

SAINT ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

June 2010

Dear Friends,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I write this newsletter we have had 2 Sundays in our new space and I am exceedingly thankful for God's goodness to us. Many of you came out to help clean and paint (on 2 separate occasions!) - thank you very much. I think that this new space is going to be just perfect for us, for however long as God is pleased to have us be here. The classrooms are allowing us to do more with our Children's Ministry (please refer to the note on this I sent earlier in the month) and the fellowship space will give us plenty of room to visit with each other following services. We have purchased a sign (a banner) to let people know that we are here and I am thankful to the property manager at Dogwood Acres for permission to put it up in front of the church. Many thanks to Rev. Brown and the lay leadership of Dogwood Acres Presbyterian Church for their kind reception of us.

Planting a new church is not an easy calling. Our modest size means that all of us have a greater load to carry, whether it be helping with the children, "volunteering" to bring refreshments or helping to clean up after a potluck supper. Every act of service that any of us does is valuable, especially if it is offered in love and service to God.

But serving others is often a challenge. We are inclined to want to *be served* rather than to be a servant. We want to serve on our own terms, in keeping with our own rules. We want to serve in such a way that we remain in control of our own lives. It's not that we don't want to be of service to God and man, it is just that we would rather be servants who are self employed - working for ourselves and answering to ourselves. But the service to which God calls us entails submitting to Him and trusting Him to tell us what to do. We are *His* servants, after all.

Offering service to God is a part of our discipleship, it is a part of learning to follow Jesus. We would do well to remember the example and instruction of our Lord, who came among us as one who served, saying: "*But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*" (Matthew 20:26-28). Jesus was a servant in a very practical and physical way - laying down His life in obedience to the Father, in atonement for sin.

At times we will struggle to find joy in our service - perhaps we feel under-appreciated or that our efforts are yielding little or no fruit and so we should just give up. At such times we must be on our guard against pride, which will tempt us to think that the *purpose* of our service is to be appreciated or to produce some desired end. When in their proper place, being appreciated by others or desiring to see fruitfulness from our efforts are not necessarily bad desires, but we must not forget that the service that we offer to God is not for us, it is for Him. What matters is whether He is pleased, not whether we get what we want as a result of our service.

The service to which we are called entails looking outside of ourselves, to those who are not yet a part of Christ's fellowship. Last week Katherine Fitzpatrick (Stuart & Kay's daughter) designed an advertisement for us, the first line of which reads: "Everybody Has a Mission." That is not only a nice slogan, but it has the added benefit of being true. Each of us has a mission and that mission has been given to us by Jesus. We are to be those who are "*proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light*" (1 Peter 2:9b). Let us pray for each other, not only that we embrace this mission but also that we do so with humility and charity, seeking to serve God by serving others.



Beginning on June 6th, you will notice 2 changes to our weekly services. *The first change* is that instead of celebrating Holy Communion each week, we will be saying Evening Prayer on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. My plan is that we give this a try during the summer (with the possibility of extending it into the Fall) but then return to weekly Holy Communion in time for Advent (if not before).

This adjustment to our schedule will allow us to become acquainted (or reacquainted) with saying Evening Prayer. Morning and Evening Prayer (as found in *The Book of Common Prayer*) are meant to be said by the parish priest every day in the church, the idea being that the people would begin and end their days together in prayer and the reading of Scripture. The pattern of daily prayer reminds us that we are called to worship God everyday (not just Sundays). The daily offices in the BCP (Morning and Evening Prayer and/or their shortened counterparts at the back of the prayer book, called "Family Prayers") provide both a practical shape and a theological content for our prayers.

Whether you call it “quiet time,” “daily devotions,” or your “daily office” (or something else) - I encourage each of you to make use of some form of daily prayer and Scripture reading. If you know me at all you will not be surprised that I recommend that you make use of those offices found in the BCP. But whether you use the BCP or some other aid, the most important thing is that each of us practices a discipline of prayer and Scripture reading (with quiet and reflection). Just as our physical bodies will grow sick and weak without good nutrition, our spiritual lives will suffer without this spiritual nourishment.

If this is not already a part of your daily life, you will probably find that at first it is difficult to get into the habit. You will likely discover that you encounter numerous temptations and distractions when you begin your prayers. The object of these temptations is to draw you away from your prayers and distract you such that you go through the motions without thinking about what you are doing. Perhaps you begin to think about all the things that you need to do or all of a sudden you really need to eat another bagel or perhaps you are simply distracted by the prayers themselves (which is to be expected until they are either memorized or very familiar to you). If this (or some variant of it) is your experience, try not to be overly discouraged. These spiritual disciplines do not come naturally to us, and so we will need to work at developing them over a period of time.

The second change is that on the first Sunday in June I will begin a sermon series on the New Testament book of Ephesians (the sermon series will end when Advent begins in late November). I hope that our time together in this book, which has been called “the queen of the Pauline epistles,” will be rich and profitable for us as a church.

What should you expect from Ephesians? The following quote from John Stott (an evangelical priest of the Church of England) does a good job at describing some of the main themes of Ephesians: “. . . we need constantly to return to the Scriptures in which alone the normative standard of the gospel is to be found. Measured by this standard, it has to be admitted that many of our formulations of the good news are defective. One of our chief evangelical blind spots has been to overlook the central importance of the church. We tend to proclaim individual salvation without moving on to the saved community. We emphasize that Christ died for us ‘to redeem us from all iniquity’ rather than ‘to purify for himself a people of his own’ (Titus 2:14). We think of ourselves more as ‘Christians’ than as ‘churchmen,’ and our message is more good news of a new life than of a new society.

Nobody can emerge from a careful reading of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians with a privatized gospel. For Ephesians is the gospel of the Church. It sets forth God’s eternal purpose to create through Jesus Christ a new society which stands out in bright relief against the sombre background of the old world. For God’s new society is characterized by life in place of death, by unity and reconciliation in place of divisions and alienation, by the wholesome standards of righteousness in place of the corruption of wickedness, by love and peace in place of hatred and strife, and by unremitting conflict with evil in place of flabby compromise with it.

. . . the realities of lovelessness and sin in so many contemporary churches are enough to make one weep, for they dishonour Christ, contradict the nature of the church, and deprive the Christian witness of integrity. Yet increasing numbers of church members are seeking the church’s radical renewal. For the sake of the glory of God and the evangelization of the world, nothing is more important than that the church should be, and should be seen to be, God’s new society. Towards the fulfillment of this vision Ephesians gives us a strong and steady stimulus.”

NEWS & NOTES

- ***As We Forgive*** movie screening - The Sunset Theatre, June 11th at 7pm. Please: **Pray** for this event, **Invite** your friends & **Volunteer** to help. More details are available on the church’s website.

- **Community Group.** Our Community Group continues to meet each Wednesday (6-8pm). We are discussing C. S. Lewis’ book *The Screwtape Letters*. All are welcome to attend. Childcare provided.

- **Church Picnic.** Mark your calendars and please plan to join us on June 27th for a church picnic/BBQ, following the service.

- **Missions Trip.** Ben Peddycord is planning to spend 6 months in Ireland, beginning in July. Ben will be serving with a Christian mission and he is seeking to raise financial support for his trip. Please speak with Ben for more details.

In Christ,
