

## Making Room for God

“It’s not about me ...” John the Baptist tried to tell the Priests and Levites, the official Jewish delegation sent by the Pharisees, “It’s not about me...”

John told them that he was a “witness.” He was preparing the way for the Messiah, the true light. “It is not about me... It’s about Jesus...”

Later we read in St. John’s Gospel that the Baptist points to Jesus and proclaims, “He must increase and I must decrease.” (John 3:30) I love our statue here in the front of the church. It reminds me of John’s Advent message in every season. “He must increase and I must decrease.” “It’s not about me, it’s about Jesus.”

John the Baptist’s ministry led people to make room for Jesus; make room in their hearts and minds; make room in their lives; make room in the world. For so many, religions the Christian faith is about their own interpretation of the Bible; their own interpretation of Jesus’ teaching. So many make religion about themselves, their own agenda. Some years ago, a book written talked about this. It’s title was “Stealing Jesus.”

Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, likes to talk about the Jesus Movement. He doesn’t say “It’s about the Episcopal Church.” “It’s about my leadership.” He says it is about Jesus. He has said, “It it’s not about love, it’s not about God.” It’s not about me; It’s not about you; It’s about love, about God, about Jesus.

In a week, the world celebrates Christmas. Christmas isn’t about presents, or decorations, or parties. Christmas is about Jesus. I like to see the big sign every year up on Braddock Road that reads, “Jesus is the Reason for the Season.”

We all know St. Luke’s Christmas story. Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem and there is no room for them in the inn. Luke is telling us something very profound. The world has no room for Jesus. Our culture does not have room for Jesus. If we believe Jesus is Lord we have to make room for him. True in the 1<sup>st</sup> century; true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We try to make room for Jesus through the sacraments of the Church in the promises we make at Baptism and the regular receiving of Christ’s Body and Blood. We proclaim Jesus to be our Savior. We promise to put our trust in his grace and love. We say we will follow him as Lord.

St. Paul made room for Jesus after Paul’s conversion on the Damascus Road. Paul’s letters are filled with encouragements for us to make room for Jesus. It’s very practical advice, including:

- Rejoice always; share joy every day.
- Pray without ceasing.
- make prayer a relationship as much as an action; Know God is as close to you as your next breath.
- Give thanks always; thanksgiving enables us to deal with our anxieties.
- Do not “quench” the Spirit; allow the Spirit to guide and comfort you.

Jesus will be with us at the most challenging times of our lives, if we have made room for him.