

**“Turning Water Into Wine” – Rev. Jennifer Adams
January 17, 2009 - Epiphany 2C – Annual Meeting**

Is there anybody here who can turn water into wine? Just checkin’. Because if there is, this sermon is unnecessary. And frankly if there were someone here who could change water into wine, our budget would probably be unnecessary too, and our planning and pledge drive and organizing and advertising (surely word would get around) and so much of the work we do in this place would not be needed. If there was someone here who could change water into wine, so many of our problems, so many of our challenges would be solved.

And so would many of the world’s problems because if you can turn water into wine you can probably turn salt water, waste water, dirty undrinkable water into water that sustains. And the world needs more of that. Who in watching scenes from Haiti this week wouldn’t have done just about anything to turn concrete slabs into fountains?

If someone here could turn water into wine they could probably also do things like helping the deaf hear and the lame walk; they could do things like multiplying loaves, curing diseases and maybe even raising the dead to life. How many of us as we hear stories from Haiti or even as we live through pieces of our own stories, how many of us wish we could make these kinds of miracles happen?

But this water into wine thing was relatively unique. Which is part of the point of the gospel passage we heard this morning. The story of the wedding at Cana is one of the primary Epiphany stories used to witness to the power of God in Christ. The story tells us that this Jesus while fully human was no ordinary human being. He was God incarnate. And there was power in his touch and love in his vision and so the miracles of transformation and multiplication and healing were a part of his presence in this world.

And so we recognize and we celebrate through those miracles this presence of God, the incarnate Christ. And we worship and we give thanks for God coming to us in him. That’s a big part of what Epiphany is about. But there is more too. This isn’t really all just about the story as it happened then. It’s about Christ’s presence now. Here. In this place. Among these people. And while nobody by themselves can turn water into wine, I have to tell you some of the things I’ve seen happen here. And I’d propose that some of those transformations are nothing short of miraculous.

First of all I’ve watched about 400 individuals become community, and not just any community but Body of Christ for the world. And in this society, the community dimension alone could be considered miracle.

Every Sunday morning in this place I listen to you and I hear words transformed into prayers, ordinary notes become music and that music in our gathering becomes praise.

This week I watched 5000 lbs of food that would have been waste, I watched it become breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert for over 60 families and in the future we’ll feed even more. I

saw nameless, hungry people become those whom we welcome and know by name and I watched a 4 year old little girl and an 80 year old man transformed from mere church attendees into those who serve and feed their neighbors. Miracles? I'd say so.

During the year that was 2009 I watched a daycare center that had lived on the brink of closure begin to breathe in new life, launch off-site and use its own legs to walk. I saw destructive floods in our lower level transformed into cleansing waters. I watched a budget shortfall transformed into surplus. And through Stephens and other pastoral care efforts I watched shut-ins, marginalized and hurting people become companions on the journey that is faith.

And every day I watch ordinary men, women and children begin to recognize that they are not only human beings but children of God and if it goes well they also begin to see that the people next to them and ahead of them and behind them and across the street from them are children of God too. And I think that all of those things are miracles too.

So while nobody here alone can change water into wine, things happen among us and through us and around us that proclaim the presence of Christ. This week in our world we will remember and celebrate Dr Martin Luther King Jr and his powerful touch and his vision of love. We will remember words he spoke and actions he led that challenged us to believe in and participate in the work of justice that is miracle. Every day we will hear appeals from Haiti as opportunities to contribute to resurrection open up before us. And today we will gather at our Annual Meeting to reflect on the year that was and look forward to and celebrate the miracles that take place here in this time and in this place and among these people all the time. Miracles of healing, multiplication, reconciliation, transformation, even resurrection are God's presence in our world even now. So this Epiphany, jump in. You just might be the piece the miracle is looking for.

Amen.