

Bread for the Journey

This is not a “State of the Church” speech. This is not a look back. We’ve done that in photos and thanksgivings, and I’ve done that in pages of fascinating texts in the Annual Meeting Report. Don’t miss it.

I do want, however, simply to note that this church has done extraordinary work in

- Changing the atmosphere: We’ve become downright, and unapologetically positive, can-do, life-giving

Shifts have occurred in

- Asking more of yourselves, with greater giving and greater participation
- Taking pride in our place in history and our delight in today
- Claiming, articulating & living into our present mission in our current context
- Cleaning house as an act of hospitality and worship
- Investing in a bright tomorrow
- Courageously self-examining ourselves
- Expanding relationships
- Creating non-threatening, non-churchy events and programs to invite non-churchy people to see us as we are
- Faithfully inviting people to visit
- Built a powerful children’s program that offers a wonderful non-traditional way of forming young Christians

Now that we have begun all of this wonderful work, I’ve taken stock with others of just what are we offering you in return for your investment in Trinity? It’s become clear that I can no longer put the lifelong Christian formation for adults on the backburner. What once, quite frankly, seemed a luxury, given all of the other pressing needs of the church, has become a necessity. Trinity needs to offer ways to facilitate spiritual growth, ways of nurturing the spiritual path outside of the cloister of worship, open up avenues for real, shared dialogue about spiritual matters.

Kristin LaTour, has taken the lead once more. She’s offering not one but two opportunities for discussion: a weekly bible study (Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m.) and a quarterly book study (next Saturday at 3 p.m.). This is wonderful.

To add to Kristin’s beginning, we will be offering a study of the bible for all ages. We’ll be reading *The Story*, and *The Story for Kids*. Next week we roll out the program, but I have the first shipment of books, so if you want to get an early

start, you can. If you want to wait, but plan to buy a book (they're slightly cheaper than list price from us, but widely available if you want to go elsewhere).

The Story is not the Bible. It's a real starting place however. What it does is give us the plot, the storyline of the bible with its fascinating characters, from beginning to end. It's a greatly abridged version of the Bible that puts the narrative out front, stripping away all that bogs it down. *The Story for Kids* is for younger readers, covering the exact same material, chapter by chapter.

They're 31 Chapters. They're not long. We can do this. We can read *The Story*, a chapter a week, as a community, over the year, with even a summer break. And most importantly we can talk about it.

There will be a study group to talk about it both before and after church. 8 am and 10:30 am on Sunday mornings. We'll mix it up as to how we approach the text; we'll have tapes to watch, speakers to listen to, and most of all good conversation about *The Story*.

This will be the formal time to talk about it. We hope you will take advantage of it! And still I wonder, if you find the material as good and interesting as I hope you will, perhaps informal times you spend talking about it – at home, over dinner with a friend, on the tennis courts, wherever it may be -- may become even more important.

We'll talk about it more next Sunday morning, when we'll also have more copies.

There's also a picturebook coming. Should be here next week, too. This will be for our littlest readers. I'm not sure if it tracks completely with *The Story* and *The Story for Kids*, as I haven't seen it yet, but in any case it should be an excellent addition to your child's library.

So, if last year's theme was the year of invitation, this year we plan to spend some time breaking "Bread for the Journey."

The simple decorations for this meeting this year – the little signs on the walls, the bread at your tables, are markers of how the church is reclaiming its role to provide multiple avenues for spiritual nourishment for you and your family as together we travel the spiritual path we've been given.

May 2010 usher in a new sense of wonder and delight in your heart and mine.

How can it not?

The Rev. Charles A. de Kay
Annual Meeting, Trinity Episcopal Church
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