

**St. Andrew's Anglican Church**

**Fort Road**

**St. John's, Antigua**

**The Seventeenth Sunday after**

**Pentecost: Proper 22 (C)**

**October 6, 2019**

**DRAFT**

**A Sermon by the Rev. Joe Parrish**

**“Tiny faith, big results”**

**The Gospel: Luke 17:5-10**

**(Cf., Matthew 17:19-21, Mark 9:28-29)**

The apostles said to the Lord,  
“Increase our faith!” The Lord replied,

“If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table’? Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink’? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you

were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’”

### **Matthew 17:19-21**

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ He said to them, ‘Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there”, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.’

## **Mark 9:28-29**

When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ He said to them, ‘This kind can come out only through prayer.’

Gracious Lord, hear our mustard seed prayers, and have mercy upon us. Amen.

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning, new every morning, great is thy faithfulness

O Lord, great is thy faithfulness.”

(Music by Edith McNeill.)

[http://www.hymnary.org/text/the\\_steadfast\\_love\\_of\\_the\\_lord\\_never\\_mcn](http://www.hymnary.org/text/the_steadfast_love_of_the_lord_never_mcn)

b. 1920,

<http://www.hymnary.org/person/McNeill>

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This is the song setting from today’s optional Old Testament reading from Lamentations 3:19-26.

Speaking of songs and hymns, Isaac Watts was the author of the Number One Christmas hymn, “Joy to the World,”

along with many other favorites such as “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”

As a young man, Isaac Watts served as pastor of the Mark Lane Church in London, England. However, in 1712, at the age of 38, he suffered an emotional breakdown that limited his activities. However, he was blessed to have good friends to take care of him, in particular Sir Thomas and Lady Abney, with whom he lived for the last 36 years of his life.

Even though he never married, Watts enjoyed children and published the first

hymnal designed expressly for children. One hymn, “I Sing the Mighty Power of God,” was one of the hymns that he wrote for that hymnal which he intended to be sung by children.

While the words of that hymn sound nothing like the songs being written for children today, it speaks of God making mountains rise—and spreading the flowing seas abroad—and building the lofty skies. It tells of a sun that rules the day—and a moon that shines at God's command—and stars that all obey. These are word images that children can,

at some level, understand. Watts knew that, by singing words such as these over and over again, children would come to understand something of God's creation, his providence, and his love.

What Watts could not have understood, is that his hymns would also be sung by adults—sung gladly—and sung in places of which he had never known—and for centuries after his death. Watts died in 1748, 18 years before the founding of the United States. With even a faith the size of a mustard seed, the music of our church would be

changed forever. What church has not sung “Joy to the World” on Christmas?

Pastor Vince Gerhardy who currently serves as Pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Caboolture, Queensland, Australia, tells this story:

<https://www.sermonwriter.com/sermons/luke-175-6-faith-the-size-of-a-mustard-seed-gerhardy/>

A small congregation built a new church on a piece of land left to them by a church member. Ten days before the new church was to open, the local

building inspector informed the pastor that unless the number of parking spaces doubled, they would not be able to use the new church. Unfortunately, the new building had used every square inch except for a rather steep hill behind the church. In order to build more parking spaces, they would have to move that huge rocky hill. Undaunted, the pastor announced the next Sunday morning that he would meet that evening with all members who had “mountain moving faith.” They would hold a prayer session asking God to remove the mountain from

the back yard and somehow to provide enough money to have it paved before the scheduled opening dedication service.

At the appointed time, 24 of the congregation's 300 members assembled for prayer. They prayed for nearly three hours. At ten o'clock the pastor said the final "Amen". "We'll open next Sunday as scheduled," he assured everyone.

"God has never let us down before, and I believe he will be faithful this time too."

The next morning as the pastor was working in his study there came a loud

knock at his door and a rough looking construction foreman entered. “Excuse me, Reverend. I’m from such and so Construction Company. We’re building a huge shopping mall. We need some fill – in fact, heaps of fill. Would you be willing to sell us a chunk of that rocky hill behind the church? We’ll pay you for the dirt we remove, and we will pave all the exposed area free of charge. We need to do this now to allow it to settle properly.” The little church was dedicated the next Sunday as originally planned. (Source unknown).

Steve Molin, currently senior pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Stillwater, Minnesota, wrote:

<https://www.sermonwriter.com/sermons/luke-175-10-warm-hearts-calloused-hands-molin/>

In 1991, a Gallup Poll survey learned what the average American needs in their life. Among the things that made the list of needs are the following:

One — There is a need for shelter and food. No surprise there. If you know

anything about Maslow's hierarchy, you realize that these basic human needs must be met before anything else can be considered. This is why the mission of Habitat for Humanity has taken on such a dramatic role in our society today because it concerns itself with the most basic needs of humanity.

Two — There is a need for community, a sense of belonging that can only be met when people are in intimate contact with one another on a regular basis. Gallup reported that nearly 1/3 of Americans

admit that they have been lonely for a long period in their lives, without close friends or a sense of community.

Three — We need a sense of purpose; we believe that life is only meaningful if we have a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Albert Schweitzer was a brilliant theologian, and he was the greatest authority in North America of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, and Schweitzer was also an accomplished physician, but his life did not find its meaning until he traveled to Africa and

spent his years caring for lepers in a leper colony.

Four — And we need to have faith in something or someone larger than ourselves. We want to know that there is a Grand Designer of the cosmos, and that even though the world seems at times to be spinning out of control, we need to believe in a God who is still in charge. And we need practical help to grow in this faith; it is not something that any of us can do on our own.

That survey speaks loudly to the Church of the 21st century, because those are our needs too. The list is not simple and one-dimensional; rather, it is complex and multi-dimensional. Every Sunday morning, we have people entering the doors of this church with those desperate needs on the front burners of their lives. And every Monday morning, we drive by countless homes and schools with people who weren't here on Sunday, but they have the very same needs. If we only care about ourselves, we stand indicted of

being an exclusive club where membership has its privileges. However, if we only reach out to others, we discover that the affection and the accountability we share as a congregation can become quickly undone. The discussion as to whether we should be a church of warm hearts or a church of calloused hands is a moot question. We must be both. In order to be healthy, we must be both. And I believe we are.

Cheer, Not Beer

The college football fan who held up a sign on national TV asking for beer money says he's giving the thousands of dollars he raked in to a children's hospital and the cash is being tripled thanks to two companies announcing matching contributions.

Carson King held a poster that said "Busch Light Supply Needs Replenished" on ESPN's "College GameDay" last Saturday morning. He scrawled his Venmo account details on the sign for the nation to see.

The college football show was broadcasting from Ames, Iowa, ahead of the matchup between the Iowa Hawkeyes and the Iowa State Cyclones.

After a little while, one of his friends asked him, “Who keeps texting you?”

King looked at his phone and after less than 30 minutes of holding the sign, more than \$400 worth of Venmo donations had already popped in to his account.

“After I got \$600 I thought, ‘There are better things I can do with this,’” he said.

He spoke to his family and decided that, after the cost of paying for a case of Busch Light, he'd give the rest to the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital, he said.

The children's hospital is next to the Hawkeyes' Kinnick Stadium. During each Iowa home game, fans traditionally do the "Iowa Wave" in tribute to the children who can watch the game unfold from the hospital windows.

By Tuesday evening, the amount he has received in his Venmo account had reached more than \$20,000.

Busch Beer took notice, tweeting, “This is the best thing we have read all year; we’re inspired. We’re going to match your donation to University of Iowa.

In turn, Venmo tweeted, “Count us in for matching the donation to the hospital, too.”

With the companies chipping in, the total donation as of Tuesday evening was nearly \$60,000, and King says he plans to keep collecting donations until the end of the month.

As of September 28, the total raised:  
\$1.14 million.

But that is still not the end of the  
story:

An Illinois beer company is tapping a  
new pilsner named Iowa Legend in  
honor of the generosity of an Iowa State  
fan who helped raise more than \$1  
million for a children's hospital.

Carson King has risen to fame over  
the past 10 days after he was featured on  
ESPN College GameDay in Ames asking  
for beer money donations. His GameDay

sign went viral and he decided to donate all the funds to the children's hospital in Iowa City. He has helped raise over \$1.14 million in donations.

After he went viral, he publicly apologized after a controversial tweet of his from 2011 was discovered. A reporter with the Des Moines Register first called attention to the tweet in a profile of King. King, who was 16 years old at the time, called the tweet “hurtful and embarrassing” and that he didn't want it to take away from all the good

the donations can do for the kids at the children's hospital.

Anheuser-Busch, which promised to match King's funds for the hospital, then cut ties with King. The company said it will still stand by its commitment to match the funds through the end of the month.

Shortly after, offensive tweets made by the reporter, Aaron Calvin, between 2010 and 2013, surfaced. He also apologized, and he deleted his tweets.

After the ordeal, Geneseo Brewing Company's head brewer, Glenn Cole,

offered a word of grace on Sept. 25 in an open letter to King that it was “appalled at the actions taken by The Des Moines Register and the Anheuser-Bush, InBev company.”

“We at Geneseo Brewing understand the growth that happens in an individual from the age of 16 to 24. It is the same reasoning the legal age of an adult in the eyes of the law is 18 and that 21 is the legal drinking age. We also understand that the inappropriate jokes people like yourself and Des Moines Register journalist Aaron Calvin made eight years

ago on social media were unfortunately more acceptable back then...”

The letter went on to say: “We have witnessed your growth through your later social media content and accept your apology. We believe that your selfless act to raise funds for the University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital is truly a noble act.”

The letter promises to donate \$1 from every pint and 16 ounce can will go to his cause until the batch is sold out.

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The Rev. Dr. James D. Kegel has served as pastor of Central Lutheran Church, Eugene, Oregon; St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Fargo, North Dakota; St. John's Lutheran Church, Baroda, Michigan; and Edison Park Lutheran Church, Chicago. He also worked at the churchwide offices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Chicago. He currently preaches on the radio and has had a radio and television ministry in Minnesota and Chicago. Here is one of his reflections:

<https://www.sermonwriter.com/sermons/luke-175-10-more-faith-kegel/>

“It has often been said that the only Bible the world will ever read is the lives of Christians. This is a warning to us that our Monday through Saturday selves should reflect our Sunday confession of faith. It is what Jesus is saying to the disciples in our Gospel text. We are not expected to be perfect people, but we are called to live out our faith in daily life. We are to live in such a way that others may come to faith too. We often hear

the charge, 'Let your light so shine forth before others, that they might see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' As we do that we show the love of Christ. We are called to forgive one another, accept one another, love one another. We are called to care about each other so much that we are even willing to call one another to task for wrongdoing. We show our faith in Jesus as we live our daily lives as Christian friends, brothers and sister of each other in Jesus Christ. We become the Bible the world reads.

May we all be the Bible others will read. And may the pages of our lives help bring them into a saving relationship with our Lord.

Two thousand years ago a carpenter with a reputation for healing had an upstairs room reserved in a house in the Middle East. He invited twelve of his friends to come have an evening meal with him. One of them then went out and brought police to arrest him. He was tried for treason, and found guilty, but none of the evidence was true. He was

then executed by hanging on a tree for six hours, and his body was put in a sealed tomb. But three days later over 500 people witnessed his walking around. His betrayer committed suicide. His eleven other followers remembered his death and appearances by having a memorial meal in his honor once a week or more. And his appearances are especially celebrated once a year during the spring. Today over a billion people will remember this person and share a piece of bread and a common cup of wine.

Whether we feel we have a lot of faith or little faith, Jesus said that is exactly enough to do absolutely great miracles. The greatest miracle is to help others find Jesus. Let us be the mustard seeds that bring others to a saving faith in our Lord. Amen.

Description: Mustard seed faith moves mountains. What even small things we do for others will bring enormous results

with the power of the Holy Spirit on our side.

Tags: Meal, bread, wine, beer, betray, Bible, Albert Schweitzer, physician, hill, mountain, joy, Christmas, Albert Schweitzer, Isaac Watts, hymns