

Sailing into a Second Century

St. Andrew's Sermons
The Rev. John D. Rohrs
4 Easter; April 29, 2012

The Cornerstone of Our Capital Campaign

In our first reading today, we find the apostles in prison. They've been arrested for healing the sick and proclaiming the resurrection, actions that clearly do not sit well with the temple authorities. "By what power are you doing these things?" they ask. "In whose name are you spreading this message?" In response, Peter gives an answer that sounds cryptic to us but would be quite clear to his jailors. He quotes Psalm 118 and says, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." What he means is that Jesus – crucified and resurrected – is the cornerstone. He is the bedrock, the foundation of all that they do.

That was true for the apostles then and it remains true for us. Proclaiming Christ may not carry the same risk today, but it's still why we're here. For the last 100 years, this parish has done just that – proclaimed the gospel and shared Christ's love in the world. For six months now we've been celebrating our centennial, remembering the saints of this church and the milestones of our history, giving thanks for our ministry in this neighborhood and beyond. But beneath all of this, the foundation of life in this church has always been the love and example of Christ. He has been the cornerstone, and continues to be as we enter a new century.

I wanted to highlight this image of a cornerstone because as most of you know, this morning we formally launched our capital campaign. On the surface, the campaign has a lot of bricks and mortar – a new heating and air system, new windows, renovated bathrooms and kitchen and social halls – but look deeper and you will see that it is much more. Once again, Jesus is the cornerstone, and these projects are really about building our capacity to extend his love into the world.

When I think of expanding our playground, I hear Jesus' command to welcome the children, and I think of generations of kids who have played on the grounds of this church. When I imagine renovated bathrooms and doors and walkways, I hear Jesus offering hospitality to those who are older or sick or in need. When I picture upgrades to our kitchen, I hear Jesus asking us to feed the

hungry and to sustain our ministry to homeless folks and those living with HIV/AIDS. When I see a new heating and air system and windows, I hear Jesus praising the lilies of the field, and encouraging us to care for God's creation.

These projects matter because they enable our mission; they improve our capacity to extend the love of Christ. None of the projects are real fancy or grandiose, but we aren't a grandiose church. We are people of gentle faith who try to live with conviction and compassion. We're a neighborhood church with a heart for the world, and Jesus has always been the cornerstone of all that we do.

Many of you have been working hard on this campaign. Many have made donations already and many more will give in the weeks ahead. Some of you will share your time and talent. Others will lend your prayers. All of that is important. We're off to a tremendous start, and we want everyone to feel a part of this effort. To each and every person here, I say thank you for your commitment and generosity. Thank you for sustaining the mission and ministry of St. Andrew's. Thank you for coming together in this centennial moment and proclaiming once again that Christ is risen and that he is the cornerstone, the foundation of our life in this special place. Amen.