



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

August 3, 2008

Pentecost 12

A little boy had heard that Jesus was going to be speaking so he asked his mom if he could go hear him. She said yes and the boy was very excited. The only thing, the mom said, was that she had heard Jesus talked a long time so she had better pack the boy some lunch.

So she packed him a lunch of 5 small barley loaves and 2 roasted fish.

Off the boy went and he was almost at the front of the crowd. He watched Jesus as he looked at all the crowd with love. He listened to Jesus as Jesus painted wonderful images of God in a tapestry of stories. A sower went to sow. A woman lost a coin. Blessed are the merciful. A Samaritan was going down from Jerusalem.

Before the boy knew it the sun was beginning to set. Jesus had talked a long time and it was as if time had stood still. The disciples told Jesus to send the crowd away but the boy heard Jesus say you give them something to eat. The boy knew Jesus would be hungry and he offered his simple lunch to Andrew to give to Jesus. The rest they say is history. Lives were changed and people were fed. Not just with bread and fish for the nourishment of their bodies, but with words of god, a face of love, for the nourishment of their souls.

When James my son was little, he sometimes told me after church that my stories were a bit long. He was referring to my sermons. Yet I always thought that we were at least home for lunch.

James has always had a huge heart for others. He was always concerned about people I would be visiting in the hospital and would ask questions about them with a real concern in his voice.

Yesterday James and I went fishing. It was the first time we had fished together in over 2 years. The last time in 2006 was at a place in Nashville called Discovery Place. Discovery Place is a rehabilitation center. It was the second rehab that James had been to that year and his stay at discovery place was just over 60 days. It had a pond and we fished during visitation.

James had struggled with alcohol and drug addiction. From discovery place he went to a halfway house and his sobriety lasted till Christmas of 2007. In March 2007 James went to a place called teen challenge in west Virginia where he stayed for 15 months. He graduated in May and served a couple of months as an intern.

Yesterday my son and I went fishing. My son who was very lost but now is found. Was living life on the edge but now is very centered in God.

James life has been changed because of places that have shown him the face of Christ. That took him in at his worst and helped him see his Godly best. That could not have happened if it were not for places that were willing to do that. Because of their commitment and ministry the life of James and lives of countless others are changed.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Established in 1847

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 info@stjohnsky.com www.stjohnsky.com



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

August 3, 2008

I tell you this because I am realizing more and more the importance of places that are used to show the face of Christ, that are used for ministry, that are willing to say we care about you no matter what sort or condition you are in.

St Johns, I believe, is now wearing a face that is a welcoming face of Christ. It is also a face that we show willingly to the community in which we live. Every day something is happening at ST Johns that is in the life changing business of God.

But I believe that there are ministries that God is guiding us towards that we do not even know about and are unable to respond to because of space and our facility.

The calendar is almost full at St Johns of ministry both within and outside of our community of faith.

We have a house next to us that at the minute is a dead house . No life happens there because we simply cannot use it as it is.

We have been entrusted a place, not just for our pleasure to have, but to use to tell, and show and live the life changing stories of Gods love to those who are dis-eased, wounded or broken. We are here to feed not just food for the bodies but food for the soul.

We are here because Jesus has said to us you give them something to eat. And each of us have offered our gifts. For some it has been with the words what is that among so many. But together we have accomplished what God has asked of us so far. Now we are being asked to take the next step.

I am very thankful for the places that gave my son James something to eat. I am very proud of my son James for what he has done these last 18 months and what he is doing with his life.

I know James would be thinking that my story is too long this morning, but it is a story that does not just affect us today. It has been the story of Christ for 2000 years and it will be the story till Jesus comes again. It is the story of love and it is our mission to tell and to show and to live that story. We are in the business of changing lives, of living the kingdom of God. What we do with, and how we use our facility must always reflect that.

Amen

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Established in 1847

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 info@stjohnsky.com www.stjohnsky.com