

SERMON - THE 10TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY - 16 AUGUST 2009
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

1 Cor. 12:4-7 (ESV)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. [7] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Wednesday, after Lilianne and I got home from church and had some supper, we were able to catch a concert on TV. The final piece of which was Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor with Joshua Bell as the soloist. It was incredibly beautiful.

If you familiar with that particular piece of music you will know what I mean, but if you are not it is a most complex composition and I would imagine very difficult to play both from the soloist's and the orchestra's positions.

I reflecting on the performance and the music, I was reminded of Paul's words in today's Epistle, in how he talks about spiritual gifts.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Each person is given his or her unique gifts but those gifts are for the use of the common good, for the common good of the Church, the church in the true sense of the ecclesia, the gathering, the parish.

Just as each member of that orchestra had his or her unique part of the arrangement to play in the concert, each one of us here at St. John's has our individual and exclusive part to play in our effort to spread the Word of God.

Can you imagine what would happen, what kind of cacophony and discord would result

if only one member of that orchestra decided to play another piece of music that he or she liked better. Can you imagine the effect if each member of the orchestra, or if even one member of that orchestra, decided to play at a different tempo than what the director was articulating.

It is no different in a parish. If only one member decides their way is better than the common good or the priest's direction, there is going to be discord.

We are each given those gifts by God to further His parish not our own individual agendas.

Also, if we do not use those special gifts, those special talents that God has given us we are just like the poor servant who buried his one talent. We all know what happened to him. Matthew 25:28-29 (ESV) *So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. [29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*

Even if we are only given the gift of one talent, that one talent is supposed to be used for God.

Lilianne and I attended a weekend retreat one time that was directed to discover or discern what our particular spiritual gifts were. As it turned out mine were identified as missionary and hospitality to which our Rector remarked that I could go into the mission field and improve two parishes at the same time.

OK! Here come the pitch.

I know that a lot of you are already aware of what I am about to discuss this morning with you but I would like to bring everyone up to date as to this matter. We have been told, told not formally informed in writing, that the Lutheran Synod wants us to move out by no longer than the end of our current lease period which is September 24th next year.

Your Mission Committee and our Building Committee has been discussing this situation and has been exploring options for our future location. These options will be presented to you in our Annual Meeting on October 25th and we will decide together what direction we will take as a parish at that time.

No matter what option we adopt it will take all of us, working in cooperation, working hard in cooperation to accomplish what ever option we decide to follow. It will take our time, our talents and our treasure to do it.

I know we can do it. We are St. John's.

Meanwhile I ask your prayers for those of us whom you have chosen to lead this parish that we can discern God's will in this matter.

If you have any questions as to what you can do individually, please come and talk with me during the week.

Go Bless Us All.

Amen.

