

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.... Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way... 1 Cor. 13:1; 4

Dear people of St. Philip's

Paul's writes to Gentile Christians in Corinth, Greece, as they have been bungling their way into being a faithful community in the Way of Jesus Christ; or founding the "Jesus Movement" as our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calls it. Early church leaders, bishops, priests, deacons and strong lay leaders, circulated Paul's letter as a guide to others forming communities of Christian faith, and eventually this letter was included in the Canon of the Church, some 200+ years after it was written. It would be good if the Body of Christ as it is represented in the institutional church would heed the call of Paul to keep LOVE at the center of all we do if we are to call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ.

One of the ways we can show love at the center of all we do here at St. Philip's Episcopal Church is to BE PRESENT. Simply showing up to worship and fellowship, to offer the spark of Christ's light which shines through your being, is one of the most basic and important expressions of God's love any of us can offer. Even when we don't necessarily agree on everything, showing up is something we can do to be part of God's conversation, to help live in to what Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calls "God's dream for us."

Bishop Curry's book CRAZY CHRISTIANS has been inspiring our Theology Book Group this month, especially in light of the fact the Anglican Communion is going through a time of discernment regarding **who** represents the Body of Christ with an Anglican expression--something The Episcopal Church has done for 230 years. Bishop Michael's very existence is based on the premise that "showing up" matters; remaining present as one part of the Body of Christ adds to the fulfillment of the whole body.

Curry recounts his family's story of his mother having a brain aneurysm and falling into a deep coma. She was eventually moved to a nursing home. His father and grandmother saw the importance of having the family remain together as one body for as long as his mother lived. He writes that the family spent part of every evening at the nursing home with his mommy, doing homework, watching TV, praying and just generally "being family together." He writes that this taught him significant messages of life: that "life can be tough. It's not always easy. But a life lived in the context of God can be a life triumphant, even when you're up against significant odds." (Curry, ch. 2) Bishop Curry learned as a young boy that each life was "part of something greater than just oneself", and showing up to participate with others who seek "something greater than themselves" results in the fullness of Christ's presence in the world. Love that is patient and kind, love that does not insist upon its own way, is a participatory love of mutuality. It is God's love in Jesus Christ.

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