

The Reverend Kathy Boss

All Saints' Episcopal Church, Littleton, NH

Sermon

January 16, 2022

Second Sunday of Epiphany, All Years

"Abundance"

[Isaiah 62:1-5](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:1-11](#)

[John 2:1-11](#)

[Psalm 36:5-10](#)

What wine we have made here in this time of anxiety and scarcity! You would think starting a curacy in the midst of a pandemic would be marked by keeping your head above water, making due with less than, an empty jug psychologically.

Instead my time at All Saints' has been full of abundance, of good wine—faithful leadership and spiritual companionship, laughter, prayer, study and growth. I leave with a full heart, energized to do God's work as Priest-in-Charge at CGS. I have learned so much from you all!

This wedding at Cana, today's Gospel, is the moment that launches Jesus from Rabbi to his disciples, to his ministry to the multitudes. From here, this wedding, this celebration, the Good News echoes out for generations. As, I feel my time here will echo into my ministry. It is a testament to God's love and grace that Good News and abundance can triumph in times of trial and anxiety.

Just, imagine the anxiety of that young bride and groom in Cana and their families as the wine begins to dwindle. It seems that what they have provided and what others have brought is not enough. Not enough. A crisis, a social fiasco! And yet, as it turns out, it becomes not only enough, but more than enough.

How many of you have been to a wedding where something went gloriously wrong? It poured rain, your cousin Lenny caused a scene, one of the bride's maids, or the bride! Tripped on the way down the aisle. Love, compassion, makes good wine of those moments. They become the thing we laugh and bond over, or remember fondly, the thing that connects us, brings out our compassion, and reminds us that we are human.

In this past year as we've responded to COVID, said goodbye to some of the faithful of our Parish, and had moments of deep anxiety and learning curves, not one moment has gone by here at All Saints' where we have not been grounded in faith and love.

Faith and Love are at the foundation of Christ's work, a Church's work in the world. In them, through the grace of God, scarcity is transformed to abundance.

As a mother myself, I love the interaction in this story. His mother says to Jesus, ""They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."" She knows that he will respond to the need, she has faith.

I have seen how many times over the last year folks have had that initial reaction—either silently or aloud—of it's not my time, my turn, my responsibility. I can't right now. And then, bolstered by faith, by love, by community, you have nonetheless said yes, have done the thing and done it with excellence. During Curtis' leave, I saw that in spades. It was an inspiration.

We see in the wedding at Cana that faith, in this case his mother's faith, is part of the equation, spurring Jesus to act, to provide this sign of hope that has

endured for over 2000 years. He tells the servants what to do. Water becomes Wine. A moment of scarcity and anxiety becomes abundance. His mother knows him, believes in him, has faith in him. This kind of faith plays a large role in Jesus' healing ministry. Over and over Jesus highlights faith as a critical part of healing.

Luke 5: 20 story of the man lowered through the roof:

"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the man, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

Mark 7:29 even the dogs get the crumbs

"And He said to her, "Because of this answer, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

Luke 7:9 Army officer asking for the healing of his servant, so much faith he doesn't think Jesus even needs to come in

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, "I tell you, this is the greatest faith I have found anywhere, even in Israel."

Matthew 9:22 Hemorrhaging woman touches the hem of his robe

Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.

In this time of sickness, fear, division, it is easy to fall into a scarcity mindset, to challenge God, blame God, lose trust in God. Instead you, the faithful of All Saints', have expected the good wine. You have filled those enormous empty jugs with water and created space for God to work. Does it mean that it was all easy? Does it mean that there were not times of anxiety and fear? Of course not! What is the grace of God, is that even in the midst of that, when we see the spirit moving, when we have faith that God is in it, when we surrender and let God, amazing things happen.

My hour for leaving you all came sooner than I expected. But the call came, go forth and share the abundance that you have gathered in your life and ministry, that you have been gifted by God's grace working in others.

You have fortified me with good wine! Your faith in me has helped me to break through barriers of self-doubt, perfectionism, and let me lean into my call. That is a true gift. It is a gift you are constantly giving to one another—the conviction that God is working through all of us, that none of us are in this alone, ever!

This curacy, answering the call to the priesthood, at this point in my life, when my oldest son is around the same age Jesus was in this story, was a big risk. It meant stepping off of a traditional career track, taking on debt, downsizing my lifestyle, and deeply examining my own life and faith.

When I first heard the call from God, that undeniable urge toward service to God through the church, I was very resistant. It was not only, “My hour has not come!” it was, “You’ve got the wrong person!” But God persisted, God, through the faith of one person and another who ignored my protests, encouraged me and pushed me forward, brought me here. I am so grateful!

Thank you all for your companionship on this journey, for your faithfulness, your humor, your example of community. I leave this curacy in the midst of a pandemic, spiking once again, and continued political uncertainty. And still I leave with a deep sense of God’s abundance and love. I see this reality reflected in each and every one of you. Keep the faith, keep it strong. God provides.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! And Praise God abundant in our midst!