

**Morning Prayer- Nov. 20, 2011**  
**Ephesians 1:15-23**

*I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

With the end of our church calendar year, I wonder if it is not appropriate for us to look back over this time and take stock. I will confess, I look forward to the year-in-review videos played each December 31 at the end of the nightly news broadcast. I am also one that writes a fairly detailed and I might add, appropriately humorous, Searight-year-in-review to include in our Christmas cards. I wonder can you guess what the highlight of our Searight-year-in-review will be this Christmas?

So, on this Christ the King Sunday, as we end our year in celebration of Christ who has dominion over all creation, and begin looking towards the preparation of Advent, what is our year-in-review as a church?

I ask this, because the writer of Ephesians has a very specific prayer for us, the church-

that the eyes of our heart be enlightened,  
and we may know the hope to which we are called;  
that we know the riches of our inheritance among the saints,  
and the immeasurable greatness of God's power for us.

This prayer comes for a church that is struggling to live the Good News of Christ the King in a world where power is marked by retribution rather than resurrection.

This prayer comes for a church that is struggling to live the Good News of Christ the King in a community where there is controversy, and question, and division.

This prayer comes for a church that is struggling to live the Good News of Christ the King when they are not quite sure what that is supposed to look like.

Sound familiar? I think if we were to have a video of our own year-in-review as a church- local and global- we would find much of this has not changed for the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Power is still defined by what one has gained rather than by what one has given; division is still maintained as we set litmus tests for theological purity; and no matter how much we think we are doing to further the kingdom of God, we consistently fall short. Though some may claim otherwise, that the church is in acute crisis, the witness of Scripture tells us that struggle is invariably a part of life distinguished in Christian community.

So, thanks be to God for the witness of this letter to the Ephesians. Here, the life (and the struggle) of the church is celebrated. In fact here, the church is the body of Christ, the fullness of God. We can read this prayer as reassurance- that God's power has been put to work in Christ; as encouragement- that God continues to reveal and to call and to save; as fulfillment- that Christ indeed reigns above all authority, all power, all dominion, above every name that is named in this age and in the next.

While it is never bad for us to look back, to do a year-in-review, and consider the ways that we have been faithful, or that we have indeed fallen short- what this prayer does is encourages us instead to look forward to what God continues to do among and within us.

With Christ as our head, we are set free to have the eyes of our heart enlightened to the hope of our unique calling as the body of Christ. That is, how can we be the fullness of God in this world in which we live? How can we bring healing to places of intense hurt? Offer hope to places of intense despair? Witness to the power of restoration and reconciliation? Uphold and celebrate our common faith in a diverse world?

These are the questions we have the privilege to ask, and the responsibility to engage as people of faith. Thanks be to God that we can look forward now to the advent of God's incarnation among us, the beginning of a new year, to continue our path of discipleship, always keeping an eye ahead to the one who is both servant and king.

