
Shhhhhh

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
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What a delightful 8:45 service we worshipped in last Sunday! I loved the energy that sparkled when a host of various people and occasions met at that early (but holy!) hour.

First of all, of course, our lives and schedules were still rolling from the Cathedral Antiques Show. Thanks to Anne Ghegan and Cindra Brown and literally hundreds of other Episcopal Church Women, and volunteers, our week of service and antiques was transformed into a blessing for FOCUS. Families Of Children Under Stress (FOCUS) is the beneficiary this year of this amazing annual outreach tradition.

But this past Sunday was also Boy Scout Sunday, and many boys and their leaders arrived at church in crisp uniforms, ready to usher, ready to read the lessons, ready to acolyte, ready to pray. We also welcomed that morning the visiting Boys' Choir of Christ the King Roman Catholic Cathedral, our wonderful neighbors across Peachtree Street. "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133.1). It was beautiful for me to worship with so many with those families!

Finally, this past Sunday was also the day on which we honored young children and their parents who have completed our annual Eucharist Instruction class. We encourage parents to allow their youngsters to receive communion any time after they have been baptized; baptism is the full entrance of God's people into sacramental and ministerial life of the Church. However, we also encourage children and their parents to attend these annual classes as a way to learn more intellectually- and practically-about this great sacrament.

At one point during the 8:45 sermon, I put my finger to my lips and asked, "Does anyone know what this means?" I was speaking directly to these children-and to children of any age-about Isaiah, the great prophet from whose book we were also reading on Sunday. Isaiah describes his vision of God in chapter 6, how the angels sing "Holy, Holy, Holy," and how the angels touch his lips, and how he answers the call of God.

It means "Shhhhhhhhh." It means "Be quiet." When we put a finger to our lips, it means "be quiet." But I propose that this familiar gesture means something more in church. It means not only to be quiet, but it also means "Someone bigger than you is here." In fact, "Someone bigger than both of us is here."

I believe that one of the true measures of holiness is the practice of making room for God. Sometimes, our own words, eager and exciting, or passionate and angry, as they are, interfere with what God is trying to say. Sometimes, we must be quiet before we can say more accurately what the Word of God is. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46.10).

The way we use our lips is important. The way God uses them is important. Consider that God is asking you to be aware of Him the next time you put a finger to your own lips, or to those of your child. We make room for God by quieting ourselves. Then, when God touches our lips-with a burning coal, or with the bread of heaven, or with the cup of salvation-our lips are made clean for true service. Then, our lips become ways that we can sing "holy, holy, holy." They become ways that we can bless others. They become ways that we kiss our brother or sister on Valentine's Day.

Shhhhh. Make room for God. Let your lips be cleansed before you speak. Sing "holy, holy, holy," Then, remember on this

Valentine's Day not just your own love, but the love of the church, the love of the body of Christ. Four times in the New Testament, four times, we are encouraged to "greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16.16; 1 Corinthians 16.20 ; 2 Corinthians 13.12; and 1 Thessalonians 5.26).

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