



St. Andrew's Tidings

Message from Margaret:

One of my favorite authors in the area of church development, Peter Steinke, offers the following:

The well-known story of the elephant and the blind men has several versions. One version goes like this: a group of blind men touch an elephant to learn what it is like. Each one, though, touches a different part of the animal, and, based on that part, infer a larger truth about what the entire elephant must be like. In one account, the

elephant is like a wicker basket to the one who touched the ear, a pot to the blind man who touched the head, and a brush to the one who touched the tip of the tail. When they compare their experiences, they discover their disagreement. Each one has his own view of reality, depending upon where he touched the elephant.

Someone once said that truth is like an elephant surrounded by blind men.

Picking up on this story, Edwin Friedman states, "I touch the elephant wherever the elephant appears." [1] His remark is based on the idea that the enormity of the elephant precludes anyone comprehending the whole. One can only observe what is there in front of him or her. In life, Friedman is suggesting, prodigious complexity can be understood only from the perspective of what is at hand. The elephant is too monstrous to handle in its entirety.

Let's probe the elephant-touch dilemma as it affects the life of today's church: If we think of the elephant as representing the congregation's mission, do all touches have the same value? Is there a place we all must touch? Finally, can we touch the mission in different places, disagree, and still work together?

Applying the elephant rule to life, one cannot deal with everything; therefore, one must work with what is at hand or known. The same rule applies to the church. Touch whatever aspect of mission is within reach. No congregation has to cover every part of the elephant. Even a congregation that has created and sustained a deep sense of mission has to work within a limited scope. Leaders and members need to humbly recognize they are not God's only agent of renewal in the neighborhood. Every congregation in town is on the contributors' list. Alongside churches are other donors. Resources are not evenly distributed among congregations; some congregations have more "outputs" than others. If a congregation thinks its outputs are secondary or paltry compared to others, it needs to remember the widow's mite. Her contribution affirms that proportion can be as important as total amount. Besides, the immense, widespread human needs that summon our attention and gifts can overwhelm us. A small church may feel that

their personal and financial offerings are inconsequential. Some people may conclude that the part of the mission they have touched is the responsibility of another institution. A congregation may limit itself to its own kind. Worse yet, people may indicate that mission is none of their concern: There is no elephant in the room.

Yet all congregations need to touch *tikkun olam*, a Jewish concept that means “to mend the world.” It epitomizes God’s work. Theologian and poet Howard Thurman set the mending motif into a memorable frame, with the birth of Jesus as background:

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins,
 To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
 To make music in the heart.[2]

All the movements of angels, kings, and shepherds foreshadow the “work of Christmas,” the mending of the world.

N. T. Wright elaborates: “What you do in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbor as yourself—*will last into God’s future.*”[3] Whatever we do to mend the world has lasting value. Everyone contributes. God blesses each and every gift.

One of the ways we will try to live in to *tikkun olam* is to institute a contemporary service this fall outside on the lawn called Worship Without Walls. It will be on Sunday evening and will incorporate cursillo music, and a more active and participatory kind of worship. If you would like to be part of the process, please speak with me.

1. Edwin Friedman (lecture, postgraduate seminar on family emotional process, Bethesda, Maryland, 1993).

2. Howard Thurman, “The Work of Christmas,” in *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1985), 23. Used by permission of the publisher.

3. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 193.

Paddle & Pray

WHEN: October 11th, 2013, 5:00PM to 7:30PM

WHO: Everyone & especially waterborne worshippers!!

FISH FRY

EVERYONE BRING LAWN CHAIRS & POTLUCK SIDES

WHAT: Kayaks, canoes or your own 'paddle driven vessel'. Low rental kayaks and canoes are available, sign-up on the sheet.

\$15 RENTAL OF KAYAK OR CANOE

\$5 FOR THOSE NOT PADDLING TO COVER THE FISH FRY

SIGN UP ON BULLETIN BOARD IN BYRNE HALL

WHERE: Carl Gray Park, at the foot of the Hathaway Bridge, on the Bay, behind Gulf Coast State College

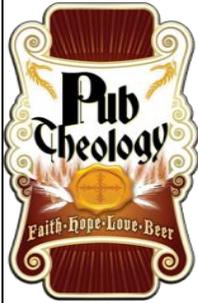
EVENTS:

5:00PM gathering, safety briefing & paddle checks

5:15PM Blessing of the Flotilla

6:00PM (Or there about) Holy Eucharist at the Beach
@Sunset

*Pub
Theology
Tomorrow
Night
6 p.m.
"The Place"
on
Harrison*



*Bring a
Bible-no
experience
necessary!*

*BAY LIGHTS AT BECKWITH IS COMING NOVEMBER 1-3
ST. ANDREW'S IS A SPONSOR. LET'S HAVE A BIG
GROUP TO ATTEND!! This is an incredible weekend to
spend as a diocese, eating, drinking, and having fun, as
well as a time to worship together. There will be
activities for all ages, booths with food, a fish fry, a
barbecue etc. If you would like to help with our donation
to the silent auction, please contact the office. Last year
we had an incredible basket.*

**September Centennial Challenge: Penny Scavenger Hunt
and St. Andrew's Timeline 1914-2013**



Please take time to notice the St. Andrew's Centennial Timeline on the wall behind the piano in Byrne Hall. Parishioners are asked to write a brief description of meaningful experiences they've had at St. Andrew's (baptisms, weddings, funerals, Cursillo, etc.) on a sticky note (one for each experience). Remember to also include the year the event occurred. Use a small piece of tape to secure the note above or below the penny that represents the year the event occurred.

Book Club Schedule

Tuesday, Sept. 24th 11:30 *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor; Barbara Sontag will lead the discussion at Glenda Dean's home 100 Cherry St. #304

BRING YOUR LUNCH!!

Tuesday, Oct. 22nd 11:30 *Sea Glass* by Anita Shreve; Elaine Ellsworth will lead the discussion at Anne Bruce's home 632 Coquina Dr., Lynn Haven

BRING YOUR LUNCH!!

Tuesday, Nov. 19th 11:30 *Call the Midwife* by Jennifer Worth; Nancy Young will lead the discussion at Barbara Sontag's home 604 Baywood Dr., Lynn Haven

BRING YOUR LUNCH!!

CHAIRS



IN THE CHAPEL IS A CATHEDRAL CHAIR WITH ARMS. THIS IS DESIGNED FOR THOSE NEEDING HELP TO STAND. PLEASE GO OVER IN THE CHAPEL AND TRY IT OUT. THERE IS ALSO ANOTHER CHAIR BEHIND IT. THERE IS A HASSECK UNDERNEATH THE ARM CHAIR. PLEASE TRY THE HASSECK FOR KNEELING.

Please keep the following in your prayers Bev, Martha, Mickey, Emma, Kenzie, Jonathan, Jessica, Lisa, Tina, Con, Niddy, Lora, Nancy, Sandra, Maggie, Kevin, Libby, Russ, Andy, Polly, Frank, Sarah, Jay, Joy, Jane, Colleen, Robbi, Sandra, Lowell, Maggie, Anna, Bob, Faye, Helen, Nancy, Maxine, John, Paul, Kylie, Marilyn, Michael, Maria, Mary, Charlotte, Sue, Evan, Ann, Keith, Jay, Colleen, Joy, Jane, Dee Dee, Donna, John, Maggie, Anna, Frank, Bubba, Robert, Katie, Aubree, Sue, Colleen, Betty, Jimmy, Bubba, Mary Ruth, Lettie, Leslie

We pray for our men and women in the Armed Forces at home and abroad; Jeff, Bowe, James, Andrew, Kenneth, Evan, Ryan, Joe, Nate, Richard, David, Brian, Jason, Billy, Joseph, Colin, Todd, Brett, Jordan