

VICAR'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH

My Dear Friends,

I want to thank all of you for attending our congregational meeting last Sunday (July 23) and for your interest in our church locally, nationally and internationally. As a church family, St. Michael's has been blessed in so many ways. In the past nineteen years and by God's grace, we have steadily grown from a congregation of less than thirty to more than two hundred members. We have been able to acquire our own beautiful church building and be able to worship God in more comfortable surroundings. Our ministry and outreach programs have affected hundreds, even thousands of people in various ways. We have grown into a loving church family where we love each other and share in fellowship with one another. For all these things we must be thankful to Almighty God.

We need to continue to foster the loving, caring and united nature of our family. This is not to be at the cost of our wider church in the diocese, nationally or internationally because we cannot build walls around ourselves and think that the wider Church does not exist. Nevertheless, Christ prayed to his Father for our unity asking him that we may be one as they are one (John 17: 20-23). It is the love and unity that we have for each other that will shine forth to those in the world, particularly to those in our community and of which people would want to be a part. It is the things that we have in common and not on our differences that must be emphasized. Support for one another rather than the criticism of each other must be encouraged and even if we disagree, let it be exercised in love and affection for the individual.

We are in the process of completing the construction of our Lower Level. This is a goal that we face together with excitement so that we can minister even more effectively to others within our community. The Four Corners 4-H Club, of which one of our young people is a member, will be meeting in our building on a monthly basis. They like our facilities and location and are already planning to participate in our Fall Clean-Up Day in September. They already see themselves as part of our extended family. We need to work fervently at finishing our lower level so that we can continue to reach out to people and organizations like the 4-H Club and to provide a ministry that will impact our community in remarkable ways. These are the kinds of things on which we must be focused, always mindful that these things help us to live out our calling which is to "restore all people to unity with God in Christ."

My friends, we have a lot of work and ministry to do in this part of God's vineyard and I believe that St. Michael's have great potential to stand out as a beacon on a hill. Each one of us has gifts which are important to the strengthening of the ministry of our church. Ironically enough, we are physically located on a hill and through our continued love for God and one another, we have a wonderful opportunity to transform people's lives through the way we love and touch them.

Let us therefore concentrate on and make every effort to pursue the things that make for peace and ways in which we can support one another. This has always been our strong point as a church and we must continue in this way. Let us be a people who believe that all things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8: 28) and therefore we can with fervency carry on the mission of the church knowing full well that God is guiding us as we seek to do his will.

With profound love and appreciation of your ministry!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Tony