



Is it ok to laugh in church?

As a child growing-up in the Lutheran faith, there were several things that one did not do during a church service. I was taught not to applaud, talk back to the pastor, crawl under the pews (I grew out of that one), and laugh. As a seminarian, I attended a church in Washington, DC while working in the inner-city. That church failed the Lutheran church behavior test, and what's more, they seem quite proud of their failure. People applauded even during the sermon, children were both seen, heard, cherished and enjoyed, sometimes people did banter a little with the priest and people laughed, oh how they laughed.

Laughter is a gift from God, and I am told that humans are the only species that laughs, although I am pretty sure my dog snickers from time-to-time. If you have never watched the movie "Patch Adams" I encourage you to find it and watch it. Adams, starring Robin Williams, is based on the life of Dr. Hunter Doherty Adams a physician and clown who strongly believed in the power of humor to heal.

Some may question my quirky way of preaching and my unusual pastoral care approach, and I accept that with respect. I do think that, for the most part, people take life too seriously and enjoying the moments when we humans are particularly human can lead to the best moments in any day. Funny things happen during church services, weddings and amazingly enough even funerals. Laughter should never overtake the solemnity of the liturgy by any means. When we laugh, good things happen, and we become aware that the good people around us are laughing too.

A dear friend was a fine lector, but occasionally he had the ability to turn a phrase in ways that were both unexpected and hilarious. Once he invited the congregation to pray for the hungry and the homeless except, he did not say homeless, he said homely which changed the prayer quite a bit. On another occasion he was concerned with reading a long list of the names of ancient kings and kingdoms, so he paraphrased "you see there was this king and a bunch of his friends and then there was this other kind and a bunch of his friends." From that beginning he went on with the lesson without a any change in meaning.

I do not recommend that kind of thing, but I do believe that a good laugh can bring happiness, joy, and maybe brighten-up even the darkest day.

Don+

From the Senior Warden.....

My favorite season is Easter but Autumn is definitely second. I know Easter is not really a season in the secular world, but for me, learning of the resurrection of Christ, and the gift of everlasting life, makes the beginning of new leaves, and bulbs blooming, more meaningful.

Experiencing the in gathering of squash, pumpkins, and apples, helps remind me that without God, the magic of a tiny seed watered by rain, and encouraged to grow by the sun, would not be possible. How easy it is for us to think we are the ones providing the nurturing of these seeds. If we truly believe we have been granted all that we have from God, we will use this autumn to be thankful for all the food we have to eat, and the ability of St Paul's to provide meals, clothing, and shelter for others, through the Tuesday lunch, Crossover, and Family Promise. We will seek new ways to become more involved in our community, and to learn to share our relationship with Jesus.

Over the past several months we have prayed that God would send us an interim priest to guide us in the process of a permanent rector. We are grateful, and excited to have Father Don Davidson as our new interim. Just like the changing colors of the trees, we can experience the burst of bright red, gold, and yellow, of leaves being transformed. The leaves begin to fall not to cause the tree to die, but rather to experience the wonder of new life. The tree will go into a time of preparation and anticipation for the future. May we follow the example of the mighty oak and be changed to meet what God has planned for St Paul's future.

For His Sake, Barbara Mannor Senior Warden

2 Corinthians 5:17

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

#####

Blessing of the Animals

This Sunday, October 3, 2021 @ 9AM

Join us Sunday morning with your furry, feathered, or finned friends as we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis and the Blessing of the Animals. All are welcome! (But pets should be appropriately leashed or crated).

#####

Artwalk, Friday October 8, from 6-8:30 p.m.

Youth Arts: Unlocked - Juveniles in Detention brings artists and art workshops to justice involved youth in Flint-Genesee County. The goal is to introduce artistic concepts and techniques as a means of connecting, expressing, learning, and discovery. Workshops are offered in the visual arts, spoken word poetry, theatre, dance, and yoga.

HerStory:Unlocked, addresses the unmet needs of incarcerated girls.

Workshops take place inside the Genesee County Juvenile Justice Center (GCJJC), and at the Learning Co-op in Flint. Each year the artwork created in the workshops are displayed to the public through exhibits ,books, and videos available on the website. Music for the October Artwalk will be provided by Justin Scanlon, Guitarist. Justin has provided music for several years for the community. He is an accomplished classical and jazz musician.

Audrey Stephens

From the Music Desk.....

“Offertory” written by John Ness Beck is a song with the text taken from Micah 6:6-8. The last time I played it for a choir was at the funeral of my mentor and friend, with Sheryl Kennedy conducting. New Century Chorale pulled it out to sing for this upcoming concert in October and it was a remembrance of losing a dear friend. The words are so appropriate for our current focus on perfect gifts.

*With what shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
Shall I come before Him with yearling calves?*

*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
With ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

*He has shown you, O man,
He has shown you what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice and to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

I am so thankful we no longer give God burnt offerings or our first-born children, what a relief! Jesus paid it all! (Which of course is another song).

As we all ponder what our giving this year should be, and we also ponder where in the church we should be using our time and talents, it is with joy we reach out to others with kindness. To walk humbly beside each other as we work to further God’s work here in Flint, continually seeking justice and what the Lord requires of all of us, to seek out what is good.

https://youtu.be/efnlQ_ooDM

Holly Richardson, Director of Music

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY UPDATE.....

The St. Paul's Stewardship Ministry continues to meet monthly, grateful for the generous acts of giving and the many gifts that our parish has received. This time of year, our work includes planning and implementation of the annual pledge campaign.

In just a few weeks, you'll be receiving your 2021 Pledge Packet and pledge card. You might recognize the images and scripture reference above, as it has appeared on your bulletin inserts and Prayers of the People handouts for the past few Sundays. "Every Perfect Gift", taken from this reading, is the theme we've adopted from publications by The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) this year.

"Every generous act of giving," says the reading from James, " with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights". James 1:17

This verse, James 1:17, describes both gifts and giving as originating in God, and it is that vision that informs the work and thinking of the ministry of stewardship here at St. Paul's.

Our Stewardship Ministry continues to meet monthly. Our meetings open with prayer, when we pray for each of the ministries of St Paul's by name, and recall how we see God's gifts at work. We reflect on the following Sunday's gospel reading through the lens of stewardship and pray for the Spirit to guide our ministries in the best way to use our many resources for the building of God's kingdom.

Our focus is on a spirituality of giftedness that includes the possibilities for mission that our building's location and aesthetic and historical value provides. This spirituality of giftedness also includes gratitude for the personal investment of our members, of which time, talent and treasure are the sign.

Please watch your mail, the Parish Facebook page, and the Epistle, for more information about our 2021 pledge campaign. We hope that you'll be able to join us on Sunday October 10, 2021, when we officially kick off this year's pledge process.

Peace,

St. Paul's Stewardship Ministry

#####



Parishioners from St. Paul's enjoyed an afternoon kayaking the Flint River together.

Financial Update.....

In October the budgeting process for 2022 gets underway. Traditionally, the vestry likes to approve the following years' budget in November, which allows the vestry to not meet in December unless something else requires it. The budget is then presented to the congregation at the January Annual Meeting for its approval. However, last year while contending with the pandemic, the vestry cut the budget from about \$700,000 annual to about \$500,000 in order to bring expenditures in line with revenue. This required the vestry to meet several times throughout December.

The vestry approved withdrawing 4% of St. Paul's endowment as revenue for our operating budget, and withdrawing an additional 1% to hold in reserve for capital expenditures for building maintenance. For example, both our air conditioning system and boiler are at end-of-life service and will need to be replaced in the near future. The 4% withdrawal is the norm for many, if not most Episcopal Dioceses, including our own, and is considered good financial management. If an additional withdrawal is needed, it is to be taken in the form of a loan and repaid. Staying with 4% withdrawal is a challenge for St. Paul's because in the past up to 10% was being withdrawn based on what we wanted to spend and not on what our revenue would support. This method is neither sustainable nor good financial management. While we are now on a sustainable path, we are still adjusting. Budget cuts are tough to do and tough to sustain.

Our pledges, which are critical, supply about 35% of our annual operating budget of around \$500,000. When only 35% of a budget is covered by pledges, the Episcopal Church considers it an "unhealthy" state. The rule of thumb is to have pledges cover 75% of an operating budget. St. Paul's goal is to grow in our pledge income and to grow in our membership. In the meantime, we are indeed fortunate to have the endowment income given by past parishioners for our benefit.

We receive revenue designated for Episcopal Outreach from the Barth Missionary Trust. This is a "third party" trust, meaning that it is controlled by an outside Trustee, in this case a Bank, and St. Paul's receives the distribution according to the terms of the Trust. The Trustee has informed St. Paul's that it will receive an additional amount this coming year of approximately \$20,000 (this is in addition to the approximately \$70,000 we normally receive every year). We will be exploring ways to use these additional Outreach Funds and stay within the requirements of the Trust, i.e. that it be used for outreach in Genesee County and that it re-enforce the teaching of the Episcopal church. If you have ideas, please contact Barbara Mannor, who is both our Senior Warden and the chair of the Outreach Committee. If you would like to join our Outreach Committee, also contact Barbara. (mannonrb@aol.com or 810-513-8089) You can also contact Maggie Hart at maggiehart39@gmail.com or 201-563-9463.

It is wonderful to report that nearly all pledges are paid up to date as of August 31, 2021. Thank you! Here is a snapshot of our finances at August 31, 2021:

		YTD as of <u>8/31/2021</u>	2021 <u>Budget</u>	YTD as % <u>Budget</u>
Revenue	Pledges	\$140,577	\$180,000	78%
	<u>Other Inc</u>	<u>143,713</u>	<u>306,056</u>	<u>47%</u>
	Total Revenue	284,290	486,056	55%
Expenses	Service/Outreach	51,850	114,272	45%
	Personnel	148,076	266,287	56%
	Worship/Education	2,066	3,300	63%
	Building/Grounds	80,431	115,500	70%
	<u>Other/Admin</u>	<u>8,001</u>	<u>2,850</u>	<u>60%</u>
	Total Expenses	290,424	512,209	57%
YTD Results	Revenue/(loss)	(6,134)	(26,153)	

Upcoming Celebrations.....

October

Anniversaries

Jerrord & Vernice Roberts	11
Mike & Debbie Bommarito	14
Lawrence & Norma Struck	16
Walt & Edythe Peake	27

Birthdays

The Rev. Don Davidson	1
Sean DeGeorge	2
Tom Shriver	2
The Rev. Dcn. Donna Kusky	4
Ferrell Katzenberger	8
Genevieve Oertel	10
Norma Struck	11
Evan Karr	13
Dr. Sean Tahaney	13
Michael Kennedy	16
Elizabeth Barnhart	25
Jo Miska	26
Judith Stoerman	28
Zack Bailey	29

November

Anniversaries

Edward and Connie Fellers	14
---------------------------	----

Birthdays

Ernest Emenyonu	1
William Sprague	1
Mike Bommarito	3
Maggie Hart	4
Ted Mannor	4
Linda Lemieux	14
Laura Meyer	14
Walter Peake	14
Minette Rollins	20
Craig Leavitt	21
Ed Walthers	30

