



THE RED DOOR MESSENGER

SHARING CHRIST'S INCLUSIVE LOVE THROUGH
WORSHIP, HEALING PRAYER, BEAUTY, AND HOSPITALITY.

JUNE 2017

Letter About Religion - Ralph Strawn 2/27/03

A "Letter About Religion" is like a box of chocolates. "You never know what you're gonna get." I happen to be crazy about movies starring Tom Hanks, especially the movie *Forrest Gump*, which is based on the novel by Winston Groom. This letter is to share some thoughts about that movie which continue to inspire me. My favorite scene from the movie *Forrest Gump* comes at the very beginning of the film, when Forrest is sitting on a park bench waiting for a bus. Just before we meet Forrest, we see this white feather blowing in the wind. It slowly dances through the sky, almost falling but then rising again with each gentle gust of wind. Finally, the feather falls to the ground at the bus stop, where it lands on Forrest's shoe. That feather stays with Forrest until the end of the movie, when he puts his son on a bus for school. Forrest opens the pages of a book where he had saved the feather during the years and the feather falls out. It rises in the wind and returns upward to the sky. To me the image of the feather coming to rest on Forrest's shoe is a compelling image of how God's Holy Spirit often comes to us. I know the Bible tells us that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was like the sound of a rushing wind. But I believe that the Holy Spirit comes in different ways to different people. It may sometimes come with the sound of a rushing wind, but it may also come like the whisper of a gentle breeze. Why do we sometimes worry that the Holy Spirit cannot be with us unless we have been hit by some sort of gale force wind from heaven? We think that because the Holy Spirit is so powerful, we have to feel something powerful to know God's Spirit is with us. We are disappointed when it doesn't always happen that way. But we do not have to actually feel the weight and power of the Holy Spirit to know that God is with us. Who can feel the weight of a feather on his shoe? But the feather is still there, just as God is always there, with us, wherever we are, whatever we do. After Forrest is touched by the feather, a series of strangers sit down beside him on the bench. After offering them some chocolates, Forrest tells them stories from his life while they wait for the bus. Forrest does not use God's name in all his tales, but the love of God is clearly revealed in the stories he shares. His stories about growing up in Alabama reveal

his love for his mother and his mother's love for him. His stories of war, death and despair reveal the courage God gives us to rescue each other from all sorts of danger. The story of Lieutenant Dan's ordeal of losing his legs and then becoming angry with God reveals how even when we lose our faith, God calls us back into reconciliation with Him. No matter who we are or where we have been, God has given us stories and experiences which we must share with those around us. When we tell our stories to others, no particular words are needed to reveal God's love and His presence in our lives. Sometimes God gives us the words to proclaim the Gospel message with confidence and eloquence. But most of the time I believe the Gospel message is spoken loudest through the quiet voices of people simply sharing stories from their lives. Forrest Gump says that you can tell a lot about a person by his shoes. A person's shoes will pretty well tell you where he or she has been. Like Forrest, we have all worn lots of shoes. Each of us has many stories to tell which reveal God's presence in our lives. God's love for us is revealed each time these stories are told or remembered. We need to share these stories with each other. And we need to listen to what other people, including strangers, may have to say to us. So remember the image of the feather and the Holy Spirit whenever you hear or tell a story which reveals God's love for us and His presence in our lives. May we always share and inspire one another with our stories, where God is always present.

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Pray for Annette, Lynda, Mac, James, Barbara, Mike, Brandon, Kevin, Roxanne, Ivey, Pat and Al, Martha Jane, Kernie, Bonnie, Ralph, Ann, Lynn and Mary.

Reminder: If you have a prayer need, an illness, or a family concern, please contact the church office or Fr. Ben Alford. Do not rely on word of mouth to communicate your pastoral needs. The church office number is 256-878-3243.

Message From the Rector
Knowing God and Being Known by God

In every time and every place humans have worshiped God, questioned God, doubted God and tried to explain or describe God. We have also judged others because they arrived at conclusions different from ours. We want to be certain about areas of our lives in which certainty can be elusive. In these cases, human beings often hedge our bets by providing alternative answers or multiple possibilities. This is often the case with our God questions.

The post Jesus Athenians were no exception. The Apostle Paul proclaimed to them: "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way, for as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.'" Then Paul continues, "The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things." (Acts 17:22-31)

"... he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'." (Acts 17:22-31)

"In him we live and move and have our being." Wow. What a gift, what an opportunity to know God and continue to grow in that relationship. The Gospel of John records the reminder that "Jesus is in the Father and we are in him and he is in us" (John 14:1-14), or as Catherine of Siena said, "the soul is in God and God is in the soul, as the fish is in the sea and the sea is in the fish." We know God by being in God and God being in us. God is over, under, around and through us, and we are over, under, around and through God.

This does not solve the ultimate mystery of who God is or what God is or where God is, but, it allows us to experience God. The Church then becomes a community in which and through which the Spirit is given and shared, and in which we can share our experience of God and hear others share their experiences, thus learning more about God as we learn more about others and more about ourselves.

The Church as the Body of Christ makes it possible for us to serve the world in the name of God, whether we have all the answers to all of our questions about God or not, whether the "unknown" God suddenly becomes known to us or not, or whether our doubts or confusion about who God is and how we know God magically disappear or not. It assures us that we will not be alone in our journey to find and know God and to be found and known by God. It means that our faith will not give us easy answers or be a simple faith. It also assures us that our faith will be exciting, bold and filled with as many questions as it is answers.

As Jimmy Buffett would say, "Where's the Church, who took the steeple. . .The God's honest truth is it's not that simple." But! It's exciting, challenging, life-giving and fun. And it will change the world!

Thanks be to God!

Christ Church 40th Anniversary

In 1977, Jimmy Carter was the incoming president, the Bee Gee's singing group was popular, and clothing styles were calming down after the late 60's- early 70's bright colors and designs. This was life 40 years ago.

In January of 1977, fifteen families, who were members of Epiphany in Guntersville and lived in Albertville and Boaz, came together to begin a new church. With the permission of Bishop Stough, Sand Mountain Chapel was formed. Thus our journey began 40 years ago.

Christ Episcopal Church will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2018. An Anniversary Committee has been appointed which consists of Brenda Mayhall, Caitlyn Dickerson, Alan Battle ,James Harris, Mel Potts, Ann Baldwin, Bunny Bains, Mel Potts, Ron Scruggs, Fran Mayo, Glenda Wooten, Richard Jones and Father Ben. Together we will plan events to celebrate our church's life and history in Albertville.

Throughout the coming year special events will be planned to remember our roots, former rectors and members, church endeavors in the community and our place in the life of Albertville.

Let's join together to rejoice in the past and anticipate our future.

Happy 40th Anniversary, Christ Church!!!

Glenda Wooten

JUNE SERVANTS

	4	11	18	25	
Crucifer	Kathy Wilemon	Alan Battle, Jr.	Bill Bennett	Joe Thomas	
LEM/Server	Glenda Wooten	Sara Watwood	Kathy Wilemon	Brenda Mayhall	
LEM/Gospel Bearer	Odes Wilemon	Ben Cumming	Glenda Wooten	Sara Watwood	
Lector	Ben Cumming	Brenda Mayhall	Phylis Thompson	Odes Wilemon	
Prayers of the People	Brenda Mayhall	Phylis Thompson	Ben Cumming	Phylis Thompson	
Ushers	Grady Holder and Dan Johnson	Kathy Wilemon and Joseph Thompson	James Harris and Tommy Thompson	Terry Mayhall and Odes Wilemon	
Greeter	Tommy Thompson	Ann Baldwin	Joe Thomas	Grady Holder	
Altar Guild	Susan and Ben Cumming	Joe and Betty Thomas	Jackie Brewster and Brenda Mayhall	Susan and Ben Cumming	
Flower Guild	Glenda Wooten	Ron Scruggs	Brenda Mayhall	Norma Liles	
Vestry Person of the Day	George Liles	Susan Cumming	Meredith Battle	James Harris	
Alms Counter	Chase Watwood	Terry Mayhall	George Liles	Susan Cumming	
Fellowship Hosts	Cynthia Denham	Meredith and Alan Battle	Myra and Randy Southerland	Norma and George Liles	

Christ Episcopal Church

40th Anniversary

Summer Frolic

Old Members, New Members, Friends & Family

Join us to celebrate 40 Years!

Hotdogs & Burgers

Inflatables for kids

Corn Hole

Marshmallow Roasting



Fun for everyone!

Saturday, June 17

5:00 pm

Christ Episcopal Church

607 E Main St

Albertville, AL 35950

Everyone is invited!

