

Appendix R-4

Presbytery of St. Augustine Memorial Resolution The Rev. Dr. Thomas Lorraine Are, Sr.

1932-2020

Whereas the Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Are, Sr. was born on December 5, 1932 and entered the church triumphant on October 7, 2020, we, the Presbytery of St. Augustine, do resolve to give thanks for his life and ministry with the following Memorial:

Tom was born and grew up in Batesburg, South Carolina, nurtured in faith by the Batesburg Presbyterian Church. Anyone who ever heard Tom preach knows tales of Batesburg. From an early age he had a deep love of choral music that led him to Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, intending to pursue a career in church music. But there he heard a call to preach the Gospel of Grace, a call he followed to Columbia Seminary, graduating in 1959.

Tom's first pastorates were in Greenwood and West Point, Mississippi. There he became deeply involved in the civil rights movement, preaching against segregation and working with local African-American leaders for inclusion and racial justice. Despite opposition from his Session, he responded with commitment, love and determination. From 1966-71 he served in Montgomery, Alabama, and succeeded in integrating his congregation.

As an outgrowth of his love of church music, while he was a member of the Synod of the South, Tom organized a large touring youth choir. The program was hugely successful and lasted for 18 years. He published Faith Song, a guide for ministers of music.

From 1971-1992 Tom served as Senior Pastor at Shallowford Presbyterian in Atlanta, Georgia. A life-long learner and thinker, during his tenure at Shallowford he earned his Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Seminary. He also authored six books, including The Gospel of Stewardship, a manual for churches to use in their stewardship campaigns. Tom worked for economic justice in Atlanta in organizations addressing homelessness and hunger, and abroad in countries where Liberation Theology lifted up the poor. He sought social justice for the LGBTQ community. Tom was deeply involved in the quest for political justice and equality for the people of Palestine following an eye-opening trip to Israel. He authored Israeli Peace Palestinian Justice, and worked tirelessly both to educate Christians about Palestinian oppression and to support that under-represented and often voiceless community.

Following retirement from Shallowford, Tom served as an Interim Pastor for eight churches, six of which were in the Presbytery of St. Augustine where he was honorably

retired. These churches included (beginning with first one served): Riverside, Geneva, South Jacksonville, St. Giles, and First Green Cove Springs.

As his son, Rev. Dr. Tom Are, Jr. said in his eulogy, Tom (or St. Tom as he came to be known) was a “giant of a man.” He had a deep raspy bass voice and a larger-than-life persona. He loved a good game of golf and was available for one at any given opportunity. He was a gifted storyteller and a mesmerizing preacher - a prophet, a prankster, a wonderful combination of playful and pastoral. During his year at Riverside Presbyterian in Jacksonville he preached each week the Gospel of Grace and the inclusion of all in God's kingdom of love. His wide-ranging sermons stretched from Batesburg to Bonhoeffer to Palestinians separated from family by barricades, always punctuated by self-deprecating humor. He told the children that “King Orient Are” was his uncle. He ended the weekly children's message with, “Don't forget, God loves you. And so do I.” In one short year, Tom and his wife Jean formed deep and lasting friendships that were life-changing for many Riversiders. Tom modeled for Riverside what the beloved community might look like. He challenged all of his congregations to treat everyone with value and dignity.

Tom Are, Sr.'s life exemplified an understanding of and faithfulness to God's command in Micah 6:8. “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” His own “Faith Song” struck all these notes. Amen, Tom.

Now, be it resolved that the Presbytery of St Augustine does remember in love our colleague Thomas L. Are, Sr. We are thankful for the years he served us. We praise God for his witness to the Gospel of Grace, his steadfast courage and commitment to justice for all God's people, for his humor and for his prophetic preaching.

Wherefore, the Presbytery of St. Augustine does adopt this Memorial Resolution, giving thanks for the life and ministry of Tom Are, Sr., and it resolves that this resolution shall be spread upon the minutes of the 2021 Winter Stated Meeting for the Presbytery of St. Augustine.

[Thank you to Mary Coxe and Cheryl Sapora of Riverside Presbyterian Church who provided the primary authorship for this resolution.]