



The St. David's Epistle

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Issue 1
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What is Success?

This month I had the opportunity to travel to New Hampshire for a conference for young clergy. The theme for the event was "Vitality and Effectiveness: Sharing Stories in the Missionary Church." There were talks and reflections, presentations from other clergy, and a lot of unstructured discussion time to encourage one another and gain new ideas and approaches to the work we are doing in our own parishes and communities.

The question at the heart of our discussion was how to identify success in the modern parish. For a long time the church has used attendance and money as the main criteria in the health and success of a parish. It is the feeling of many church leaders that while these are important measures of a parish, they are not the best way to quantify their success. They focus solely on size and don't give any information regarding the heart and soul of a parish. Our time in New Hampshire focused less on numbers and more on stories. We kept coming

back to the fact that, in ministering to the community, transformation and new life was most important. Jesus sends us out to make disciples and to invite people into the amazing new life of the church. We felt that in collecting our stories of transformation and new life, we would have a better idea of the impact we are having on the world.

This is where things get tricky. How do you measure and compare stories and transformation? Well...you don't.

It turns out that we were not actually talking about a new way to measure success and health in our churches. We were discussing a way to describe and understand the impact and importance of what we are doing and why we are doing it. This can help us to evaluate if it is worth the doing, but it cannot be measured.

Transformation is something that God does and we are invited into it. It is not something we do and it is not something we can measure; it is something observed and lived. The church is not

about measurement even though we have always tried to make it so (just look at our recent Gospel reading where the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest). The church is in the business of new life and transformation.

I hope you have been and are being transformed by God here at St. David's. My prayer is that you are connected to the life of this parish and find God in the many facets of our life together. I also ask that you tell those stories of transformation. And not just to me, but to those in your life who need to hear them. So many of our family and friends, our colleagues and neighbors, need transformation. We all have stories of God's love and grace changing our lives. Please share them. And please consider how those stories can be a part of our story as a parish, connecting us to one another and to God.

As always it is an honor and a pleasure to serve you here at St. David's. I look forward to more of our life together and hope that we can find more and

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Announcements

Blessing of the Pets - On Sunday, Oct. 4th, during church, we will have our annual Blessing of the Pets in connection with the Feast of St. Francis. Bring your family pets to church and we will have a short liturgy and blessing with holy water. (If you have a beloved pet that doesn't get along as well with other pets, please bring them by after the service (around 11:30) and Fr. Kris will bless them privately. We don't want anyone to be left out!

Fall Clean Up Day - On October 10, we will have our Fall Clean Up Day to clean up the grounds and also do some weeding and gardening here at St. David's. Pizza lunch will follow in the Youth Room.

Stewardship Sunday - On Sunday November 22, we will wrap up our stewardship campaign for the year with a lunch. Please plan to attend if you are able.

SHIM Shuffle - On Saturday October 17, join with S.H.I.M. for a 5K fun run and walk. Registration begins at 8 a.m. on the Montour Trail at George Washington Elementary School in Bethel Park and the walk/run will begin at 9 a.m. Proceeds will benefit the South Hills Interfaith Ministries.

This month:

Why Connection Matters

Beginning this month we will be devoting a section of our newsletter to Parish Wellness. We invite you to let us know if there are specific topics you would like to see addressed in this space. Also, we will be placing health and wellness promotion related materials in the narthex in the coming months, so keep an eye out!

If you're like me, the temptation to hit that snooze alarm on Sunday morning can be strong, especially when it comes at the end of a busy week when we've most likely been overscheduled and overstretched. When I'm able to resist that temptation for just a few more minutes of sleep (ok—I'll confess: I usually hit the snooze more than once!) and join all of you for Sunday services, I always feel lighter, brighter, and amazingly, less tired in the end. While the primary reason for this energy boost is the spiritual nourishment I receive, I believe there is another reason, and that is the connection I feel with all of you; the joy of being a part of our church community. While I have always known that I felt better after connecting with family and friends, I didn't realize just how important it was to my overall health and happiness until I started reviewing the literature on this topic. In a nutshell, here's what I discovered:

- We are social beings who thrive on interaction with one another
- Social connection is one of the biggest predictors for health, happiness, and longevity (Stanford University, 2015)
- People who feel more connected with others have lower rates of anxiety and depression (Seppala, 2012)

- Low social connection has been associated with declines in physical and psychological health (Seppala, 2012)
- Social connection strengthens our immune system (Seppala, 2012)
- Social connection may help us recover from disease faster (Seppala, 2012)
- People who have stronger social connections may experience lower blood pressure (Seppala, 2012)
- People are often happier when they are with other people than when they are alone (PBS, 2015)
- Connecting with others is the single most important thing we can do for our happiness (PBS, 2015)

So, what does this all mean? While it's important to exercise, eat your veggies, and get enough sleep, remember—it's equally important, (if not more so) to cultivate relationships and social connections in your life.

Not sure how to do that? Well, speaking from my own experience, St. David's is a great place to start!

- Join us for Sunday services
- Stick around for a cup of coffee afterwards (my husband Craig highly recommends the donuts!)
- Check out Bible Study or the Discipleship Group
- Say hi to someone you haven't met before
- Come to the Farmer's Market on Wednesday evenings
- Sign-up to help with our Community Garden
- Just come!

And while I can't promise I won't ever hit my snooze button one too many times, I'll try my best to join you at St. David's for my much

needed dose of human and spiritual connection. Hope to see you there—here's to your health and mine!

For more tips on getting and staying connected, check out the following website: www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/connecting/getting-connected

References:

Croteau, J., & Ryan, L. (2015). BeWell@Stanford, Stanford University: *Social ties are good for your health*. Retrieved from bewell@stanford.edu on April 20, 2015.

Public Broadcasting Station, WQED (2015). *This Emotional Life: Connecting*. Retrieved on April 20, 2015 from www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/connecting/getting-connected.

Seppala, M., (2012). *Connect to Thrive*. Retrieved from Psychologytoday.com on April 20, 2015.

Healing Words: “A man's spirit can sustain his broken body, but when spirit dies, what hope is left? (Proverbs 18:14)”

- Kathy Carter

Success continued from Pg. .1

more ways to share the wonderful gifts we have with one another, our community and the world.

God bless,

Fr. Kris

Our Children are our Greatest Gift

For many parishes, a lack of young families and children is a big problem. St. David's is very blessed

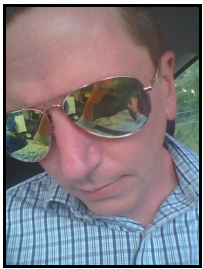
with a bounty of God's Children. I am thankful for these children every day and am honored to love and



serve them and hope they know the Love of Christ through the work of our team of volunteers. Every one of us is part of the spiritual growth of these children-it is part of our Baptismal covenant with them! I would like to invite you all to join our children's ministry team. We need story tellers and people to help in the classrooms. You don't need to know all the answers, you may be of any age, and with or without children of your own. Please, prayerfully consider serving with us on a rotating basis. It's a wonderful way to experience Jesus in a new way.

- Jen Yoon

Parish Spotlight: CraigMcConville



At the annual Vestry retreat in March, members shared their stories of what brought them to St. David's, and what kept them coming

back. The Vestry found this to be such an enjoyable and connecting experience that it sparked an idea: wouldn't it be great to extend this opportunity to the entire church? So, beginning this month, the Ministry Committee will begin shining the Parish Spotlight on a member of St. David's who is willing to share their story...thanks Craig McConville for being our first brave volunteer!

Craig McConville: Craig has been attending St. David's since February 2014. He has two sons, Jack (4) and Finnigan (10). Craig serves as a LEM, a youth volunteer, and participates in the Family Promise program.

Q: What first brought you to St. David's?

A: I was first invited to St. David's by someone I was dating. When that relationship ended. I continued to attend.

Q: What kept you coming back to St. David's?

A: I immediately felt welcomed. I met Adam and Beth White when I

started coming and they, along with everyone else, were so welcoming and friendly. I especially liked the way they were with the kids. Jack and Finn really enjoyed coming and wanted to keep coming. I really needed a calm and relaxing place to be at that time in my life and I found that here at St. David's. I grew up Catholic and even though I hadn't been to church in 10 years, I liked certain aspects of the Catholic liturgy that seemed to be present in the Episcopal services. I met with Father Kris a number of times when I first started coming and really enjoyed my conversations with him. It felt like I had come to the right place at the right time. When I first began coming to St. David's I lived in the Peters area. I have since moved and live 40 minutes away, but this is my church home now, and I will keep coming back.

- Craig & Kathy Carter

Budget Synopsis August 2015

Ordinary Income/Expense	<u>Jan - Aug 15</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>
Income			
40000 · Pledges	45,372.35	49,333.36	91.97%
41500 · Non-Pledge Contributions	8,906.70	8,833.28	100.83%
41600 · Special Days	298.00	800.00	37.25%
43400 · Building Use Income	55,935.88	40,281.00	138.86%
46400 · Other Types of Income	12,023.28	11,250.00	106.87%
47500 · Subsidies	26,500.00	26,500.00	100.0%
49500 · Farmers' Market	11,435.00	0.00	100.0%
49900 · Community Garden	800.00	250.00	320.0%
Total Income	<u>161,271.21</u>	<u>137,247.64</u>	<u>117.5%</u>
Expense			
62000 · Administration	3,603.24	3,547.00	101.59%
62800 · Facilities and Equipment	6,612.62	6,210.73	106.47%
63300 · Insurance Expense	4,785.87	7,476.00	64.02%
64600 · Ministry Expenses	6,539.62	5,132.84	127.41%
65000 · Operations	0.00		
66000 · Payroll Expenses	88,674.99	85,283.64	103.98%
67200 · Repairs and Maintenance	18,222.49	15,283.28	119.23%
68600 · Utilities	23,361.38	24,283.28	96.2%
69400 · Off-Budget Purchases	2,540.00		
Total Expense	<u>154,340.21</u>	<u>147,216.77</u>	<u>104.84%</u>
Net Income	<u>6,931.00</u>	<u>-9,969.13</u>	<u>12.67%</u>

A note about pledge enclosures - Last year, when we calculated pledges, we took the per week amount on the cards and figured them on a 52 week/year basis, which is how they are reflected on the enclosed pledge sheets. If the annualized amount on your sheet is more than you intend to give this year, please let Brianne in the office know, so that we can plan accordingly. We are going to use a different format for this year's stewardship campaign to avoid possible confusion next year. If we mistook your intended pledge we apologize. Thank you.

Stewardship

Each fall we devote some time to talking about how we use the gifts God has given us. We call this "stewardship." While much of the talk will be about financial gifts, money is only a part of the whole picture of stewardship. We believe that all we have is a gift from God and stewardship is about exploring how we are called to give of those gifts for the work of God's mission in the world. We will discuss this question and invite the whole congregation into this conversation as we look to preparing for the coming year.