

The flag in the chancel stands beautiful and strong in its red white and blue. It is a brand new flag, a gift from Sylvia McCormick and her family as a way of remembering John. As a Marine he was so proud of his country, so proud of his service that is perfect memorial.

As we see the flag this morning it might do us well to remember all the men and women who have fought for that flag, have carried that flag, and have sacrificed for that flag. For their service was not for their own purposes. Rather, they fought and served for all that flag stands represents: freedom, justice, dignity and equality for all of us. And this weekend, this holiday, was established to honor those who died bearing the awesome and sacred responsibility of that flag.

There is no greater honor, nor greater gift, than to sacrifice for a purpose for a cause beyond our own lives. There is no greater honor, as Jesus said, than that we would lay down our lives for a friend. There is no greater gift that we have received from God than the life of God's own son who died upon a cross because "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son."

Though we may not ever be in an armed conflict, though we may never walk upon a battlefield, let us each find the courage to stand firm for our faith, to witness by how we live the reality of God's love. And let us never forget those whose graves will be marked by flags waving in the wind.