

Church of the Mediator
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The Mediorite

Rector's Ramblings:



It is time for me to preach a sermon on 'the bus'.

You know that we've bought a bus.

You know that we're raising funds to make the payments on the bus.

The Vestry and I have done our best to keep the congregation informed each time we've taken a step in this process.

Some folks are excited about this venture. Others are anxious. Still others are thinking "How can we afford a bus with gas prices like they are?" The Vestry struggles currently with the decrease in summer income due to members being away and we still face expenses that must be paid.

I have run the gamut of emotions as well. At times I've been elated. At times I've been anxious. I've asked myself the same questions about the wisdom of buying a bus with gas prices going up and up. At such times I have to remind myself as to the WHY of the bus.

The 'why' lies in the story of Abraham as he, at age seventy five, took his wife and everything he possessed and left his home at God's command. God brought him to a new land and he and Sarah and their descendants prospered and multiplied. The 'why' also lies in Paul's understanding of Abraham's faith as written in the book of Romans:

"He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he drew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised."

The 'why' lies in today's gospel when a tax collector accepted Jesus' invitation to 'follow me' and risked humiliation for moving out of his 'station' and tainted others by his sin.

The leader of the synagogue risked rejection by his fellow leaders when he begged Jesus to heal his daughter. And the woman with a hemorrhage risked being put to death for the taboo of touching Jesus so that she might be healed; for she was considered 'unclean.' Each person had to move out of his or her 'comfort zone' to receive the gifts God offered.

Abraham became the 'father of many nations.' Paul became an Apostle, a Saint and established the Christian church. The tax collector and the woman who touched Jesus' cloak were instrumental in bridging the barrier between those considered clean from those who were considered unclean...and the woman was healed. The leader in the synagogue had his daughter restored to him because of his faith.

Each stepped out of their comfort zones and were blessed by God.

At the Mediator, we are called both individually and corporately to move out of our 'comfort zones' and step out on faith. (Over)

Historically, this church has moved, been closed, re-opened moved again, built a church, built a Parish Hall, built an Educational Building, accepted the gift of a house and committed to the renovation of another house. We continue to paint, repair, hire staff, develop new programs, project plans for the future and care for one another in good times and in bad.

We have stepped out on faith and been blessed with good things.

In the next few years, we will take even bigger steps in discerning God's will and following God's call.

In one of our vestry meetings, the following story was shared from the little publication *Vestry Papers* in which vestry's share their deliberations as leaders in their churches.

One Parish reported that 'Roy' would sit at vestry meetings and listen to all the plans and dreams and proposals presented. Then he would ask searching questions. After he was satisfied, he would always say the same thing, "Why not, if it is for Christ and his kingdom?" Roy shared with them and with us, the longing to invest in things that matter, and to have the parish in which he served be successful. His hope was to insure that when he stepped aside, the congregation would exist stronger and more faithful for the next generation. No easy task in today's environment.

In essence, Roy had a 'discerning' heart; if the parish is doing this for Christ, WHY NOT!

Discernment means that every member of the vestry comes together for his/her own purpose, but for the well-being of the larger community, putting it first in both vision and decision.

Discernment also means PRAYER.

I can assure you that your Vestry listened to all the data, asked probing questions and prayed.

We envision all the wonderful things that we can do FOR CHRIST SAKE.

They include: making the Mediator more visible to the surrounding community, enhancing our children and youth programs, extending our outreach to those in need in Meridian and Lauderdale county, caring for our aging and physically limited members, to name but a few.

Finally, the 'why' is based on our theological understanding of Christ's charge to us to "Go...and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-21)

This is why we bought the bus. This is why we are excited about the bus. This is why we stepped out on faith once again.

This is why like Roy we ask, "If it is for Christ and his kingdom and God is a part of it, WHY NOT?"

My brothers and sisters, God has charged us to go into all the world and spread the gospel. Many of us will be riding in the Mediator bus to do just that.

Please climb aboard.

Why buy a bus? Why not if it is for Christ's sake!

Amen.



This sermon was preached on June 8, 2008.

We welcomed 'Newcomers' with a gathering at Helen and Charles' home on Thursday night. ***Thanks to Ben Box, Jr. and Judy VanVeckhoven for the food and Cindy Aucoin for the flowers.***

New to the Mediator are: Scott, Susan, & Lauren Kirchhefer, Pablo, Wendy & Boris Wofford, Patricia Kahrs, Mark Porter, Jenny Ramos, Chris Mission, Bonnie Brown, Marguerite Bass and Rick & Cheryl Barry.

*If you are new to the Parish please contact Helen Tester for information.
Inquirers' Classes will begin in July for those who want to learn more about the
Episcopal Church.*