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# The Epistle

October, 2015

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## Father Bob's message

As I write this, the Columbia and the surrounding area is struggling through what has been called a “fire hose” deluge that has not been seen in South Carolina in many, many years. I pray that you, your families and all the folks in our State affected by this flood will be safe and be encouraged by each other during the days ahead as we recover and where necessary rebuild.

I was reading St Paul recently. St Paul it seems to me often reminds us in his letters that you and I are broken. Now he states over and over again that this is not something to be ashamed of but rather to be broken is in fact to be human. He also asserts that to be human is to be loved by God and to be drawn together into relationship with all the others that God loves. Which means that when you and I gather on Sunday mornings our coming together is a community of the broken and yet loved. We gather as those who are hurting but also healed and thus instruments of healing. We gather as those who are lost but have also been found. We gather as those that known their need and seek not simply to have those

needs met but have realized that in helping meet the needs of others our own needs are met in turn.

I would suggest that this is what the church was originally about and must be about today. I think this has been sadly forgotten. The church is not a place or political organization but a living community. It is a community not of the strong, or the wealthy, or the powerful, or the independent. Rather the church, the Christian church, is a community of the broken, of the vulnerable, of those at risk. It is a community of those who need, know that they need and seek to be in relationship with each other because they have learned that by being in honest and open relationship with each other they are in relationship with God. A community of those who came to experience God through the crucified Jesus as the one who met them precisely in their vulnerability, not to make them impervious to harm but rather open to the brokenness and need of those around them.

So you and I are called to live as a community of the broken and yet blessed. It is a message that runs totally contrary to the conventional wisdom about strength and security that is espoused by so many who claim that this is the Christian way. I hear this often and wonder what bible they are reading this Christian who sounds more Old Testament than the voice of the one who is to heard speak to us in the words and pages of the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May be someday these folks will actually read our Lord's words for themselves. For here is life-giving meaning, not only to those of us who know that they are broken but also to those of us who are in denial, who seek relentlessly and foolishly to make it on our own, even if it kills us.

“Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were powerful, not many of you were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

### **Senior Warden Update**

This week has been an eye opener as to how powerful Mother Nature can be. The people of Forest Acres, our close neighbors, and many others throughout the state have fallen victim to the storm of the century. I remember Forest Acres back in 1965 and 66 as one of the most exclusive areas in the Columbia area. Sadly, it will never be the same after the flooding. Many who lived in the area, especially those not on a pond or creek, never thought they would need flood insurance. Those people will have a major uphill battle to recover from the last few days. Many never will. I ask your prayers for those who lived there and for all of the people of the state who will have the same problems. They are, by and large, gentle souls who love life and their neighbors. May God give them the strength to survive this crisis and pull their lives together.

That being said, remember the good fortune we have had to make it through the storms with negligible damages. We are all blessed to have avoided the devastation. I often wonder if anyone really reads the Epistle or pays any attention to the thoughts and/or requests in it. In the last Epistle, I mentioned the project that we have, the Fairfield County Food Bank, which feeds many of the less fortunate within the County. I

thought it would be nice to bring one item for the bank every Sunday we attend church to keep the basket full. Everyone has a different shopping pattern but adding one item for the food basket to your shopping cart each trip would be a major help. Several of the items on our list are under \$2. This is a project that is ongoing, as hunger will always be something that happens.

Many in Columbia never thought they would be on the receiving end of needing disaster assistance. It is amazing how the tables can turn. It was eye opening to listen to a woman who was evacuated from Wildewood to A.C. Flora high school. She was so thankful for the kindness she experienced at the shelter and was thankful for everyone's help. The people we help through the food bank are thankful as well.

Please consider providing one food item per family for the basket when attending services. It will make you feel good to know that you have helped someone less fortunate. If you forget to bring something, I have that problem, bring one or two items the next time you attend. I hope we all believe in this ministry as it is so important.

DID YOU SIGN UP FOR  
HOSPITALITY SOON?



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2 & 72% (5#)

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

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NOVEMBER

11/1	Berk/Koenig
11/8	OPEN
11/15	Beale/Langdale
11/22	Annual Meeting – Covered Dish – separate sign up
11/29	Donna Guess

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

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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NOVEMBER

11/3	Jim McGrew
11/5	Kathleen Harwood
11/11	Cleve Langdale
11/13	Sharon Swofford
11/15	Justin Autry
11/16	Tom Harwood
11/17	Jo Milling
11/30	Jay Branham

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