

“Man, I Invite Everybody”

Christ the Redeemer Church
May 30, 2010
Trinity Sunday/Memorial Day

Romans 5:1-5
Rev Gary L. Smith
www.christredeemerchurch.com

I do hope you listen to the end of this sermon today for the Gospel. This is a blended Trinity Sunday and Memorial Day telling of the Good News. I hope you hear the Gospel...the Good News.

Good things happen when Grateful people with good intentions gather for the purpose of doing Good with God's help.

It has been a funny week in the church.

Stephen Jones bought a live donkey last weekend at the Hays Caldwell Women's Center Fundraiser Auction...and gave it to Janice for their 23rd Wedding Anniversary. Not that it matters, but Stephen did graduate from the University of Texas, just so you know.

Janice wrote, "We came home and told the kids that we weren't getting them a new kitten but we had gotten them something better. Mark looked at the picture of a field of donkeys and just looked at us. Alicia looked at the picture and said, "You bought an Ass?" Yesterday, on the way to the restaurant, Mark asked about the bags of horse feed in my van and then asked, "Why did Dad buy a donkey?" I said, "I don't know". Then Mark asked, "Why didn't he let the other guy win?" to which I answered, "Because your Daddy's competitive side kicked into gear".

Even I asked Janice privately, so as not to embarrass her any more, why Stephen bought the donkey. She said, "He recently commented that he is feeling left out because you make more fun of Pinky Jones (the other Steven Jones) more than you do him. He bought the donkey so that you would make fun of him publicly again." It worked. Stephen has to buy attention from his pastor.

Last Sunday morning 8-year-old Kaley, whose life is full of challenges and change recently, read a letter to her dog in heaven last Sunday during Children's sermon. Her dog died last week. Kaley was crushed and told her dog in a letter that she would come straight to see him someday when she gets to heaven. Her letter gripped all of our hearts.

Many Sunday mornings Bobette's granddaughter and Lorell's daughter Piper comes to the altar for communion. She was born with one arm. Serving her communion always deeply touches me.

Carla had her plate full the past three weeks as she had one mastectomy and reconstructive surgery following a year of treatment and last year's mastectomy. Things did not go smoothly and she ended up being the only woman we all know who has been

special enough to have three mastectomies. The prayers of an entire church have been riveted to that hospital room in San Antonio.

Tuesday night our church softball team, playing in a non-church post-season play for the first time ever, braced for getting spanked badly in the tournament. All the other church teams have been trounced and eliminated. Only CTRC still remains in the tournament.

Yesterday 18 of us were able to go on the Painted Churches of Texas tour led by Larry and Sherry Wyatt. We toured four beautiful German built cathedral type churches built in the 1800's by German immigrants. We also toured one buffet restaurant and one German pub and dance hall. When you go on a tour with Larry – any tour – you eat well!

In the cemetery of one German church are buried 9 German military soldiers. They served their new country, the United States of America, including serving in the European theater during World War II against the Nazi regime. One of the soldiers was a Lt. Col chaplain during World War II.

These words were on the monument honoring these 9 soldiers. “For God and Country. To the honor and glory of the sons of the Praha Parish Community who died on the Battlefields, and to all veterans who served to keep our country free.”

I keep church and state issues separate in my life and in this church. To do so is to be an American. Reading the words on that monument written by the families of German immigrants here in Texas deeply touched me. Soldiers serve to protect our freedoms.

Janice got a donkey for her 23rd anniversary.

Two months ago Jerry Moore watched Piper take communion. He is a lifetime Mason and Shriner, having just received his 60-year pins in a ceremony this past week. He asked Bobette if he could sponsor Piper to seek getting an artificial arm for Piper through the Shriners. Bobette's father had been a Mason. She is an Eastern Star. But her father is deceased so he could not sponsor her. Jerry initiated sponsoring her after watching little Piper take communion with one arm here in this place.

This past week the Shriner's in Dallas approved fully paying for a prosthetic arm for Piper. Fully fund it.

After the children's sermon last Sunday when little Kaley read a letter telling her deceased dog that she would come see him as soon as she gets to heaven someday, Brenda Smith went up to Kaley and offered to give her Brenda's dog named D-O-G...pronounced Di – Oh –Gee with a soft G. Kaley needed a new dog and DOG needed someone to walk her daily and love her. When Kaley sits on the grave of her recently buried dog, DOG comes and comforts her.

We are losing three key members of our church this coming week.

Mark, Don, and Bert are converting to Catholic faith. While 15 of us were inside the German Catholic churches admiring in awe the spectacular ornate icons of the Faith which adorned every church, these three men were outside and found the most spectacular bar-b-q pits ever built by man-kind...built with German architect and skill and functionality in mind. HUGE bar-b-q pits built behind the German churches, on the church grounds, for church bar-b-ques. Mark was speechless, having never seen such a system of bar-b-q pits. Near by were refrigerators...for locally brewed German beer for the church picnics. Bert, Don, and Mark converted to German Catholicism on the spot. Sold.

We won both games Tuesday night. We are in the city championship game Tuesday night at 9 pm, one of three teams left out of 21 open league teams. No one can believe we won the three games so far in the non-church league.

After the game a guy on another team named Rico came up to me and said, "My son is playing in a Christian Band at your church next month." I had no idea what he was talking about. I assumed he had the wrong church and told him that he had the wrong minister. He said, "No, Steve Jones invited my son and his band to play at your Vacation Bible School every night of your VBS in June."

I laughed so hard and said that is wonderful. I called Pinky and told him the story. Pinky said, "Man, I invite Everybody I know to our church. I kept meaning to tell you that I invited his son and his band." Our VBS Theme is Backstage, focusing on Christian music and singing in the Lord.

The Mason's were originally the highly organized guild of skilled architects and builders (masons) who traveled Europe several hundred years ago and built the great Cathedrals in Europe. Now a Mason in San Marcos is helping a girl named Piper to build a more complete life by equipping her with a second arm.

And Carla read the scripture here this morning in front of us. God the Architect in Life has more plans for her life.

It is a wonderful country where we are free to do so much good if we just unite, connect, focus, and try. That will honor all of the soldiers who gave the last full measure of their lives for the freedom we have. Freedom to go good. Amen.