about you.”
- “He was always busy but it was always for someone else.” Stories abound of Mark making, painting, writing, working, helping someone else.
- “Known for his compassion, ability to make everyone laugh, and warm hugs.”

How do you remember Mark? However it may be, you're right. That's exactly who he was and who he wanted to be. There are no bad memories of Mark.

And Mark would want us to remember who we are. What we believe. Who he knew us to be. This candle — and the candle near you right now — that is a remembrance of Mark is also a way to remember all that he showed you that you could be. The best in you that he always could easily bring out.

Remember Mark, but remember also who he believed you to be. There's a shirt I've seen that reads, "Be the kind of person your dog thinks you are." How about we all start living into the person that Mark knew us to be, that we were when he was around — that person he was able to make us feel like?

Mark, help us remember who we can truly be.

3) Show up.

Things were better when Mark was there. He was punctual but what mattered more was that he was present. He would greet friends passing through town just to say hello real quick at the airport. He honored commitments, leaving work sometimes to go do other work he has promised someone earlier.

Who can you show up for? This is how you honor Mark; this is how Mark lives on in and with each of us.

Who needs you to be as present as you safely can be in their lives right now? Who needs a text from you, a call, a video coffee or dinner? Who needs help?

I want to give you time right now — yes, right now — to send that text or at least write down that name. Put it somewhere it's in the way so you won't forget it. Mark had a natural talent, it seems, to just be able to show up for us when we needed. For others of us it may not be as easy so we need prompts and reminders (that's ok).

Do it. Commit to show up for someone like Mark showed up for you. Say yes; remember; show up.

Do that and you'll be on your own mountain of joy. And when you reach the top, don't be surprised to see Mark Solesby there, maybe asking what took you so long, but then flashing that smile, offering a hug and a story, and willing to just sit with you awhile.

Prayer and Closing

“Such an easy way about him.”

As we close this morning, I’m going to lead us in prayer and then Mark will take us home. To close, as we look through memories, we’ll hear a recording of Mark singing his favorite song, Easy. This is the recording we listened to on Tuesday together and knew it was the perfect way to end the service today.

The lyrics may remind us and encourage us to live how Mark showed us:

I wanna be free to know
The things I do are right

That's why I'm easy
I'm easy like Sunday morning!

Why in the world would anybody put chains on me?
I've paid my dues to make it
Everybody wants me to be
What they want me to be
I'm not happy when I try to fake it! No!
Ooh that's why I'm easy
I'm easy like Sunday morning

Let us pray.

God, thank you.

Thank you for the life, love, and legacy that is — not was — Mark Solesby.

Whether we had 44 years with him or just 44 minutes, he taught us. He taught us how to say yes, how to remember, and how to show up. Thank you for using someone as kind, as friendly, as authentic, and as loving as Mark to be our teacher in this regard.

And now, God, as we go from this place back to our lives in a world where we can’t see Mark’s smile or feel his hugs, use us as your teachers now to share the lessons and love he taught and showed us. Let us carry the light he gave us to those who need it most.

Amen.