

Rector's Report

2011 Annual Parish Meeting

What then is a community? According to Webster's online dictionary, a community is defined as: a unified body of individuals; people with common interests living in a particular area; and an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location.

What is interesting here is: these definitions are all about individual people living in relationship with other people. Nothing is implied that says everyone believes or agrees on the same thing or that we fully embrace each other's ideas; all that is being said is that we are simply enjoying a relationship with each other as we serve and worship together in a place called the Church of the Incarnation.

Yes, we do hold certain things in common; things that unite us as a community and that is our seeking to do our best for the God we love through the church. In the Nicene Creed we say, "We believe in Jesus Christ." Jesus is the Son of God, he lived as one of us and was fully human and at the same time fully divine. He was born of the Virgin Mary, his mother, and he lived with the people of his hometown and surrounding area. He taught people, the people who would have ears to hear about God's love for them. And, as often happens when one human being points to another's faults, regardless whether he or she was/is right, Jesus was betrayed, tortured, tried, and crucified by people who wanted things to remain as they were. The good news that Jesus died for our sins, past, present and future; who on the third day rose again so that we may have eternal life.

There are indeed many aspects of our day-to-day ministries in which we do not agree, but one thing remains constant; we remain a community of believers bonded together through our love for God and God's Son Jesus Christ. A very important part of our being a member of the Church of the Incarnation is that we remember our reason for being, our call if you will. We are called by God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to love and serve all people. When we fulfill our calling to love and serve all people we will be living in a community that mirrors the Kingdom of Heaven; a community held together by the love of God in our heart, in our minds and with our lips.

This past year, we entered into a mediation process that I hope and pray will help us begin to heal as a community of Christ. I also help that this process will help us move forward so that we can discern the will of God not only in our individual lives, but in the life of the Church of the Incarnation as well.

Each time we reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant we confirm an aspect of God's calling and that is to "Strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every

human being.” As we grow as a community it is imperative we remember; that taking a stand on issues of justice and peace that affect others in a negative way is an important characteristic of what it means to be Christian. By this I mean we should pay attention to issues of justice and peace affecting others in a negative way and to try to affect a change, and while we pay attention to these issues we should not forget a goal that truly is within our ability to fulfill and that goal, that calling is to love and serve all people right here in Great Falls as there are issues of justice and peace right here in our midst. Our call is to be faithful to God, and allow God to work out the details on those issues that are larger than we can ever hope to handle.

In Christ,

Tim+