



But while the son was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him....And they began to celebrate.

+Luke 15:20,24

Greetings again from the St. Paul Giving Campaign Team,

One of Jesus' most famous parables is usually called, "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." Jesus told his disciples this parable to teach them, and now us, about the merciful, generous nature of God. And because "prodigal" means extravagant or over-the-top, that word is better applied to the father in the story.

The son comes home hoping for a modest meal in exchange for an apology. But before he can say a word, his father lavishes him with love and makes preparations for a party. For the prodigal parent, only a splendid celebration of his son's return home will do.

Jesus says that God - the Prodigal Parent - puts grace into action this way: welcoming us home even when we don't "deserve" it; forgiving us completely before we can even ask; and treating just the sight of us as cause for extravagant joy.

At our best, this sort of celebratory welcome is what St. Paul is all about. Welcoming visitors and regulars alike into the beautiful choreography of worship and celebration. We strive to be a community of joy - prodigal, extravagant, and free - for anyone who longs for a meal, an embrace, and the reassurance that they are not alone.

This welcome is about repairing the world through love, one celebration at a time. That's "Grace in Action." You can hear it in the language we use: when we celebrate Communion, a Baptism, Easter, Christmas, our Confirmation Class, and all the saints who have gone before us at St. Paul for more than 150 years.

On the other side of this letter, you'll find a brief testimony from Justine Holcomb about what this prodigal celebration feels like here at St. Paul. We hope you'll read their thoughts on joy in our life and work together.

And speaking of celebration: we're looking forward to celebrating Giving Sunday with you on November 20. That will be a party you won't want to miss!

Grace and joy,

Bill McKinnon
Jack Warner
Brandan Dainas



Testimony from Justine Holcomb

St. Paul is a place of celebration to me because it is always welcoming or loving, no matter who you are, what's going on in your life or how seemingly perfect or imperfect you've been. It's a place of warmth and cheer, filling empty cups.

The story of the Prodigal Son reminds me of a great quote from the documentary about the rescue of the boys soccer team from the cave in Thailand "The Trapped 13: How We Survived The Thai Cave". It says "Generosity is the beginning of everything."

Generous Celebrations. Amen.