

THE CALL

The Reverend Adam S. Linton, Rector

OCTOBER 2006

Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd

2374 Grant Avenue, Ogden, Utah 84401

Rector's Reflections

"UNDISCOVERED TERRITORY"

The Rev. Adam S. Linton
Sermon on 1 John 3:1-8

In the First Letter of John, we heard, "No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him." (3:6) Now, what are we to make of this? Is it an unlikely promise or an impossible challenge? To begin with, of course, we need to hear these words in context, especially the context very shortly before this in First John itself. We read there, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us... If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1:8-9; 2:1)

This certainly sounds rather contradictory – these two statements; the one we heard from today's reading, the other from a bit before in the very same document. Which is it? Are we sinners in need of Christly forgiveness or are we the ones in Christ who no longer live within sin's realm? At least in our present, paradoxical mode of existence, somehow, it's both. In faith, ours is now a profoundly transitional life. To live in the Risen Christ is to be bound up in a process of change; major, transformative change. We find ourselves baptized into ontological tension, and sometimes conflict. The point of the Christian spiritual enterprise is not that we merely be able to feel good about the status quo – either the world's or ours. The disequilibrium between these two passages from John's First Letter can remind us that we may often underestimate the extent of what God is up to in Christ, in us and around us. God is doing more than we suspected.

So, it's a very questionable notion that authentic faith somehow guarantees for us uninterrupted experiences of either good feeling or "success" (at least as we presently are likely to define success). God's purpose in Christ isn't contained only within that which we experience as constructive, affirming. Jesus has a way of unsettling matters that we'd prefer be left alone. Our Lord takes down as well as builds up; he challenges as well as

comforts. We find ourselves borne into a process – not of mere improvement or pain-relief – but of new creation.

Who we are, who we will be, is, to a large extent for us, still undiscovered territory. Like the Lewis and Clarke expedition of two hundred years ago, we often find ourselves filling in our map as we proceed. For all they knew, they would see mastodons; what they *did* see, certainly, was at least as remarkable. And for us, in our journey – "we are now God's children; [but] what we shall be has not yet been disclosed, but we know that when Christ appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." (3:2)

To be sure, we're not in control of the process; even more surely, in comfort or discomfort, this process is shepherded – effectively – by God's love; a gracious love, active and determined. In the words of C.S. Lewis, this love must inevitably sometimes feel to us an "intolerable compliment." (*Problem of Pain*, chapter 3, "Divine Goodness").

So, in this resurrectional life, we're in for it; even though sometimes we may be less than fully enthusiastic pilgrims. But God is "in for it" too, on our behalf. Our journey in faith is held in the purpose of God, who will see it (and us) through.

We return, then to our opening question, now set before us as an affirmation, as well; "No one who abides in him sins": a challenge *and* a promise. Amen.

(Scripture citations from *The Revised English Bible*)

Stewardship

Our stewardship campaign this year is going to be a little different. We are not having the stewardship dinner, for a couple of reasons: a change up, and the time got away from us. Instead we are going to try a Stewardship Sunday. We encourage everyone to make a special effort to attend one of the services on Sunday, October 22, either 8:30 or 10:30; or attend the evening service, Saturday, October 21 at 5:30. This Sunday is being designated Pledge Sunday and will feature a prayerful collection of the pledge cards

from every member in attendance who wishes to pledge for the 2007 year.

A couple of things that you will have heard from me if you were in church on the 17th of September: for the past three years, we have had 104 people (whether individual or family units) give money with some regularity to the Church of the Good Shepherd. In 2004, only 70 pledged. In 2005 and 2006, 84 pledged, although they weren't the same 84 for both years. We have not only had people physically move in and out of the parish, we have had people start and stop pledging over these three years while remaining in the congregation in good standing.

The good thing about this pattern is that the amount of given money has increased over the past three years, even though the number of pledges has been constant over the past two. In 2005, \$141,000 was pledged, and \$143,000 received. This year doesn't look that good: \$154,000 pledged, and I estimate \$146,000 will be received. You still have time to prove me wrong in this estimate, and I would be tickled pink if you did.

We have submitted an estimated budget to the Diocese (they require the estimate by September 15), even though our Vestry has not approved it. The budget is as conservative as the Finance Committee could make it, and it still requires about an 11% increase in pledges this coming year. Even though we get (over the past three years) an average of \$21,000 from "regular givers", we really can't count on that. (Being eternally optimistic, however, we do.) The problem is that the banks won't give us credit (pun intended) on people who give regularly, but are unwilling to commit in writing to do it.

Proportional Giving

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The following paragraphs are hard reading and if they were subject to the Movie whatever code would be rated "R" – for spiritually mature audiences only – reader discretion advised!

I want to introduce a concept that some or many of you may be familiar with: proportional giving.

There are basically two ways of giving to the Church and they are fundamentally different in their spiritual orientation. One comes from a concept that generally is applied to the world around us: we can partake of pretty much whatever we want (in moderation for those dangerous things), and pay for it. This leads to the idea of attending Church on most Sundays and "buying two or three (or five or ten) dollars worth of God", and being essentially done with it for the week (or month). If something special happens, such as a birthday, graduation, or some other "event", then maybe a few extra dollars are tossed in the plate that Sunday, just to show God that we're appreciative. This way of giving is, at best, spiritually neutral, and at worst guilt driven. (I have to give something or XXX will think badly of me.)

The second way to give recognizes that the way Americans value the world is through money, and the Biblical concept of giving the "first fruits of the harvest for the sanctification of the rest" applies today to cash. Very few of us are herders of sheep or growers of crops or tenders of vineyards who can measure out the first born, or the first cutting, or the first pressing of the grapes and place it on the altar of God so that the rest of the produce and in fact our very existence, can be made holy, or sanctified. This is the basic idea of the tithe. Our harvest, however, is our paycheck (or whatever source of monetary income), and the sanctification obtained by tithing is still our life, even though our life is no longer tied up in agriculture the way the early Hebrews was. (Fortunately for us, the offerings are no longer burnt, but deposited in our bank account for the continued existence of the Church.)

We recognize that giving 10% of our income can be daunting. This is where the concept of proportional giving steps in to give us an easier way to buy in to the concept of sanctification through the offering of the first fruits of the harvest to God in a modern economic framework. Instead of approaching pledging or giving from the unconscious "give me two dollars worth of God, today, please," world view, proportional giving allows us to say, "I may not be able to tithe, but I can give X% of my net income this year!"

With prayer and perseverance, your outlook will change, and your life will be sanctified, although you may not notice it for quite a while.

You can find the table of proportion elsewhere in this newsletter, or in bulletin inserts, or at the back of the church.

Yours in Christ,

Bill Bangert
Treasurer

Episcopal Youth Join us at the Haunted Corn Maze Friday, October 13

We will be going to the maze in Roy that is located on 1900 West. I had several requests last year to go when the maze is haunted. In order to do that, we will need to go on a Friday or Saturday night as those are the "haunted nights" and they are closed on Sundays. Please watch your mailbox for a postcard containing the exact address, meeting time and cost. Also, remember to dress warmly and with appropriate footwear. Last year we were rained on!! – Letitia.

Adult Sunday School

We will continue this month with our series entitled, "Living in the Way of Jesus." Class meets at 9:30am in Tuttle Hall.

October 1: Living in the Way of Jesus, "Sin Management" or New Life?

October 8: Living in the Way of Jesus, "What Jesus Knew – Our God-bathed World"

October 15: Living in the Way of Jesus, "Who is Really Well Off – The Beatitudes"

October 22: Living in the Way of Jesus, "The Rightness of the Kingdom Heart – Beyond the Goodness of the Scribes and Pharisees"

October 29: Living in the Way of Jesus, "Investing in the Heavens – Escaping the Deceptions of Reputation and Wealth"

Confirmation Classes

October 1: "ENROLLMENT SUNDAY" – Youth and Adults at the 10:30 service.

Youth: Classes meet on Mondays at 5:45pm

October 2: Spirituality, *Mere Christianity*, Book Four, Chapters 1 through 3

October 16: Spirituality, *Mere Christianity*, Book Four, Chapters 4 through 6

Adults: Classes Meet Saturdays, 3:00 - 5:00pm

October 14: Spirituality, *Mere Christianity*, Book Four, Chapters 1 through 6.

News from the Atrium

It has been a wonderful month in the Atrium. We have practiced talking quietly and moving slowly and carefully so that we will be able to hear what God is saying. Each child is called into the Atrium one at a time just as the Good Shepherd calls us each by name. During the month of September, the following materials were introduced: the Atrium itself; rolling and unrolling of mats; crayons and holders, puzzles and books; the prayer table.

October's presentations will be: Alter I (the alter, chalice, paten, candles, cross, and alter cloth); bean spooning (refinement of movement); 3-D map of Israel; polishing. Please look in the bulletin and the back of the church for a list of materials that we are still lacking. The

majority of the materials are created from scratch, but some of them are purchased. Any help at all that you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

PLEASE NOTE: the Atrium needs to have a planned ending so we will be entering the church each Sunday at 11:00. This may or may not coincide with communion. Our continued practice with speaking and moving will allow us to enter with a minimum of distraction to others. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Peace in your day,
Letitia, Sarah and Suzanne

Children's Eucharist

All children / youth and their parents are invited to attend our monthly children's Eucharist, held downstairs on **October 8** at 10:30.

UNITED THANK OFFERING INGATHERING Sunday, November 19 SUNDAY BEFORE "THANKS" GIVING

We will be collecting our little blue boxes again for the fall ingathering on November 19. Additional boxes have been placed in the back of the church and in Tuttle Hall for those who need one. There is plenty of time left to give thanks for blessings by dropping coins into your UTO box and offering prayers.

Questions I have received:

What is UTO?

The United Thank Offering is a ministry of the Episcopal Church. It helps to nurture the habit of giving daily thanks to God and discovering that thankfulness often leads to generosity. All offerings are used to support grants for ministries at home and overseas as an outreach of the Episcopal Church.

What does UTO support specifically?

The United Thank Offering funds many things such as:

- Kitchen equipment for a homeless shelter
- Playground for a child-care center
- Handicap access in church and service buildings
- A school in the Dominican Republic
- Family counseling
- A dental clinic for the poor
- Half-way houses

- After school programs
- Vans and other vehicles
- A library for a seminary in Africa

What do I do with the blue box?

You can become an important part of UTO in the following ways:

- Offer thanks and prayers as a part of your life in Christ
- Take the opportunity to put an offering in your UTO box
- Bring your offering box, envelope or check to church on Ingathering Day (**November 19**)

If you have additional questions please call me at 698-2341. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this wonderful outreach and I thank each of you for your ongoing support. We can all feel proud of what we accomplish together.

Many blessings,
Tricia Dirks

Affirmations 2006 - 2007

The Affirmation Series of lectures and workshops offers a vehicle to help people develop intellectually and spiritually. Lectures, workshops and retreats are open to anyone seeking a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

The Episcopal Diocese of Utah
Resources for Ministry
80 South 300 East
P.O. Box 3090
Salt Lake City, UT 84110-3090
Phone: 801-595-5362
Fax: 801-322-5096
Email: jhatch@episcopal-ut.org

October 27, 2006 – 10:00am until 12:30pm Workshops at Davis Conference Center

Resources for Life-Long Learning introduces participants to some exciting and useful print materials for children, teens, young adults, and parish adults by those in the field: diocesan Youth Coordinator Karen Cramer Van Winkle; The Rev. Joel Nau, Episcopal/Lutheran Campus Minister; The Rev. Lyn Briggs, the Rev. Canon David Bailey, and the Rev. Canon Mary June Nestler. Recommended titles will be available for purchase.

Beyond Coffee and Doughnuts: How Welcoming are You?

Bonnie and Rick Ehrheart of Church Planning Resources are back to offer truths and tools for strengthening your congregation's efforts to welcome friend and stranger. Use as a primer or a refresher. Visit their website at

<http://www.cpronline.org> Recommended materials will be available for purchase.

Care of Creation: What Can We Do About Global Warming?

Moab Mayor and Episcopal priest, David Sakrison, will join other local and regional leaders to present the data, answer questions and offer tips for more carbon-neutral living. Lots of tip sheets and ideas will be available to take-home.

ECW Holiday Bazaar Saturday, November 4 10:00am to 3:00pm Church of the Good Shepherd

Handmade soaps, scarves, socks, pet items, sewing accessories, gifts, holiday and home décor items plus much much more!

Vendor Booths

Featuring Jewelry, Floral Items, Candles, and others. (Contact Linda at 399-0428 if interested in booth space.)

Tea Room & Bake Sale

Treat yourself to a hot cup of tea and delicious lunch or dessert and something wonderful to take home.

Raffle

Featuring: Quilt, St. Nicholas, Wood Puzzle, Sony DVD Camcorder, and much more

Split the Pot

Five prizes, drawn on the hour and ½ the pot drawn on Sunday, November 5

What-Not-Why-Not Sale Bargains galore!

Children's Program

Magic Show by Steve Bauter
Visit with St. Nicholas
& have your picture taken

The Attic will be open

Study Groups

We will continue our discussion on Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* on Tuesdays at 7:00pm and Thursdays at 12:45pm as follows:

October 3 & 5: Book Six, "The Russian Monk"

October 10 & 12: Book Seven, "Alyosha"

October 17 & 19: Book Eight, "Mitya"

October 24 & 26: Book Nine, "The Preliminary Investigation"

October 31 & November 2: Book Ten, "Boys"

Stewardship Sunday October 22, 2006

Please prayerfully consider your pledge and return your card today. A Proportionate Giving Chart is included for your consideration in this Newsletter and will be available in the back of the Church. Thank you for your support.

Rector's Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday, 9:30am - 4:30pm

Friday is Fr. Adam's usual day off. Always feel free to contact him in the event of a hospitalization or a pastoral emergency at the office (392-8168) or at home (605-1883).

Parish Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8:00am - noon, 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Fridays the office will close at 3:00pm.

Phone: 392-8168

Fax: 627-7026

Email: goodshepherd -ut@qwest.net

Website: www.goodshepherdogden.org

October Birthdays...

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP)

1. Meghan Gill
2. Tiffany Arnett, Richard Brown
5. Mattie Wilson
8. Jamie Mansfield
9. Brandon Lemings
10. Adrienne Mansfield
11. Adam Linton
13. Dorothy Paine
16. Aaron Anderson, Sandy Moss
17. John Gardiner
23. Tom Clarke
25. Lewis Gale
26. Brad Lowe
27. Gerry Clute
28. Pete Poggemeyer
30. Candice Gale
31. Alex Coy

October Anniversaries...

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their lives. Amen (BCP)

2. Jan & Gerry Clute
5. Jerry & Nancy Groshart
10. Ron & Julia Ingoldsby
29. Charles & Shirley Campbell

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"Wherever you are in your faith journey, we are blessed to have you with us. At whatever level you find it helpful, we are happy to be available as a spiritual resource – as a place to visit, a way station, or if you be so led, as a home in faith."