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Grace and Holy Trinity Church
October 20, 2019
2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Continue in what you have learned from childhood. Continue in what you believed as a child. You have known the sacred writings from your youth, it is through your instruction that you have come to know the Lord and salvation. I have a friend who works at an Episcopal School as a chaplain who recently posted on social media the following:

“One thing I’ll say like a broken record is that kids have wonder and can so often see God in a way much more clear than us grown people. Yesterday, one of my students asked me a question that my soul was asking too, but didn’t know how to ask. In answering his question, I found my answer too. My soul has been meditating on that answer all morning. Y’all, kids are so beautiful” ¹

I know this feeling first hand as a mother, but before I ever had kids of my own, I knew it to be true because I worked with middle and high schoolers in youth ministry for about 5 years before settling into ordained parish ministry. In my experience those youth were lightning rods for the Holy Spirit. Not just those youth, but all youth are. The wonder and awe and questioning that young people embody innately is inexhaustible. If you have ever lived or worked with a child or even sat behind one in a grocery store line you know this is true.

The faith of a child, the wonder of a child, the tenacity of a child is something that ought to be maintained throughout our lives. In today’s readings, we hear about the child-like nature of discipleship the persistence, like a dog with a bone insistence on justice being served, and the intensity with which the followers of Christ will pursue it.

¹ The Rev. Michelle Bullock - Facebook Post 10/10/19

I'd like to invite each of us to imagine that tomorrow when we get the mail included with the political ads and sale flyers there is a letter that says:

Keep on keeping on. You are doing good work, even if it doesn't feel like it. You know that God is with you and that God will continue to be with you no matter what. Keep on keeping on with the learning the praying the teaching and the growing. See you soon.

No signature.

You aren't sure who it is from- there is no return address.

How does this letter make you feel?

Assured, Concerned, Comforted, Ready to take on the world?

Do you know what work they are talking about? How are you doing with the learning and praying and growing and teaching?

Close your eyes for a moment and remember your spiritual teachers. Who in your life has asked questions that your soul needed to be answered? Who in your life has lead the way for you to have a deeper, clearer, more meaningful relationship with God? Who in your life has inspired you to take a more active role in your spiritual journey?

It was that person who wrote you the letter.

How do you feel now? Encouraged? Hopeful? Prepared?

Right now we at Grace and Holy Trinity Church are at the point in our spiritual journey as a congregation when we are invited to consider who are leaders are, who our leaders will be and who our leaders have been. Each of us bring spiritual gifts to the table, and we are invited to offer them fully before the Lord. We are responsible, each of us, for our own giving out of

the abundance that God has given freely to us. It is in part generosity that allows us to be leaders.

Not one of us thought of a miserly individual when we imagined our spiritual teachers. The folks who formed us were generous with their experiences. They taught us what it means to give freely.

Some of us learned specifically that we need to be explicit with our giving. Folks like Nancy Trego whose parents asked her to write a letter explaining who they were and why they supported what they supported in their will, in case they died before their children got to know them. Or Nick and Jamie Sollog who have their boys receive pledge envelopes and encourage them to use them every week to make their offerings.

Some of us learned to keep our giving between God and ourselves. An individual from Red Door who anonymously gives to this parish whenever they have cash to give. Or anonymous members of the legacy society embody this kind of giving.

Some of us teach by example. Elaine Quinn has often shared that she followed her granddaughter Molly here to Grace and Holy Trinity Church. Or folks who come every week to worship and share that with their friends and family by posting pictures of worship on social media.

Some of us teach by trial and error. Folks who come here for Al-anon meetings can attest to that school of thought. More of us probably feel connected one to another after the general confession where we admit that we have sinned against God and against one another, and we make that confession or something similar in all of our services reconciliation and forgiveness are at the core of our theology.

Some of us have relied on the canon to instruct us, only the books of Genesis through Revelation - we read mark learn and inwardly digest them. We have dog eared bibles and apps on our smart phones to keep us engaged with scripture.

Some of us find scripture in punk rock and B-films, the poems of Emily Dickenson, and a reverence of all creation. We have Bibles whose spines have never been cracked, but spirits that are fed through word and sacrament none the less.

The church is not designed like the rest of the world- where you need to lead, follow or get out of the way. We are a community made up of leaders.

The church is different. The church is the Body of Christ in the World. The church is made up of ministers of the love of God, the resurrection of Jesus and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Every time we baptize a person we are reminded of our promises to lead, follow, pray, teach, preach, and evangelize. Today we get to do that when we baptize Jack Elias Lane at the 11 am service. Today we get to do that when we discuss what leadership means to us here and now.

Today we get to promise to do this for one another especially, we get to promise to write those notes and inspire one another to keep on keeping on pursuing justice, freedom and peace, keep on keeping on with the prayers and the teaching and the learning about scripture, keep on keeping on seeking and serving Jesus in one another and in the stranger, keep on keeping on by leading the way.