



Geoff's Journal

“Be the Church”

First, “Thank you!” Thank you to all of you who signed up, showed up, pitched in, dropped off, and helped out this past month as, together we put our faith into action for our fifth annual faith in ACT!ON campaign.

During this year's campaign, as we learned to think, act, be, give, and become more like Jesus, we were reminded that ‘faith’ is an action. Jesus took action to come to be with us and die for us. Through His commission – first to His disciples, now to us – Jesus calls His followers to action: “Go, Do, Be like me!” And in between He taught and prepared His disciples how to fulfill God's plan and purpose for them: to be the Church, the Body of Christ to the world. And, as St. Andrew's looks to its future, this lesson is important for us to not only hear but to live out!

As many of you know downtown Brampton is about to undergo a significant change: a new university, an Innovation Centre, and three new condominium developments have all been approved to start this year by both City Hall and the provincial government. Why this is important is that all of these developments will happen within three kilometers of St. Andrew's! By changing Brampton right outside our doors, I believe that God is revealing what His plan for us is: that we are to be the Church; not a historic building, but a community of faith fulfilling God's mission.

To do this we must go, do, and be like Jesus to the people God will be sending to us.

But what does it mean to “be the Church?” To ‘be the Church’ we are to live up to both God's purpose for – and Jesus' commission to – us: we are to be like Jesus, the One who left the safety of heaven to come to be with us where we were, regardless of who we were, or what we'd done, even though to do all this meant dying for us. But Jesus didn't come to erect a building called a ‘Church’; He came to build up those who believed in Him to be like Him as a ‘living’ body known as the ‘Church.’

Paul challenged the early 1st Century Christians to live out their faith as a Church

“not built with hands” (2 Cor 5:1). Peter goes further in his letter to the early Church.

“Come to him, a living stone, ... and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

(1 Peter 2:4-5)

Understood this way, the Church is not a building we go to, it's made up of people who, by being like Jesus, go out and witness to God's Good News.

For the past year I have been pointing out to the Session that the future is coming – that Brampton is changing – and that we, and St. Andrew's, need to be ready. I've been warning them, that while God is still sending people to us, the days of waiting for people to walk through our doors are over; to be the Church we must put our faith into action, leave the safety of the past, and, like the 1st Church did, go out to meet the needs of the people with whom God will fill our neighbourhood.

As we wrapped up the “ThinkActBe” preaching series, I asked everyone to imagine what St. Andrew's would be like if we all chose to “BE the Church” by putting into practice what it means to be like Jesus, not for ourselves but for our neighbours. Together, let us choose to “be the Church” and be the Church God planned for us to be 170 years ago as we look forward fulfilling God's purpose for us into the future.