

## Weekly Ruminaton

Contributed by The Rev. Paul Gennett Jr.  
 Thursday, 19 August 2010  
 Last Updated Sunday, 22 August 2010

### THE SEASON OF PENTECOST

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#### BACK TO OUR FUTURE!

The past week I have been reading about the ministry of Ezra and Nehemiah through my daily One Year Bible Online reading. Rising from 40 years of exile in Babylon in 537 B.C., Ezra led a remnant of the Hebrew people, now freed by King Cyrus of Persia, back to the promised and the Holy City Jerusalem. They returned to a city in ruin, the Temple built by Solomon laid to waste, and a disheartened and hopeless people.

Ezra was the priest, and his work began rebuilding the spiritual life and worship of God's people once again. Returning with Temple artifacts for worship, he started where they were and with what they found, rebuilt the place and practices of worship, and returned to the life of prayer with hope, reverence, and joy. Nehemiah was the architect and builder. Using his talent for organizing the gifts and talents of others, he put the people to work rebuilding the walls and the temple, preparing and serving food for the workers, and assigning security to protect them from the surrounding cultures whose vision was not for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Ezra the priest &hellip; Nehemiah the architect and organizer &hellip; both giving of their talent to God's glory and the people with whom they served.

This same formula for God's kingdom building through St. Thomas's goes on this very day. We continue in our mutual ministry to build and rebuild our spiritual life in worship and through ministry with different people and resources than in the past. Changes in the levels of giving in time, talent, and treasure during these challenging economic times and work environment invite us to continue in our ministry, yet in different ways, walking as yet by faith in God's leading presence. Likewise, we follow the path of rebuilding the physical parts of our worshiping community. During 2009, a group of our parish family took on the task of initiating a strategic planning process. This group looked back over the rich 168 year history of St. Thomas's, and in particular the 50+ years in our current home of worship, to frame what has happened over this journey of faith to where we are now. They made their report and recommendations earlier this year that is the framework for the current strategic planning ministry team, lovingly known as SP2. This group of faithful people share their time and talent, gathered by Senior Warden Debbie Supplee, to move toward this future through defining the vision and mission of St. Thomas's, considering, dreaming, and conversing of ministries to serve God, our parish family, and our community in the near and longer term, and defining the available and needed resources of time, talent, and treasure to move forward in this future, with God's help always.

Like Ezra and Nehemiah, we are ALL called to build the spiritual and temporal life of St. Thomas's parish together &ndash; brick by brick &hellip; prayer by prayer &hellip; day by day &hellip; with God's help. I am deeply grateful to SP1 in laying the foundations that SP2 now builds upon, and the enthusiastic sharing of talents by each and every servant of God. Please keep them in your prayers &hellip; join the group to share in the common work and mission &hellip; and may we soon be replicating the celebration led by Ezra and Nehemiah of the new Jerusalem ... &ldquo;With praise and thanksgiving the people sang to the Lord, &rsquo;God is good; God's love to Israel endures forever.&rsquo; And all the people gave a great should of praise to the Lord, for the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.&rdquo; Ezra 3:11

In peace always, your servant in Christ,  
 Paul+