

Advent IV—Love

Henry Hayden

A Passion for Loving Kindness



The Rev. Henry Hayden learned early on that “if you find your passion and follow it, you’ll live a happy life.” Uninspired by work in the insurance industry, Henry enrolled at Syracuse University to study English, with plans to be a teacher. While there, he was drawn into the life of the downtown Plymouth Congregational Church, and a lifelong passion for a prophetic ministry was born. “Wherever I went, I tried to find out who was hurting and then did something about it.”

Over nearly half a century of ministry in schools, established congregations, new church starts, and interims, Henry never stopped asking that question, and responding with a prophetic voice and witness. From an early fiery sermon against the evacuation of Japanese Americans to detention camps, to resisting segregation of African Americans at the University of New Mexico, speaking out against McCarthyism, advocating for migrant farm workers from Mexico, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, and marching with Cesar Chavez and Martin Luther King, Jr., Henry advocated for those most hurting in society. “By the grace of God I loved the ministry I did, loved the paths to which I was called. God gave me a Teflon skin; I never let criticism get to me.”

Choosing always to follow his passion, Henry notes, “Money never meant that much to me; it was more important that the people in the churches I served were ready to hear a prophetic voice.” He and his wife Betty retired in 1985 with enough to live comfortably, but shortly after Betty died, Henry suffered a devastating illness that lasted two years, “and used up every single cent that I had.” He was left with enough income to exactly meet his assisted living rent at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California, but without enough to allow him to purchase supplies for his newfound retirement passion for oil painting. When Henry received his first annual “Thank You” gift check at Christmas, “I was overjoyed. That extra made such a huge difference.” Because of the Christmas Fund, Henry is now able to paint every day, and to celebrate the 31 birthdays of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren each year. Being remembered by his church with the same loving kindness that fueled his own passion for ministry “is a blessing beyond measure.”

# ★ THE CHRISTMAS FUND

for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



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In 2015, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Small pension supplementation for 464 retired clergy and lay employees - \$1,500,203
- Health benefits supplementation for 235 retired clergy and lay employees - \$452,561
- Emergency grants for 58 individuals and families - \$91,694
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 528 retired clergy and lay employees - \$211,200

Your gift in 2016 will be combined with the gifts of others to continue this vital mission. Thank You!