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The Rev. Dr. John K. Graham received his MD degree from Tulane Medical School, New Orleans, and is board-certified in otolaryngology and plastic and reconstructive surgery. He received national attention in 1977 when he successfully replanted the amputated arm of a four-year-old boy. In 1990, Dr. Graham left the practice of medicine to answer God's call. He received an MDiv from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, and a DMin degree from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston. Dr. Graham is the author of *Mold Me and Shape Me* and *Graham Crackers and Milk: Food for the Heart and Soul*. He and his wife, Pat, have five children and 19 grandchildren. Readers may contact Dr. Graham at jgraham@ish-tmc.org.

About *Vintage Voice*

Vintage Voice is a monthly publication for retirees of the Episcopal Church who, in sharing their stories, help deepen the sense of community. We hope you enjoy these articles and find them helpful. Stories are published with the authors' permission. If you have a reflection about your life in retirement, consider writing for the *Vintage Voice*! Send your submissions to vintagevoice@cpg.org.

VINTAGE VOICE



Lost and Found

by the Rev. Dr. John K. Graham

In a department store, if we lose an item, maybe a wallet, an umbrella, a jacket, we head to the Lost and Found to find what we're missing and identify it as our own.

Now locked at home, with the coronavirus looming outside, we soon discover that what we have lost is more than our freedom. It's our family and friends, our co-workers, our favorite restaurant, gym, and theater. Even the doors of our place of worship are closed. We have lost so much that we took for granted.

But what have we found? Being in the midst of loss gives us a special opportunity to explore the Lost and Found department of life. In our quiet space, we may realize that this can be the time to recover what was lost long before the virus struck.

Our "lost list" may be long. Simple pleasures around people and things may have gone missing. Maybe it was the enjoyment we took in playing a game of chess or Monopoly; putting a puzzle together; looking at photograph albums from our childhood and school days, our church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. Maybe we stopped taking joy in the flowers in the back yard, the bird feeder, or the bike hanging on the garage wall. Maybe our "lost list" includes members of the family we realize we hardly know—our spouse and children.

Most of all, maybe we even lost ourselves. Our authentic selves. Who we truly are. In the haste of living, making money, and climbing the ladder at work, many of us left much behind and lost some of the things that give us genuine joy and pleasure.

Thankfully, lost things and lost people can be found. And that includes our lost selves. Alone in our shuttered homes, we can recover one by one what we have lost. But, first, we must identify and claim each lost item. We must tell the clerk who resides in our heart, "Help me recover what I have lost."

Our first task is recognition. Our second task is taking action to restore what has gone missing. This may mean going to the closet to bring out the game of Scrabble or putting a puzzle together with our son or

daughter. It may mean looking through an album of pictures together with our spouse and children, or reading a book, story, or sacred writing that brought forth life and joy and tears when we were much younger—and still alive, still seeking, still believing.

We can recover these things, and more, in our own personal Lost and Found. We can bring them back by recalling the time when simple things were the most important in life. We can reclaim them in a song, in a dance, or in a glance at the ones we love. Yes, even a glance and smile can restore love that was lost and now is found.

The Lost and Found department is not far away. It is residing in your soul, where true meaning and joy are always found.

(A version of this article was distributed by the Institute for Spirituality and Health at the Texas Medical Center, Houston, where the Rev. Dr. Graham is President and Chief Executive Officer.)



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