

## **The Sermon Without Words**

***Author's Note:*** *This poem was created from a story (author unknown) I received in an email, about a young college man who shocked a very conservative church congregation by walking into the church, and not finding a vacant seat, proceeded down the aisle to the front squatting on the floor, right below the pulpit.*

It was one day, on a Sunday that the preacher had no words.  
Yet the sermon brought that morning, these folks had never heard.  
For the stuck-up congregation, dressed in finery and gold,  
Learned a lesson they'll remember, from a deacon wise and old.

On that certain day -- that Sunday -- as the service just began,  
Stood the stuck-up congregation, and with boredom they all sang:  
"Give to us a special blessing. May we hear Thy word today."  
But their hearts were cold and stony, and their minds were far away.

It was then a strange thing happened. And the people turned to stare.  
Down the aisle tramped a young man, ragged clothes and wild hair.  
Now, the stuck-up congregation watched in horror and dismay.  
And they whispered to each other, "Surely he can't mean to stay!"

But the fellow kept on walking, vainly searching for a chair,  
Never giving second thought about the fact his feet were bare.  
To the front he ambled onward, joining in the last refrain,  
While the stuck-up congregation watched in horror and disdain.

He sat down on the carpet, since there was no vacant chair,  
Just below the pastor's pulpit, waiting for God's Word to hear.  
But the stuck-up congregation was disgusted and annoyed.  
This behavior was exactly what they tried hard to avoid.

As the uptight congregation cleared their throats and looked around,  
And the minister was squirming ... from the back row came a sound.  
"It's the deacon," said the preacher to himself. "Oh bless his heart!  
He'll remove this uncouth fellow; then my sermon I can start."

Now this deacon, in his eighties, three-piece suit and silver hair,  
Shuffled slowly down the aisle, unaware of questioning stares.  
"Well! At last he'll do his duty," whispered many in the pews.  
"It is for this kind of problems that we pay the deacon dues!"

With his ivory cane a-tapping, the old deacon reached the youth.  
Thought the stuck-up congregation, "Well! It's finally time for truth.  
Now the deacon soon will tell him that we do not want him here.  
He is such a great distraction, when God's Word we've come to hear."

But the stuck-up congregation, and the waiting pastor, too,  
Were aghast at what the deacon did what deacons never do.  
For with ancient bones a-creaking, he dropped down on to the floor,  
Joining hands with the lad in worship ... This had not been done before!

Well! The stuck-up congregation had no further words to say!  
They just bowed their heads in silence. Yes! Some even tried to pray.  
With emotions playing havoc, and with shame in many hearts,  
The posh church was left in silence, Even Pastor couldn't talk.

But the preacher soon was speaking, In his voice was great regret.  
"My sermon, friends, mean nothing, but this scene you'll not forget.  
Today we've had a sample of compassion from above,  
From our deacon's fine example of humility and love."

Now the stuck-up congregation changed their attitude that day.  
From then on they welcomed everyone, They turned no one away.  
They judged a person, not by looks, as they had done before.  
Their church was known from that day on as "The Church With the Open Door."