

St. David's Presbyterian Church  
St. John's, NL  
"Surprising Resources"  
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Have you ever gone a long time despising something wrong with your car, but chose not to repair it or deal with it because it cost too much money to fix? Then you find out there was a hidden warranty and all you needed to do was to bring it in to the dealership and get the work done for free. That's an example of hidden resources.

Or perhaps you are looking at something in the mall and someone out of the blue offers to buy it for you, maybe it's someone you know or someone you don't know, or someone on the plane or bus who offers to buy you lunch, or simply gives you a gift. All of these are surprising, hidden resources.

I've told you about my experience on Sunday shopping where my father, unlike mother who told me "no" on every occasion I can remember when we were in the supermarket to any requests, my father said to me, "Put whatever you want in the cart." And he meant it. It was a surprising resource. It took me by surprise even after it happened several times, numerous times. I still was in shock. Still am.

It called to mind years later on those TV shows where a shopper was give two minutes or 60 seconds or some crazy amount of time to put whatever he or she could fit into a shopping cart in a grocery store and it was theirs. Do you remember that show?

The Scriptures today bring us back to an important fact as Christians. That fact is: We have many more resources in our lives than what we think we do. This is true for both the well to do and those without, and everyone in between.

It is true for us personally. It is true for us as a community. It is true for us in the worldwide movement of God called the Church.

It is true for us personally as we hear the Apostle Paul pray over us about the love of Christ, the fullness of God. He prays that we will be able to experience the four dimensions of the love of Jesus Christ: the height, the depth, the width, and the eternal moment of Jesus' love. So many of us have

love deficits from our childhood and our adulthood. We have such a need to know that we are loved, because our lives are more than the rational, intellectual, social lives that we think we have. We also need the unconditional, wonderful love of God, consistent, foundational, graceful, love that informs every relationship when we are truly gripped by the love. Sometimes, we get little glimpses. We see a rose or wild flower, or a wonderful vegetable or fruit from the garden, or an amazing wild berry plant. Sometimes we stare out into space and realize that our lives are not random and small, but the God who made all this loves us deeply and consistently. Sometimes we hear a story of how lives were saved as a child from death and destruction and dismemberment. God was there. God is here.

We have a great resource in the love of God that sustains us, if we but take the time to hear of such a love and take it into ourselves. We also have a great resource in one another. Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ, the Apostle Paul says in Galatians, chapter six. We need to help each other. We need to hear each other. And the way to do so is by asking for such help. That's why James in chapter five, says we need to confess our sins to one another to be healed. We have a great resource in one another, much greater than we can ask or imagine, as we have in our heavenly Father, who is also more than we can ask or imagine. But we need to ask. Asking for help takes courage. Asking for what we need takes energy and fortitude. Why? Because we often experience much less on the inside than what we present on the outside. We have doubts and difficulties and challenges that we let only a few see. And we don't share the load, we become lonely, sometimes depressed and wondering if God cares, or anyone else.

But we have a resource greater than we can imagine in Jesus Christ, and in our friends, neighbors, family and the church family. We have it right here.

And in the Church community right here in St. David's we have more than we think. We have the ability to do much more right here than sometimes we think we do. We have the ability and the resources to reach out with the love of Christ. We have the ability and the resources to reach out to the community.

The disciples doubted this was the case. Jesus was teaching in a lonely place in John, chapter six. He knew the crowd needed to eat. He asked his

disciples what it would take to feed them. Philip was bold enough to give his best estimate for the occasion. He suggested it would take six months wages to have just a little bit of bread for the crowd. That would be tens of thousands of dollars of bread in today's terms. But you know the story. A boy had a few barley loaves, and some fish. Jesus took them and a miracle took place, so that all were filled with all they wanted to eat and there were twelve big baskets full left of the scraps left over. You know this story. Some commentators say that the miracle was the boy opening his lunch bucket and everyone else did the same. But the story does not read that way, and dismissing a miracle so easily does not do justice to the amazement of the crowd and the disciples. No, this was truly a surprising resource in Jesus that they did not know they had. It was more than they could ask or imagine.

How might we imagine this story here? Once there was a church on Queen's Road that needed repairs. Instead of the repairs, new property was bought way out in the country. A new building was built out here for the future. And within a few years a new hall was put on the new building. That was the kind of faith that didn't say, "We don't have the money, we can't possibly do that." It was one that relied on Jesus and on God for the resources. That was fifty years ago or so.

Now we need that kind of faith again. We could put up a ten story high rise next to us where the house is and the lot behind it. We could have as much covered parking as we needed in two or three stories there. We could have retail and professional space there. We could continue and expand our ministry to new immigrants and refugees there. We could continue and expand our ministry to our seniors, for housing and programs. We could have again a ministry with counseling and reconciliation/mediation services there. We could have a university ministry there, and we could find the millions of dollars necessary for such a project, if we but see the hidden resources available to us in God, and in one another. If we caught hold of what God wants for the future for this place and this property, we could do even more than that, but this is to spark your imagination, and to say what we can do is way more than we expect. We don't have to say, "oh we don't have the money, or the people to do this or that ministry."

We have the resources to plant another Presbyterian church in the Avalon peninsula in one of the areas growing. We already have hundreds of thousands in the bank for such a project from the funds generating after the

St. Aidan's congregation closed in the '70s. We have the resources to do much more than simply stay open and survive and grow a bit.

And there will always be people who say "No, we can't." There were people saying that fifty years ago, when we moved here out to the country, out to the sticks. They moved on, many of them. But now here we are in a place considered central and the land is valuable.

We don't have to do what David did. He stayed in a comfortable place, not out in the battle where he was supposed to be. He was looking for trouble, or maybe just looking, and all of a sudden, he was an adulterer and a murderer. He repented of his sin, and he was forgiven. Solomon, the son of this wife, taken by David through crime, became king. David's household had calamity from there on in. But he was still somehow close to God, somehow still God's person.

We will still be God's church, whether we choose the comfortable place, or whether we stretch ourselves in faith. And faith isn't only putting up a high rise building, it is also in ministries and in what we choose to do, each of us in our personal lives, in our personal relationships. But I would like to consider stretching ourselves greatly in ministry. What might be the Tower that God calling us to build?

Let's keep asking God, who keeps surprising us, throughout our lives,

Let us pray.