

Carib-Cruise-Overview

During the winter my youngest brother Hilding invited Gail and me to join him, his wife Judi, and our mother Ruth (age 94.7) on another of their cruises. Judi's teaching job restricted the dates to be within 19 to 27 March. I got to select an interesting ship and route, and then shore excursions for at least Gail and myself. Hilding made the ship reservations and payment. I reimbursed him for our share, registered for our own excursions, and purchased the airline tickets from Denver, Colorado, to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Later Hilding's long employment with HP (computer company) got cancelled by staff reductions. So Hilding, Judi, and Ruth had to withdraw their reservations (with some financial loss). Gail and I decided to continue with our plans. It could be considered as a celebration of my 17.3 years of university teaching which I was ending on 18 March.

Though the ship boarding was on Sunday afternoon, 20 March, we decided to fly to Florida on Saturday, just in case of a snowstorm that might cause transportation delays. (Such a major snowstorm happened while we were gone and closed the Denver airport on 23 March.) For Saturday night I had selected an inexpensive motel that was near the airport, the ship port, and a particular church to which we could walk on Palm Sunday morning.

That was Trinity Lutheran Church (LC-MS). In my research I found that its pastor had many points of interest to us. (See <http://www.trinityftl.org/about-us/http-trinity-lutheran-church-e-zekielcms-com-about-us-staff>) He had been disabled, blind, and near death from the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) disease. After a miraculous healing (almost no one ever gets better from this progressive disease, according to our younger daughter, Maren, who is employed by the national MS hotline for MS support resources) he went to Concordia University in Mequon, Wisconsin (where our older daughter, Michelle, studied for her B.S. in biology) and then to Seminary in St. Louis to become a pastor of a church. His family is from Wisconsin, where Michelle now resides as a family practice medical doctor.

On 20 March, Palm Sunday in the church calendar, Trinity had a special service of Confirmation at which teenagers publically professed to be followers of Jesus. During a breakfast for the five families involved, I laid out my exhibit of genuine Biblical period coins. (See <http://www.EdHolroyd.info/biblicalcoins>) That large exhibit shows that the history in the Bible is real history and not fiction or myth. Some other members of that church also viewed and appreciated the exhibit. The principal of the school operated by that church also realized its importance. I donated two representative coins to both the pastor and the school principal, and they are using them already. After the 10 AM worship service we went back to the motel to get our suitcases and go to the ship, the Silhouette, operated by Celebrity Cruises (<http://www.celebritycruises.com>).



Fort Lauderdale harbor, as we left port

Yellow box: our room, deck 9

During lunch on the ship we met a family whose daughter was about to attend Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona, where Maren went at the beginning of this century. We told them about Maren's 2003 three month trip around the world on a ship of Semester-At-Sea (<http://www.semesteratsea.org>), earning college credits while visiting many countries. That family was quite interested. Then we waited for our 4:30 PM departure from port.

between Florida and Cuba.

On Monday 21 March we were at sea



Our route was first to Cozumel, a Mexican island off the Yucatan Peninsula. The next stop was at George Town on Grand Cayman Island. Then we visited Falmouth on the north shore of Jamaica. The last stop was at Labadee in northeastern Haiti. The return trip was closer along the north shore of Cuba than indicated, just beyond visibility of its coast.

Those stops are described in separate reports.

I took only a few photos within the ship. There are many stores, special restaurants, game rooms,

exercise rooms, swimming pools, and sunning decks. We were often on Deck 14 for buffet breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Most evenings we were at an entertainment theater in the front of the ship, spanning Decks 3 to 5. Elevators could be used between decks, or better exercise could be obtained using the stairs.



Multiple Decks between elevators



Band and singer on stage



Audience departing after show

for six was on Deck 3. A couple from Quebec joined us the first night, but we could not speak French with them. The next three nights we ate by ourselves. I spotted two Chinese students seated across the room at a table for two. I asked our head waiter to invite them to our table for the remaining dinners and they joined us. Since I have had many years of contact with Chinese students of Colorado School of Mines, and have been to

Decks 3 and 4 both served the formal dinners. Our assigned table with seats



Waiters serving Ying and Irene at table with Gail

China nine times (two times for Gail), our conversations with Ying and Irene were very enjoyable. They were finishing their fourth year of studies at the University of Illinois and were hoping to work in New York City after graduation.

At the end of the cruise we docked at the port in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at about 7 AM on Sunday, 27 March, Resurrection Day on the church calendar. We took a taxi back to Trinity Lutheran Church. We had snacks before the 10 AM worship service, then lunch there afterwards. The pastor's wife and daughter took us to the airport for the 3 PM flight home.



Pastor Carlson giving the sermon talk at Trinity Lutheran Church on Resurrection Sunday.

We were among the last people on the Southwest Airline plane because we could not officially check in 24 hours earlier to get our boarding sequence numbers. We were on ship then without Internet access. Even so, I was able to get a remaining window seat. I had good conversations with a family from Monument, Colorado. They mentioned discussing that morning the thirty coins given to Judas to betray Jesus. I surprised them by letting them handle the two real examples of such coins from my exhibit, each about 2000 years old.

Maren gave us a ride home from the airport shuttle terminal in Arvada. We were surprised to see large branches fallen in our front yard, caused by the weight of snow from the mid-week storm. A smaller branch was down in our back yard. The snow also crushed part of the cage erected over our vegetable garden, and our cat's playground. It took more than a week to clean up our yards and repair the cage. - Ed Holroyd, 4 April 2016



Two large branches down in our front yard



A smaller branch down in back yard; bird feeder right



Snow collapsed the rear wire mesh roof.



10 foot wide, 40 foot long, roof collapse on right