

Consecration Sunday

November 18, 2018

This morning we conclude our month long stewardship campaign with an appropriate thanksgiving meal. I wish to express special thanks to Steve Wilson for his leadership, along with his team of Debbie Beckman, Joel Harsh, and Liz Karavitus. Throughout the month, we have heard from people what this parish community means to them. Those few voices shared the sentiment of many of us.

A community of faith, flourishes upon the faith of the people. A community of love, grows vibrant from the love of the people. A community of courage, of hope, of healing, of prayer relies upon these attributes being poured forth from the hearts and lives of its people.

When I think of my time in this parish, an endless stream of deeds, prayers, service, meals, hospitality, community engagement, music, art, annual pilgrimage through the life of Jesus, deep conversations at Pilgrims and formation, sharing community with young and old flow through my mind. I have shared communion with saints and commended them into the communion of saints. My life has been irrevocably blessed and directed by the faith, the wisdom, the faithfulness, the love, the support, and the challenges that is the community of Saint Andrew. This place has shined bright and long in the heart of Kokomo for the soul of Kokomo.

Presently, our parish community is in the midst of change. The outside of our building has changed, the front landscape has changed, the office building has changed, the service times have changed, our faces, our age, our community has changed. The world around us has changed. But what hasn't changed is our call to be the Episcopal Church in Kokomo. What hasn't changed is our identity as the Body of Christ offering healing, hope, faith, love, and belonging in our time in this place. What hasn't changed is the long line of saints who have been our models of service, deeds, prayer, hospitality, companionship, and love. What hasn't changed is our call and anointing to be a church that lies in the heart of Kokomo for the soul of Kokomo.

In the midst of all these changes we have opportunities to change. To grow. To be different and realize our ability to do so. We have opportunity to open our hearts and expand our experience to include others amidst the intimate and personal sanctuary of our common worship. We have an opportunity to reconnect with one another, to be enriched by one another, to be a gift to one another – that we may rekindle the light of faith, hope, and love that we have received through our baptism in Christ – to rekindle that flame that has grown dim in the world around us.

Over the past four weeks we have heard and shared the valuable place this Community of Christ is to all of us. As you decide in your heart what you will offer at this altar as a faith offering in thanksgiving to God and in solidarity and support of the community we share at Saint Andrew, I encourage you to practice the spiritual discipline of the faith

offering. Offer in faith and love of God, the one in whom we move and breathe and have our being. Offer to God an offering that reflects a renewed faith and partnership with God's love, God's provision, God's presence in this world, and a renewed commitment to the life and work of the church at St. Andrew.

What you bring to this altar is not a contribution, it is not a gift, it is not a membership fee – it is an offering of faith. Its an act of humble obedience to the ancient wisdom that proclaims, “Bring your offering to the house and altar of God and see God’s hand pour out blessing upon and through your life.” After forty years of believing and practicing the spiritual discipline of tithing, I agree with the Jewish prophet who proclaimed some 2500 years ago. I have seen the hand and provision of God time and time and time and time again.

May God bless you as you find in your own heart a generosity and trust in God's blessings and a love for this church.