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The Epistle

September, 2015

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Father Bob's message

During the next few Sundays in September, our lectionary readings will include readings from the Book of James. I would encourage you to read James. It is not a very long book, only five chapters, but while it may be short, I feel that it is relevant to our personal lives as well as our corporate life. But let me first warn you that this book is a bit different. Why? Well for one thing Jesus Christ is only mentioned twice in its five chapters. You probably will also note there is no mention of the cross or baptism or grace. What should become clear is that the author of James has a strong emphasis on works. Indeed for the author of James, a person is justified by works and faith. This sounds like a bit of heresy to many of us who have been brought up believing that we are justified by faith in Christ and not works. How often have we heard Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone? We have been told "a person is saved by grace and not by works lest any person should boast." We have heard these words so often and so persistently that we often come to the false conclusion that works of charitable love are not that important.

This is a conclusion that does not mesh with the witness of the Gospel.

Now, as I have studied the book of James and the context in which it was written, I have come to believe that the author of James is not ignoring faith, but rather was issuing a call to the church of his day and our day that one cannot have faith without the works of faith, which are charitable love. Faith and works in the Christian context are tied totally and completely together, for there cannot be one without the other.

The book of James spoke a message to the Christian community then that needed to be heard. It speaks a message to the Christian Community now that needs to be heard. What do I mean? I would suggest that there was and is always the danger of the Christian community becoming unbalanced. In my life time, I have witnessed the Church go through sweeping cycles, if you will. I grew up in a mainline denomination that proclaimed the social gospel at the expense of faith, if you will. I can remember sitting in church and being told that I should love this person, this group, and so on. Yet to love another, I need to hear of the healing love of Jesus Christ. I needed to hear that I was loved; to feel that love, so that I could love others as God loved me, in and through Jesus Christ. I needed to hear the Gospel before I could live the Gospel. The so-called social gospel was only half the picture and because it was, it failed in spite of the good intentions of those who proclaimed it. In response, the church began to focus on the works of faith, finding its extreme expression in the denomination in what would be called today neo-Pentecostalism. I was involved in that also, looking, seeking that which I did not find in the social gospel of works, but here again, I found that while I was traveling an exciting journey of faith, there was something

missing, for it was all about me, my journey, but Christianity, faith, these were and are not solely about me. The English poet, John Donne, “no man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main... “To be a Christian is not just to be a hearer of the word but a doer...hearing and doing is the mark of the Christian. We are Christ’s not for our own sake but for the sake of God’s creation, for the sake of those who follow Christ, for the sake of those who would follow Christ, and for the sake of those who see no need to follow Christ.

I believe strongly that faith, the faith journey, must always find expression in action as Christ has shown us the way and commanded us to follow. Let us always be not only hearers of the word but doers as well.

God Bless

Fr. Bob

Senior Warden Update

The year is quickly coming to an end. It is almost impossible to get everything that needs to be done fit into the short period of time we seem to have. There are three projects that need to be completed soon. A work day at the church will be scheduled and volunteers will be requested. The projects are as follow:

- Wash the new windows. This should be fairly easy to accomplish from the inside as they tilt out. Both the men and ECW can help with this project.
- Clean out the storage room next to the kitchen in the church hall. Move items to the vicarage for storage and discard junk.

- Wax the wood floors in the church hall and hallway. The chairs and tables will have to be removed prior to waxing and replaced afterwards.

My guess for completing all of this would be less than four hours. By completing all the projects we should be ready for the onset of Advent. Please keep an eye on the bulletin as we should shoot for October to get all this done. It will be a little cooler then and is usually a good time to do a little heavier work.

One project we work on throughout the year is the Fairfield County Food Bank. The basket is located in the church hall and is usually hungry. The Food Bank relies on our contributions and is always very appreciative of them. It would be a real boost to the basket if every family, when attending church, could bring one item with them for the basket. The list of items needed is on the wall above the basket. Small donations by many multiply quickly. This is just a thought.

DID YOU SIGN UP FOR HOSPITALITY SOON?



SEPTEMBER

9/6	Dee Dee Branham
9/13	OPEN
9/20	Patti Earle
9/27	OPEN

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OCTOBER

10/4	OPEN
10/11	Berk/Koenig
10/18	OPEN
10/25	OPEN

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*Please wish the following
people, a Happy Birthday:*

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SEPTEMBER

9/15	George C Langdale
9/15	Samantha Robinson
9/15	Peter Saless
9/21	Tracy Saless
9/26	Gaye Milling
9/30	Berk Palmer

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OCTOBER

10/1	Don Babb
10/3	Jason Branham
10/15	Sieglinde Thomas
10/23	Kayla Branham
10/23	Bob Moore
10/24	John Davis
10/26	David Ford

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