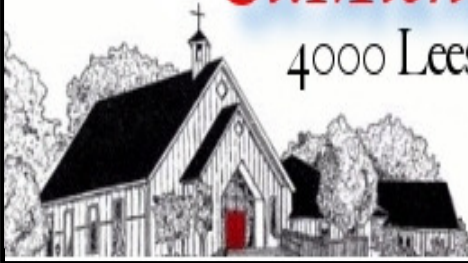


St. Michael's Episcopal Church

4000 Lees Summit Rd, Independence, MO

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November 2009

A monthly newsletter of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Independence, MO

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VICAR'S REFLECTION

Vicar's Reflection

The weather has turned cold and so last week I tried to change my front storm door from the summertime screen back to the heavy double insulated glass panel; and it was difficult and frustrating. I had never changed the glass to screen before so I had carefully labeled the glass door when I took it out to make sure I could put it back correctly and easily or so I thought! However, when I tried to put the full length glass panel back into the slots, I just could not get it lined up correctly. One side was too far from the edge and the other was too close. I took it out and repositioned it over and over again without success. Finally, I just had to admit that I could not do it and I called a friend who had more experience with storm doors and in a matter of seconds, the glass panel was in the correct slots and the door was installed. What a relief. But the point of this story is that although I had all the knowledge that I needed to do the work, I did not have the experience of having done it.

Perhaps you are wondering what a storm door has to do with anything you might be interested in. Well, in our liturgical faith tradition, we believe that it takes knowledge and experience for our life as disciples. If we just have knowledge, we may end up not being able to do the work because we lack experience; and we can't just have the experiences because then we won't have the knowledge to interpret what we have experienced. Liturgical worship assumes that our bodies learn just like our minds learn. It is not enough to simply collect facts about God; we have to physically do the work of worship to fully engage in offering praise to God.

Something happens in our brains and hearts when we bow, stand, kneel, sing and link together as a community of faith. Colors, smells, and even the arrangement of the furniture delivers information to us in different ways which help communicate new learning and new experiences.

Liturgy means the work of the people. Liturgy is what we do every time we gather for worship and it is not meant to simply express who we are, but it is also meant to change and transform us. We are changed because we not only hear the words and think thoughts about God, but the movement of our bodies imprints within us the mystery of God's holiness and presence. For example, kneeling for prayer or confession often brings to mind unconscious thoughts and feelings simply by the very act of bowing down before God. Just like words of a song are often more powerful when set to music, so too our worship transforms us when we engage with both our bodies and our minds.

Just like my learning to install a storm door took both knowledge and experience, so too our Christian journey requires us to use our minds and our bodies to learn, struggle, explore and grow into the likeness and image of the One we follow, Jesus Christ. May God continue to give you work to do which invites both wisdom and experiences of God's presence so that you may grow in the knowledge and love of God. Mo Pat+

From the Deacon

Duty to God

Duty may seem a strange word to many among us. Duty is defined as conduct owed to one's parents, older people, etc.; behavior showing a proper regard or sense of obligation; obedience; respect. In The Book of Common Prayer, we have in the catechism the question, "What is our duty to God?"

Answer: Our duty is to believe and trust in God;

- I. To love and obey God and bring others to know him;
- II. To put nothing in the place of God;
- III. To show God respect in thought, word, and deed;
- IV. And to set aside regular times for worship, prayer, and the study of God's ways.

If we do then hold to a belief in God, and are a follower of Jesus Christ, then this call to duty is for us. Duty may be seen by some as relating mainly to those in military service, but actually, our baptism qualifies each of us for "active duty" to serve God.

So what shall we do? To love God means to be committed to God, and that leads us to being obedient to God. We have to cultivate a relationship to know about a person, and what that person likes, hopes for, or desires from us. The same is true for God. God desires to hear from us as often as we make ourselves available to speak to God. So it is good to make it a habit to talk to God daily, not just asking for this or that, but thanking God, and giving God praise. It is difficult to lead others to God if we can't tell them what God means to us personally. People are observant, and they pick up from our demeanor if God is a vital part of our life. It is almost certain that when you love and obey God it leads you to others that wish to know God. Many of you know it to be true in your lives, you can't escape from God: Some of you may be trying to avoid God, like a modern day Jonah. Let me say, you won't find peace until you submit in obedience to God.

We are called to put nothing in the place of God. When God is first, everything else falls into place. It is amazing that when God is first there is more time for family, and for getting the important things done in life. Priorities are important, and God should be first in our lives.

We show respect to God by the way we live, by being honest and to respect others, and we are to respect this earth, our island home. These are all ways we show our obedience to God.

We are called to have regular times daily to relate to God in prayer, and worship, and then going weekly to worship in community. We meet also to encourage each other in doing God's work in the world. Some neglect God, and at times make poor life choices. It's time to renew a relationship with God that has been neglected. God always has arms open wide waiting to embrace hurting, wandering children. May we all grow closer to our loving Creator. God's Peace, Deacon Larry

BISHOP'S VISIT

NOVEMBER 15

Bishop Howe will visit St. Michael's on Sunday, November 15.
There will be a brunch between services at 9:00 a.m.

NOVEMBER FEAST DAYS

November 30 St. Andrew the Apostle 6:30 p.m.

FAMILY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Crawford 11/12
Christine Fogarty 11/13
Davina Trowbridge 11/29
Arron Trowbridge 11/30

ANNIVERSARIES

Joe & Peggy Chmelicek 11/7
David & Sandra Dougherty 11/26

BAPTISMS

Larry Allen 11/1
Teri Adams 11/24
Joshua Kilpatrick 11/24
Kelly Kilpatrick 11/24
Tyler Wilds 11/28
Ellen Fuller 11/30
Emma Fuller 11/30