

'The Ambassador'

st. paul's
anglican
church

**As Ambassadors for Christ, we are called to
bring our Lord's grace, love, and peace to everyone.**

~ **Friday August 13, 2021** ~

In Memory Of Our Beloved Rev. Charlene



Jason & Tara, Addison, and Meryk Scriver with Charlene's sister Janis Beebe at the ceremony.



Meryk, Addison and Xander Scriver with their Grandmother's Labyrinth Stone.



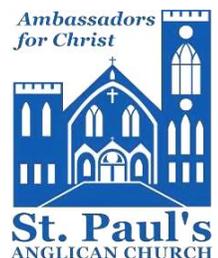
God Bless the late Rev. Charlene Scriver's family, who gathered for a ceremony

dedicating her Labyrinth Stone after church last Sunday August 8. They placed it next to the one Charlene had placed in 2008 in memory of her husband Earnest. The engraving was completed during lockdown, so the dedication was held as soon as we re-opened for worship.

A "GRACE NOTE" from thunderbay-northshoreanglicans.com

"God's mercy is fresh and new every morning."

visit our website @ stpaulsanglicanchurch.ca and find us on facebook



Editor's Note: Time for our Summer Break! This will our last 'Ambassador' until September so we've packed it full of good reading! Enjoy! 😊

1. Rector's Grace Notes ~

ZOOM / Phone-In 9:00 am Morning Prayer Service This Friday & Every Friday ALL SUMMER

I invite you to join me for this 30 min. service. You are then free to leave the call or stay on for a check-in.

Deborah Kraft is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting: ↓ **SAME LINK EVERY WEEK** ↓

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82208698866>

- 📄 **Topic:** Morning Prayer with the Parish
- 📄 **Time:** Every Friday Morning at 9 am
- 📄 **Meeting ID:** 822 0869 8866

OR Dial any one of these numbers ~

- ☎ 1-[204]-272-7920 ☎ 1-[438]-809-7799
- ☎ 1-[587]-328-1099 ☎ Meeting ID: 822 0869 8866

So Good To Be Open For Worship! 😊

It is wonderful to be open for in-person worship once again! We had a great attendance at our first re-opening Sunday last August 8th. **We have 2 weekly Communion services: 8:30 am & 10:00 am.**

The 10:00 am service will continue to be live-streamed (**YouTube / St. Paul's Media**) and all the services will stay on our *YouTube* channel so you can watch them at your convenience!!

Please remember your mask and to socially distance. I am finding that St. Paul parishioners are committed to vaccinations so that is really good news. Jouni and I have both received the 2 shots.

We will have socially distanced **fellowship** outside following the 10:00 am service, with bottled water and juice boxes and cupcakes.

Baptisms ~ *"I Sign You With The Cross And Mark You As Christ's Own Forever."*

I am currently taking requests for baptisms. Please email me directly stpauls.rector@shaw.ca or call/text me on my cell (**807-624-7161**).

Home Communions

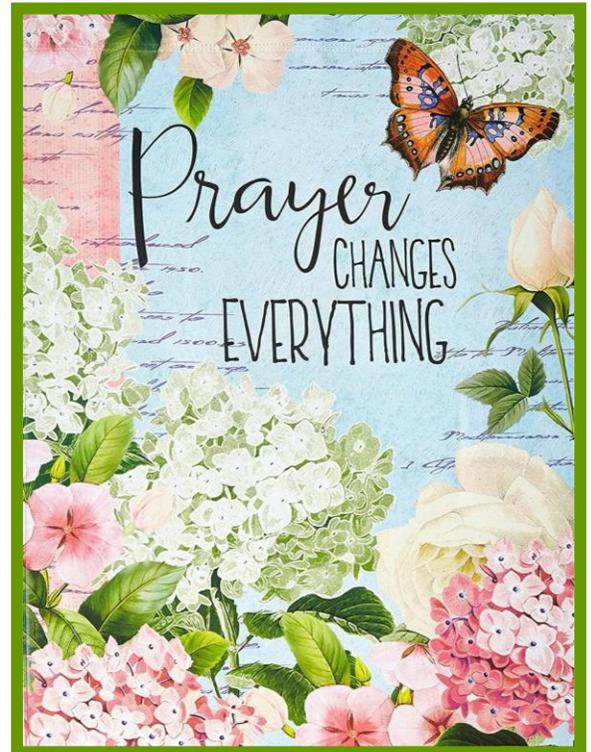
I am happy to be once again able to bring communion to people in their residences. **Please let me know if you wish to receive communion at home.** You may email me (stpauls.rector@shaw.ca) or call/text me (**807-624-7161**) to request a visit.

Candle Lighting

I will be continuing our new tradition of **lighting a candle on the altar on Sunday mornings** for those who have died or for a significant celebration. Please let me know your requests!! You may email me (stpauls.rector@shaw.ca) or call/text me (**807-624-7161**) to request a candle be lit. They do not need to be parishioners! We are all part of God's holy family!!

Who Do You Want Us To Pray For?

Please email me (stpauls.rector@shaw.ca) or text me (**807-624-7161**) your prayer requests and we will pray for you or your loved one by name during the 10:00 am service.





Healing Prayer AVAILABLE VIA OUR 'PARISH PRAYER CHAIN'

The power of prayer to heal and to comfort is truly a blessing! We encourage you to request a Healing Prayer through our **CONFIDENTIAL Prayer Chain ministry**. The dedicated parishioners who undertake this special ministry offer up the names they receive in prayer continually throughout the day. Call/Text **Sandra Rejall at 629-3431** to leave a name; give as little or as much info as you wish. "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them." (James 5: 14)



Good News! We're On TV!

Watch our weekly Sunday 10:00 am service on local TV, every Tuesday at 7:00 pm on **Channel 10, "Shaw Spotlight."** This Sunday's Service will be broadcast **Tuesday August 10 at 7:00 pm**. This free service from Shaw Spotlight is a blessing. Let me know if you have been able to able to enjoy it!



watch live or **ANYTIME**



Our Sunday Service LIVESTREAMS ARE HERE FOR YOU!

We will continue to live-stream both our **10:00 am Eucharist Service** every Sunday. Worship with us on **YouTube / St. Paul's Media** or watch the Sunday service on **Shaw TV Channel 10, Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm**.

Office Closed for **STAFF HOLIDAY**, But **WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!** 😊

Our Parish Administrator Christine French is on holiday until September 7, but I will be in and out of the Office and available to address your questions, requests, or concerns. As I am **often on the phone or attending multiple 'ZOOM' meetings**, please do **leave a message if I can't answer your call!** I faithfully check messages and emails and will keep you updated on any news, and we will continue to bring you the livestreams. You are most welcome to email me (stpauls.lector@shaw.ca) or call me at 622-4945 (office messages) or 624-7161 (Rector's cell).



Archdeacon Deborah+

2. My Sermon from Sunday August 8, 2021, 'Pentecost 11' ~ "Deal Gently"

Speak Lord your servants are listening. Amen.

What a gift it is to see your faces in front of me and also know that people are able to worship with us through the live-stream. This is our first Sunday morning back together with in-person worship in over 8 months. We are a family. We are the body of Christ. We walk together.

Speaking of other kinds of families ~ Comedian George Burns said this: "Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family . . . In another city!"

All families have idiosyncrasies and some have unusual habits. There is a huge difference between traditions that define a family and patterns of behaviour that become dysfunctional.

One of the ultimate dysfunctional families was King David's. And we have an episode from his life that centres on lust, jealousy, power, greed, and murder. It is a complex story that is told throughout several chapters in the Old Testament in the 2nd book of Samuel. It begins with a rape. David had a daughter named Tamar and the Bible tells us that she was beautiful. Tamar had a brother named Absalom who was the third son of David. David's son Amnon, who would be a half-brother to Tamar, lusted after Tamar. He eventually concocts a scheme in order to be alone with her so he can rape her. Once he does this, Amnon's lust instantly vanishes and he loathes his half-sister Tamar.

Tamar hides in her brother Absalom's house.

When David hears about the rape, the Bible tells us that he does nothing because he loves his son Amnon. Perhaps David is also remembering his sin of rape against Bathsheba.

Absalom hates Amnon and waits for an opportunity to avenge the rape of his sister. After 2 years of waiting, Absalom gets his servants to kill Amnon. Absalom then flees from his father David for 3 years. Eventually, David forgives his son for killing his half-brother Amnon. David is remembering his own transgressions and how he arranged for Bathsheba's husband Uriah to be killed in battle.

However, the dysfunction continues. Absalom is power hungry and tries to usurp the throne away from his father. Many of David's allies switch sides and give their loyalty to Absalom. The conflict intensifies and there is battle between David's men and Absalom's men.

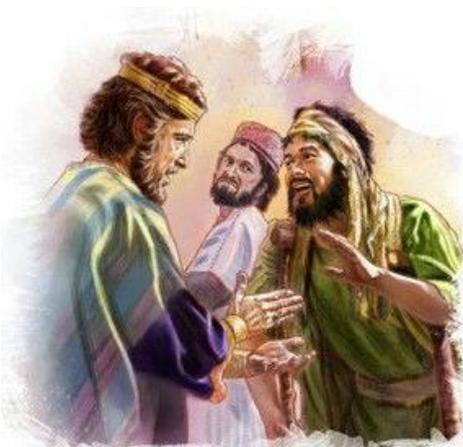
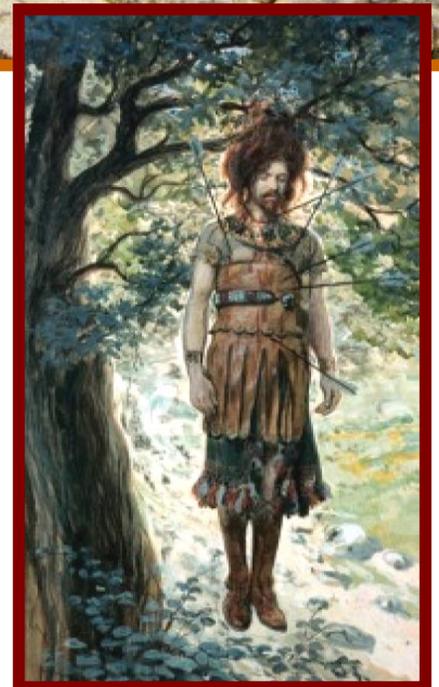
David gives this instruction to the generals in charge of his army: ***“Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom!”*** (2 Samuel 18:5). And everyone heard his instruction. Deal gently with my son.

At this point, King David isn't worried about losing his throne. He is only worried about his son Absalom. During the battle, 20,000 men died. The battle took place in an oak forest with many trees. Absalom was known for his thick and beautiful long hair. The hair is significant in this story. A few hundred years earlier, Samson lost his strength when Delilah had his long hair cut off. Now we have another story with hair.

When Absalom went under the branches of a great oak while riding on his mule in the intense battle, his long hair became entangled in the branches and Absalom was left hanging from the branches. The mule he was riding kept going.

So now we have Absalom hanging between earth and heaven. General Joab hears about Absalom and even though he knows that David told all the commanders to “deal gently” with Absalom, Joab cannot. After all, Absalom is the son who tried to usurp his father's throne. Joab grabs 3 spears and goes to Absalom and says, ***“I will not waste time like this with you.”*** (2 Samuel 18:14).

Joab drives the spears into Absalom's heart and then the ‘mob mentality’ takes over. 9 of Joab's men join the fight and strike Absalom over and over again. Absalom is now well and truly dead. Joab throws Absalom into a pit in the forest and covers him with stones.



Back to David, who is waiting for news of the battle. He is sitting at the gates leading into Jerusalem and wondering if he still has his throne. The messenger tells David that the throne is still his but all David is thinking about is his son Absalom. Is Absalom OK? We know the answer and it is not good news.

When David finds out that his son is dead, he mourns for Absalom and cries out ~

“O my son Absalom, my son, my son, would I have died instead of you, my son, my son.”

Commander Joab is disgusted that David doesn't care that many of the people loyal to him have been saved. He scolds David and asks why the lives of his officers mean nothing to him.

All David can think about is his son and how his commander Joab ignored his strict instruction to deal gently with Absalom.

That is an amazing story of forgiveness and grace. **Deal gently.** That is advice that brings healing to families. David's words remind us of the unconditional and extravagant love of God for each of us. **Deal gently.** Even the most dysfunctional family situations can be turned around and have healing. God's love and compassion in us brings that healing to others. This requires spiritual strength and what gives us the strength is the acknowledgement that Jesus is the living bread.



“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”
– Ephesians 4:32



A thousand years later, the apostle Paul give rules for the new life in Christ. In his letter to Christians in Ephesus, Paul writes that we are to build up each other with kind words. We are to *“be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you.”* (Ephesians 4:32)

“We are to be imitators of God as beloved children and live in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” (Ephesians 5:1)

Deal gently. What a wonderful way to live. What an outrageous way to live.

What an extravagant way to live. **Amen.**

Archdeacon Deborah+

3. My Sermon from Sunday August 1, 2021, '10th Sunday after Pentecost' ~ *“The Truth in Love”*

I speak to you in the name of our God of truth, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

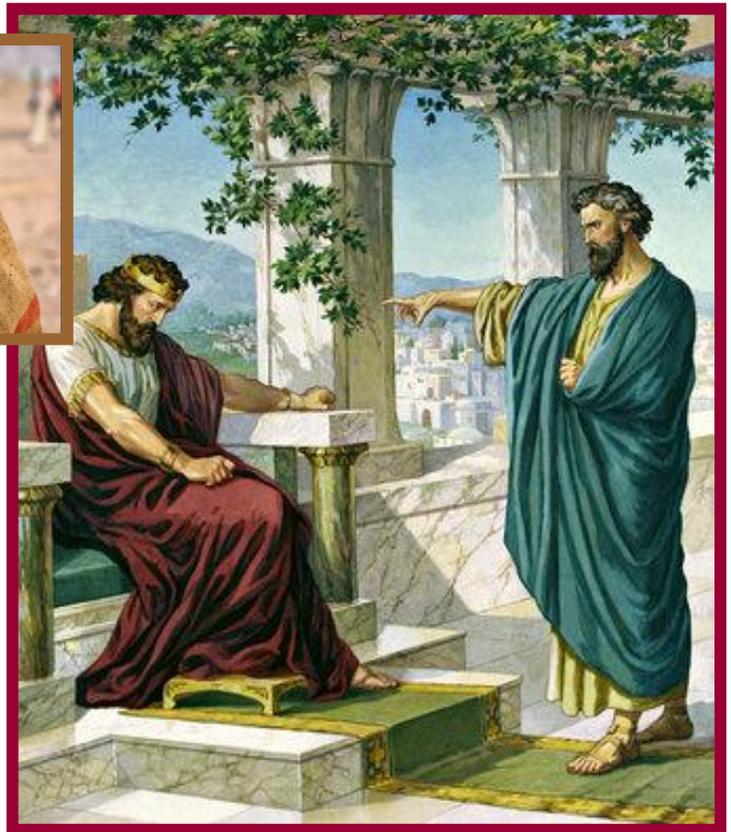
“Speak the truth in love,” the apostle Paul writes (Ephesians 4:17). For many years, I have tried to live by these words written by St. Paul. He was writing to Christians in Ephesus, literally begging them to lead worthy lives in the unity of the Spirit of God. He reminded them that there is *“one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”* (Ephesians 4:5-6).

To speak the truth is one thing. To speak the truth in the **agape love of God** is entirely different. And that is exactly what the prophet Nathan did when he pointed out the sin of King David. David had an affair with a married woman named Bathsheba. She had no choice in the relationship. You don't say 'NO' to a King. David then compounded his sin. He arranged for Bathsheba's husband Uriah to be killed in battle. Then David took Bathsheba as one of his wives. Multiple marriages were the norm in those days.

A couple of weeks ago, our Old Testament scripture focused on Nathan and his courage in telling David not to build a temple in Jerusalem. In our scripture for today from the 12th chapter of the 2nd Book of Samuel, the 10th Sunday after the Day of Pentecost, we read another episode involving Nathan speaking the truth in love. Nathan knew that the Lord was unhappy with David's adultery with Bathsheba and with David's arrangement to put Uriah at the front of the battle so he would be killed. Uriah was an honourable man who put loyalty to king and country first.

Nathan alerts David to his sin by telling David a story. Nathan tells the story of a rich man and a poor

man. The rich man had many flocks of sheep and the poor man had only one little lamb whom he loved and treated like his child. This little sheep became his best friend and the man would eat and sleep with the ewe. Then one day, the rich man needed a sheep for a feast and he did not wish to take one of his own sheep so he took the poor man's beloved sheep. He had the sheep killed, cooked and eaten.



What is David's reaction to this story? David is horrified and believes that the rich man needs to die and needs to make compensation to the poor man by giving him several sheep.

Nathan, speaking the truth in love, informs David about his sin of adultery and arranged murder. David realizes the depth of his transgressions against God and cries out: *"I have sinned against the Lord."* (2 Samuel 12:13)

David could have had a very different reaction. He could have said, *"Nathan, you did it again. First you said I couldn't build a temple and now you are accusing me of a sin. I could have you arrested for your words."*

Instead, David, in a spirit of humility and repentance, listens to Nathan and trusts his words spoken in truth and in love.

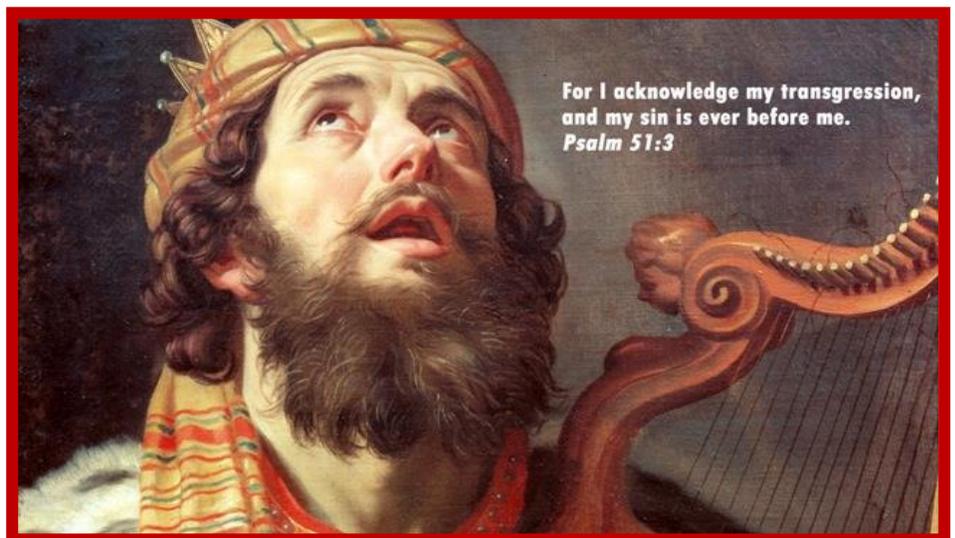
God forgives David. Our psalm for this morning is Psalm 51, which is David's act of confession and penitence. Here is what 17th century English priest and Bible commentator **Matthew Henry** wrote about this psalm:

"Psalm 51 is the most eminent of the penitential psalms and most expressive of the cares and desires of a repenting sinner."

In the psalm, David acknowledges his sinfulness and asks God for forgiveness. David is acutely aware of what he has done and cries out to God:

"For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me."

David then asks for forgiveness and promises that he will teach others about the forgiving power of God. David prays for the grace to proclaim God's praise:



"Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise."

Then why do we uphold David and refer to him, in the words of the prophet Ezekiel as the 'Shepherd King'? The reason is clear.

David loves God. Remember how he danced with all of his might and with joy when the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Jerusalem.

David is an imperfect person just like you and me. **David has the gift of examining himself and of acknowledging his faults, his actions, and the damage that he has caused** to others.

It is when we know our own flaws that we can then ask God for forgiveness. Not everyone is able to go into their hearts and to look at their shortcomings. Some people can go through their entire life without ever saying *“I have sinned against the Lord.”* Either they don’t think they have done anything wrong, or they don’t realize how serious it has been, or they can’t go into their own pain.

David gives us a model of the courage it takes to be real and to be truthful. David knew that true forgiveness comes from our loving God. **If we are willing to acknowledge “our sins in thought, word, and deed by what we have done or by what we have left undone”** (from the ‘General Confession’), God is there right beside us to bless us, and to forgive us, and to teach us.

David accepted the words of Nathan and did not push back against them. Sometimes when we are given a realistic assessment as to how we are doing, we push back and stop listening.

It is so much easier to say:

- *“I am not responsible. It wasn’t my fault,” Or*
- *“It wasn’t the clergy abusing the children. It was the night watchmen,” Or*
- *“I didn’t even know what was going on,” Or*
- *“They didn’t mind.” . . .*

When someone you trust speaks the truth in love, listen to them. Then do what needs to be done to grow in grace, to make amends, and to change your thoughts and your actions as needed.

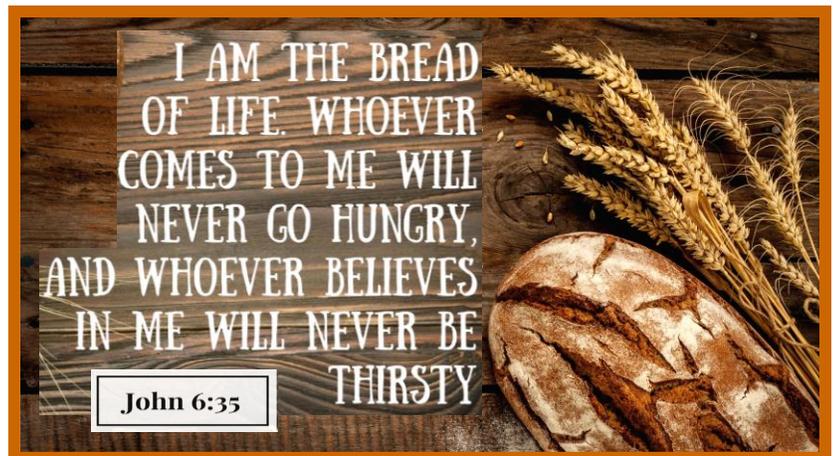
When we have Jesus in our heart, we are given the strength to examine ourselves. The day after Jesus fed the 5,000 with the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, the people came searching for Jesus because they wanted another miracle. Jesus spoke the truth in love and told them that the very best bread gives life to the world.

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never thirst.” (John 6:35)

Jesus feeds us with the bread of his life and sustains us by this true and living bread.

Amen.

Archdeacon Deborah+



4. My Sermon from Sunday July 18, 2021, 'Pentecost 8' ~ *“Where Does God Wish To Dwell?”*

Note To Readers: *The scripture for this sermon is found in the Service Outline (emailed or mailed) for July 18, 2021. I have also included it here for your convenience. I encourage you to read the Old Testament passage from 2nd Samuel and the epistle from Ephesians before you read the sermon. Thank you!*

2 Samuel 7:1 –14a ‘Nathan’s Vision’

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of

cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.”

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

Ephesians 2:11 – 22 ‘We Are A Dwelling Place For God’

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” — a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands — remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Speak Lord, your servants are listening. Amen.

When I was a little girl, I was told that the church building was God’s house and so we needed to be respectful and quiet in church. Today, I agree that our worship spaces are consecrated to the glory of God and are sacred spaces, filled with the presence of God, but where is the dwelling place of God?

Where does God live?

Where does God choose to live?

I teach the children that Jesus lives in our hearts.
And we sing this song:

*“Into my heart, into my heart,
come into my heart, Lord Jesus.
Come in today. Come in to stay.
Come into my heart Lord Jesus.”*

My 9 year old grandson **Luke** asked me this week why does God live in our hearts? Luke was wondering about this in a literal way. I said to Luke,



“Good question. We use our hearts as a place where we feel love. We have done this for thousands of years. It used to be believed that the heart experienced emotions such as love. We still use hearts as a symbol of love. Many of us use heart emojis on our texts and emails. I know that I do. We send hearts on Valentine’s Day.”

Where does God wish to dwell? The answer is clear. Within us. Within our souls. Within our hearts.

Over 3,000 years ago, King David was asking this very question. David believed that God wished to dwell in a fine home on earth. David was living in Jerusalem in a fine home of cedar while the ark of God was in a tent. God dwelled in a portable tabernacle. David didn’t feel this was right as his own lodgings were permanent. David’s prophet, Nathan, agreed with David and told him to go ahead and build a permanent temple for God. **“The Lord is with you.”** (2 Samuel 7:3). Nathan made this affirmation before he had taken the request to God.

That night, Nathan had a dream and the Lord said that he did not wish to have a permanent home. God basically said, **“No thanks David. That is a nice offer. However, I will make you a house.”** In the vision to Nathan, God made a covenant with David and said that he would **“raise up your offspring after you. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”** This house would be David’s dynasty, culminating in Jesus, the Messiah. This home for God would be within the hearts of David’s ancestors.

Following these significant visions, Nathan has the courage to go to David and tell him not to build the temple. It was not God’s will for David. I commend Nathan for his courage in changing his mind and speaking about it. He would have known that David would not find this to be happy news. David wanted to build the temple and have that as his legacy.

I understand how he must have felt. When I was the Rector at *West Thunder Bay*, we developed the plans to re-build *St. Mark’s* in Rosslyn village. Oh, how I wanted to see that project completed and be the Rector when the doors of the refinished church were opened, but that was not God’s plan for me.

Later on, Nathan shows tremendous courage again and condemns David for his affair with Bathsheba and for arranging the murder of Bathsheba’s husband Uriah.

David believed that the Lord’s prophecy to Nathan meant that David’s son Solomon should build the temple. And this is indeed what happened. The first temple in Jerusalem would be built by King Solomon. This temple would be destroyed in the 6th century BC and then re-built and destroyed again in the first century AD by the Romans. Now only part of the foundation remains and Jewish people continue to pray there daily.

Where does God wish to dwell?

The church is the body of Christ and you and I are God’s temple. In our reading for the 8th Sunday after Pentecost from Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes this:

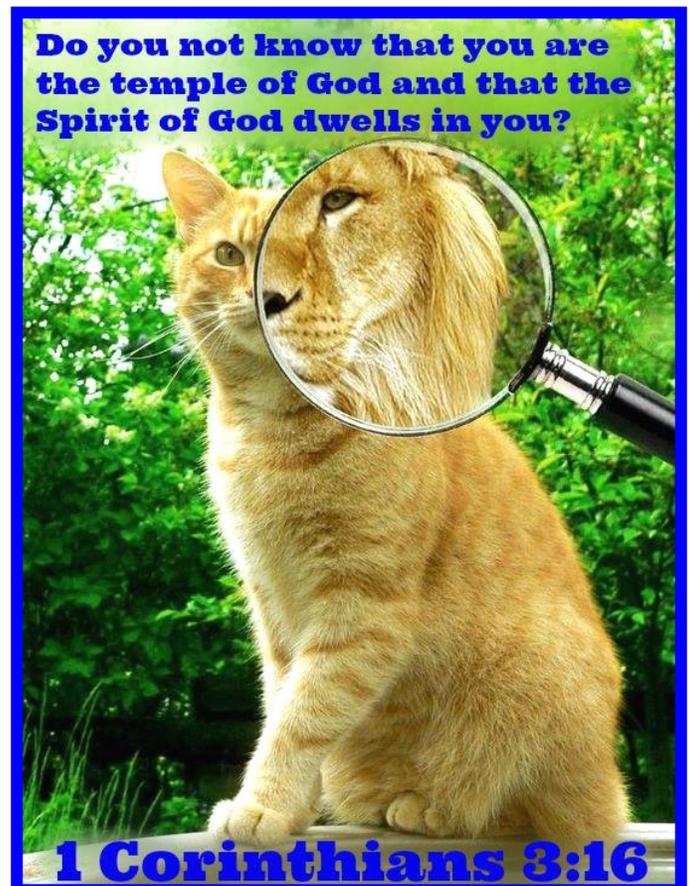
“We are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.”

(Ephesians 2:22)

In Paul’s letter to Christians in Corinth, he confirms

“that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you. . . . For God’s temple is holy and you are that temple.”

(1 Corinthians 2:16-17)



Paul knows from a deep and reflective place that our bodies are where God chooses to dwell. We invite God into our hearts and into our lives. We open the door of grace in faith and in belief and God enters in. **Believers are God's dwelling place.**

Like the apostle Paul, some of the great mystics of the Middle Ages have articulated the dwelling place of God as being inside each of us.

Here is an example from a revelation, a vision, given by God to **Julian of Norwich** in the 14th century. I am quoting from her book *Revelations of Divine Love*:

*“And I was still awake and then our Lord opened my spiritual eyes and showed me my soul in the middle of my heart. I saw my soul as large as if it were a kingdom and it seemed to me to be a glorious city. In the centre of that city sits our Lord Jesus, true God and true man, glorious, highest Lord. **He sits in the soul, in the very centre, in peace and rest and he rules and protects heaven and earth and all that is.**”*

And Julian of Norwich also wrote this: *“We ought to rejoice greatly that God dwells in our soul. Our soul is made to be God's swelling place.”*

Less than 200 years later, in the 1,500s, **Teresa of Avila** had similar visions. She received a vision of a crystal castle that lives within each of us. During our spiritual growth, each of us moves through 7 interiors or mansions of this castle until our souls ultimately connect with God. Here are her own words, translated into English from Spanish:

*“The human soul is so glorious that God himself chooses it as **his dwelling place.** The path to God, then, leads us on a journey of self-discovery. To know the self is to know God.”*

We have always been taught to treat our worship spaces with the respect they deserve. It is even more important to treat each other with the respect we each deserve. Your body is a holy temple for God. Your body is where God chooses to live. Your body is where God wishes to live.

Let us all live with the courage of the prophet Nathan. Let us be willing to change our minds, to show grace under pressure, and to say and to the right thing.

I will close with a favourite prayer written by St. Teresa of Avila:

*Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing cause you fear.
All things pass.
God is unchanging.
Patience obtains all:
Whoever has God needs nothing else.
God alone suffices.*

Amen.

Archdeacon Deborah+

*“My soul magnifies the Lord.”
from The Magnificat, Luke 1:40-55*

Archdeacon Deborah+

“The Happy Rector & Archdeacon”

