

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 // Scott Hayes

What is Church?

As you may be aware, the Episcopal Church follows a prescribed set of readings known as a "lectionary" each year. This practice isn't new; in fact, it traces back to the early church. The current lectionary used, known as the "Revised Common Lectionary," employs a three-year cycle of designated readings and is widely embraced across various denominations. The Episcopal Church formally embraced its use in 2006.

A couple of weeks back, Psalm 133, a mere five verses in length, was appointed in the lectionary. Since it was appointed for the 2nd Sunday of Easter, one must wonder if the creators of the lectionary were aiming to give us a break from the intensity of Holy Week and Easter celebrations! However, the Psalm leaves quite the impression within its five short verses:

1 *Oh, how good and pleasant it is, **

when brethren live together in unity!

2 *It is like fine oil upon the head **

that runs down upon the beard,

3 *Upon the beard of Aaron, **

and runs down upon the collar of his robe.

4 *It is like the dew of Hermon **

that falls upon the hills of Zion.

5 *For there the Lord has ordained the blessing: **

life for evermore.

I must confess that verses 2 & 3 make me chuckle. I can imagine poor Aaron sitting there with his beard dripping away all over his clothes! But of course, that isn't the focus of the Psalm. Diving a bit deeper reveals the Psalm's true essence: "Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when brethren live together in unity!" It's likely that the mention of oil was intended to

evoke memories of festive Temple celebrations which brought the entire community together. Indeed, there is a common theme of “unity” running through all the readings appointed for the day.

Absolutely, the power of unity is undeniable, especially in today's divided world. There are countless ways we can come together for the greater good. It might be volunteering at the Welborne Food Pantry or in the All Saints Pantry Garden. It might look like our Treblefest on Sunday that brought together singers from very different liturgical traditions for a few festive hours of song and food. It could look like our upcoming Cabaret, where we just get to hang out with friends and enjoy time together with good music.

Whatever brings us together is powerful and fun! As memories of Easter Sunday fade, I pray that we find those times to come together and support one another's ministry in the world & in the church. Indeed, it is very good and pleasant!