



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector  
November 23, 2008

### Kirkin of Tartans 2008

I have been asked why St Johns Episcopal Church has this service called the Kirkin of the tartans.

Well for one thing it is a lot of fun. Parading, bagpipes drums, banners and so on.

The pageantry is incredible and the music awesome. The presence of God that gives a connection to all of our past, not just those with Scottish heritage.

But there is a deeper meaning for the Episcopal Church.

If you look closely at the Episcopal flag you see that it has the red cross of St George that tells us we are connected to the church of England as Anglicans, but if you look closely we also have what looks like the cross of St Andrew, the flag of Scotland.

If you look even closer the cross is made up of 9 smaller crosses. Each of these crosses represents one of the 9 provinces that make up the Episcopal Church. The reason that it is made to look like a Scottish flag is very significant.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*Established in 1847*

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 [info@stjohnsky.com](mailto:info@stjohnsky.com) [www.stjohnsky.com](http://www.stjohnsky.com)



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector  
November 23, 2008

From 1775 to 1783 there was a war. A war in which the English came second. It was a war that saw the birth of the United States of America. After the war all things English were not very well trusted or respected.

The Church of England in America was exactly that. The clergy, usually inferior clergy, were sent from England. But the problem was that there were no bishops. The Church of England in America was given oversight by the bishop of London whose full title was bishop of London and all colonies.

Of course after the war the new America did not want anything to do with anything English and that included the church.

But there was one problem in the church.

As part of the one apostolic church that Jesus commissioned, it was a belief that any bishop that was consecrated had to be consecrated by at least three other bishops. This enabled the trace of ordination to be taken back to st peter. This is called apostolic succession.

For the newly formed Episcopal Church, it was vitally important to be part of apostolic succession.

A priest named Samuel Seabury was chosen as the first bishop and since there were no bishops in America he went to England to ask for consecration.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*Established in 1847*

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 [info@stjohnsky.com](mailto:info@stjohnsky.com) [www.stjohnsky.com](http://www.stjohnsky.com)



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector  
November 23, 2008

When you have just lost a war, and a considerable amount of income, the reception that Samuel Seabury got from the Church of England was less than charitable.

So he went to the Church of Scotland and it was the Church of Scotland that consecrated him and gave the newly formed Episcopal Church our first bishop. It was not long that the Church of England consecrated 2 more Americans as bishops that gave the Episcopal Church the number of bishops required to carry on the apostolic succession and carry on the new work of the holy catholic and apostolic church in America.

I tell you this today to say that the Episcopal Church owes a great deal to the Church of Scotland for our beginnings as a new church. Our first prayer book was pretty much based on the Scottish prayer book, and we look back with a great deal of thankfulness.

The Church of Scotland responded to a need and the rest we say is history.

The church in America was dependent on the Church of England for oversight and leadership, but that cannot come from far away places.

The Church of Scotland gave us our first bishop and set us free to preach and live the gospel with the people who God had put us with. How God can be preached cannot be controlled by far away places.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*Established in 1847*

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 [info@stjohnsky.com](mailto:info@stjohnsky.com) [www.stjohnsky.com](http://www.stjohnsky.com)



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector  
November 23, 2008

Because we do not live in far away places and we do not live in the past.

Deuteronomy tells us the word is very near to you it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

Jesus said the kingdom is not over there or out there the kingdom is among you.

Do not look to far off places, and do not look to other people because my words are already with you. This is not about somebody else this is about you.

We live in the families that God has placed us in . We live in the community that God has placed us in. We are at the school, office, work place that God has placed us in and my guess is that there are other people in those places too.

Today we not only Kirk the tartans. Kirk is the Scottish word for church and church means simply to be called out.

So today we not only Kirk, call out the tartans, today it is you that is being called out. You are being called not only to say the words of god, but to live the words of god. Words like forgiveness, compassion, care, and love.

It is you that today is being kirked,

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*Established in 1847*

210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 [info@stjohnsky.com](mailto:info@stjohnsky.com) [www.stjohnsky.com](http://www.stjohnsky.com)



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector  
November 23, 2008

It is you that must not just bear the tartan of your ancestry but bear the good news of Christ in your words and in your actions. It is you that will be said how beautiful the feet of those who bring good news are.

Because what we have is good news. What we have is gospel. What we have is Christ who says to each of us follow me.

Amen

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*Established in 1847*

*210 North Main Street Versailles, KY 40383 859.873.3481 [info@stjohnsky.com](mailto:info@stjohnsky.com) [www.stjohnsky.com](http://www.stjohnsky.com)*