



March 2018

# The Habit

*Reaching out in the Community*



Dear Habitual Friends

## RECTOR'S STATEMENT OF NEEDS – VESTRY MEETING, 25 February 2018

Last Sunday, as we looked at God's Covenant with Noah, I drew your attention to the closing words of our Eucharistic Prayers – or Prayers of Thanksgiving:

**With him, in him, and through him.**

- **with Jesus** – walking *with* Jesus through life as with a best friend. "Follow me!"
- **in Jesus** – becoming one with him in our Baptism and journey through life all the way to our death and resurrection. We are reminded how he said to his disciples, "I *in* you, you *in* me and us *in* the Father." "Remain *in* me."
- **through Jesus** – Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. "No one comes to the Father but *through* me."

We looked at the Covenant / Agreement which God made with Noah. Noah was a man who walked *with* God, remained *in* the ark (a symbol of Christ's Body – the Church if you wish) and was saved *through* remaining in the ark.

As we meet in Vestry this year, our Scriptures remind us of how God builds on the Noah Covenant as he renews his Promise to Abraham and Sarah: "**I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.**" We know and believe today that even then God was pointing to the everlasting Covenant he would establish with us in his Son Jesus. God could reiterate his everlasting Covenant with Abraham because he was a man who walked *with God*, remained faithful to God (remained rooted *in God*) and trusted God's promise of providence and salvation *through God's* actions.

In our **Parish 2020 Vision**, we have first of all encouraged parishioners to make a commitment to Jesus and be **Anchored in the love of Christ**, and then to **Grow in that Love**. Walking life with Jesus as our friend and getting to know Jesus better and better, we identify with and become more **Committed to God's Mission** to all people, realizing that God's mission in Jesus' mission and that Jesus' mission needs to be our mission, if we walk with him.

Over the past three years of our **Vision 2020** process God has indeed blessed us greatly with teaching, insight as we have encouraged one another to forge a more intimate relationship with Jesus through commitment and prayer and then to reach out to each other and the community as we encourage growth in discipleship and service. These spiritual actions have been mirrored in what we can see – our greening projects and establishing of our *Prayer Garden*, our publication and wide sharing of our little *Prayer Book, Anchored in the Love of Christ*, our going out on mission to neighboring parishes last year, our reaching out to the community in various ways like contributions and involvement in the soup kitchens, our food parcel outreach and our prayer outreach recently through *Whispers of Wonder*. Have we done enough? Of course not! Do we need more and deeper commitment in our parishioners? Most certainly! But I believe that we are on the right track.

We're getting there!

I must commend this parish on its dedication to God and God's mission through their sustained financial giving. Over the past seven years that I have been your rector we have tackled some major and costly projects successfully, and never wanted for funds. Once again this past year we have closed off our accounts with a substantial surplus. Thank you!

I also thank everyone – everyone – who has participated with passion and dedication to the ministry and mission in this Parish. God bless you and your reward is lodged with him.

As we look to future years we ask God, with the help of his Spirit, to change our hearts from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh, so that we will be guided more accurately by God's spirit in our teaching, deeds, and actions as we minister to those in the world around us in the freedom and joy of his Spirit.

Service and sacrifice are not words that fall easily on the ears of modern man, yet this is what God calls us to. A few weeks ago I had to quite forcibly draw our attention to this. Jesus does it in our Gospel reading this morning:

**“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.” (Mark 9:34-38)**

Sharing my frustrations, a wise person in the parish remarked that people do not really understand service and sacrifice “because in the modern world people are too used to paying for what they need and receiving instant gratification at the click of a button, rather than using their skills and talents to produce what is needed. If this is so, then perhaps our expectation of a congregation serving in a practical sense seems out of reach, if not plain

foreign to them. In other words, they do not know or understand what their personal **Vocation** is. I'm wondering if part of preparing our congregation isn't in providing them with a means to find and follow their vocation and then to celebrate it by taking that small (all be it shaky) step. It all comes back to building an intimate relationship with God that will enable them to *hear* God and grow excited about their *personal* call by God to work *with* God." I agree with this completely!

So, please dear friends in Christ, let us look this coming year at increasing our commitment to service and sacrifice **with Jesus** to those around us. This calls for elbow grease as much as money.

This coming year, apart from our growing spirituality through actions like Whispers of Wonder, we have a Garden to plant and we need to apply our minds more acutely to outreach in the community with prayer, food and clothing, compassionate visits and practical help. Our actions should preach the gospel of Jesus' love and care, loudly and clearly, so that when we disciple individuals, they have already experienced the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us approach our tasks **in the power of Jesus' Spirit** so that through our love, sacrifice and service, we may not only please God here in this world, but take many more of his children Home with us, **through the love of Christ** our Saviour and theirs.

Blessings, *Reggie*



## Prayer Garden Project

**Earthforce Landscapes** has just about completed laying out our Prayer Garden and parish groups should begin planning and planting their gardens. Karien Pechous has generously offered to review each garden layout with the group concerned, so there is plenty of professional advice and help available. Although different groups are going to plant each garden, Karien will help ensure that the Garden still maintains a unity and a 'flow'.

***Ideally we would like to have our gardens completed by Easter this year (1 April) so that they are well established before winter sets in.***

Please phone Alton [072 660 7663] or Beryl [083 388 4652] if you would like to be involved in any way with the evolving Garden.

Please let us know if you would like to purchase one of our Prayer Garden benches, a water fountain, light post or a bird bath, and dedicate it in memory of a loved one.

### **We still require donations for:**

- Glass sliding doors at the back of the Altar in the Chapel. Quotations are being obtained.
- The construction of a deck on the outside of the Chapel, behind the Altar
- Water storage tanks which will be placed below the outside deck to collect more rainwater for the Prayer Garden

# From the Diocese of the Highveld



- **2018 Counselling Courses:**
  - Basic Counselling:** 3, 10, 17, 24 Feb; 3, 10, 17, 24 March, 2018
  - Marriage:** 12 and 19 May 2018
  - Trauma:** August 2018 – Dates to be announced.
- **Diocesan Council Meeting** – 3 March, 08:00, St Dunstan's Cathedral.



## Parish Notices



- 3 March – **Jumble Sale**
- 10 March, 08:30 – **Women's Fellowship**
- 17 March, 08:00 – **Men's Fellowship**; 14:00 – 16:00 **Servers Practice & Baptism Preparation**
- 24 March, 09:00 – 16:00: **Diocesan Lay Minister Trainees- Quiet Day**; 14:00 – 16:00 **Baptism Preparation**
- 25-31 March: **Holy Week** – See pew slip for information

## Dedicated Giving – January, 2018

Month	Amount Dedicated	Amount Received	Surplus + Shortfall -	Accumulated Surplus + / Shortfall -
<b>January</b>	R 110 000.00	R 101 155.00	- R 8 845.00	- R 8 845.00



## Parish Contact Details

Office hours (weekdays): **08.30 - 16.30**

Website

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Rector: [rector@sfc.org.za](mailto:rector@sfc.org.za)

### BANKING DETAILS: *Standard Bank - Alberton*

Account Name: The Parish of St Francis

Account No: 421855282



### TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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