

Proper 6 Year A
June 18, 2017
St. James Episcopal Church:
Wheat Ridge, Colorado
By the Rev. Deb Angell

**HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED
THE FACT THAT WE ARE ALL STORYTELLERS?
YES, WE EACH HAVE A STORY TO TELL....**

In many ways we are surrounded by stories.
When we walk into this space at St. James
the very nature of the room...tells a story.

Yes, this is a church and we are the people.

We come together to learn about God's love, to praise God
and to be empowered to go out into the world
to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

OUR STORY and HISTORY

Dr. Allen du Pont Breck wrote a book about the history of
"The Episcopal Church in Colorado 1860-1963"
St. James mission Wheat Ridge was begun in 1953
with the purchase of a house at the corner of 44th and Brentwood.

My family moved from Aurora to Lakewood in 1955.
There's a picture of me standing next to the hole
where our basement would be build.
Our home parish was St. Paul's in Lakewood.
Like so many we moved from the city to suburbia....

If you look at the pictures of the priests who served at St. James-
Norman C. Middleton is the first priest pictured.
He was the first vicar of St. James. , He became the rector of St. Paul's.
Fr. Middleton was my parish priest as I grew up
and I went to school with his younger daughter Mary Len.

I am grateful for the impact that Fr. Middleton had on my life
and on the lives of those who worshipped at 44th and Brentwood.

After I was ordained to the priesthood I spent time
with Fr. Middleton and his wife Mary Jane.

One day Fr. Middleton and I walked around the sanctuary at St. Paul's. He told me the stories behind the stained glassed windows.

Each window was given as a memorial for one of the early members of the parish. He shared some funny stories.

I had the privilege to serve at Fr. And Mrs. Middleton's joint memorial service in Greeley.

BIBLE STORIES:

Each Sunday when we come together we spend much of our time listening to, and remembering stories...

Originally these stories were not written down they were shared orally...

"Let me tell a story about a man named Abraham."

On Monday I spent time with Mother Becky talking about this Sunday and the lessons that were going to be read.

The Story about Abraham and Sarah captured our imaginations.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu: has retold some of our favorite stories from the Bible. They are published in the *Children of God: Storybook Bible*.

Here is Desmond Tutu's version of the story that we heard this morning...

"Abraham was sad because he and his wife, Sarah, had no children. God told him to pack up everything and to go to a whole new land to begin a whole new life. Abraham trusted God, so he and Sarah left their home and family and began a long hard journey..."

They wandered for so many years they grew too old to have babies. One night, God said "I am giving this land to you and your children and your children's children..."

One long, hot day, Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent. Three strangers appeared and Abraham ran to greet them. "Please come and rest," he said. "Here is cool water to wash your feet. I will bring food so you can eat."

Sarah baked bread with her best flour, and Abraham prepared a young calf for a feast. When the food was ready, he served the strangers himself.

The visitors were pleased with how kind and generous Abraham was.

“We are angels sent by God” the visitors said.

When we return, Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was listening from the tent and chuckled.

“I am too old to have a baby.”

The angel said “Nothing is too hard or too wonderful for God.”

And, just as promised, Sarah gave birth to a baby boy. She said, “God has given me a child to bring laughter into my heart.”

Abraham and Sarah thanked God and named their son Isaac, which means “Laughter.”” (*Children of God Storybook Bible pp. 18-21 Zonderkidz edited by Douglas C. Abrams, 2002*)

Abraham and Sarah offered hospitality to the three strangers.

Abraham and Sarah trusted God. They were not afraid.

Their faithfulness was rewarded: ultimately Isaac was born....

ST. JAMES HOSPITALITY

St. James is community that offers hospitality to strangers.

I know that my husband and I have experienced a warm welcome.

Yes, we’ve been friends with Mother Becky for a long time, but you have welcomed us with open arms... Thank you....

DINNER CHURCH: Love, Pray, Eat

This our new Sunday evening service. Invite your friends.

New comers or visitors are warmly welcomed.

This evening we will attempt to sing a new hymn set to Rod Stewart’s song: Maggie May. (Come if you want to be thoroughly entertained.)

AN OBSERVATION

We live in a world where people don’t take the time to get to know a stranger.

My good friend Mark lives in Salida. He's an artist.
The Fib-ark races are taking place this weekend

The FIB-Ark stand for "First In Boating the Arkansas River."
There are whitewater boat races.
Paddlers from around the nation and world come to compete.

In an email Mark wrote about his disappointment.
"The town is filled with visitors attending the "Fib-ark" races.
The sidewalks are crowded.
Instead of looking up and saying hello
most of the visitors are looking down-
concentrating on getting from point A to Point B.

There's something wrong with that picture!!!

A SUGGESTION

At St. James we each can tell our story. We tell our story when we greet one another. We tell our story when we invite folks to join us. We tell our story when we take the time to listen to another person's story.

This summer St. James will host the Wheat Ridge Farmer's market.
Mother Becky is encouraging members of St. James to sign up to offer hospitality to those who will be shopping.

People from all around will come to the corner of 44th and Brentwood looking for food and perhaps something more....a friendly greeting, a place to rest in the shade, a cup of cold water and the chance to meet someone new.

I invite you to come and be part of the action.
Do what you can to make our visitors feel at home.
Be Real.....

One way to tell your story is to show others that:
Love is practiced here...

Amen...