

Reflection for the Week: September 13th-20th, 2020

Yesterday we looked at the material for the *First Mark of Healthy Church* as part of our planning for the future. To reinforce some of that thinking, the reflection this week poses a number of questions. The talk can be found in the Healthy Church resource on the church website.

Mark 1: Energized by faith

The many rules and regulations that order church life are necessary to ensure good governance. But, it can seem like we are maintaining the institution rather than following our calling to love God, worship Christ and welcome others into the knowledge of God's love. Likewise, many projects and events are undertaken in churches which are fun and function as annual markers along the path of the year, but sometimes, the reason why we do them gets lost. There comes a time when we need to reassess the meaning and purpose of church; why we are and who we are in Christ.

In our society, cultural Christianity (going to church because your parents and grandparents did, or ritual attendance at Sunday School and compulsory Christian assemblies) is disappearing fast. We also live in a multi-faith society where there is an infinite variety of faith systems to choose from. A popular worldview is that Christianity is one of many faiths that leads to God. I wouldn't dispute that a faithful Muslim, for example, knows and loves God, but I would argue for the uniqueness of Christ. Added to this is a questioning, rational secularism which forces us to ask what we really believe to be true about the Christian faith.

It is useful occasionally to reflect on why we are going to church and to define what is helpful to you in the specific church community of which you are a part. Covid has temporarily redefined the look of church communities, but perhaps also sharpened our insight into what is of prime importance to us. ***Why is your faith important to you and what helps you to express it?***

How would you describe the character of St. Mary and St. Michael's?

Where does its energy come from?

Maybe read Colossians 1: 1-6, 3:17; Luke 1:39-45 Micah 5: 2-5 and Galatians 4:17-20 (what are we, as a church, meant to be pregnant with?)

The above passages contain the common themes of faith, expectancy and birth, of faith prefiguring birth. Note any thing that strikes you about the words you read before answering the questions below

Do you know enough about the faith you profess and would you feel comfortable explaining it, or giving the reason(s) why you believe in Christ to another person?

What is special about the church we are a part of?

What kinds of change are we *called* to make?

What kind of change might we *need* to make to be energized by faith?

What needs working on with respect to being energized by faith?

I would like to hear from you if you have any observations or insights that you want to share.

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If you don't want to email and would like a conversation, please let me know.

Mandy