



Rev. Rebekah Mitchell

Rebekah's Writin'

June 2017

Party Theology...

June is an interesting month around St. Andrew's. As a church, we're really busy this month. Most of our activities and ministries are wrapping up for the summer. And just about every one of them wants to have a party. There will be wrap-up barbecues and potlucks for GRACE Groups, for the choir, for various committees, for Lunch with the Minister. Plus, we have a number of fellowship activities this month, including the Church Picnic and the Strawberry Social. This is a good thing – as a church it is always good to get together and celebrate.

I've often said that our God throws a party. Think of the parable of the prodigal son – when the son returns, the father welcomes him with a party. All of his misdeeds are forgotten, and he is brought in to celebration, good food and community. This parable – as all parables do – tells us what God is like, and what God's Kingdom is like. Our God is a God who throws a party, who welcomes us home, who forgives our past and prepares a feast.

So when we throw a party, we are doing what God does. Now, as we celebrate another year of working together in God's Kingdom, it is good to remember some of the guiding principles that could help us throw our parties the way God would.

When God throws a party, everyone is welcome. In the parable of the prodigal son, the older brother complains that he never got a party, and the father answers, "my son, you are always with me and everything I have is yours." (Luke 15:31) In other words, the older brother was every bit as welcome at the party as everyone else. It was only the older brother's attitude that kept him out.

When God throws a party, everyone has enough. God's parties are marked by hospitality. Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine so that the party celebrating the marriage that had taken place, wouldn't end on a sour note.

When God throws a party, everyone is safe. Heaven – the ultimate party which God invites us to – has been described as a place without tears, without worries, without danger.

So, as a church, when we throw a party, we should do everything in our power to welcome everyone, to provide for those who come, and to ensure the safety of our guests. Let's remember that everything we do as a community of faith should honor and emulate the ultimate party-thrower, God himself.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebekah". The script is cursive and elegant.