"Monuments come and monuments go but monumental lives linger long into the future." I don’t know when I first heard that expression but it stuck long ago among the mental treasurers that clutter my cerebral attic. There is no monument of stone or marble that can replace the monuments we build in our hearts to the memory of loved ones. Memorial Day weekend is for both kinds of monuments—ones hewn from hearts the other from marble.

Historically, Christian worship is not a place to celebrate monumental patriotism. It is a place to celebrate Jesus Christ and his call to live in ways not of this world— to turn the other cheek, to love enemies, to serve one another, to go into the world baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—in other words to live monumental lives.

That said, I’m thankful to be an American citizen. I believe deeply in the unique principles of Constitutional Democracy, our social and economic freedoms and responsibilities that are used for the betterment, and sometimes detriment, of all people. I’ve been in places where the only and most beautiful colors were red, white, and blue. I value the monumental sacrifices that have been made for our country and to them I have added a few small sacrifices of my own.

My Christian obligations include being a good citizen and honoring the memory of other good citizens who’ve encouraged our present and inspired our future. And so, we remember the honored dead of wars past. They should not be driven out of time. And we will not do that. We gather at many monuments to honor their monumental sacrifices.

More importantly, we remember the saints who died to the glory of God. They should not be driven out of time lest we be driven from the grace of God and we will not do that. We Christians gather every Sabbath at one cross to offer honor and praise to the one sacrifice that has made monuments of us all—the living breathing body of Christ.

-Rev. William P. Worley, PSE Conference Minister